

The History and Politics of Taiwan's February 28 Incident, 1947- 2008

by

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BA, National Taiwan Univeristy, Taiwan, 1991

BA, University of Victoria, 2007

MA, University of Victoria, 2009

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

Taiwan's February 28 Incident happened in 1947 as a set of popular protests against the postwar policies of the Nationalist Party, and it then sparked militant actions and political struggles of Taiwanese but ended with military suppression and political persecution by the Nanjing government. The Nationalist Party first defined the Incident as a rebellion by pro-Japanese forces and communist saboteurs. As the enemy of the Nationalist Party in China's Civil War (1946-1949), the Chinese Communist Party initially interpreted the Incident as a Taiwanese fight for political autonomy in the party's wartime propaganda, and then reinterpreted the event as an anti-Nationalist uprising under its own leadership. After the rapprochement of Mao's China with the United States in the 1970s, both parties successively started economic or political reform and revised their respective policies toward the February 28 Incident. Moreover, the Democratic Progressive Party rose as a pro-independence force in Taiwan in the mid-1980s, and its stress on the Taiwanese pursuit of autonomy in the Incident coincided with the initial interpretation of the Chinese Communist Party. These partisan views and their related policy changes deeply influenced historical research on the Incident. This study re-examines both the history and the historical accuracy of these partisan discourses and the relevant scholarship on the Incident, and further proposes to understand this historic event in the long-term context of Taiwanese resistance and political struggles.

Keywords: Taiwan; the February 28 Incident; the Chinese Nationalist Party; the Chinese Communist Party; the Democratic Progressive Party.

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Romanization

I have used pinyin romanization for the Chinese terms and names in the text. However, when a person or a place in Taiwan is more widely and primarily known by a Romanized name from Wade-Giles or other spelling systems, I will use the original spellings but put the pinyin spellings after them for the first time.

Abbreviation

AP	Associated Press
ARATS	Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CNA	Central News Agency
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
KMT	Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang, or Kuomintang)
NPC	National People's Congress
NTU	National Taiwan University
PCC	Political Consultative Conference
PFPP	People First Party
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
SEF	The Straits Exchange Foundation
TIM	Taiwan Independence Movement
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UN	United Nations
UP	United Press
US	The United States

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Introduction

Taiwan witnessed one of its most tragic historical moments in the February 28 Incident (Ereba Shijin) of 1947, at the height of the Civil War between the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang or Kuomintang, KMT hereafter) and the Chinese Communist Party (Zhongguo gongchandang, CCP hereafter) in mainland China. Starting from February 28, 1947, large scale anti-KMT popular protests and the subsequent Taiwanese political struggles engulfed the island but suffered bloody military suppression from the KMT authorities between March 8 and early May of that year. This months-long Incident then became a major subject in the partisan propaganda of both the KMT and the CCP, as well as a key plank later in the political platform of the Democratic Progressive Party (Minjindang, DPP hereafter) after its rise in Taiwan from the mid-1980s. It has entered the mainstream historical scholarship on the two sides of the strait in the recent two decades.

Thus, this Incident does not simply refer to a single historical event that occurred on the day of February 28, 1947. Rather, it is a term that embodies the whole process of Taiwanese popular protests and political struggles against the KMT authorities, as well as its subsequent military suppression and political pacification that lasted for months in early 1947, and has left long-term impacts on KMT, CCP, and DPP partisan politics. Although there is disagreement over a shorter or longer duration of the Incident, scholars generally accept its periodization running from February 27 1947 to May 15 1947.¹

¹ Lai Tse-han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991) 100-101; Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi: Ereba beiju de lingyi mianxiang* 派系鬥爭與權謀政治：二二八悲劇的另一面相 (Factional struggle and Machiavellian politics: Another aspect of the February 28 tragedy)

There have always been different politicized references to this historical event. In mainland China, the CCP authorities and even some scholars tend to use “the February 28 Uprising” (Ereba qiyi) or “the February 28 Revolution” (Ereba geming) to refer to what happened in Taiwan in early 1947. According to Du Jidong, this usage reflects the long-term mainstream view of the CCP and mainland academia on the Incident. It originated from the CCP’s anti-Chiang and anti-US discourse in the 1940s-1950s, and has been prevalent in the official propaganda and academic works since 1949, which have subordinated the uprising to the Chinese people’s revolutionary movement under the leadership of the CCP.²

Ironically, the early overseas advocates of Taiwan independence also spoke of the event as “the February 28 Uprising” or “the February 28 Revolution” but they saw it as a fight for home rule by the Taiwanese.³ They have also used the term “popular rebellion” (minbian) or “massacre” (canan) to refer to the event.⁴ While the implication of the former term is similar to that of “qiyi,” the latter implies a massive killing of Taiwanese civilians by the KMT. Regardless of their usage of “revolution,” “uprising,” “popular rebellion,” or “massacre,” they explicitly perceive the Incident from the perspective of

(Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1995), 15; Chen Yishen 陳儀深, “Lun Taiwan Ereba Shijian de yuanyin” 論台灣二二八事件的原因 (On the causes of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan), in *Ereba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 二二八學術研討會論文集 (Proceedings of the symposium on the February 28 Incident), ed. Chen Yanyu and Hu Huiling (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1992), 28-30. Also see Chapter Four for more detailed discussions about the duration of the Incident.

² Du Jidong 杜繼東, “1949 nian yilai Zhongguo dalu ‘Ereba’ Shijian yanjiu pingjie” 1949 年以來中國大陸二二八事件研究評介 (Comments on and introduction to mainland China’s scholarship on the February 28 Incident since 1949), in *Ereba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji* 二二八事件六十週年紀念論文集 (A collection in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary the February 28th Incident of 1947), ed. Xu Xueji 許雪姬 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2008), 28.

³ Huang Zhongxiang 黃種祥 (Huang Chung-xiang), “Ereba Shijian yanjiu shi: Yi Taiwan de xiangguan yanjiu yu chubanshen wei zhongxin 二二八事件研究史：以台灣的相關研究與出版品為中心 (The history of research on the February 28 Incident: With focus on relevant studies and publications in Taiwan),” (PhD diss, Chinese Culture University, 2016), 118-119.

⁴ Steven E. Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence: The Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945-1950* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 148.

Taiwanese independence.

The neutral term “shijian” (incident) tends to be more acceptable to scholars and even to the KMT regime. Since the terms “revolution,” “uprising,” and “popular rebellion” carry political connotations of an attempt to either overthrow or rebel against the established system or government, both the KMT and the Taiwan independence movement (TIM) favor the term “shijian” to minimize the episode and dispel divisive feelings,” and to “minimize the violent rebellion that provoked KMT repression” respectively.⁵ Steve E. Phillips adds that “the Nationalists spoke of what happened on February 28 as an ‘incident’ (shijian), implying an unexpected or unplanned event.”⁶ Chen Yishen points out that scholars may over-interpret it since the Chinese term “shijian” does not necessarily have the political connotations that “incident” may imply in English.⁷

This work adopts the term “Ererba shijian” or “February 28 Incident” not only as a neutral reference to the whole series of Taiwanese actions and KMT responses in the early months of 1947, but also because this term was actually used by the Taiwan media and the major Taiwanese organizations such as the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee during the Incident from its beginning, for example in the title of Taipei’s Resolution Committee of the February 28 Incident (Ererba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui).⁸

⁵ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 7.

⁶ Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence*, 148.

⁷ Chen, “Lun Taiwan Ererba Shijian de yuanyin,” 28, 58n6.

⁸ The local newspaper, *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, initially referred to the event as “Yanpinglu shijian” (The Yanping road incident) in the editorial on March 1, 1947 because it evolved from a clash between the police and civilians on that street of Taipei. But the newspaper later called it “Ererba Shijian” (February 28 Incident) in an article published in the extra edition of March 3, 1947. Local Taiwanese politicians initially established an organization called “Qisi xiean diaocha weiyuanhui” (Committee to Investigate the Case of the Arrested Smuggler) on March 1, 1947, but changed its title to “Ererba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui” (The February 28 Incident Resolution Committee) suggested by Taiwan Governor Chen Yi on March 2, 1947. See *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 1, 1947:1; March 3, 1947: extra edition; Lai Tse-han 賴澤涵總主筆 et al.,

This usage follows a common academic trend, but also avoids politicized meanings conveyed in other alternatives. But before turning to an examination of the history of the February 28 Incident and its various political interpretations, it is necessary to have a brief discussion about Taiwan geography and demography, the significance of the Incident, and the goals, the sources, and research methods of this study.

Taiwan Geography and Demography

Taiwan lies about 160 kilometers (about 100 miles) off the southeastern coast of mainland China, 1,120 km (about 700 miles) south of Japan, and 320 km (about 200 miles) north of the Philippines. While the Taiwan Strait separates Taiwan from mainland China, it is bounded by the East China Sea to its north, the Luzon Strait to its south, and the Pacific Ocean to its east, lying in the sea routes connecting Japan and Southeast Asia. Taiwan proper is about 377 kilometers from north to south, and about 142 kilometers from east to west at its widest. With an area of slightly more than 36,000 square kilometers, including Taiwan proper and its outlying islands, its size is similar to that of the Netherlands. Although the Central Mountain Range dominates the island that makes much of the land mountainous, the Tropic of Cancer going through its southern regions and the tropical temperate climate, combined with fertile soil and abundant rainfall, has allowed agriculture to flourish in Taiwan.⁹

Ereba Shijian Yanjiu Baogao 二二八事件研究報告 (Research report on the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Shi bao wenhua, 1994), 57.

⁹ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 13; Ronald G. Knapp, "The Shaping of Taiwan's Landscapes," in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), 4-5; Shi Ming 史明, *Taiwan ren sibainian shi* 台灣人四百年史 (A four-hundred-year history of the Taiwanese people) (San Jose, CA.: Paradise Culture Associate, 1980), 6-7; May Tseng et al., *2019-2020 Taiwan at a Glance* (Taipei: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019), 3-5.
http://multilingual.mofa.gov.tw/web/web_UTF-8/MOFA/glance2019-2020/English.pdf.

The island of Taiwan had long been home to different groups of Indigenous peoples. However, little is known about the early history and interrelations of these peoples before the arrival of the European colonists in the early seventeenth century because they did not leave any written records. Archaeological findings suggest the early existence of Paleolithic settlements, but only limited information about the original inhabitants of the island has been acquired. Some archaeologists in Taiwan, such as Zang Zhenhua, basing themselves on recent archaeological findings on the island and its surrounding areas, suggest the possibility of the origin and dispersal of Austronesian-speaking peoples from the southeast coast of the Chinese subcontinent. However, Zang also admits that the origin and dispersal of the Austronesian-speaking peoples remain contested.¹⁰ Regardless of scholarly disputes over this issue, it is agreed that modern Taiwanese Indigenous peoples are ethnically and linguistically part of the Austronesian family.¹¹

The early Indigenous peoples in Taiwan formed their societies on tribal lines. They lived in villages, relying on an economy of deer hunting and millet and rice cultivation. Despite occasional alliances and the practice of trading and marriages among themselves, intervillage rivalry and head-hunting customs were common. These prevented Indigenous unity and left the villages vulnerable to colonial intrusion, first by

¹⁰ Zang Zhenhua 臧振華, “Zai lun nandaoyu zu de qiyuan yu kuosan wenti” 再論南島語族的起源與擴散問題 (A further discussion on the question of the origins and dispersal of the Austronesian people), *Nandao yanjiu xuebao* 3, no. 1 (2012): 89-91, 97-111. As Zang’s article admits, scholarly opinions on the origin and dispersal of the Austronesian-speaking peoples could be generalized into two main schools: the “Out of Taiwan hypothesis,” and the “Out of Southeast Asia hypothesis.” The former hypothesizes that the Austronesian-speaking peoples originated from southeast coast of China or Taiwan, and spread to Southeast Asia and Oceania; while the latter suggests that the Austronesian-speaking peoples stemmed from Southeast Asian islands, and from there migrated to Taiwan, Oceania, and even to the southeastern coast of the Asian continent.

¹¹ Michael Stainton, “The Politics of Taiwan Aboriginal Origins,” in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007), 28-9.

the Dutch and other Europeans, and later the Chinese and Japanese.¹²

According to one study of Dutch village censuses, 68,657 Indigenous people in 268 villages were recorded in 1650. Five years later, the 1655 census recorded an Indigenous population of 39,223 people under Dutch nominal control. But Dutch censuses still left central mountain villages uncounated as large regions, particularly those in the central mountains, stayed outside of Dutch administration. Therefore, an estimate of 100,000 Indigenous people in 1650 has been suggested, taking mountain villages into account.¹³

In the meantime, Chinese immigrants came into Taiwan from the mid-1630s. The Dutch imported Chinese immigrants for agricultural work, and beginning in September 1640 imposed a poll tax on them. Jiang Shusheng uses the materials from the Dutch poll tax to reckon maximum and minimum numbers of Chinese on Taiwan from 1640 to 1661. According to Jiang, there existed a maximum of 30,000, and minimum of 25,000 Chinese people on Taiwan at the end of the Dutch era, in 1661.¹⁴ Chinese immigrants continued to flow in after Dutch colonial rule was ended in 1662 by Zheng Chenggong, a loyalist general of the fallen Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Nevertheless, the Chinese population shrank in 1683 because of warfare and an outflow of troops. The Qing government then took over Taiwan from Zheng family rule, and there followed a further influx of Chinese immigrants to Taiwan. Despite its restrictions on immigration in the first 100 years or so of its rule, the Qing authority loosened its cross-strait immigration policy after 1790. The

¹² John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), 7, 29.

¹³ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 7, 38-41, 451n20.

¹⁴ Jiang Shusheng 江樹生, *Dangan xushi: Zaiqi Taiwan shi yanjiu lunwenji* 檔案敘事：早期台灣史研究論文集 (Telling stories by archives: A collection of essays on the early history of Taiwan) (Tainan, Taiwan: Taiwan lishi bowuguan, 2016), 194-196, 212-214.

population of Taiwan, including the Plains Indigenous peoples and the Chinese, but excluding mountain Indigenous peoples, was estimated at about 660,147 in 1756, but increased to about 2,545,731 in 1893. The Chinese immigrants originated mainly from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou prefectures in Fujian province, and from northern Guangdong province. The former immigrants are referred to as Min, and the latter as “Hakka.” The local population continued to grow after Japan defeated the Qing dynasty in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and took Taiwan over as its colony, and the population of Taiwan reached 2,973,280 in 1905 and 3,325,755 in 1915.¹⁵

It should be noted that due to tribal rivalry in the early period, some groups of Taiwanese Indigenous peoples tended to seek protection from, and were thus cooperative with or utilized by, the colonial powers, in their efforts to resist against other incoming ruling powers, other Indigenous groups or Chinese penetration. However, as Chinese penetration intensified during the Qing era, the Indigenous peoples were soon overwhelmed by increasing Chinese population, and have long been marginalized and disadvantaged politically, economically, and even culturally.

Indeed, by the mid-eighteenth century, the Chinese population overwhelmingly outnumbered the Indigenous peoples. According to the Japanese censuses, the aforementioned 2,973,280 residents on Taiwan in 1905 consisted of 46,432 Plains Indigenous people, 36,363 mountain Indigenous people mostly originating from the Taidong plains, 2,492,784 Hokkien people (from Fujian), 397,195 Hakka, and the

¹⁵ George W. Barclay, *Colonial Development and Population in Taiwan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), 13, 16; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 8, 142-146, 148-162. The 1905 and 1915 figures include Taiwanese Indigenous peoples, early Chinese immigrants of Fujian and Guangdong origin, and other Chinese origins, but exclude Japanese, Korean, and other foreign nationalities.

remaining Chinese from other regions.¹⁶ In 1935, a total of 207,900 Taiwanese Indigenous people were recorded, while there were 4,675,565 people of Chinese origins.¹⁷ By the end of 1946, according to Wu Congmin's studies, the population of Taiwan was estimated at about 6,276,517, including about 50,000 mainlander soldiers and 31,721 mainlander civilians.¹⁸ Therefore, most "natives" of the island around the time of the February 28 Incident were actually descendants of earlier immigrants from mainland China, in contrast to those mainlander Chinese going to Taiwan in or after 1945, especially those following the KMT regime to the island.

Although the leaders and most participants in the February 28 Incident were mainly local Taiwanese with Chinese origins, Indigenous Taiwanese also engaged in the Incident. In Hualien city, local people concerned about the development of the Incident assembled at a city plaza on March 4, 1947. There were about 4,000 people in the gathering, including Indigenous Taiwanese, expressing their support of Taiwan self-rule.¹⁹ The most well-known case is the participation of the Tsou people, an Indigenous group residing in today's Jiayi and Nantou counties, in the Incident.²⁰ The leader of the Tsou people, also the head of the Wufeng township, sent a group of about 100 Tsou braves to assist Jiayi militia in maintaining local order, but also in attacking the armory

¹⁶ Barclay, *Colonial Development and Population in Taiwan*, 13, 16; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 161, table 6.4. Those mountain Indigenous peoples were mostly from plains areas of Ami and Puyuma population under Japanese control.

¹⁷ Barclay, *Colonial Development and Population in Taiwan*, 16, table 3.

¹⁸ Wu Congmin 吳聰敏, "1945-1949 nian guomin zhengfu dui Taiwan de jingji zhengce" 1945-1949 年國民政府對台灣的經濟政策 (The Nationalist government's economic policies regarding Taiwan in 1945-1949), *Jingji lunwen congkan* (Economic review) 25, no.4 (1997): 547-550. There is no statistical data of household registration for the year of 1945.

¹⁹ *Minbao*, March 9, 1947: 2. Also see Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 143.

²⁰ The spelling in their language is "Cou," or "zou zu" 鄒族 in Chinese. The Tsou are an Austronesian ethnic group.

and in the battle of Jiayi Shuishang airfield on March 7, 1947.²¹

Thus, a short clarification of the use of the terms in this work should also be noted. Throughout this thesis, the term “Indigenous” peoples refers to Austronesian-speaking peoples, while “native” or “local Taiwanese” includes both “Indigenous” defined in that way and speakers of Chinese-dialects, and their descendants, who went to the island particularly before the KMT regime took over Taiwan in 1945.²²

²¹ Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui 台灣省文獻委員會, ed., *Ereba Shijian wenxian jilu* 二二八事件文獻輯錄 (Historiographical records of the February 28 Incident) (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1991), vol. 149-150; Lai, et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 107-8; Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲, ed., *Ereba Shijian cidian* 二二八事件辭典 (Dictionary of the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2008), 320, 471; and *Ereba Shijian cidian: Biece* 二二八事件辭典: 別冊 (Dictionary of the February 28 Incident: Supplement volume) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2008), 230, 394; Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲 et al., “Wen Wenzhong” 溫文仲, in *Jia-yun pingye Ereba* 嘉雲平野二二八 (February 28 Incident in Jiayi and Yunlin areas), ed. Zhang Yanxian (Taipei: Wusanlian jijinhui, 1995), 287-288; Fan Yanqiu 范燕秋, “Lexin Wadan yu Ereba Shjian zhong Taiya zu de dongtai: Tansuo zhanhou chuqi Taiwan yuanzhumin jingying de zhengzhi shijian” 樂信瓦旦與二二八事件中泰雅族的動態: 探索戰後初期台灣原住民菁英的政治實踐 (Lexin Watan and reactions of Atayal People to the February 28 Incident: Political practices of Indigenous elites in early post-war Taiwan), in *Ereba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji* 二二八事件六十週年紀念論文集 (The February 28th Incident of 1947, in Retrospect on its 60th Anniversary), ed. Xu Xueji 許雪姬 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2008), 366-72, 366n3. It should be noted that the Tsou people soon withdrew from the events and turned to cooperating with the authorities. In fact, the Indigenous leader of the Atayal people in northern Taiwan even made efforts to prevent his people from engaging in the disturbances. Fan Yanqiu argues that the reactions of Indigenous elites to the Incident reflected their ideas and pursuit of the Indigenous autonomy as they tried to avoid being manipulated by Han people and meanwhile sought to consider their ethnic autonomy in such a disturbing period. Thus, the Incident illustrates the complicity and dynamics of various groups of Taiwanese peoples in their search for their identities and autonomy.

²² In 1984, a group of Indigenous Taiwanese, missionaries, and Han people organized and established the first Indigenous peoples’ rights group called Taiwan Yuanzhuminzu quanli cujinhui 台灣原住民族權利促進會 (Yuanquanhui 原權會), and used the English title the Alliance of Taiwanese Aborigines (ATA). In August 1993, the ATA submitted a statement on Taiwan to the United Nation Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWIGIP). This statement concerns the condition and rights of the Indigenous Taiwanese. In 1994, the ROC government officially recognized their indigenous status. In today’s Taiwan, the official term for Indigenous Taiwanese is Yuanzhumin 原住民 in Chinese, and Taiwanese Indigenous peoples in English. See Michael Rudolph, “The Quest for Difference versus the Wish to Assimilate: Taiwan’s Aborigines and their Struggle for Cultural Survival in Times of Multiculturalism,” in *Religion and the Formation of Taiwanese Identities*, ed. Paul R. Katz and Murry A. Rubinstein (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 144-145n1, 145n2; and “Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines Statement to UNWIGIP,” TDP (Taiwan Documents Project), <http://taiwandocuments.org/ata.htm> (accessed 6 January 2021).

The Significance of the February 28 Incident and Previous Studies on the Subject

Although the February 28 Incident occurred about seven decades ago, it continues to be significant in the history and politics of Taiwan, China, and the wider world. In addition to its importance in the propaganda war between the KMT and the CCP since their Civil War period in the late 1940s and in the political rivalry between the KMT and the DPP in Taiwan politics during recent decades, the Incident has marked a watershed in Taiwanese people's search for a national identity and cultural reconstruction since particularly the later period of Japanese colonization.²³

Studies on the February 28 Incident in the early period were restricted by politics and dominated by partisan interpretations in both Taiwan and mainland China for decades after its outbreak. Chen Cuilian indicates that there have been three stages of development in the partisan discourses on the Incident. The period from 1947 to the early 1980s mainly saw KMT dominance and control over narratives of the Incident in Taiwan, despite publications by former Taiwanese communists in Hong Kong and by Taiwan Independence groups in Japan.²⁴ In the second period of the 1980s, challenges to the KMT's views started to emerge as opposition forces on Taiwan and abroad and the CCP all competed over interpretations of the Incident.²⁵ However, as the KMT and the CCP

²³ Chen Fangming 陳芳明, "Weile burang lishi chongyan" 為了不讓歷史重演 (In order to prevent history from repeating itself), "Qianyan" (Preface), in *Ereba Shijian xueshu lunwenji* 二二八事件學術論文集 (Essays on the February 28 Incident of 1947), ed. Chen Fangming 陳芳明 (Irvine, CA.: Taiwan Publishing Co., 1988), 1. As early as the later period of Japanese rule, a Taiwanese identity against the Japanese colonists emerged at least among the educated elite. After the February 28 Incident, a distinctly Taiwanese identity was further constructed at least by overseas Taiwan Independence advocates, and this had considerable influence on the formation of a Taiwanese consciousness in post-Chiang Taiwan later on. Unfortunately, Indigenous Taiwanese have long been marginalized up to the present, and the "mainstream" or majority of "local Taiwanese" has consisted of those with Chinese origins.

²⁴ Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, *Chonggou Ereba: Zhanhou Mei--Zhong tizhi, Zhongguo tongzhi moshi yu Taiwan* 重構二二八：戰後美中體制、中國統治模式與台灣 (Reconstructing the February 28 Incident: Post-war US-China system, Chinese ruling pattern and Taiwan) (Taipei: Weicheng chuban, 2017), 12-13.

²⁵ Chen, *Chonggou Ereba*, 13-14.

controlled the narratives in Taiwan and mainland China respectively during these two stages, works relevant to the February 28 Incident tended to be either eyewitness accounts, partisan arguments of the Taiwan independence movement, including the DPP, or political propaganda from the KMT and the CCP. Before 1987, substantive academic studies on the Incident were lacking. In the third stage since the 1990s, according to Chen, following the political democratization of Taiwan, scholarly studies on the subject have thrived. Some major monographs on the Incident began to appear from then onward, such as *Daoyu xin taiji: Cong zhongzhan dao Ererba* (The rebirth of the island: From the end of the War to the February 28 Incident) by Li Xiaofeng; *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28 Incident* co-authored by Lai Tse-han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou; and *Ai zeng Ererba* (Love and Hate the February 28 Incident) by Dai Guohui and Ye Yunyun. After 2000, there are abundant research findings about the Incident. Nevertheless, most of those works are more or less detailed regional, topical, or case-based studies of the Incident, and there is still a lack of works transcending previous studies in historical perspective and offering major breakthroughs in research frameworks.²⁶

Although previous studies of the Incident tend to restrict their discussions to such limited temporal or episodic frames, some publications outside of Taiwan by former Taiwanese communists and Taiwan Independence advocates have placed the Incident in a broader historical background and linked the Incident to a broader history of Taiwanese resistance. For example, both Su Xin's and Wang Yude's works all attend to Taiwan's

²⁶ Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 14-16.

colonial past and to movements in the 17th-19th centuries.²⁷ Despite difference in their political ideologies, they show an awareness of the early anti-colonial struggle in Taiwan's history, even though they lack deep historical analysis of the Incident.

This study starts with a short discussion about the February 28 Incident but focuses on its politicized interpretations by the KMT, CCP and DPP as well as on scholarly research on the subject in the recent two decades. Although it roughly follows Chen Cuilian's periodization of the political and scholarly discourse on the Incident from 1947 up to 2008, its discussion provides more detailed analysis of the partisan views and their impacts on scholarly research in each period, and it especially examines changes in such views related to political transformations in Taiwan, across the strait and at the international level.

The Taiwanese scholar Chen Fangming has conducted research on the development of the CCP's politicized historical view on the February 28 Incident and changes in its partisan interpretation. Chen holds that the CCP's initial assessment of the Incident was based entirely on its wartime strategy in 1947-1949. After 1949, the CCP's evaluation of the Incident was subordinated to its Taiwan policy. Therefore, over the past decades, the CCP's interpretation of the Incident mainly depends on the attitude of the

²⁷ See Su Xin 蘇新 (Zhuang Jianong 莊嘉農), *Fenun de Taiwan* 憤怒的台灣 (Angry Taiwan) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, (1949)1990); and Wang Yude 王育德, *Kumen de Taiwan* 苦悶的台灣 (Taipei: Ziyou shidai, unknown). Wang's book was first published in Japanese in Tokyo in 1964. The Japanese title of the book is 台湾—苦悶するその歴史 (O Ikutoku, *Taiwan: Kumon suru sono rekishi*). Latter, the book was translated into Chinese and published in Tokyo in 1979. The Chinese version was published in Taiwan by Zheng Nanrong's Ziyou shidai magazine office under the aforementioned title. In 1993, it was re-published in Taiwan by *Zili wanbao*, and renamed as *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi* 台灣：苦悶的歷史.

party leaders toward the “Taiwan issue,” and has been constantly adjusted to accommodate to its internal and external political changes.²⁸

The CCP’s interpretation of the Incident has thus reflected the CCP’s political needs in different periods. According to Chen, the years from 1947 to 1949 marked the revolutionary perspective period in the CCP’s propaganda on the Incident. The second phase from 1950 to 1957 was the anti-US perspective period when the CCP’s anti-American ideology primarily shaped its narratives on the Incident. The third stage covering the years from 1958-1966 is categorized by Chen Fangming as the New Democratic revolutionary perspective period. From 1966 to 1979, there were no significant or representative works because of political unrest and chaos during the Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless, from 1980 onwards, what Chen defines as “the co-existence” perspective period emerged under the CCP’s “one China, two systems” policy. The normalization of US-PRC relations that led to changes in the CCP’s Taiwan policy in turn also affected the CCP’s stance toward the February 28 Incident.²⁹

Chen Fangming’s periodization of the CCP’s discourse on the February 28 Incident pays more attention to its details than the aforementioned study by Chen Cuilian, but it does not often reflect significant changes in the partisan view from one stage to

²⁸ Chen Fangming 陳芳明, “Zhonggong dui Eerba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian” 中共對二二八事件史觀的政策性轉變 (Changes of the CCP’s view on the February 28 Incident), in *Tansuo Taiwan shiguan* 探索台灣史觀 (Exploring historical views on Taiwan), ed. Chen Fangming 陳芳明 (Taipei: Zhili wanbao, 1992), 114.

²⁹ Chen, “Zhonggong dui Eerba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian,” 115-131. Note: Chen Shaoting also conducts a study with a similar theme and a focus on the CCP’s historical interpretation, and evolution of which, of the February 28 Incident. See Chen Shaoting 陳少廷, “Zhonggong dui Taiwan Eerba Shijian de lishi jieshi, jian ping Taiwan tongpai jinian Eerba de zhengzhi suqiu” 中共對台灣二二八事件的歷史解釋，兼評台灣統派紀念二二八的政治訴求 (The CCP’s historical interpretations of the Taiwan February 28 Incident, with comments on the political appeal of the pro-unification faction in Taiwan in commemorating the Incident), in *Eerba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 二二八學術研討會論文集 (Proceedings of the symposium on the February 28 Incident), ed. Chen Yanyu 陳琰玉 and Hu Huiling 胡慧玲 (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1992), 305-333.

another. His discussion also focuses only on the CCP's own view about the February 28 Incident, but its introduction to academic research in mainland China is insufficient. In contrast, this study covers not only changes in the KMT, CCP and DPP partisan interpretations of the Incident between 1947 and 2008, but also considers the causes of such changes and examines contemporary scholarship on the subject in Taiwan, mainland China and the West.

The mainland China scholar Du Jidong has conducted a review of studies from 1987-2004 on the February 28 Incident. Du first gives a chronological account of the development of political and research activities related to the Incident in and beyond Taiwan from 1947 to 1995, marking the year of 1987 as a turning point. Then he breaks discussion from various works into eight categories: 1) Cause(s) of the Incident; 2) The time span of the Incident; 3) Taiwanese political organizations like resolution committees during the Incident; 4) Casualties from the Incident; 5) The nature of the Incident; 6) Effects of the Incident; 7) The KMT's Taiwan Governor Chen Yi's role in the Incident; and 8) The relation of the Incident to the Taiwan Independence Movement.³⁰ Although Du briefly introduces these works, his review is in essence descriptive rather than analytical, and he also fails to address interrelations between partisan politics and historical research on the Incident.

In 2008, Du Jidong published a thorough review of PRC scholarship on the February 28 Incident, covering the period from 1949 to 2006. Following the structure of the aforementioned article, Du gives a brief historical review of the development of the CCP's view and the studies about the Incident in mainland China in three stages. The first

³⁰ Du Jidong 杜繼東, "Taiwan 'Ereba' Shijian yanjiu zong shu" 台灣二二八事件研究綜述 (An overview of research on Taiwan's February 28 Incident), *Jindaishi yanjiu* (Modern Chinese history studies) no.2 (2004): 258-289.

stage starts from 1945 to 1965, during which the CCP's anti-Chiang regime and anti-American imperialism ideology dominated works about the Incident. The years from 1966 to 1978 constitute the second stage, when the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution severely constrained both scholarly works and the CCP's commemoration of the Incident. In the third stage from 1979 to 2006, studies on the Incident were less constrained by political interference, were no longer confined within the revolutionary view, and became more diverse. Du then generalizes various discussions into five categories, including the cause of the Incident; casualties in the Incident; the nature of the Incident; the meaning and influence of the Incident; and the role of Governor Chen Yi.³¹ Though Du indicates political influence on relevant studies in mainland China, his review focuses mainly on the chronological development of the study on the February 28 Incident in China since 1949, and it too was descriptive rather than analytical, like the previously mentioned study.

This dissertation bases itself on the previous works by Chen Cuilian, Chen Fangming, Du Jidong, and other scholars, but it will also go beyond the scope of their reviews of previous publications and monographic works on the February 28 Incident. Instead, it will reveal not only the changes in the partisan views and historical studies of the February 28 Incident from 1947 to 2008, but also how such studies of the Incident reflected political transformations in Taiwan, mainland China, and international politics over approximately four decades.

³¹ Du, "1949 nian yilai zhongguo dalu Ererba Shijian yanjiu pingjie," 17-36

Purposes, Significance and Structure of this Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation is to unravel the dynamics, process and results of the intertwined political and scholarly changes around the February 28 Incident from its outbreak in 1947 to the end of the DPP's first period in government in Taiwan in 2008. In particular, the dissertation has three objectives: 1) To examine why the KMT, CCP, and DPP presented different interpretations of the February 28 Incident, and how partisan politics limited early studies of the Incident; 2) To examine why and how the KMT, CCP and DPP interpretations of the February 28 Incident changed along with new international, cross-Strait, and especially intra-Taiwan politics from 1947 to 2008, leading to the rise of revisionist studies of the Incident, but also coming under challenges and influences from the latter; 3) To examine the accuracy of both partisan and scholarly interpretations of the February 28 Incident in the light of documentary analysis, and to suggest a more comprehensive understanding of the historic event in the context of long-term Taiwanese traditions of militant resistance and political self-assertion.

Thus, this work aims to fill a gap in the literature by providing a systematic and comprehensive examination of interactions between the partisan politics and political changes in mainland China and Taiwan on the one hand and different historical interpretations of the February 28 Incident in 1947-2008 on the other. It assesses major political and scholarly accounts of the Incident and further suggests a long-term historical approach for future study of the subject from a Taiwanese perspective. The significance of the long-term historical approach lies in its ability to help achieve a fuller understanding of the February 28 Incident in the trajectory of Taiwanese resistance and political struggle against colonial powers since the early seventeenth century. Such an

approach can also reveal the true significance of the Incident as a milestone of historical change and continuity on Taiwan within the broad contexts of Chinese and global history, rather than treating it as a single, isolated event in a particular local historical context

This dissertation is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include archival materials kept in the National Archives Administration (Guojia danganguan) in Taiwan, government documents published by Academia Sinica, Academia Historica (Guoshiguan), and the Historical Research Commission of Taiwan Province (Taiwan wenxian weiyuanhui), oral histories or interviews regarding the Incident published by official or civilian organizations, reports, memoirs, and autobiographies of eyewitnesses, as well as relevant newspaper reports. Secondary sources contain officially commissioned and governmental publications, scholarly studies, especially monographs, journal articles, conference proceedings, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, online sources, and other non-fiction publications.

It should be noted that the Taiwanese scholar Lin Yuanhui has made great efforts to collect, compile, edit and publish local news reports that are particularly relevant to the February 28 Incident. During the February 28 Incident, dating from February 28, 1947 to May 15, 1947, these reports were carried by local Taiwan news agencies including *Taiwan xinshengbao* (Taiwan new life daily), *Zhonghua ribao* (China daily), *Heping ribao* (Peace daily), *Chongjian ribao* (Reconstruction daily), *Minbao* (People's newspaper), *Renmin daobao* (People's guide), *Damingbao* (Enlightenment daily), *Zhongwai ribao* (China-foreign daily), and *Xintai ribao* (Reviving Taiwan daily). The major result of Lin's efforts is four volumes of publications entitled *Ererba shijian qijian Taiwan bendi xinwen shiliao huibian* (Materials of Taiwan local news during the

February 28 Incident) published by Ererba Shijian jinian jijinhui (the Memorial Foundation of 228) in 2009.³² The news reports utilized by this work are from the aforementioned local newspapers and are quoted from those volumes compiled by Lin Yuanhui.

This dissertation adopts multiple research approaches to the study of the February 28 Incident, including conventional textual research and qualitative analyses, as well as other analytical methods drawn from biographical research, local history and global comparative analysis, in addition to archival research. It also utilizes some tabulated, numerical information to illustrate various circumstances. Its aim is to advance scholarly understanding of the historical incident from different perspectives through the analysis of primary and secondary sources and by evaluating different accounts and interpretations.

In particular, the conceptual framework of this work draws sole inspiration from Fernand Braudel's stress on "the *longue durée*," or long term, of history. As the leading historian of the French Annales School after World War Two, Braudel stressed the importance of long-term approach to historical studies. In his "History and the Social Sciences: the *Longue Durée*," originally published in French in 1959, he proposes a programmatic return to historical research methods that focused on the long term, as deployed in the 18th and early 19th centuries, in response to the conventional preference for analyzing the short time span and particular events in social scientific studies. Braudel argued that this method looks at the large-scale evolution of social institutions and environmental conditions that have stayed the same or changed only slowly over long

³² See Lin Yuan-huei 林元輝, ed., *Ererba Shijian Taiwan bendi xinwen shiliao huibian* 二二八事件台灣本地新聞史料彙編 (Materials of Taiwan local news during the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: The Memorial Foundation of 228, 2009). vol.1-4.

periods. Rather than focusing only on “events” and short-term episodic history, historians should look at long-term structures. For Braudel, events become most meaningful when situated in the context of longer-term time-frames. In Braudel’s contextualization of history, it is only by looking at the development of structural change over the long time-span that one obtains an overall view of the historical picture, and that history brings itself meaning.³³

This study adopts the Braudel-style “long-term” approach in two senses: it both situates the February 28 Incident in terms of Taiwanese history since the 17th century, and examines historical writings on the Incident from 1947 until 2008. In doing so, it aims both to see whether there is any evidence that people in the Taiwanese resistance before or during the February 28 Incident considered the earlier resistance actions as precedents of anti-outsider or anti-colonial struggle, and to determine whether a tradition of local resistance existed in the period of 1600-1945. Adopting such long-term perspectives also allows a fuller assessment of the complicated interactions between the local society and the colonial or incoming ruling powers, and among the various groups within the local society.

In addition to the short “Introduction” and “Conclusion,” this dissertation consists of four main chapters. Chapter one reconstructs a brief history of violent Taiwanese resistance and political struggles against the rule of various colonialists. It then offers a brief account of the KMT’s takeover and control of Taiwan up to early 1947, and shows how the February 28 Incident was depicted in the reports of both Chinese and English newspapers from news agencies in Taiwan, mainland China, and the West in early 1947.

³³ Fernand Braudel, “History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Duree,” *Review* 32, no.2 (2009): 171-203.

Chapter two demonstrates how partisan policies of the KMT and the CCP toward the February 28 Incident dominated and controlled the narratives of politicized histories of the Incident in Taiwan and mainland China respectively during the period of 1947-1987. It first shows how the KMT's and the CCP's initial policies toward the Incident were shaped in accord with their respective political concerns during the KMT-CCP Civil War. Then it discusses both the KMT's control over the discourse of the Incident under its political monopoly in Taiwan as supported by the U.S, and the CCP's re-narrativization of the Incident in the contexts of the Korean War and the Cold War. Lastly, it considers the impact of the 1970s PRC-US rapprochement on the KMT's and the CCP's respective interpretations of the February 28 Incident. Chapter three then discusses political changes and revised historiographies on the Incident in both Taiwan and mainland China in 1988-2008. It reveals how KMT inter-party rivalries along with social and political challenges to the party led to the KMT's implementation of political reforms and to a major change in its stance toward the Incident. This chapter's discussion about the rise of the DPP to ruling power reveals the further rehabilitation of the Incident and its victims and the unprecedented development of a revisionist scholarship on the Incident, as well as the emergence of KMT-DPP antagonistic politics and partisan policies about the Incident in 2001-2008. This chapter ends with analysis of political changes in mainland China since the late 1980s, and considers their influence on the CCP's Taiwan policy, which in turn affected its stance and rhetoric about the Incident, and allowed the emergence of a new scholarship on the Incident on the mainland. Chapter four re-examines the partisan interpretations about the February 28 Incident by the KMT, the CCP, and the DPP, and unpicks the scholarly disputes over their claims. It also assesses historical research on the

causes, course, and consequences of the Incident. The dissertation's conclusion briefly summarizes previous chapters and proposes a long-term approach to the future research on the February 28 Incident.

Chapter One

A History of Taiwanese Resistance and the Repressed Voice of the February 28 Incident in 1947

Taiwan's modern history began with the arrival of European colonists in the early seventeenth century, and was characterized by a series of colonial regimes. Prior to the seventeenth century, Taiwan was relatively isolated, and it was largely outside the influence of China's imperial power, despite Chinese settlements and administration on the nearby islands of the Pescadores as early as the twelfth century.¹ By the early seventeenth century, the island had become a base for Chinese and Japanese merchants, pirates, as well as European colonists competing in maritime activities. Starting in 1624, the Dutch built a colony on the southwest coast of the island; they later drove out their Spanish rivals in 1642 who had established a base in northern Taiwan in 1626. In 1661, a loyalist general of the fallen Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Zheng Chenggong pushed out the Dutch forces, replacing their colonial rule with a Chinese regime in 1662. In 1683, the victory of the Qing court over Zheng's regime incorporated Taiwan into Chinese territory for the first time in history.² However, in 1895, the defeat of Qing China by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) resulted in Qing cession of Taiwan to the Japanese Empire. After a fifty-year colonial rule over Taiwan, Japan in turn lost its control of the island following its defeat in WWII. As a result, the Nationalist Government took over

¹ Ts'ao Yung-ho (Cao Yonghe) 曹永和, *Taiwan zaoqi lishi yanjiu* 台灣早期歷史研究 (Research on Taiwan's early history) (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1979), 6-7.

² The Zheng family surrendered in September 1683, and the Qing admiral Shi Lang landed in Taiwan in October of that year. However, Taiwan was not made a prefecture of Fujian province until 1684. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 104, 106-7.

Taiwan in 1945, just before its Civil War with the CCP broke out.³ Although Taiwan came again under a Chinese regime, the early colonial history of Taiwan continued to have important implications for the February 28 Incident of 1947.

During the period of Dutch colonization of Taiwan, the Dutch exploited the island's resources by recruiting farmers from the southeast coast of China, and they initiated substantial Chinese immigration in Taiwan. The successive rule of the Zheng and Qing regimes, accompanied by the influx of immigrants from southern China, intensified the Chinese penetration that eventually transformed the island from an Indigenous homeland into an area under Chinese dominion. The increasing presence of Chinese inevitably resulted in their economic expansion at the expense of the Indigenous populations and their livelihood and generated conflicts between the two ethnic groups. Within the Chinese settlers, division also occurred along the lines of differences between clans and between people of different native places.⁴ Inter- and intra-ethnic rivalries within the island population often counteracted their fights against the ruling authorities and were often used by authorities seeking to crush different rebel groups. Nonetheless, throughout the long process of Taiwan being repeatedly taken by successive conquering powers, Indigenous Taiwanese and local Chinese immigrants never ceased resisting abusive rule by both foreign colonists and authorities, ranging from the Dutch, the Spanish and the Japanese to the Zheng regime, the Qing empire and the Nationalist government. But militant resistance in the early period gradually turned to political mobilization during the era of Japanese occupation. This pattern of resistance also

³ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 1, 91; Stephane Corcuff, "Introduction: Taiwan, a Laboratory of Identities," in *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issue and the Search for a New Taiwan*, ed. Stephane Corcuff (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2002), xii-xiv.

⁴ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 85-9, 96-7, 168-76, 312-15.

appeared in the February 28 Incident, but it has long been neglected or downplayed by previous scholarship, partly because local voices about the Incident were repressed from its beginning.

Taiwan under European Colonialism and the Zheng Regime, 1624-1683

Dutch Colonization and Taiwanese Struggles, 1624-1662

The Dutch initiated European colonization over Taiwan in the early seventeenth century, but they first took it as an entrepot in their competition with Asian merchants and other European powers and somewhat later began to exploit the island's resources. While the Dutch colonial administration forced Taiwan into the global political order and inaugurated foreign rule of the island, it also triggered a tradition of local resistance to colonial rule, and became a precedent of popular protests in the February 28 Incident of 1947.

The early Dutch colonists went to the China Sea in hope of cutting into a trade network that had been well established by the Chinese and other Asian and European peoples.⁵ After years of attempts to secure a mainland base for the China trade, the Dutch, rebuffed by and at the suggestion of the Ming officials, then turned to southwest Taiwan in August 1624, where they constructed a colony, used it to combat both Japanese merchants and Chinese pirates, and pushed out the Spanish in the north. Eventually they also pacified the Indigenous tribes in southwest and central Taiwan while expanding

⁵ The Dutch went to Taiwan mainly for two reasons: first, strategic ones, to attack “the Iberian enemies and [prevent] Chinese junks from sailing to Manila. Secondly, they had commercial reasons, to “establish Taiwan as an entrepot for Chinese trade, and to link this trade into world-wide commercial networks.” See Ts’ao Yung-Ho, “Taiwan as an Entrepot in East Asia in the Seventeenth Century,” *Itinerario* 21, no.3 (November 1997): 99.

maritime trade. To maximize their gains, the Dutch imported Chinese farmers for land cultivation, licensed Chinese individuals for fishing and hunting, and levied taxes on both Chinese and Indigenous Taiwanese. However, challenges from Indigenous Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants often hampered the Dutch rule of Taiwan.⁶

The Dutch were not the first group of outsiders whom Indigenous Taiwanese had encountered. Prior to their arrival, Japanese and Chinese traders had already engaged in commerce with Indigenous Taiwanese. Therefore, Dutch intervention in the island's economy inevitably conflicted with certain interests of both the Indigenous peoples and the previous arrivals. The conflict happened even before the Dutch stood firm on the island. As early as 1623, a vanguard group of Dutchmen was attacked by Indigenous Taiwanese from Mattau, one of the four major Indigenous villagers settled near the core of the Dutch colony on the southwest coast. The attack was said to be a result of Chinese incitement. In 1625, the Dutch made an attempt to drive out three Chinese pirate ships from the Wankan area around Mattau, and it turned out that the pirates had taken refuge in the Indigenous village; Mattau refused to turn the pirates in upon the demand of the Dutch. Only after the ultimate defeat of the Chinese pirates did the Dutch rebuild their military reputation among the Indigenous peoples.⁷

In addition to the Chinese, Japanese competition with the Dutch over trade also created room for Indigenous groups to negotiate with the Dutch. Sinkan villagers, the Indigenous people near the Dutch base Tayouan on the southwestern coast of the island,

⁶ The Dutch called Taiwan Formosa, meaning “the beautiful [place]” while the Chinese term “Taiwan” came from “Tayouan,” the peninsula on which the Dutch built Zeelandia Castle, today's Anping, Tainan. The Dutch also built Fort Provintia on Sakam, the site on the mainland across the harbor from Zeelandia, and later developed into today's city of Tainan. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 47-51, 459n7; Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 9-11.

⁷ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 23, 63-5.

once made an attempt to ally with the Japanese against the Dutch authority. In 1625, the Dutch move to tax the trade at Tayouan generated a dispute with Japanese merchants there. In 1627, the tension escalated, and some Sinkan village representatives, together with their Chinese interpreters, showed up in the Tokugawa shogun's court without the knowledge of the Dutch. After meeting the shogun, those Indigenous people were escorted back to Taiwan by the Japanese in 1628. But the Dutch jailed them and refused to let the Japanese junks leave Taiwan. Japanese forces then visited the Dutch Governor Pieter Nuyts in Tayouan and managed to capture him and take control of the governor's residence until the Dutch released these villagers.⁸

In order to amend their relation with the Sinkan villagers, the Dutch first tried bribery, then the threat of force, but eventually compromised with them. Only villagers who had gone to Japan were punished with fines, and their houses destroyed. The Sinkan peoples submitted by accepting the Dutch terms due to fear of military retaliation and their need for Dutch protection from rival villages, particularly Mattau and Baccluan. Sinkan peoples then became the loyal ally of the Dutch and worked as their auxiliaries among the tribesmen. Even so, they still launched a severe revolt in 1635. For unclear reasons, the Sinkan people killed missionaries and soldiers stationed in their village, and made a further attempt to ambush other Dutch troops. Tonio Andrade suggests that this

⁸ The Dutch attempt to impose duties on the Japanese traders in Tayouan angered Suetsugu Heizo Masanao, the magistrate of Nagasaki and a rich and powerful merchant, who had close ties with ruling circles in the Tokugawa court and had been sending junks to Tayouan for trade even before the arrival of the Dutch. He led the sudden attack on the Dutch, and the resulting conflict lasted for three days. After the Dutch accepted the five demands of the Japanese, including releasing those Indigenous Taiwanese, Governor Nuyts was released. Dutch authorities in Batavia worried about losing trading privileges in Japan and sent an envoy to Japan to mend relations with the Japanese. However, this attempt was in vain. The company's activities were banned in Japan. The Dutch came nearly to abandon its Taiwan colony but eventually just cut the funds for the Taiwan colony instead. However, in June 1630, Suetsugu died and his son inherited his fortune and helped the Dutch mend their relation with the shogun. The Dutch were allowed to trade in Japan again, but Nuyts was sent to Japan again as an actual prisoner. He was held in Japan until 1636 when the shogun ordered the release of the Dutch prisoners. See Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 48-53.

Sinkan revolt might have been “part of a wider anti-Dutch alliance” involving a union between Mattau and Soulang, another of the four major villages near Tayouan.

Nonetheless, the Indigenous peoples on Taiwan Island did not unite as a whole despite the existence of some sort of cooperation and alliance and even a “proto state” called Lonkjouw in the south. In particular, inter-village battles and headhunting practices reflected a lack of common consciousness of political or cultural identity among the Indigenous peoples, and these practices made them vulnerable to imperial exploitation. Taking advantage of inter-village hostility and the military inferiority of the Indigenous peoples, the Dutch were able to exploit Indigenous disunity for their own interests and forced the Indigenous peoples into submission in spite of their persistent resistance.⁹

The fiercest struggle against Dutch colonial rule came from Mattau in the early period of the Dutch occupation. Indeed, from the Dutch perspective Mattau was the major “troublemaker”: it caused many of the Dutch casualties after their colony was formed in Taiwan around 1624. Near the Dutch base at Tayouan (today’s Anping, Tainan) were four major Indigenous villages: Sinkan (Hsin-kang), Soulang (Hsiao-lung), Mattau (Ma-tou), and Bakloan/Baccluan (Mu-chia-liu-wan), known collectively as the Siraya. Of these four villages, Mattau was the largest and strongest, and it was an ally of Baccluan, but unfriendly to Sinkan, which therefore sought protection from and allied with the Dutch. Indeed, despite earlier conflicts with the Dutch, Sinkan provided excellent auxiliaries for the latter in their joint campaigns against Indigenous and Chinese rebellions, as well as against the Spanish. The Dutch-Sinkan alliance upset Mattau, which

⁹ William Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch, Described from Contemporary Records* (London, UK: Kegan Paul, 1903), 45-46, 93-94; Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 29, 65-6, 69, 71; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 7, 59. The primary villages of Lonkjouw was located in the area of today’s Hengchun. See the cited book of Andrade, 37n40.

then raided Sinkan. Sinkan turned to the Dutch for protection and meanwhile attacked Mattau and its ally Baccluan.¹⁰

However, attacks from Mattau on Sinkan continued despite a military threat from the Dutch. In 1629, Mattau forces ambushed and killed about sixty Dutch soldiers who had attempted to push out Chinese pirates who had allegedly taken refuge in the village. They and Soulang also attacked Sinkan. This attack weakened Dutch authority and induced Soulang and Baccluan into revolts as well. The Dutch, joined by Sinkan, later took revenge by punishing Baccluan first, as it had the smallest numbers of villagers. In 1631, the Dutch launched an unsuccessful campaign against Mattau. In the following years, Mattau harassed small villages surrounding Sinkan and threatened to advance a Mattau-Japanese alliance against the Dutch in 1633. However, thereafter, the Tokugawa shogunate imposed a closed-door policy, and its withdrawal from the seas around Taiwan facilitated the expansion of Dutch colonization on the island. Japanese competition had made the Dutch hesitate to “invest” in Taiwan for fear of the loss of the Japan trade, and they even considered withdrawing from Taiwan in early 1630s when conflicts with Japanese traders escalated. However, the Tokugawa shogunate’s closed-door policy helped remove Japanese competition. Later in 1639, the Tokugawa shogun further ended the Portuguese trade privileges in Japan, which reduced Portuguese competition with the

¹⁰ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 25, 27, 64-5; Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 209; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 51-2; Johannes Huber, “Chinese Settlers Against the Dutch East India Company: The Rebellion Led by Kuo Huai-I on Taiwan in 1652,” in *Eclipsed Entrepots of the Western Pacific: Taiwan and Central Vietnam, 1500-1800*, ed. John E. Wills, Jr. (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002), 156. According to Andrade, “Sinkan is present-day Xinshi; Soulang is present-day Jiali; Baccluan is today’s Anding; and Mattau is present-day Madou.” See Andrade, 75n2.

Dutch as well. Thus, the Dutch sent reinforcements to Taiwan in 1635 for an expanded mission.¹¹

As a result, in 1635, a joint expedition force of the Dutch and Sinkan crushed Mattau, and the latter surrendered soon afterward. In early 1636 the Dutch proceeded to avenge themselves on Soulang, which had previously joined the Dutch-Sinkan alliance against Mattau in 1634, but engaged in the plot against the Dutch in 1629. Mattau's defeat led to the submission of many more villages to the Dutch, and in 1636 the latter signed a peace treaty with these villages.¹² Hence, the Indigenous villages complied, and the Dutch finally solidified their control of Taiwan in 1635.

Chinese in Taiwan also resisted Dutch colonial rule because of their clashes with the latter over economic interests. Prior to the arrival of the Dutch, Chinese fishermen and traders had already set foot onto Taiwan. In particular, many of these Chinese traders who lived among Indigenous villages would come to serve as interpreters for both the Dutch and the Indigenous peoples. Having felt threatened by the Dutch presence, local Chinese villagers used Indigenous Taiwanese to stir up trouble for the Dutch. After the 1635-36 campaigns to vanquish rebellious Indigenous villages, the Dutch accused the Chinese residing in Mattau village of inciting the natives' rebellions. Indeed, as the Dutch imposed high fees on fishing and hunting licenses, Chinese traders in the Favorlang area were said to have engaged in smuggling and inciting the villagers against the Dutch.¹³

¹¹ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 41, 53, 66-8; Campbell, *Formosa Under the Dutch*, 100, 106, 109, 111, 116-7.

¹² Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 53-4. Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 72-3.

¹³ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 83-84; Laurence Thompson, "The Earliest Chinese Eyewitness Accounts of the Formosan Aborigines," *Monumenta Serica* 23 (1964): 176-77.

While those Chinese fishermen and traders soon submitted to the Dutch's forces, the Dutch encountered a much more severe challenge from more recently arrived groups of Chinese settlers. Unlike earlier settlers from China, Chinese farmers on Taiwan were mainly imported by the Dutch for agricultural cultivation from the 1630s. By the late 1630s, the local Chinese population had grown to about 15,000 in total. Apart from a few exceptions, Chinese immigrants were subjected to the levy of a head tax in addition to a land tax. In 1652, enraged by the burden of heavy taxes and the harassment of corrupt Dutch tax collectors, Chinese farmers gathered under the leadership of a headman called Guo Huaiyi at Amsterdams Polder, located in the Sakam area, and rebelled against the Dutch. The Dutch had been warned, however, and were ready for the attack. Even though the Chinese numbered about 4,000-5,000 people, the rebellion was crushed by the Dutch, augmented by their Indigenous auxiliaries, within two weeks. Around 3,000 Chinese were killed in this revolt. It was said that the rebellion was associated with Zheng Chenggong, yet no evidence has been found to confirm such an association.¹⁴

These anti-Dutch fights by early Indigenous Taiwanese and/or by Chinese settlers to the abusive activities of European colonists, including both the Dutch and the Spaniards, did initiate a tradition of local resistance. In particular, the large-scale rebellion against and the suffering from its brutal military suppression by the Dutch colonial authorities were similar to what happened in the February 28 Incident of 1947.

¹⁴ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 172-75; Huber, "Chinese Settlers Against the Dutch East India Company," 154-59, 167, 169-72; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 86. The Dutch authorities' Indigenous auxiliaries included Sinkan, Soulang, Mattau, and other settlements under Dutch control.

Spanish Colonialism and Its Clashes with Indigenous Peoples, 1626-1642

While the Dutch started their rule in southern Taiwan from 1624, the Spanish also built a colony in northern Taiwan from 1626. Similar to the Dutch experience in southern Taiwan, the Spanish rule of northern Taiwan was not successful in their exploitation of natural resources and Indigenous peoples on the Island.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the exploitation of Taiwan's resources and abuse of local people were the major causes of Taiwanese resentment, which were similar to what caused the February 28 Incident in 1947.

The Spanish presence in Taiwan was aimed primarily to keep its Amoy-Manila trade route safe from attack by the Dutch. For that purpose, they built a fortress called San Salvador in today's Keelung (Jilong) in 1626 and later another one named San Domingo in today's Danshui. The Spanish also used the colony as a stepping stone for religious missions to China and Japan. However, despite the advice of Spanish missionaries to bring in Chinese farmers and then levy taxes on them, the governor in Manila failed to do so. Therefore, compared with the Dutch, the Spanish were much less effective colonists in terms of exploitation of the island's resources in their imperial expansion on Taiwan. As a result, Spain's Taiwan colony mainly relied on supplies from Manila, and it became a financial burden on its rulers. Thus, the Spanish governor in Manila soon reduced support for the colony to avoid financial losses. He also reduced the number of Spanish soldiers in the Danshui fortress in 1636, leaving it vulnerable to an attack by the Danshui Indigenous peoples.¹⁶

¹⁵ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Front*, 56-8.

¹⁶ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 80-1, 87, 100-109; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Front*, 56-8.

According to the writings of Jacinto Esquivel, a Dominican missionary, the societies of the northern Indigenous peoples were similar to those of Indigenous peoples in southwestern Taiwan in terms of their headhunting customs, linguistic and cultural diversity among villages, as well as their inter-village rivalries.¹⁷ Therefore, due to inter-village hostility, some villages sought alliances with the Spanish, as did their Taiwanese counterparts with the Dutch on the southwest coast of the island. In late 1627 one village in the Danshui area requested Spanish aid to combat a rival village. The Spanish helpers were welcomed with feasts, but then became unwelcome because of their demand for rice supplies. The village head secretly reconciled with his native enemy and planned to attack the Spanish. Eight Spanish along with the village head were killed in the ensuing battle. Provisions from Manila arrived in time, and the Spanish sought revenge with an expedition of 100 men. The villagers ran off, and the Spanish force raided their granaries.¹⁸

The Indigenous people's vacillation between accepting and killing the missionaries indicated the complications in their relation with these European intruders. On the one hand, inter-village hostility generated a desire for the Indigenous peoples to secure powerful allies, and the missionary presence in their villages brought them military protection because the missionaries often brought with them armed soldiers for security. On the other hand, the religious expansion resulted in the missionaries' venturing into rival villages of one Indigenous group and damaged their established relations in the native society. The Taparri and Kimaurri peoples had fled to the mountains after the Spanish arrived. Some of them later returned to the two villages, but

¹⁷ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 83, 94n18.

¹⁸ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 83, 85; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Front*, 56-7.

others stayed hidden and occasionally attacked the Spanish and their associates. In 1630, the already mentioned Dominican missionary Jacinto Esquivel arrived there and requested to live in a Taparri village.¹⁹

Jacinto Esquivel obtained permission with a few soldiers for his security. The Taparri eventually accepted Esquivel in their village as his presence put the village under Spanish military protection. Esquivel then proceeded to Danshui when the Spanish built a fortress in 1628, but the Indigenous villagers there had escaped to a site called Senar, consisting of eight or nine villages. Esquivel built a church in Danshui and upon its completion, Spanish missionaries held a procession to impress the Indigenous peoples with military power. Because acceptance of the missionaries could bring a strong ally, many villages along the coast west of Danshui and up the Danshui River valley thus welcomed the presence of Spanish missionaries. However, in January 1633, when a Dominican priest, Francisco Vaze, accepted the invitation of the Pantaos to live in their villages, some headmen of the nearby Senar village ambushed and killed him. The Pantaos, consisting of a group of villages, were in war with the Senar, and they wished to secure Spanish protection with the residence of a missionary among them. The Senar, on the other hand, killed Vaze to prevent possible alliances between their enemy and the Spanish. After killing Vaze, the Senarians fled to Beitou and stayed hidden. In March 1636, provisions from Manila failed to come in time, so the Spanish Danshui garrison sent a group of soldiers to obtain grain. They were accompanied by Vaze's successor, Luis Muro. Muro persuaded the Spanish authority to forgive the Senar and also attempted to persuade those Indigenous people hiding in mountains to return to their villages. However, the Senar along with nearby Indigenous villagers ambushed them and

¹⁹ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 88.

killed more than twenty Spanish, including Muro. In addition, when the Spanish tried to impose taxes on Indigenous Taiwanese for their chickens and rice, it fueled another revolt.²⁰ Since the presence of missionaries symbolized Spanish protection, killing missionaries suggested a challenge to Spanish authority.

However, the alliance of northern Indigenous people with the Dutch suggests that Indigenous resistance did not necessarily mean indiscriminate fighting against external powers. As early as April 1641, the Dutch made contact with the Danshui Indigenous Taiwanese and managed to obtain Indigenous allies in an expedition against the Spanish in August 1641. Despite outnumbering the Spanish, the Dutch failed to seize the Danshui fortress due to a shortage of cannons. However, the Dutch severely weakened the reputation of the Spanish as protectors by burning the Kimaurri villages, their Indigenous allies, and ridiculing the Spanish military forces. This resulted in the loss of respect of the northern Indigenous Taiwanese for the Spanish. Moreover, the Dutch came to terms with the Danshui Indigenous peoples and granted the latter protection against their enemies. Shortly after, the Danshui Indigenous delegates went to the Dutch headquarters in Tayouan and offered their submission. Meanwhile, Chinese traders also played a role in the Dutch mission against the Spanish. They informed the Dutch of the intention of the Spanish to abandon Taiwan and allowed Dutchmen on their junks, sailing for the sulfur trade in Danshui in April 1641, to make contact with the northern Indigenous peoples.²¹

In August 1642, the Dutch finally drove the Spanish out of Keelung, which signified a power shift both in Taiwan and in the Far East.²² But they themselves were soon to be driven out of Taiwan in turn by Zheng Chenggong's military forces in alliance

²⁰ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 88-91.

²¹ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 105-8.

²² Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 105-8.

with the local Chinese in Taiwan. Thus, the local resistance to European colonialism in Taiwan successively contributed to the collapse of the Dutch and the Spanish rule on the island. Such anti-colonial struggles, like Taiwanese fights against Dutch colonialism, also initiated a tradition of local resistance to intrusive and abusive forces from outside, including the Zheng regime after it ended the European colonial presence on the island, and eventually the KMT regime in the February 28 Incident after its end of Japanese colonial rule in Taiwan.

The Zheng Regime in Taiwan and Local Militant Resistance, 1662-1683

Zheng Chenggong was a person of mixed blood from a Chinese father and Japanese mother, but he became a loyalist general of the Ming dynasty after its demise in 1644 and after members of its royal family fled to southern China. Zheng has long been regarded as a Chinese national hero not only because of his loyalist efforts to restore the Han regime of the Ming dynasty against the Manchu-ruled Qing dynasty but mainly because his military force drove the Dutch colonialists out of Taiwan and brought the island under Chinese rule for the first time.²³ Nonetheless, the Zheng regime in Taiwan soon faced local resistance from both the Indigenous Taiwanese and Chinese settlers, just as the Dutch and Spaniards had experienced before. The local resistance to the Chinese regime of the Zheng family deserves special attention because a similar pattern of local reactions to the Nationalist regime emerged after the latter's takeover of the island from Japanese hands in 1945. This pattern led directly to the February 28 Incident of 1947.

²³ Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *Maritime Taiwan: Historical Encounters with the East and the West* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 39-44.

Zheng Chenggong inherited the naval forces of his father, Zheng Zhilong, but chose a different path. Zheng Zhilong, a pirate-merchant dominating the seas in East and Southeast Asia, harbored and advocated the short-lived southern Ming regime of the Longwu Emperor, but later submitted to the Qing in 1646 and became its prisoner thereafter.²⁴ Zheng Chenggong took over his father's maritime forces and managed to seize Xiamen and Jinmen in 1650, from which he would continue to battle against the Qing, pledging his loyalty to the southern Ming regime of the Yongli Emperor in western Guangdong.²⁵

Zheng Chenggong's campaign against the Dutch on Taiwan actually resulted from his military frustration in the wars against the Qing in mainland China.²⁶ In April 1661, Zheng's fleet with about 25,000 soldiers sailed from the coast of Fujian province and reached the bay of Tayouan, the Dutch stronghold on the island. His force, which was welcomed by Chinese settlers there, soon controlled the countryside and laid siege to the two Dutch fortresses, Provintia and Zeelandia. Fort Provintia in the Sinkan area surrendered quickly after its Dutch force had held out for a few days. Zeelandia Castle, however, was able to survive Zheng's attack until February 1662.²⁷

Like the Dutch, the Zheng regime was able to use Indigenous allies to further its interests. Despite some short-lived resistance, a few days after Zheng Chenggong's

²⁴ Xing Hang, *Conflict and Commerce in Maritime East Asia: The Zheng Family and the Shaping of the Modern World, c. 1620-1720* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 65-71.

²⁵ Some historians offer a new perspective, pointing out the opportunistic and pragmatic elements in Zheng Chenggong's Ming loyalism. However, according to Xing Hang, Zheng prioritized Ming restoration over his personal interests at least before 1651. See Hang, *Conflict and Commerce in Maritime East Asia*, 77-82.

²⁶ Tsai, *Maritime Taiwan*, 41.

²⁷ Yang Ying 楊英, *Cong zheng shi lu* 從征實錄 (Veritable record of the military expedition), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* 台灣文獻叢刊 no. 32, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi 台灣銀行經濟研究室 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958), 186-87; Jiang Risheng 江日昇, *Taiwan waiji* 台灣外記 (Unofficial record of Taiwan), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 60, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1960), 244; Campbell, *Formosa Under the Dutch*, 70-71, 413, 427, 455.

arrival in 1661, all major Indigenous villages in the vicinity of Tayouan and more remote areas came to offer their loyalty. The acceptance of Chinese official uniforms by Indigenous heads from Zheng Chenggong symbolized their incorporation into the Zheng ruling order, just as they had accepted rattan sticks offered by the Dutch during the Dutch rule.²⁸ Once under Zheng's rule, Indigenous peoples had to provide labor and military services in addition to taxes. In 1683, local Chinese and Indigenous Taiwanese both were commanded to build local defensive installations on Taiwan. In 1674, Zheng Jing, a son and the successor of Zheng Chenggong after the latter's death in 1662, even issued an order for the requisition of Indigenous Taiwanese to Xiamen for military missions.²⁹

The Zheng regime was also able to incite the northern Indigenous peoples, who were beyond its control, against the Dutch. After being driven out by Zheng Chenggong, the Dutch turned to cooperate with the Manchus, and regained control of Keelung in northern Taiwan in 1664. In 1666, the Zheng regime launched a futile attack on the Dutch base at Keelung. Nonetheless, despite the failure, it managed to generate friction between the Danshui Indigenous peoples and the Dutch based at Keelung. Thus, in 1668, the Dutch finally abandoned the Keelung port and left Taiwan altogether for their Asian capital of Batavia, in Java. Meanwhile, the Zheng regime also promoted Chinese learning by establishing Confucian schools in Indigenous villages to ensure their loyalty to the regime.³⁰

²⁸ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 241-42; Yang Ying, *Cong zheng shi lu*, 187; Campbell, *Formosa Under the Dutch*, 84, 318, 421; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 61. The Dutch had given Indigenous heads rattan sticks which they held as a symbol of their power.

²⁹ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 102; Jiang, *Taiwan wai ji*, 267; Thompson, "The Earliest Chinese Eyewitness Accounts of the Formosan Aborigines," 195.

³⁰ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 95; Liu Liangbi 劉良璧, *Chong xiu Fujian Taiwan fuzhi* 重修福建臺灣府志 (Revised gazetteer of Taiwan prefecture, Fujian), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 74, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958), 486; John E.

However, Indigenous revolts still happened because the regime's harsh rule, especially since its desperate need for revenue and supplies, threatened Indigenous interests. Conflicts came even before Zheng Chenggong solidified his base on Taiwan and pushed the Dutch out. In 1661, the Dadu Indigenous Taiwanese rose up against the abuse and exploitation (*lin xue*) of the Zheng garrison near their territory and even attempted to aid the Dutch. They fought fiercely before their resistance was suppressed by Zheng's reinforcements. In early 1665, the Dadu peoples revolted again for unknown reasons, but once again the uprising was stamped out. The severest Indigenous revolt occurred in 1670, when the Shalu peoples, of the same Papora ethnicity as the Dadu, fought bitterly against the Zheng regime. The suppression campaign led by the Zheng regime's general Liu Guoxuan crushed the revolt and nearly destroyed the tribe. The campaign also resulted in the migration of the Dadu tribe, and its entire village, to today's Puli in Nantou county. The last years of the Zheng regime also saw more Indigenous resistance. In 1682, the Indigenous workers drafted to transport provisions for the troops in Keelung fort rebelled due to abuses by Zheng regime officials. In 1683, seven Indigenous villages reportedly rebelled due to the high price of rice.³¹

Though Chinese settlers themselves never violently revolted against the Zheng regime, decline in popular support for the Zheng family still resulted in passive resistance against its tax policies. In 1681, one-third of the populace in the countryside around the

Wills, Jr. "The Seventeenth-Century Transformation: Taiwan Under the Dutch and the Cheng Regime," in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007), 97-98; John Wills, *Pepper, Guns and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China 1662-1681* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 144; Jiang, *Taiwan waiji*, 235-36; Thompson, "The Earliest Chinese Eyewitness Accounts of the Formosan Aborigines," 186.

³¹ Lian Heng 連橫, *Taiwan tongshi* 15 台灣通史 卷十五 (A comprehensive history of Taiwan), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 128, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1962), 416; Huang Shujing 黃叔璥, *Taihai shichalu* 台海使槎錄 (A tour of duty on the raft in the Taiwan sea), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 4, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yangjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1957), 128, 133; Jiang, *Taiwan waiji*, 204, 233, 375-76, 394, 398, 410.

capital city of Tainan destroyed their houses when an official attempt to subject the countryside to the existing house taxes was revealed. This collective action caused the authority to give up the plan eventually.³² In 1683, the last Zheng ruler, Zheng Keshuang, surrendered to the Qing, thus ending the Zheng family's rule on Taiwan. From Zheng Chenggong's successful defeat of Dutch colonial forces to Zheng Keshuang's surrender of the island to the Qing dynasty in 1683, it took about twenty years for the Zheng regime to lose popular support in Taiwan. In contrast, the KMT regime would lose popular support in Taiwan just in two years after its takeover of Taiwan from the Japanese colonial authorities in 1945 and became the target of Taiwanese resistance in the February 28 Incident.

Taiwan under the Qing Dynasty and the Japanese Empire, 1683-1945

The Qing Dynasty's Control over Taiwan and the Local Reactions, 1683-1895³³

The Qing government's defeat of the Zheng's regime brought Taiwan under its imperial control in 1683. Once again, many Indigenous leaders submitted to the new regime through their acceptance of its official uniforms and gifts at a formal ceremony.³⁴

³² Wen-Hsiung Hsu, "From Aboriginal Island to Chinese Frontier: The Development of Taiwan before 1683," in *China's Island Frontier: Studies in the Historical Geography of Taiwan*, ed. Ronald G. Knapp (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980), 23; Xia Lin 夏琳, *Haiji jiyao* 海紀輯要 (Abstracts of record of the sea), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 22, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958), 64, 73.

³³ It should be noted that although the majority of Chinese immigrants on Taiwan were Han Chinese, the Qing dynasty was established and ruled by the Manchus. The Manchus, who had militarily conquered China, and incorporated the land and the people of the Ming empire into its own empire, was an alien dynasty to Han Chinese. The Qing court also militarily conquered the Zheng regime on Taiwan, and Chinese settlers on Taiwan along with Indigenous Taiwanese (excluding mountain Indigenous Taiwanese) thus became Qing subjects, just as they would later become the imperial subjects of the Japanese empire after Japan took over Taiwan.

³⁴ Shi Lang 施琅, *Jinghai jishi* 靖海紀事 (Record of pacifying the sea), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 13, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958), 51.

The Qing government retained the Zheng regime's taxation practice, which levied a head tax and corvee service on the Indigenous villages. It further divided Indigenous peoples into two categories. The so-called "ripened" or "civilized" Indigenous peoples (shoufan) referred to pacified taxpayers, who lived in western coastal areas, while "raw" or "uncivilized" Indigenous peoples (shengfan) were mountainous peoples not subordinated to Qing rule.³⁵ Despite the coastal Indigenous peoples' initial subjection, revolts soon appeared among both Indigenous peoples and Chinese settlers because of the harshness of Qing official extortions and mistreatment. These events once again demonstrate a spirit of rebellion among various groups of the island's population, a spirit similar to that shown against ruling authorities under the Dutch and Spanish rule. Indeed, both Indigenous Taiwanese and Chinese settlers rebelled against not only European colonialists but also the abusive rule of authorities based in mainland China. Later this spirit would again be evident in the rebellions against the Japanese, and in the February 28 Incident against the Nationalist regime.

However, intertribal divergences enabled the Qing authorities to use their Indigenous auxiliaries against Indigenous rebels. Meanwhile, increases in the Chinese population also threatened Indigenous peoples' economic interests and thus intensified tensions between Indigenous peoples and Chinese settlers. Among Chinese settlers, native-place and linguistic differences contributed to their own internal strife that compromised their resistance against the corruption and bullying of local governments. Such intra- or interethnic economic conflicts or divisions would also be seen in the February 28 Incident that either facilitated the resentments of local Taiwanese against the

³⁵ John R. Shepherd, "The Island Frontier of the Ch'ing, 1684-1789," in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murraay A. Rubinstein (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007), 110.

mainlanders or that were utilized by the authorities to roil the resistance camp. Yet despite the Qing's use of interethnic and intra-ethnic rivalries to crush individual rebelling groups, local resistance continued throughout the Qing era to characterize the "frontier society" of Taiwan.

As tribal divergences among the Indigenous villages complicated their resistance, the Qing regime was able to turn these differences to its advantage to help stabilize imperial rule over the island. Indigenous rebellions often resulted from outrage at official abuses and extortions, and at ruthless demands for corvee service. This was evident in three revolts of the "civilized" Plains Indigenous peoples,³⁶ two in northern Taiwan in 1699 and another in Dajiaxi in central Taiwan in 1731-32. In the first of the two revolts in 1699, the Qing government enlisted Plains Indigenous peoples from the southwestern coast, along with "uncivilized" Indigenous peoples, to lead an attack on the rebellious Indigenous villages in Tongxiao, which had risen up because of the extortions of a Chinese tax farmer and interpreter, in north-central Taiwan. In another revolt of 1699, the rebellious Indigenous village in Danshui area was betrayed by its neighboring villages, which were enticed by incentives from the government. The 1731-32 Dajiaxi revolt further exposed this weakness in Indigenous resistance. Dajiaxi was located in today's Taizhong county, north of the Dajia River. The Dajiaxi peoples, allied by neighboring villagers and different tribal groups, rose up against the official abuses, but were

³⁶ The term "Plains Indigenous peoples" (pingpufan) is more a historical category than an ethnic or geographical category. It includes "the eight ethnolinguistic groupings of villages that occupied the western plains and were compelled to submit to Dutch and Chinese jurisdiction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." See Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 7, 451n22.

ultimately crushed by Qing reinforcements, consisting of Qing troops, Hakka braves, and loyal Indigenous auxiliaries from the same tribes as the rebellious ones.³⁷

The Dajiaxi rebellion demonstrated the possibility of inter-tribal alliance of Indigenous peoples despite ethnic and linguistic divisions; however, such divisions were vulnerable to the government's "strategy of dividing and ruling" and jeopardized Indigenous unity. Such a history and pattern of local resistance would repeat in the February 28 Incident of 1947.

Although Indigenous revolts against Qing rule were often defeated and seemed to be futile, they reflected a sort of rebellious spirit, especially evident in violent actions against authority. In the Dajiaxi revolt, the Dadu, Shalu and Tongxiao (Tun-hsiao) tribes had long histories of resistance. The Dadu once revolted against the misdeeds of Zheng Chenggong's forces in 1661 and even intended to side with the Dutch for that reason. Zheng put down the revolt, but another short-lived disturbance by the Dadu against the Zheng regime occurred in 1664-65. As already mentioned, the Shalu even confronted the Zheng army at the cost of almost total ethnic extinction in 1670, while the villagers of Tongxiao violently resisted abusive heavy levies under the Qing in 1699.

Popular uprisings against the Qing authorities also arose from Chinese communities on Taiwan. There is a saying that vividly characterizes Taiwan frontier society: "A small revolt every three years and a major one every five years" (Sannian yi xiaofan; Wunian yi dafan). Among Chinese communities, violent resistance to Qing rule

³⁷ Zhou Zhongxuan 周鍾瑄. *Zhuluo xianzhi* 諸羅縣志 (Zhuluo county gazetteer), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 141, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yangjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1962), 279-80; Huang, *Taihai shicha lu*, 168; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 128-32; Shepherd, "The Island Frontier of the Ch'ing," 111-12, 117.

took three major forms of action: “banditry, communal strife, and popular uprisings.”³⁸ According to Liu Niling, there were about 73 popular uprisings (minbian) against state authority on Qing Taiwan. These popular uprisings varied in scale and duration, ranging from minor disturbances with three to five participants—far from being an organized anti-Manchu rebellion or a challenge to Manchu control—to a major rebellion of thousands of people. Some of these were quashed in embryo, and a few others were vanquished only after years.³⁹ Though all of these violent actions contributed to social disorder, the large number of popular revolts had the potential to challenge or even undermine Qing rule. Like Indigenous Taiwanese, however, Chinese settlers were not a unified whole, but instead were divided by subethnic rivalries and clannish feuds. The Qing was able to exploit such rifts along with interethnic tension between Indigenous peoples and Chinese settlers to its own advantage.

The Zhu Yigui rebellion of 1721 best illustrates the complicated relations between the Qing authority, the rebels, other Chinese settlers, and the Indigenous peoples participating in the uprisings. Similar to the situations in their home places in mainland China, Chinese settlers were divided by native-place and linguistic differences into the Min group from Fujian province and the Hakka group that mainly came from Guangdong province.⁴⁰ The Min group was further separated into Zhangzhou and Quanzhou subgroups on Taiwan. The pervasive social disorder in the Taiwan society encouraged the establishment of various organizations for mutual aid and protection. Those

³⁸ Wen-Hsiung Hsu, “Frontier Social Organization and Social Disorder in Ch’ing Taiwan,” in *China’s Island Frontier: Studies in the Historical Geography of Taiwan*, ed. Ronald G. Knapp (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980), 87.

³⁹ Liu Niling 劉妮玲, *Qingdai Taiwan minbian yanjiu* 清代台灣民變研究 (Research on popular uprisings in Qing Taiwan) (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue lishi yanjiusuo, 1983), 109-110. According Wen-Hsing Hsu, however, there were at least 77 instances of communal strife while public uprisings occurred at least 68 times. See Hsu, “Frontier Social Organization and Social Disorder in Ch’ing Taiwan,” 87.

⁴⁰ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 313.

associations were generally formed on the basis of places of origin, surnames, dialects, ethnicity, or even occupations, such as the commercial guild created by merchants, and the “righteous volunteers” (yimin) organized by Hakkas during the Zhu Yigui uprising.⁴¹

As most rebellions started in the remote countryside, the seizure of a county or prefectural seat was usually the primary aim of the rebels because that signified victory over the state. Since merchants usually resided in the cities, they sided with the Qing authority and sponsored militias to combat the rebels and to safeguard their interests there. Meanwhile, friction among different regional groups also facilitated the cooperation of these rival groups with the government. As Hsu indicates, “when the people from [Zhangzhou] revolted, the Hakkas and those from [Quanzhou] would become volunteers fighting against the rebels and vice versa.”⁴² The Indigenous peoples, under the threat of the Chinese settlers’ expansion through land reclamation, normally stood by the Qing government.⁴³ Thus class interests and inter- and intra-ethnic elements were intertwined in the rebellions, and often compromised resistance efforts of individual rebellious groups. As such, they helped the pacification campaigns of the Qing authorities.

In 1721, Zhangzhou-originated Chinese settlers in Taiwan led by Zhu Yigui rose to confront official oppression. Discontented with and angry over the corruption and extortion of the magistrate (zhifu) of Taiwan Prefecture (Taiwanfu), Wang Zhen, who then took charge of Fengshan County, Zhu met with his Zhangzhou fellows plotting against the authorities. The insurgents appealed to the crowd with a call for Ming restoration and soon successfully raided military outposts in the county seat of Fengshan. A Hakka outlaw group allied with Zhu’s rebellious force and later these amalgamated

⁴¹ Hsu, “Frontier Social Organization and Social Disorder in Ch’ing Taiwan,” 88, 97-8.

⁴² Hsu, “Frontier Social Organization and Social Disorder in Ch’ing Taiwan,” 98.

⁴³ Hsu, “Frontier Social Organization and Social Disorder in Ch’ing Taiwan,” 88, 96-98, 105.

rebels broke in and captured the county capital city. The government mobilized its Indigenous allies from the southwest coast. The indiscriminate killing of Chinese settlers by the Indigenous peoples incited by the government pushed the law-biding settlers into the arms of the rebel groups. The rebel bands consequently soon expanded the territory under their control, covering the area from Zhuluo to the north. However, conflict between Zhu and the leader of the Hakka outlaw group soon split their alliance. The latter turned to attack Fujian villagers in the Zhanghua area, which was followed by more communal feuds that further separated Hakka and Min settlers. The Hakka organized “righteous volunteers” or “self-defense corps” to combat the insurgents. Thus, this anti-Qing rebellion was first undermined by a subethnic rift, before being eventually crushed. The Zhu Yigui rebellion demonstrated the negative effect of inter- and intra-ethnic rivalries on local resistance against the Qing authority.⁴⁴

The Hakka “righteous volunteers,” the Quanzhou loyalists and the Indigenous auxiliaries also proved to be a useful aid to the government in another major rebellion, the Lin Shuangwen rebellion of 1787. The Lin Shuangwen rebellion was also triggered by the mismanagement, corruption, and heavy-handed policing of the local authorities. It was led by secret societies and escalated into an anti-Qing political revolt. Like the Zhu Yigui rebellion, it again demonstrated a spirit of rebellion, yet simultaneously exposed the inter-ethnic tensions and sub-ethnic divisions that compromised resistance efforts.⁴⁵ In January 1787, Lin Shuangwen led the Tiandihui (Heaven and Earth Society), a major secret society spreading from the southeastern coast of China to the island, into open

⁴⁴ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 146-48, 324, 326-27; Liu, *Qingdai Taiwan minbian yinjiu*, 130-35, 195-97, 199.

⁴⁵ Liu, *Qingdai Taiwan minbian yanjiu*, 175, 192-93; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 311, 316.

rebellion after local officials began to chase and arrest its members. Prior to the Lin Shuangwen rebellion, the involvement of this secret society' members in a property brawl between two Yang brothers resulted in the government's suppression of the feud. The remaining rebel forces sought refuge from Lin Shuangwen, who was a senior member of Tiandihui and a gangster leader in the area. Local authorities conducted an investigation, and low-ranking officials seized the opportunity for extortion. This generated resentment against the officials, which was further worsened by official threats to burn down villages if the inhabitants did not turn in Lin Shuangwen.⁴⁶ Lin Shuangwen, along with the Tiandihui's other members, thus rose against the authority. They initiated an attack on a nearby military garrison and fought government troops. The rebels then pressed forward and successfully occupied the Zhanghua county capital. They then allied with rebellious groups in the south led by another Tiandihui member, Zhuang Datian, and seized two more county seats, Zhuluo and Fengshan. As the rebels were overwhelmingly of Zhangzhou origin,⁴⁷ the government made use of subethnic antagonism and recruited people from the Quanzhou and Hakka groups for support.⁴⁸

These Quanzhou and Hakka people effectively frustrated the rebellious forces when the Lin-Zhuang joint forces launched the first attack on the prefectural capital Tainan in late January 1787. In May 1787, when the Lin and Zhuang forces launched a second attack on the prefecture capital, one of Zhuang's own subordinates led 3,000

⁴⁶ Liu, *Qingdai Taiwan minbian yinjiu*, 190-99; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 319-28.

⁴⁷ Though the majority of the rebels originated from Zhangzhou, people from Quanzhou and Hakka also joined the rebellion. Liu, *Qingdai Taiwan minbian yanjiu*, 197.

⁴⁸ Zhou Xi 周璽, ed., *Zhanghua xianzhi* 彰化縣志 (Zhanghua county gazetteer), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 156, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1962), 366; *Qing Gaozong shilu xuanji* 清高宗實錄選輯 (Selections from the Veritable Records of the Qianlong Emperor), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 186, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1964), 313, 319, 804.

people to turn against the rebel band and frustrated Lin and Zhuang forces. To combat the uprisings, the Qing government sent military reinforcements at least three times from the mainland and eventually crushed the rebellion with the capture of Lin and Zhuang in February and March of 1788 successively. To avoid “uncivilized” Indigenous revolt incited by the rebels, the government adopted a reward-threat strategy. While offering material incentives for “uncivilized” Indigenous peoples’ cooperation, the government used the long-term tension over land issues between Han settlers and Indigenous peoples to rule out possible rebel-Indigenous cooperation. It specially warned “uncivilized” Indigenous peoples of likely encroachment on their land by settler rebels if they allowed the rebels to take refuge in local mountains.⁴⁹

In persuading “uncivilized” Indigenous peoples to give their cooperation, loyal plains Indigenous peoples played an important role. They served not only as guides leading officials to “uncivilized” Indigenous villages, as messengers carrying news of revolts for the government, but they also acted as militia along with Han loyalists to combat the rebels.⁵⁰ Thus, as Shepherd indicates, “the subethnic nature of the strife shaped the Ch’ing government’s strategy of suppression... and determined the role played by the Indigenous peoples, both raw [uncivilized] and cooked [civilized].”⁵¹

Rebellions in early Qing Taiwan thus all demonstrated the militant pattern of local resistance to abusive outside power. These insurgencies by Chinese settlers mainly emerged from “sworn brotherhoods and secret societies,” not from “political groups

⁴⁹ *Qinding pingding Taiwan jilue* 欽定平定台灣紀略 (Imperially commissioned history of the pacification of Taiwan), in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* no. 102, ed. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1961), 482; Liu, *Qingdai Taiwan minbian yinjiu*, 195; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 324-27.

⁵⁰ *Qinding pingding Taiwan jilue*, 102, 201, 211; Zhou, ed., *Zhanghua xianzhi*, 365, 367; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 317, 326-27.

⁵¹ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 323.

originally attempting to seize power.”⁵² They often resulted from public resentment against official corruption, extortion, mismanagement, or policing actions, and often lacked political ideals or inspirations. Despite that, they reflected a “consciousness of opposition” that can be said to illustrate the character and spirit of the Taiwan society and to foreshadow the popular resistance to the Nationalist rule that emerged in the February 28 Incident of 1947. In fact, even the internal fragmentation and factional fights among the rebellious forces against the Qing authorities would reappear in the historic event of 1947.

Japanese Colonial Rule and the Change in Taiwanese Resistance, 1895-1945

Qing China’s loss in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 led to the cession of Taiwan to Japan under the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. Like previous periods under alien rule, the era of the Japanese occupation also witnessed the islanders’ resistance. However, the nature of resistance had transformed from armed revolts to mainly non-violent political movements. This change would have important influence on the February 28 Incident of 1947.

Local resistance by various groups of the island’s population to Japanese colonial rule can be divided into two phases before the full-scale anti-Japanese War started in China in 1937. The first phase, which saw violent local resistance to Japanese governance by military governors-general, lasted about twenty years, from the establishment of the Taiwan Republic in 1895 to the crackdown of the Xilai’an Incident in 1915. The second phase from late 1914 to 1937 saw a shift to Japanese rule under civilian governors-

⁵² Hsu, “Frontier Social Organization and Social Disorder in Ch’ing Taiwan,” 97.

general, a system that emphasized assimilation and economic developments. This phase witnessed soft anti-Japanese resistance led by the educated Taiwanese elites,⁵³ baptized by the Taisho liberalism of the period and sparked by Chinese nationalism in mainland China. Through the establishment of political organizations, these elites called for “racial equality, home rule, and popular elections” and sought local political reform aimed at legitimating their political rights. However, the domination of the military form of government resumed in late 1936, and the civilian governor phase ended definitively in August 1937 when the colonial government forced the closure of the last political organization of the local elites. During WWII all political movement was repressed as the full-scale Japanese war against China took place.⁵⁴ Although most of these resistance efforts ended in vain, they reflected a growth in political awareness in the development of the resistance movements in Taiwan.

When Japanese colonization of Taiwan started in 1895, it immediately met with military resistance. Local resistance led to the founding of the Taiwan Republic by the local elites on May 25, 1895, although the Republic survived only eleven days. It then fell apart as its president and most of its officials fled to China. However, the city of Taipei fell into chaos, and some elite founders and leaders of the Taiwan Republic turned to collaborate with the Japanese. This short-lived Republic was created with a naïve assumption that by claiming independence and adopting Western forms of political institutions, the Republic as a sovereign state would be able to escape from Japan’s

⁵³ By the time of Japanese colonization, Chinese populations had overwhelmingly outnumbered Indigenous peoples and dominated Taiwan’s society. Those educated elites from the Chinese groups on Taiwan were the leading forces for the political movements of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as for the formation of a Taiwanese identity in contrast to that of Japanese colonists during this period.

⁵⁴ Edward I-te Chen, “Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1914-1937,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 31, no.3 (May 1972): 477.

annexation. However, the anticipation of support from Western powers proved to be unrealistic because such diplomatic interventions might jeopardize those powers' own colonial interests.⁵⁵

After the demise of the Taiwan Republic, other insurrections continued to arise until 1915.⁵⁶ In addition, Taiwan's Indigenous peoples posed fierce resistance to exploitation by the Japanese colonial government. To exploit mountain resources, the colonial administration from 1911 forced its way into Indigenous reservations designed by the previous colonial official Goto Shinpei,⁵⁷ and launched a five-year "subjugation plan." However, this met vigorous resistance. Inferior in arms and weapons, the Indigenous peoples adopted tactical strikes such as ambushes and night raids on Japanese troops. The colonial government brutally avenged these by burning Indigenous villages and indiscriminately killing Indigenous men, women and children in some areas. In the 1913-1914 "subjugation" campaign, the colonial regime even brought in an airplane and naval vessels in an attempt to bomb some inaccessible villages in the mountains of the eastern coastal area. By 1915, due to food shortages and loss of male leaders, many Indigenous villages had surrendered.⁵⁸

Nonetheless, Indigenous resistance to Japanese colonial rule continued and culminated in 1930, when the Musha Uprising occurred. It was the last major insurgency by Indigenous peoples. In it more than three-fourths of the population of the rebel groups

⁵⁵ Andrew Morris, "The Taiwan Republic of 1895 and the Failure of the Qing Modernizing Project," in *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan*, ed. Stephane Corcuff (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2002), 4, 13, 15-18.

⁵⁶ Harry J. Lamley, "Taiwan Under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism," in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007), 211-12.

⁵⁷ Goto Shinpei served as the head of Civilian Affairs of Taiwan from 1898-1906.

⁵⁸ George H. Kerr, *Formosa: Licensed Revolution and the Home Rule Movement 1895-1945* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1974), 79-80, 102-105. Goto "drew a line encircling the interior high country... and established a permit system controlling passage into and out of the reservation." See Kerr, p.79.

was ultimately killed. In October 1930, outraged by colonial exploitation and abuse, the Indigenous people from Musha launched an indiscriminate attack on a Japanese school's autumn sports event, killing 134 Japanese. The uprising ended in the brutal suppression by about 3,000 Japanese military and police forces with the use of poisonous gas in 1930, and further by a subsequent attack from the joint-force of the colonial government along with Indigenous auxiliaries in the following April.⁵⁹

During the 1920s and much of the 1930s, fruitless armed revolts against Japanese colonial rule on Taiwan gave way to non-violent political movements in pursuit of Taiwanese political rights. Over about two decades, Taiwanese elites established at least six major organizations to pursue their political goals, including the Assimilation Society (Tonghua hui), New People's Society (Xinmin hui), the League for the Establishment of a Taiwan Parliament (Taiwan yihui shezhi qingyuan tuan), the Taiwan Cultural Association (Taiwan wenhua xiehui), Popular Party (Minzhong dang), and the Taiwan Local Self-Government League (Taiwan difang zizhi lianmeng). Of these organizations, the Assimilation Society was the first of its kind. It was founded and initiated by Lin Xiantang, who was inspired by the Chinese reformer, Liang Qichao, and the KMT politician, Dai Jitao. The organization appeared in December 1914, aiming at equal rights for Japanese and Taiwanese; but it failed to achieve anything concrete as it was dissolved the very next month in late January 1915. However, the establishment of this organization marked the beginning of partisan political opposition to Japanese rule. Lin

⁵⁹ Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 137-39, 141-43, 227-28n7.

Xiantang was to play a crucial role in the history of Taiwanese political movements, as he did during the February 28 Incident.⁶⁰

In March 1920, a group of Taiwanese students formed the New People's Society in Tokyo under the encouragement of the liberal environment of the Taisho reign (1912-1926) and of Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of self-determination of nations. Lin Xiantang was chosen as the president of the organization. Under his leadership the Society launched a monthly magazine called *Taiwan Seinen* (Taiwan Youth), pioneering the political enlightenment of the Taiwanese. The magazine was the predecessor of *Taiwan Minbao* (Taiwan People's newspaper), which was transferred to Taiwan in 1927, and was eventually expanded into a daily newspaper in 1932 and survived till 1936. Above all, these activists would later create a new organization called the League for the Establishment of a Taiwan Parliament; on fifteen occasions, from 1921 to 1934, they presented political petitions to the Imperial Diet, demanding a separate parliament in Taiwan.⁶¹

The colonial government dealt with these legitimate political efforts through three primary methods: "conciliation, coercion, and police repression."⁶² While conciliation failed to work,⁶³ coercion inflamed radical sentiments, leading to the creation of the

⁶⁰ Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 477-81.

⁶¹ Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 481-89; Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, *Bainian zhuiqiu: Taiwan minzhu yundong de gushi, juan 1. Zizhi de mengxiang* 百年追求：台灣民主運動的故事 卷一：自治的夢想 (A century of pursuit: the story of Taiwan's democratic movement, vol. 1. The dream of self-government) (New Taipei city, Taiwan: Weicheng chuban, 2013), 73, 145.

⁶² Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 487.

⁶³ For example, Japanese colonial government made a decision to "amend the composition of the Consultative Council (Hyogikai), and to implement the system of local autonomy." Both went into force in 1921 and October 1920 respectively. The Council had consisted exclusively of high ranking Japanese officials, and the new organic regulation allowed some Taiwanese elites to be appointed to the Council. The system of local autonomy contained three levels of local councils. These policies were implemented to mainly lure the local Taiwanese, particularly the elite, into abandoning their mission for creation of a Taiwan parliament. See Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 487.

League for the Establishment of a Taiwan Parliament, which was first banned in Taiwan but eventually permitted in Tokyo, in 1923. Its members were soon arrested. However, the subsequent trials gained great attention and increased support for Taiwanese political movements. Meanwhile, this political movement enhanced the belief among some supporters that more radical actions such as those to be undertaken by a mass movement that included labor and the peasantry were necessary. Some radicals even came to accept Marxism for promoting class struggle.⁶⁴

Factionalism within the League resulted in the formation of new organizations, such as the Taiwan Cultural Association, which further split because of internal ideological differences. With its base in Taipei, the Taiwan Cultural Association was founded in 1921 by Jiang Wei-shui. The Association undertook to extend its influence beyond the elite circle; it has been called the major organization that contributed to the formation of early Taiwanese nationalism. It aimed at the promotion of local culture against the Japanese cultural assimilation movement pushed by the colonial government. But out of a practical need to avoid police repression, it shied away from any directly political activities despite its ultimate goal being to awaken Taiwanese consciousness and self-determination. Nevertheless, with its radical leftist members in charge in 1927, some senior members quit and established the Popular Party, which in due course further divided after the formation of the League for the Attainment of Local Autonomy in 1929 by more conservative members who disapproved of involvement in the labor movement.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 487-93.

⁶⁵ Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 489-93.

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 forced an end to all these organizations, and the increased social control by police repression prevented any resistance movement during the period of 1937-1945.⁶⁶ Instead, Japan's wartime mobilization in colonial Taiwan recruited thousands of local Taiwanese, including those from both the Indigenous and ethnically Chinese groups, into its military campaigns in mainland China and Southeast Asia.

However, in spite of differences between the aforementioned organizations in their methods and ideologies, they had negotiated for Taiwanese political space with the Japanese authorities and instilled a nativist consciousness into the mind of the local populace. Chen Cuilian points out that from the 1920s onward, the political movements under the leadership of these educated elites resisted Japanese colonial rule and negotiated for the political future of the island.⁶⁷ The spirit of the political movements of this period that reflected a Taiwanese desire for political participation and rights was to continue after Taiwan was taken over by the Nationalist government at the end of World War Two.

Taiwan under Nationalist Rule and the February 28 Incident of 1947

The Nationalist Takeover and Control of Taiwan up to Early 1947

The announcement of the unconditional surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945 ended the Second World War⁶⁸ and led to Taiwan's political shift to Nationalist (KMT)

⁶⁶ Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 477.

⁶⁷ Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, *Taiwan ren de dikang yu rentong 1920-1950 台灣人的抵抗與認同* (Taiwanese resistance and identity, 1920-1950) (Taipei: Yuan liu chuban gongsi, 2008), 18.

⁶⁸ Technically, WWII ended on September 2, 1945 when formal surrender occurred.

rule. Because of the shared ethnic and cultural background for the majority of the Taiwanese, the KMT government was in general welcomed by local people, who envisioned an equal and prosperous future under the governance of the “mother country.” Resentment and disillusion soon arose among the local Taiwanese people, however, due to the KMT government’s discriminatory policies and corrupt rule. That discontent eventually resulted in the outbreak of violent protests against the KMT authority on February 28, 1947. In November 1943, the Allied leaders U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and China’s Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, assembled in Cairo and made an agreement on the return of Taiwan and the Pescadores to China upon Japan’s surrender.⁶⁹ Afterward, in April 1944, the KMT government in China established a Taiwan Investigation Committee (Taiwan diaocha weiyuanhui), headed by Chen Yi, to start preparatory work for the take-over of Taiwan after the war.⁷⁰ On August 29, 1945, two weeks after the announcement of Japan’s surrender, Chiang appointed Chen Yi as Governor-General of the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office (Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu; hereafter the Executive Office). On September 7, Chiang further appointed Chen Yi as the commander-in-chief (zongsiling) of the Taiwan Provincial Garrison Command (Taiwan sheng jingbei zongsilingbu; hereafter the Taiwan Garrison Command). Thus, Governor-General Chen Yi controlled the administrative, military, judicial and legislative powers

⁶⁹ United States, Department of State, *The China White Paper*, August 1949 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 307; Lai et al., *Ereba shijian yanjiu baogao*, 3.

⁷⁰ Zhang Ruichen 張瑞成 ed., *Guangfu Taiwan zhi chouhua yu shouxiang jieshou* 光復台灣之籌劃與受降接收 (Preparatory measures and take-over for the retrocession of Taiwan) (Taipei: zhongguo guomindang dangshihui, 1990), 44-47.

over the island later on.⁷¹ On October 25, 1945, the KMT government established military rule over Taiwan after a takeover ceremony held in Taipei.⁷² The KMT's rule, however, soon proved to be a failure as a result of political, economic, cultural, social complexities and other elements. Public resentment against the Chen Yi regime culminated in late February 1947, and violent resistance eventually erupted and quickly evolved into island-wide popular uprisings.

Responses to the rule of the KMT varied among the Taiwanese. With the support of some Japanese military officers, a few members of the Taiwanese elite including Gu Zhenfu gathered together on August 16, 1945, plotting an uprising for the island's independence against the KMT's rule.⁷³ But the Japanese Governor-General Ando Rikichi warned Japanese military officers against any attempt at a resistance movement for fear of angering the Americans and implicating the Japanese royal family (*huangshi*); and the scheme was soon aborted.⁷⁴ In fact, United States intelligence reports claimed that “‘80% of civilian pop. [are] very indignant over Chinese occupation,’ and ‘Very few

⁷¹ Zheng Zi 鄭梓, “Zhanhou Taiwan xingzheng tixi de jieshou yu chongjian: Yi xingzheng zhangguan gongshu wei zhongxin zhi fengxi 戰後台灣行政體系的接收與重建：以行政長官公署為中心之分析 (The takeover and reconstruction of Taiwan administrative system after WWII: Analyses based on the example of the Administrative Executive Office), *Si yu yan* 29, no.4 (December 1991): 217-259.

⁷² *Taiwan sheng tongzhi, juan 10: guangfu zhi* 台灣省通志 卷十：光復志 (Annals of Taiwan province, vol. 10: retrocession) (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1970), 29-30.

⁷³ Li Yizhong 李翼中, *Mao Yan Shushi* 帽簷述事 (Narratives of Mao Yan). “Mao Yan” literally means “the brim of a hat.” But here it is the name of Li's residence in the region of Mt. Yangming in Taipei, in *Ereba shijian ziliao xuanji* 二二八事件資料選輯 (The 228 Incident: A Documentary Collection), ed. Zhongyang yanjiuyuan 中央研究院 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1992), vol. 2, 399-400; Taiwan sheng jinbei zongsilingbu 台灣省警備總司令部, *Taiwan sheng jinbei zongsilingbu zhounian gongzuo gaikuang baogaoshu* 台灣省警備總司令部週年工作概況報告書 (Taiwan Provincial Garrison Command's Annual Reports on work) (Taipei: Jinbei zongsilingbu, 1946), 94.

⁷⁴ *Taiwansheng wenxian weiyuanhui* 台灣省文獻委員會, ed., *Ereba Shijian wenxian jilu* 二二八事件文獻輯錄 (Historiographical Records of the February 28 Incident vol. 1) (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1991), 11-2; Ye Rongzhong 葉榮鐘, *Taiwan renwu qunxiang* 台灣人物群像 (Portraits of Taiwanese) (Taipei: Pamier shudian, 1985), 279.

Formosans want China overlordship.”⁷⁵

Despite such claims, the populace in Taiwan generally welcomed the arrival of the KMT government and reunification with China. Across the island, Taiwanese elites set up the Preparatory Committee to Welcome the Nationalist Government (Huanying Guomin zhengfu choubenhui), showing their loyalty to the new government by various activities. It distributed national flags and banners, built decorated archways with welcoming couplets, promoted the New Life Movement (Xin shenghuo yundong) initiated since the 1930s by Chiang Kai-shek, and encouraged the learning of Mandarin Chinese. Many young people joined Three People’s Principles Youth League (Sanminzhuyi qingniantuan) to promote the KMT government’s ideology and expressed their loyalty to the KMT government.⁷⁶ Such enthusiasm for Taiwan’s reunion with the mainland was complicated by the mixture of uncertainty about the future under the KMT government and simultaneous expectations for “liberation” brought by the “mother” country.

However, despite the initial enthusiasm, Taiwanese, especially their elite leaders, were soon alienated by the KMT regime. Though the KMT government invited six prominent Taiwanese to Nanjing in September 1945, they were from the beginning excluded from devising the KMT’s political arrangements for post-war Taiwan. Early in

⁷⁵ Quoted from Steven E. Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence: The Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945-1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 176n3. Original sources cited by Phillips from NR 8 Clark to Indiv. for Helliwell, 19 Sept, and NR 22 Clark to Indiv. Op-Secret. 231625C, Office of Strategic Services, National Archives, entry 173, box 11, folder 98.

⁷⁶ Wu Zhuoliu 吳濁流, *Taiwan lianqiao: Taiwan de lishi jianzheng* 台灣連翹：台灣的歷史見證 (Taiwan forsythia: Witness to Taiwan’s history) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1994), 152-54; Wu Zhouliu 吳濁流, *Wu hua guo* 無花果 (Figs) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1988), 163; *Ereba Shibian de huiyi: Lin Hengdao xiansheng fangwen jilu* 二二八事件的回憶：林衡道先生訪問紀錄 (Reminiscence of the February 28 Incident: Interview with Lin Hengdao), in *Kousu lishi* 口述歷史 no. 2 (Oral history), ed. Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1991), vol.2, 214; Wu Xinrong 吳新榮, *Wu Xinrong huiyilu* 吳新榮回憶錄 (Memoirs of Wu Xinrong) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1989), 189-95; Ye, *Taiwan renwu qunxiang*, 283-84.

1944 the KMT government had set up a Taiwan Investigation Committee chaired by Chen Yi. This further established the Training Group for Taiwan Administrative Cadres (Taiwan ganbu xunlianban), also chaired by Chen Yi, and other preparatory training organizations for the purpose of providing cadres to meet the administrative needs of postwar Taiwan.⁷⁷ Above all, the establishment of the Executive Office reincarnated, in a significant way, the Japanese colonial regime's Law 63, which "authorize[d] the governor-general to legislate all regulations to be enforced on the island."⁷⁸

In other words, despite the inclusion of some Taiwanese staff, the KMT government had decided the directions for post-war Taiwan's administration without consulting local Taiwanese and imposed on them a political system reminiscent of the previous Japanese colonial regime, which the Taiwanese had sought to replace as early as the 1920s. Such KMT policies crushed the islanders' dream of local autonomy and denied them the civil rights granted by the new constitution of the Republic of China under the KMT's dominance.⁷⁹ In addition, Chen Yi staffed his administrative offices with mainlanders and excluded Taiwanese from major provincial posts.⁸⁰ As Edmondson summarizes, the KMT government acted like a new colonist regime:

⁷⁷ *Taiwan sheng tongzhi, juan 10: guangfu zhi*, 16-7.

⁷⁸ Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule," 482.

⁷⁹ According to Robert Edmondson, weeks before the February 28 Incident, Chiang "had decided the new ROC constitution, adopted on December 25, 1946, would not apply to Taiwan due to their Japanese 'contamination.' Denial to the civil rights promised by the new constitution was a critical blow to KMT legitimacy on Taiwan prior to the Incident." See Edmondson, "The February 28 Incident and National Identity," in *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan*, ed. Stephane Corcuff (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 42n2.

⁸⁰ Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 76-7. The statistical tablets of the book show that the upper- and middle-level positions were filled with mainlanders.

They moved into Japanese residences, filled the most important administrative posts, replaced the Japanese as the police force, nationalized the largest industries previously owned by the Japanese, and imposed Mandarin Chinese, a foreign language to the Taiwanese, as the national dialect. Portraits of the Japanese emperor in public schools and offices were replaced by pictures of Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek as the new objects of mandatory ritualized state-worship, and urban spaces were reordered with place-names evoking a ‘motherland’ that few living Taiwanese had ever seen.⁸¹

This disappointed Taiwanese elite leaders, many of whom had been influenced by liberal political ideals and had participated in political movements in the 1920s and 1930s. Their political frustration would then transfer into reformist pursuits embodied in the Thirty-Two Demands (sanshier tiao yaoqiu) aimed at self-government as articulated during the February 28 Incident.⁸²

In addition to disappointing political measures, the ineffective administration of the KMT regime further worsened economic conditions in Taiwan. Postwar Taiwan was in imminent need of reconstruction since the economy had been worn down by the Japanese colonial regime’s wartime campaigns and American bombing. The KMT government, however, was unable to reboot factories or carry out repair work due to the repatriation of Japanese technicians and managers, and because of the difficulty in acquiring components for equipment. As a result, factories were forced to close down, which pushed many people out of work. Meanwhile, a lack of fertilizer further impaired already-degraded agricultural performance, contributing to grain shortages. In addition, excessive issuance of currency led to hyperinflation. With the return of thousands of repatriated Taiwanese from overseas, unemployment and food shortages, in addition to

⁸¹ Edmondson, “The February 28 Incident and National Identity,” 27.

⁸² Chen, “Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule,” 497; Edmondson, “The February 28 Incident and National Identity,” 29.

hyperinflation, increased social disturbances.⁸³

On the other hand, the KMT government's economic approach effectively ensured state control over the island's economy under a command economy (*tongzhi jingji*). To assist the China's postwar economic reconstruction, the central government organized a National Resources Commission (*Ziyuan weiyuanhui*). Despite rivalries between the Commission and Governor-General Chen Yi, they both agreed on state domination over Taiwan's economy and on the transformation of the industries left by the Japanese into central State enterprises (*guoying qiye*) and provincial enterprises (*shengying qiye*), with the former controlled by the Commission and the latter overseen by the provincial government. Meanwhile, the provincial government established a "Monopoly Bureau" (*zhuanmai ju*) and a "Trade Bureau" (*maoyi ju*) to control production and trade between Taiwan and its trading partners within and outside the island. Through state control and its monopoly of the island's production and commerce, the KMT government in the late 1940s appropriated the island's wealth and resources for its efforts to struggle against the communists on the mainland.⁸⁴

In short, the exclusionary political policies and exploitative economic measures of the KMT regime, combined with official corruption, serious inflation, unemployment, poor military discipline, and cultural frictions, sparked public resentment against the Chen Yi administration and fueled social tensions. All of these problems eventually culminated in late February 1947, when public resentment translated into violent protests against the KMT regime across the island.

⁸³ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 5-7, 23-25; Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 95-100.

⁸⁴ Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 81-7, 92-5.

Early Reports on the February 28 Incident in Chinese and Western Media

Media reports of the February 28 Incident in 1947 provided the earliest information about its outbreak and development prior to the KMT's military suppression and the imposition of total news censorship in Taiwan, which started around March 8. As Tables 1 and 2 show, local media in Taiwan, especially *Taiwan xinsheng bao* (Taiwan New Life Daily), covered the event with detailed news reports every day during this period. However, only two major newspapers in mainland China carried reports about the Incident from March 1, 1947, and the KMT's central organ, *Zhongyang ribao* and CCP-controlled media like *Renmin ribao*, as well as Western newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* only started such coverage sporadically before March 3 or 4. A detailed analysis of these mainland and Western newspapers' reports reveals that most of them originated with the KMT's Central News Agency (CNA) in Taiwan rather than from Taiwanese newspapers, and CCP newspapers even carried baseless reports about the Incident. Because the newspapers in mainland China, including in the areas under KMT control and those under CCP control, directly influenced general public opinion outside of Taiwan and even impacted the two parties' relevant policies, their reports about the February 28 Incident will be scrutinized below. Although American newspapers like the *New York Times* rarely covered the February 28 event up to March 8, 1947, its reports influenced an international audience, including politicians in Washington. Its reports of the incident will also be examined in detail because the American government was the major Western sponsor of the KMT regime. By contrast, more detailed local reports of the February 28 Incident by Taiwan newspapers were

Table 1

List of Major Taiwan Newspapers around the time of the February 28 Incident

	Newspapers	Date of Establishment	Date of forced closure
Civilian newspapers	<i>Daming bao</i> (Enlightenment daily)	May 05, 1946	Mar. 13, 1947
	<i>Minbao</i> (People's newspaper)	Oct. 10, 1945	Mar. 13, 1947
	<i>Renmin daobao</i> (People's guide)	Jan. 01, 1946	Mar. 13, 1947
	<i>Xingtai ribao</i> (Reviving Taiwan daily)	Aug. 11, 1946	Ceased publication before Mar. 13, 1947
	<i>Zhongwai ribao</i> (China-foreign daily)	Feb. 01, 1947	Mar. 13, 1947
KMT-controlled or affiliated newspapers	<i>Chongjian ribao</i> (Reconstruction daily)	March 1, 1947	Mar. 13, 1947
	CNA Taipei Bureau (Taiwan bureau of the Central News Agency) By KMT Central Government	Feb. 15, 1946	
	<i>Heping ribao</i> (Peace daily) By KMT army	May, 05, 1946	Mar. 24, 1947 reopened on Jul. 27, 1947
	<i>Taiwan xinsheng bao</i> (Taiwan new life daily) By Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office	Oct. 25, 1945	
	<i>Zhonghua ribao</i> (China daily) KMT party organ in Taiwan	Feb. 20, 1946	

Source: For dates of the establishment of Taiwan newspapers, see Lin Yuan-huei, "Ereba shijian qijian Taiwan guanminying meiti baodao zhi bijiao," 18-9. For dates of forced closure of these Taiwan newspapers, see Lin Yuan-huei, ed., *Ereba shijian qijian Taiwan bendi xinwen shiliao huibian*, v.1-4 (Materials of Taiwan local news on the 228 incident, v.1-4) (Taipei: The Memorial Foundation of 228, 2009), v & v.n4.

Table 2

Early Reports on the February 28 Incident available in Major Taiwan Newspapers before
March 10, 1947

	Newspapers	Date									
		Feb. 28	Mar. 1	Mar. 2	Mar. 3	Mar. 4	Mar. 5	Mar. 6	Mar. 7	Mar. 8	Mar. 9
Civilian newspapers	<i>Daming bao</i>			x			x	x	x	x	
	<i>Minbao</i>			x		x	x	x	x		x
	<i>Renmin daobao</i>			x						x	
	<i>Xingtai ribao</i>		x		x			x	x		
	<i>Zhongwai ribao</i>			x			x	x	x	x	
KMT- controlled or affiliated newspapers	<i>Chongjian ribao</i>			x	x					x	
	CNA Taipei Bureau										
	<i>Heping ribao</i>		x	x						x	
	<i>Taiwan xinsheng bao</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	<i>Zhonghua ribao</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Source: Lin Yuan-huei, ed., *Ereba shijian qijian Taiwan bendi xinwen shiliao huibian*, xiii-xix.

unknown to the general public outside of the island until they were collected and republished together with relevant archives during the 1980s and thereafter (see Chapter Two). These now available local newspapers' reports will be used as primary sources for factual analysis of the February 28 Incident in Chapter four. First, however, a comparison of different reports about the outbreak of the February 28 Incident by news agencies in Taiwan, mainland China, and America will reveal how the Incident was presented simplistically, sensationally, or incorrectly outside of the island from its very beginning.

Between late 1945 and early 1947, about fifty newspapers or periodicals were launched in Taiwan, including both civilian and KMT-controlled media agencies.⁸⁵ Table 1 lists ten major newspapers and agencies that carried detailed reports of the February 28 Incident until military suppression started around March 8, 1947.⁸⁶ Among the KMT-controlled media organs, the CNA kept its headquarter in Nanjing but established its Taipei Bureau in February 1946; it was the major news supplier for other newspapers, especially those in Mainland China and Western countries, including the United States.

⁸⁵ Taiwansheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu xuanchuan weiyuanhui 台灣省行政長官公署宣傳委員會 (Propaganda Committee of Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office) ed., *Taiwan yinian lai zhi xuanchuan* 台灣一年來之宣傳 (Promotion of Taiwan in the last year) (Taipei: Xingzheng zhangguan gongshu, 1946), 25-29.

⁸⁶ All of the aforementioned civilian-run newspapers should have been closed during the first two days of military suppression on March 8-9, 1947, as there was no news released by them after March 9, though they were officially shut down on March 13. See Lin Yuan-huei 林元輝, "Ereba Shijian qijian Taiwan guanminying meiti baodao zhi bijiao" 二二八事件期間台灣官民營媒體報導之比較 (A comparative analysis of the reports from state-controlled and private-run media in Taiwan during the February 28 incident), in *Daguo baquan huo xiaoguo renquan: Ereba Shijian liushiyi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui xueshu lunwenji* 大國霸權或小國人權：二二八事件六十一週年國際學術研討會學術論文集 (Taiwan's human rights or China's hegemony: Proceedings of the international conference on the 61st anniversary of the February 28 Incident), ed. Yang Zhenlong 楊振隆 (Taipei: Ereba jijinhui, 2009), 20.

Moreover, *Taiwan xinsheng bao* was under the control of the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office, and was one of the most influential local newspapers.⁸⁷

In fact, *Taiwan xinsheng bao* was the first to report on the initial stage of the February 28 incident. As early as February 28, it ran a short column about the disorders that had taken place the previous evening. Thereafter, together with the civilian *Minbao* and KMT-controlled *Heping ribao*, *Taiwan xinsheng bao* further reported details of the preliminary disturbance on February 27. According to these reports, on the evening of February 27, ten policemen and some agents from the Taiwan Provincial Monopoly Bureau (Taiwansheng Zhuanmai ju; hereafter the Monopoly Bureau) confiscated the goods and cash of an unlicensed female tobacco vendor and rejected her pleas for mercy when checking illicit sale of tobacco in Taipei city. While wrestling with her, one agent hit the female vendor with the butt of his gun, knocking the woman down, which enraged onlookers. The female vendor was sent to hospital for treatment, but an angry crowd surrounded the officers. While fleeing the scene, one police officer shot and killed a bystander. This further generated public indignation, and the police chief of Taipei municipality (jingcha juchang) then went to the scene and arrested four policemen in person. Nonetheless, an angry crowd burned a truck belonging to the Monopoly Bureau and then flocked to a city police station (shi jingchaju) and the offices of the gendarmerie (xianbingdui), demanding punishment of the perpetrators.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, “Cong *Minbao* kan zhanhou chuqi Taiwan de Zhengjing yu Shehui 從民報看戰後初期台灣的政經與社會 (From the reports of *People’s Newspaper* to examine Taiwan’s politics, economy, and society in the immediate postwar era),” *Taiwan shiliao yanjiu* (Research on Taiwan historical materials) 8 (August 1996): 98-99.

⁸⁸ *Taiwan xinsheng bao* first called it “Yanpinglu shijian” (Yanping road incident). After the Investigation Committee of the incident was restructured and renamed as Eerba Shijian Chuli Weiyuanhui (the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee), *Taiwan xinsheng bao* ran an extra edition on March 3 and first called it “Eerba shijian” (the February 28 Incident) in its news title. There are discrepancies in these reports about

What would be called the February 28 Incident proper broke out on that day in 1947 because the previous evening's event triggered widespread protests in Taipei. According to detailed reports by *Taiwan xinsheng bao* and *Minbao*, about nine o'clock in the morning, people in Taipei beat gongs, calling on shopkeepers along the street to strike. All business establishments in Taipei were shut down in response to the call. One group of people went to a local police station (paichusuo), beat its chief and smashed the window glass of the station as the chief tried to stop the crowd. They then turned to the Monopoly Bureau's Taipei Branch (zhuanmai ju Taipei fen ju), burned its merchandise, beat two of its staff to death, and injured four others of its employers. About two or three thousand onlookers were present. Afterward, crowds flocked to and surrounded the Head Office of the Monopoly Bureau (zhuanmai ju zong ju), and smashed its windows. A bit after one o'clock in the afternoon, four or five hundred people marched to the Executive Office, but the guards raised guns to stop the crowds. Soon more than twenty gunshots were heard.⁸⁹ Afterward, local residents pointed out that two civilians were killed, with several injured. However, the secretary-general (mishuzhang) of the Executive Office told the municipal councillors that one civilian and one soldier were injured respectively. The crowds fled away, but did not disband. Indeed, conflicts escalated. People swarmed into the city from different locations, attacking shops run by mainlanders and mainland-originated government employees, military police and policemen as well.⁹⁰

the details of the event on the evening of February 27, 1947, see *Minbao*, March 5, 1947:2; *Heping ribao*, Mar. 2, 1947: 3; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, February 28, 1947:4; March 3, 1947: Extra edition.

⁸⁹ According to *Minbao*, the guards shot with machine guns from upstairs into the crowds, causing several deaths and injuries. This further fueled the public indignation directed against mainlanders and caused violence including the beating of mainland-origin government employees and the burning of mainlanders' belongings. *Minbao*, March 5, 1947:2. Also see *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 3:1947: Extra edition.

⁹⁰ "Ereba shijian de jingguo" (The course of the February 28 incident), *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 3, 1947: Extra edition. "Ereba shijian faduan" (The outbreak of the February 28 incident), *Minbao*, March 5, 1947:2.

Meanwhile, negotiations started around lunch time on February 28, 1947, and continued on thereafter. Around eleven o'clock in the morning, crowds of protesters sent five representatives to petition the chief of staff (canmouzhang) of Governor Chen Yi with five requests, including the public execution of the officer responsible for the original crime and the removal of the chief officer of the Monopoly Bureau. The chief of staff accepted most of the requests but failed to fulfill his promise to take effective action, and public indignation went beyond control. Later, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the Taipei Municipal Council (Taibeishi canyihui) held an emergency meeting to discuss the incident, and passed a resolution, which all the councillors took to the Executive Office, proposing a solution with six suggestions to Governor-General Chen Yi, who accepted the requests conditionally. The suggestions included the immediate lifting of martial law, punishment of the perpetrators, compensation for the victims, establishment of an investigation committee by Taipei municipal councilors and other public representatives, a ban on wearing a gun by civil servants (gongwuyuan) when checking for the illicit sale of monopoly goods, and the release of the arrested urban residents (shimin) related to the case. However, that evening, martial law was imposed on Taipei city and after eight o'clock, heavily armed soldiers and military police filled each thoroughfare and the city's major junctions.⁹¹

Thus, Taiwan newspaper reports on the prelude to and outbreak of the February 28 Incident revealed the spontaneous, unorganized violent nature of the reactions of local Taiwanese to the KMT's ruthless authoritarianism and its local authorities' use of violence. Such reactions were reminiscent of those of Taiwan people when they had previously faced the European, Zheng, Qing and early Japanese regimes before. These

⁹¹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, February 28, 1947: Extra edition; March 3, 1947.

local newspapers also recorded peaceful and political negotiations by local social elites at the beginning of the Incident, reminiscent of the negotiations their predecessors had often undertaken under Japanese-rule in the 1920s and 1930s. Even the Taiwanese attacks on mainlanders were similar to sub-ethnic clashes in previous resistance movements in Taiwan's history.

From the beginning of March 1947, major newspapers in mainland China and the US joined in paying attention to the Taipei disturbance. Table 3 shows the frequency of the reports of six major mainland Chinese newspapers and two major American newspapers on the disorders during the period from March 1 to March 9, the day after a whole-scale military suppression of the Taiwan disturbance started. The pro-KMT *Shenbao* and the independent *Dagong bao* first reported the February 28 Incident on March 1, 1947, the day after its outbreak. Apart from *Dagong bao* and the CCP-controlled *Jiefang ribao* and *Renmin ribao*, the other major newspapers in mainland China, especially *Shenbao* and the broadly leftist *Wenhui bao*, then reported the disturbances on nearly a daily basis from March 2 or 3 onward. Nonetheless, a close look at their reports of the February 28 Incident will show that most of them, except for the CCP newspapers, directly cited the KMT's CNA as their source of information. These reports, compared with those from Taiwan newspapers, were brief, general, and sometimes sensational and biased. That is especially true in their accounts of the outbreak of the February 28 Incident.

Table 3

Reports on the February 28 Incident in Major Mainland China and Western Newspapers,
March 1-March 9, 1947

	Newspapers	Date								
		Mar. 1	Mar. 2	Mar. 3	Mar. 4	Mar. 5	Mar. 6	Mar. 7	Mar. 8	Mar. 9
Pro-KMT or KMT- controlled newspapers	<i>Shenbao</i> (Shanghai daily)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	<i>Zhongyang ribao</i> (Central daily)			x	x	x	x	x		x
Independent newspapers	<i>Dagong bao</i> (Impartial newspaper)	x				x		x	x	x
Leftist newspapers	<i>Wenhui bao</i> (Convergence daily)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
CCP- controlled newspapers	<i>Jiefang ribao</i> (Liberation daily)							x		
	<i>Renmin ribao</i> (People's Daily)				x			x	x	
US newspapers	<i>New York Times</i>				x				x	x
	<i>Washington Post</i>					x				

Sources: Among the six major newspapers in mainland China, *Dagong bao* was based in Tianjin, *Zhongyang ribao* in Nanjing, *Shenbao* and *Wenhui bao* in Shanghai, and *Jiefang ribao* and *Renmin ribao* in the CCP-controlled regions of northwestern and northern China. According to Su Yaochong, the national circulation of newspapers was about two million in total in 1946, and the circulation in Nanjing and Shanghai areas alone took up to 600,000 copies, about one-third of the nationwide circulation. These major newspapers were well-known, representative, and influential nationally, or in respective regions. In addition, as Nanjing and Shanghai were political and economic centers respectively around 1947, reports published by major newspapers in these two localities could have direct impact on other regions and on governments' politics. See Su Yaochong, "Zhongguo baozhi youguan Eerba Shijin baodao zhi Yanjiu: Yi Nanjing Shanghai wei li" (Study on the reports of newspapers in China about the February 28 Incident: Examples from Nanjing and Shanghai), in *Jinian Eerba Shijian 60 zhounian xueshu lunwen ji* (Proceedings of the academic conference on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident), ed. Kaohsiung shi wenxian weiyuanhui (Kaohsiung: Kaohsiung shi wenxian weiyuanhui, 2008), 57, 57n1.

Although the evening event of February 27 was the key trigger to the February 28 Incident, its details didn't receive any attention from mainstream newspapers in mainland China, not to mention those in CCP-controlled border regions and Western countries. As a relatively independent newspaper in Shanghai, *Dagong bao* on March 1 first reported the outbreak of the February 28 Incident by citing the CNA as its source. Its report stressed only that the Taipei police's "search for the illegal sale of tobacco caused clashes [with the populace] and fatal injuries. Situation has been extremely serious."⁹² The pro-KMT *Shen bao* also ran a report from the CNA on March 1, but it stressed the imposition of martial law on Taipei by Taiwan's provincial government on February 28 in its headline and gave a graphic depiction of the violence and supposed irrationality of the Taipei protesters, who surrounded the police station, destroyed the Monopoly Bureau, and beat its employees. Its report also emphasized the promptness of the Executive Office's solutions of the issues and its maintenance of order.⁹³

On March 2 and March 3, 1947, *Shenbao's* reports, again citing from CNA, reinforced the image of the sincerity and benevolence with which Governor Chen Yi was said to have accepted the requests of Taipei municipal councillors. But its report also depicted escalating violence by the Taiwanese people, who stormed a military clothing factory (beifuchang) located in Xindian, a suburb of Taipei, and who surrounded the city hall of Xinzhu prefecture southwest to Taipei.⁹⁴ Such images were reinforced on March 5 by reports in the same pro-KMT newspaper and especially in the KMT's central organ, *Zhongyang ribao*, both of which portrayed a disciplined Nationalist army issuing warnings to unlawful Taiwanese by dry-firing their weapons first when patrolling the

⁹² *Dagong bao*, March 1, 1947:3.

⁹³ *Shenbao*, March 1, 1947:1.

⁹⁴ *Shenbao*, March 2, 1947:2; March 3, 1947:1.

streets, and never firing if not being attacked. According to their accounts, Taiwanese thugs not only destroyed houses and assaulted people, but also surrounded the U.S. Taipei consulate into which some mainlanders escaped when chased.⁹⁵ Thus, these mainland newspapers, especially those under KMT control or influence, failed to report how the Taiwan authorities' violence had sparked the spontaneous, unorganized but also violent actions of local Taiwanese.

The leftist *Wenhui bao* gave a brief yet incorrect description of the flash-point event on the evening of February 27, stating that the Monopoly Bureau's agents beat and injured two Taipei civilians when checking for unlicensed tobacco, meeting fierce opposition by local Taiwanese to their actions. Angry crowds burned down the Bureau's truck on the spot, it reported, and then put the Monopoly Bureau's buildings to flames. Despite the dispatching of Taiwan province's entire military and police force to prevent the disturbances, their attempts to stop the fire were in vain.⁹⁶ As for the CCP-controlled news agencies, *Renmin ribao* on March 4 reported on the February 27 event, but like the leftist *Wenhui bao*, it provided a baseless account, in this case reporting that the KMT authority had searched people's houses and thus caused conflict and careless killings. About the outbreak of the February 28 Incident, the paper did report Taiwanese people's resistance against the KMT's economic monopoly policy, but mainly stressed their anti-Chiang regime sentiment.⁹⁷ Given the on-going Civil War between the KMT and the CCP on the mainland, *Renmin ribao* simply regarded any Taiwanese resistance against the authorities as anti-Chiang actions. Thus, both the broad leftist and the CCP-controlled newspapers not only provided incorrect accounts of the February 28 Incident from its

⁹⁵ *Shenbao*, March 5, 1947:1; *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai), March 5, 1947:2.

⁹⁶ *Wenhui bao*, March 2, 1947:1.

⁹⁷ *Renmin ribao*, March 4, 1947:3.

beginning but also ignored the peaceful political negotiations undertaken by Taiwanese social elites immediately after its outbreak.

More importantly, on March 2, sensational reporting of three or four thousand casualties in the Taiwan incident appeared first in the Shanghai-based leftist *Xinmin wanbao*, and then in *Wenhui bao* the next day. On March 5, *Shenbao*, *Dagong bao* and *Zhongyang ribao* (Nanjing edition) all quoted this news but reduced the number of casualties.⁹⁸ At the same time, under the KMT's direct or indirect control, *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai edition) and *Shenbao* reported the death or injuries of only forty Taiwanese but of more than 400 mainlanders in the February 28 Incident.⁹⁹

On March 4, *The New York Times*' first report of the February 28 Incident also claimed casualties of three to four thousand people in the disturbances, quoting its source from Shanghai UP (United Press), which in turn cited its source as being "Chinese press dispatches."¹⁰⁰ According to Su Yaochong, this was probably a false report fabricated by the CNA, but it directly affected Chiang Kai-shek's early decision to deal with the incident with military suppression.¹⁰¹ Indeed, confusion over the numbers of mainland casualties generated great concern in mainland China. In a press conference held on March 5, 1947, the first question from journalists to Peng Xuepei, the director of the KMT's Central Propaganda Department (*Zhongyang xuanchuanbu*), was the Taiwan

⁹⁸ According to Su Yaochong, this report first appeared in *Xinmin wanbao* on March 2, followed by *Wenhui bao* on March 3. On March 5, *Zhongyang ribao* (Nanjing), *Dagong bao* and *Shenbao* all reported on this news but corrected the number of casualty. See Su Yaochong 蘇瑤崇, "Zhongguo baozhi youguan Ererba Shijin baodao zhi yanjiu: Yi Nanjing Shanghai wei li" 中國報紙有關二二八事件報導之研究：以南京上海為例 (Study on the reports of newspapers in China about the February 28 Incident: Examples from Nanjing and Shanghai), in *Jinian Ererba Shijian 60 zhounian xueshu lunwenji* 紀念二二八事件六十週年學術論文集 (Proceedings of the academic conference on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident), ed. Kaohsiung shi wenxian weiyuanhui 高雄市文獻委員會 (Kaohsiung: Kaohsiung shi wenxian weiyuanhui, 2008), 23.

⁹⁹ *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai), March 5, 1947:2; *Shenbao*, March 5, 1947:1.

¹⁰⁰ *New York Times*, March 4, 1947:14.

¹⁰¹ Su, "Zhongguo baozhi youguan Ererba Shijin baodao zhi yanjiu," 65-69.

incident and its casualties. Peng cited the CNA's reports, stating that there were casualties of about 100 local Taiwanese and of about 400 mainlanders. He also said that the Control Yuan had already sent an inspector to investigate the incident.¹⁰² Su Yaochong observes that the death toll of the mainlanders before and after the military suppression was only thirty-three according to the contemporary investigation report of the inspectors of the Control Yuan, and that the number increased to forty-five in the account of the Garrison Command in Taiwan.¹⁰³ In other words, the contrast constructed between benevolent authorities and a disciplined army, on the one hand, and ruthlessly violent local Taiwanese people attacking mainlanders, on the other hand, was stressed by pro-KMT agencies as a way to win support and justification for the military suppression.

After the outbreak of the February 28 Incident in Taipei, major newspapers in Taiwan, especially *Taiwan xinsheng bao* and *Minbao*, published on-the-spot reports of its development and did so frequently up to March 9, as Table 2 shows. These local reports generally demonstrate that the February 28 Incident unfolded in Taipei and across the entire island by following the aforementioned two patterns: the spontaneous, unorganized and violent responses of Taiwanese masses towards the KMT authorities' high-handed policies, on the one hand, and the local elite leaders' peaceful and politicized negotiations with the authorities, on the other hand.

Within Taiwan, news of the Taipei disturbance soon spread beyond the city, and within days people in other cities on the island rose-up in protest.¹⁰⁴ According to

¹⁰² *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai edition), March 6, 1947:2.

¹⁰³ Su, "Zhongguo baozhi youguan Ererba Shijin baodao zhi yanjiu," 67.

¹⁰⁴ Most newspapers reports did not clearly indicate whether local protests were provoked by police violence or were simply responses to the Taipei disturbance. Nevertheless, according to *Minbao*, violence occurred in Xinzhu on March 2 after news of the Taipei incident had reached that city. Thus, at least in Xinzhu mass protests were responses to what happened in Taipei. See *Minbao*, March 9, 1947.

available local newspaper reports, by March 2 there appeared mass protests in cities near Taipei, such as Keelung and Xinzhu,¹⁰⁵ located in northern Taiwan.¹⁰⁶ In the following days, violence and disorder occurred as well on March 2 in Taizhong and Zhanghua in the central areas, and in Jiayi in the south, as well as in Tainan, another southern city, on March 3.¹⁰⁷ Kaohsiung in south Taiwan even witnessed severe armed clashes between the military and civilians on March 5.¹⁰⁸ In the east, Taidong and Hualian saw large numbers of youth assemble on March 3 and March 4 respectively.¹⁰⁹ Thus, virtually the whole island was engulfed in mass protests and even violence by March 5, 1947.

Meanwhile, Taiwan newspaper reports also show that whenever chaos occurred in specific cities, local resolution committees were established. They were either voluntarily set up in response to local situations, or established as responses to the call of the Taipei Resolution Committee. Leading social elites in Taipei, the center of negotiations with the authorities, further organized the Investigation Committee for the Bloody Case of Checking Smuggled Tobacco (Qiyian xie'an diaocha weiyuanhui) on March 1. The committee was restructured as the Resolution Committee of the February 28 Incident (Ereba shijian chuli weiyuanhui) on March 2, after which it was further expanded as a provincial organization. Following Taipei's example, Keelung, Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Hualian, all established local branches of the committee, as did Yilan in the northeast and

¹⁰⁵ According to the 1994 edition of the official report, areas nearby Taipei city such as Taipei prefecture and Keelung (Jilong) were first affected where violence and disturbances occurred in that afternoon and evening of February 28, 1947, and the authorities imposed temporary martial law on Keelung on the morning of March 1. (In the period immediate after the war, Xinzhu prefecture's jurisdiction included today's Taoyuan, Xinzhu, and Miaoli counties.) See Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 72, 75, 136.

¹⁰⁶ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 3, 1947:3; March, 6, 1947:2.

¹⁰⁷ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 6, 1947:2; *Xingtai ribao*, March 6, 1947:1; March 7, 1947:2.

¹⁰⁸ *Zhonghua ribao*, March 6, 1947:1. Kaohsiung was one of the areas where young militants fought fiercely against the authorities. According to the official report, severe armed clashes took place in Kaohsiung, and violence and conflicts occurred as early as on March 3. However, newspapers' reports about the Kaohsiung disturbance were fragmentary and offer little information on the actual situation. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 115-120.

¹⁰⁹ *Minbao*, March 9, 1947:2; *Daming bao*, March 7, 1947:1.

Banqiao, capital of Taipei prefecture. Other major cities, such as Xinzhu, Taizhong, and Zhanghua, also formed similar organizations with different titles.¹¹⁰ All of these local committees sought peaceful solutions, and they either negotiated with the local authorities or made suggestions to the Taipei Resolution Committee. Their initial demands usually concerned punishment of the perpetrators, compensation for the victims, and so on.¹¹¹ On March 5, a protocol with eight articles for political reform was formally proposed by the Taipei Resolution Committee.¹¹² Thus, local protests and even violence against KMT rule as well as peaceful negotiations with authorities occurred in parallel across Taiwan before the military suppression started around March 8, 1947.

However, most mainland newspapers failed to report the two dimensions of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan right after its outbreak. From March 1 to March 8, reports in the pro-KMT newspapers, such as *Shenbao* and *Zhongyang ribao*, cited sources from the CNA and mostly stressed the Taiwan authorities' efforts and effectiveness in maintaining peace and restoring order, but downplayed both the spread of violent mass protests on the island and local elite leaders' peaceful efforts at negotiation.¹¹³ The existence of the Resolution Committee in Taipei was only mentioned by a *Shenbao* report on March 3 with stress on its official participants from the Taiwan Provincial Executive

¹¹⁰ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 2, 1947:2; March 3, 1947:1; March 3, 1947:extra edition; March 4, 1947:extra edition; March 5, 1947:1; March 6, 1947:2; March 8, 1947:1 & 2; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 5, 1947:1; March 6, 1947:1; *Minbao*, March 9, 1947:2; *Zhongwai ribao*, March 8, 1947:1; *Xingtai ribao*, March 7, 1947:2. According to the official report, Jiayi was among the areas where disturbances escalated into more violent militant resistance against the authorities, and Jiayi also established a local resolution committee on March 2. So did Taidong in the eastern Taiwan in response to the call of the Taipei Resolution Committee. But these were not reflected in the newspapers' reports. See Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 106, 148.

¹¹¹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, Feb. 28, 1947:extra edition; March 2, 1947:2; March 3, 1947:1; March 4, 1947:Tainan extra edition; March 6, 1947:2; March 7, 1947:1; *Minbao*, March 9, 1947:2.

¹¹² *Minbao*, March 6, 1947:2.

¹¹³ *Shenbao*, March 1-8, 1947. *Zhongyang ribao*, March 3-7, 1947.

Office.¹¹⁴ As for independent *Dagong bao*, its news reports were similar to those of the pro-KMT newspapers due to its reliance on sources from CNA.¹¹⁵

In contrast, reports in the leftist and CCP media placed more stress on the violent resistance of Taiwanese people to the KMT government than on any peaceful negotiations with the latter. *Wenhui bao* indicated the spreading of disturbances to areas near Taipei as early as March 2, 1947.¹¹⁶ On March 4, it repeated sensational stories of the highly exaggerated number of casualties and of some people fleeing into the US consulate seeking protection. In the next few days the newspaper further reported the spread of disturbances to central and southern Taiwan, although its report also mentioned the establishment and restructuring of the Resolution Committee of the February 28 Incident and its demands, and to some extent it did so before and even after the military suppression started on the island around March 8, 1947.¹¹⁷

The two main CCP propaganda organs also emphasized the mass disturbances and their spread after the outbreak of the February 28 Incident, but they ignored Taiwanese elite leaders' efforts for peaceful solutions. From the beginning, *Renmin ribao* labelled the Taiwan incident an anti-Chiang government movement, and its reports of March 7 and March 8 described the spread of the disturbances across the whole island by emphasizing the Taiwanese people's demand for the establishment of a self-rule government.¹¹⁸ *Jiefang ribao*'s report of the February 28 Incident on March 7 likewise pitched it as an "anti-Chiang Kai-shek" movement that was demanding people's self-

¹¹⁴ *Shenbao*, March 3, 1947:1.

¹¹⁵ *Dagong bao*, March 5, March 7-9, 1947.

¹¹⁶ *Wenhui bao*, March 2, 1947:1.

¹¹⁷ *Wenhui bao*, March 4, 7, 9, 1947:1.

¹¹⁸ *Renmin ribao*, March 4, 1947:3; March 7, 1947:3; March 8, 1947:1.

government.”¹¹⁹ However, neither of these papers reported Taiwanese elites’ peaceful and political negotiations with KMT authorities.

As for foreign media, especially American newspapers, they presented somewhat different and sometimes incorrect accounts of the February 28 Incident due to the limits of their sources. On March 4, *The New York Times*, citing from Shanghai UP (United Press International), reported that a CNA dispatch from Taipei had indicated the gradual pacification of the disturbances in Taiwan by Governor-General Chen Yi following his promises of an investigation, the release of the arrested protesters, compensation for the victims and so on. But the same report also cited other sources, indicating the spread of the disturbances to southern Taiwan. Moreover, *The New York Times* report reflected negotiations between officials and civilians over the demands of the Taiwanese for economic and political rights.¹²⁰ However, even *The New York Times*, citing the AP in Nanjing and without knowledge of the military suppression then in-progress, reported on March 9 that riots in Taipei were instigated by former Taiwanese veterans repatriated back from Japan and Hainan.¹²¹ Given the fact that the presence of foreign journalists was banned until late March, the discrepancy between the reports and the on-going situation is readily explainable.

On March 5, 1947, *The Washington Post* also ran a report based on sourcing from Shanghai AP (Associated Press), which cited witnesses who had arrived in Shanghai from Taiwan on March 4. This report indicated that the disorders in Taiwan had become more intensified since the outbreak of the incident, and that there had been hundreds of deaths so far. These witnesses also said that “the Formosan People’s Council” (Taipei

¹¹⁹ *Jiefang ribao*, March 7, 1947:1.

¹²⁰ *New York Times*, March 4, 1947:14.

¹²¹ *New York Times*, March 9, 1947:7.

Municipal People's Council) intended to appeal to the United Nations to seek UN trusteeship.¹²² On the same day, Li Wanju, a member of the Resolution Committee and president of *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, announced that the Shanghai United Press (hezhongshe)'s report distorted the February 28 Incident as a Taiwanese uprising for international trusteeship and ultimate independence.¹²³

In fact, it was not until March 8 that most major newspapers in mainland China reported the Resolution Committee's "Letter to All Our Compatriots" (Gao quanguo tongbao shu),¹²⁴ which was released in Taiwan on March 6. This letter stated that the aim of the Committee was to promote the political reform of the Taiwan government and eliminate political corruption, rather than to exclude the mainlanders.¹²⁵ However, by that time, the KMT's military suppression of Taiwanese protests was set to happen on that very day. Local elite leaders' peaceful and political efforts turned out to be in vain.

Media Coverage of the February 28 Incident under Military Suppression

After the KMT started its military suppression of the movement that sprang from the February 28 Incident around March 8, 1947, it also closed most newspapers in Taiwan by March 13, 1947 (See Table 1). It thus came to monopolize media coverage on the island. Under KMT-control, the remaining newspapers in Taiwan presented one single voice, disseminating the government's propaganda for the military purge of local resistance. Major newspapers in mainland China, especially pro-KMT media, also

¹²² *Washington Post*, March 5, 1947:9.

¹²³ *Minbao*, March 5, 1947:2.

¹²⁴ *Shenbao*, March 8, 1947: 2. There were no reports regarding the February 28 Incident by Nanjing *Zhongyang ribao*. However, its Shanghai edition ran a report on "the Letter" on March 8. See *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai), March 8, 1947:2. For "Letter to the Nation," see *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 7, 1947:1.

¹²⁵ *Shenbao*, March 8, 1947: 2; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 7, 1947:1.

published only the KMT-censored news, mostly from the CNA, and they largely echoed the KMT news organs' reports about the February 28 Incident. The reports of the two major CCP propaganda organs, *Renmin ribao* and *Jiefang ribao*, on the other hand, suffered from a lack of accurate information and thus created false impressions about the current situation in Taiwan. Western media, such as major American newspapers, also faced limits in the face of the KMT-censored sources, though they used other sources as well to present somewhat alternative stories of the February 28 Incident.

Su Yangchong examines reports about the February 28 Incident by KMT-controlled newspapers in both Taiwan and mainland China and indicates that they deliberately covered up how the first group of the Nationalist army from mainland China arrived in Taipei in the evening of March 8 and started bloody suppression of civilian protests on the island thereafter. They were also silent on the suppression of popular protesters and on the subsequent civilian casualties caused by local troops and policemen in Kaohsiung, the major city in southern Taiwan, as early as March 6, 1947. Instead, these news reports fabricated various reports claiming that Taiwanese attacked local authorities. They also depicted local elite leaders' peaceful efforts during the incident as anti-KMT subversive activities and thus justified the military suppression across the island from March 8, 1947.¹²⁶ In particular, such news reports falsely presented the government's high-handed, violent policies as a consequence of Taiwanese riots carried out under communist and Japanese influence.

These KMT-controlled newspapers first reporting communist agitation behind the Taiwanese riots as the trigger of the military suppression started on March 8, 1947. On March 10, *Zhonghua ribao* first, and then *Taiwan xinsheng bao* on the next day, ran

¹²⁶ Su, "Zhongguo baozhi youguan Ererba Sijian baodao zhi yanjiu," 69, 71-83.

reports about the Taiwan Garrison Command's announcement of the previous day. This announcement claimed that the military had imposed martial law on Taipei and Keelung in northern Taiwan to ensure security from 6:00 A.M. of that morning because the communists had sneaked into Taipei city from Songshan and Beitou in northern Taiwan in the evening of March 8 and robbed the head office of the Bank of Taiwan and other major companies.¹²⁷ On the same day of March 10, major pro-KMT newspapers in mainland China, including Shanghai *Shenbao* and *Dongnan ribao*, all published an identical report citing the CNA. They even claimed that Taiwanese mobs (baotu) had attacked Keelung fortress (Jilong yaosai) at 2:00 P.M. on March 8, and launched attacks on military and administrative institutes, including the naval office at Yuansha, the Taiwan Garrison Command, and the Executive Office in the evening of that day. They also carried sensational reports about how the ombudsman (jianchashi), Yang Lianggong, arrived at Keelung port to investigate the incident in the same evening, but together with two battalions of military police, was ambushed by Taiwanese mobs on their way to Taipei city in the early morning of March 9, when their forces engaged in gunfights with the mobs.¹²⁸

In these KMT-controlled newspapers, the elite-organized Resolution Committee was portrayed as a subversive organization. On March 10, both *Zhongyang ribao* and *Shenbao*, citing CNA news of March 8, claimed that the Loyalty Service Organization (Zhongyi fuwudui) under the Resolution Committee had been searching and plundering the mainlander's houses, even those of KMT officials.¹²⁹ On the same day, all major pro-

¹²⁷ *Zhonghua ribao*, March 10, 1947:1; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947: 2.

¹²⁸ *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai), March 10, 1947:2; *Shenbao*, March 10, 1947:1; *Dongnan ribao*, March 10, 1947:1.

¹²⁹ *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai), March 10, 1947:2; *Shenbao*, March 10, 1947:1.

KMT press reported that Governor Chen Yi had ordered the dissolution of the Resolution Committee on the grounds that its actions were nearly treasonous.¹³⁰ Another Taiwanese elite organization during the peaceful negotiation of the February 28 Incident, the Political Construction Association (*Zhengzhi jianshe xiehui*), was said to have started a rebellion and openly recruited veterans serving in Japanese colonial forces, as well as local thugs, during the disturbance.¹³¹ Thus, the Taiwanese elite negotiators during the Incident were depicted as Japanese agents, although they had in fact followed their predecessors in carrying out peaceful political protests against Japan's colonial authorities in Taiwan previously.

In particular, on March 11, all major KMT organs and affiliated papers reported both Chiang Kai-shek's talks and Chen Yi's broadcast to the province made on March 10. In his talks, Chiang indicated that the disturbance involved people who had been serving with the Japanese forces in Southeast Asia, some of whom were communists, taking the chance to incite riots. He also declared that the demands of the Resolution Committee to dissolve the Taiwan Provincial Garrison and disarm the military were unreasonable and unacceptable. Therefore, he asserted, the central government had decided to intervene militarily and had already sent in military forces to maintain local order.¹³² Similarly, the news reports on Chen Yi's broadcast claimed that some rebelling parties (*luan dang*) and national traitors (*pantu*) took advantage of the disturbance to subvert and rebel against the country. Therefore, transferring troops to Taiwan was a step intended to eliminate the

¹³⁰ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947: 2; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 12, 1947:1; *Zhongyang ribao*, March 11, 1947:2; *Shenbao*, March 11, 1947:1.

¹³¹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 16, 1947: 2.

¹³² *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947:1; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 11, 1947:1; *Shenbao*, March 11, 1947:1; *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai), March 11, 1947:2.

traitors and protect the general populace.¹³³ The evidence suggests both Chiang and Chen lumped communists together with Japanese agents, the KMT's new and old foes, as the two driving forces of the February 28 Incident.

As these newspapers' reports demonstrated, an island-wide military action started upon the landing of the Nationalist Army from the mainland on the evening of March 8, 1947,¹³⁴ even before Chiang and Chen made the aforementioned accusations two days later. Though newspaper reports stressed only the "restoration of order" (pingding; zhixu huifu) in various locations by the army, this timing actually suggests military suppression had been decided well beforehand. According to *Taiwan xinsheng bao* and *Zhonghua ribao*, quoting the Taiwan Garrison Command, unrest throughout the whole province was quelled under the Nationalist control on March 13, by which time troops had been deployed to all localities.¹³⁵ Indeed, Taiwanese protests were generally suppressed by the troops by March 13, but subsequent military actions carried the suppression further still.

In north Taiwan, as reported by *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, the Twenty-first Division's landing in Keelung occurred on March 9,¹³⁶ and on March 11, the city was already quite calm, while Taipei became calm by March 14.¹³⁷ Nationalist troops also pushed further to southern and eastern parts of the island. In the central areas, the 436th regiment of the Twenty-first Division entered Taizhong on March 12 and then turned to Puli the next day, to pursue and suppress local resisters. On March 16, Nationalist troops and local militants encountered each other in Puli and fought fiercely. The militants then retreated to

¹³³ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947:2; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 11, 1947:1; *Shenbao*, March 11, 1947:1; *Zhongyang ribao* (Shanghai), March 11, 1947:2.

¹³⁴ Actually, military suppression started in Kaohsiung as early as on March 6.

¹³⁵ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 16, 1947:2; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 15, 1947:1.

¹³⁶ *Taiwan xinsheng bao* March 11, 1947: 1; *New York Times*, March 11, 1947: 18.

¹³⁷ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 15, 1947:2; March 16, 1947: 2.

Wushe.¹³⁸ By March 14, order had been gradually restored in the central region, including in both Taizhong city and prefecture as well as in Zhanghua city.¹³⁹

In the south, according to *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, the Taiwan Southern Defense Headquarters (Taiwan nanbu fangwei silingbu) announced that the KMT troops first suppressed protests in Fengshan on March 7 and then further restored order in both Kaohsiung and Pingdong the next day. From March 9 to March 14, southern cities like Gangshan, Tainan, Jiayi, and Xinying were successively pacified, and troops seized a large amount of ammunition, including rifles, light machine guns, heavy machine guns, and handguns.¹⁴⁰ In the east, Hualian city had returned to normal from March 11, while troops arrived in Yilan on March 13. Taidong was reportedly quiet by March 16, even before the troops entered the city on March 19.¹⁴¹ Thus, the whole island was actually under military control by March 13 or 14, despite some remaining resistance.

Subsequent pacification (suijing) missions, aka “political stabilization,” came right after the military suppression. What this actually meant was pursuit and persecution of participants in the February 28 Incident.¹⁴² The major tasks of the *Suijing* campaign, as related by Peng Mengqi, the commander-in-chief of the Kaohsiung Fortress (Gaoxiong yaosai siling) and the Southern Pacification Command-in-chief (nanbu suiying siling), in

¹³⁸ *Zhonghua ribao*, March 19, 1947:1.

¹³⁹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 17, 1947: 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 26, 1947: 4.

¹⁴¹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 16, 1947:2; March 18, 1947:2; March 21, 1947: 2. *Zhonghua ribao*, March 13, 1947:1.

¹⁴² Reports of newspapers reflected that KMT authorities apparently used the term “suijing” to refer to political stabilization (suijing gongzuo) after military suppression (junshi zhenya). For example, both *Taiwan xinsheng bao* and *Zhonghua ribao* reported the Taiwan Garrison Command’s announcement that unrest in the province had been quelled as of March 13, and the political stabilization (suijing gongzuo) was progressing so well that order was expected to be restored within one or two days, back to the situation before the Incident occurred. Another news item of March 21, 1947 by *Zhonghua ribao* reported that Taiwan Southern Defense Headquarters reaffirmed its order regarding cleaning-up (suqing) of the evil and thugs (jia bao) as the political stabilization (suijing gongzuo) was about to begin. See *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 16, 1947:2; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 15, 1947:1; March 21, 1947:2.

a press interview with *Zhonghua ribao*, included confiscation of weaponry, search and arrest of traitors (jiandang), household checks, and the establishment of security.¹⁴³ In fact, according to newspaper reports citing the Taiwan Garrison Command, the authorities had already first carried out the so-called Suijian (purging evils) tasks on March 14. The tasks required people to report (jianju; migao) the evil elements (jianweifenzi) among them, and criminalized anyone who harbored the “evil parties” with the same responsibility as belonged to such parties.¹⁴⁴

The pacification or suiying was followed by or combined further with the Cleaning-up (qingxiang) campaign that started on March 21, 1947. On March 26, *Taiwan xinsheng bao* published Chen Yi’s statement, titled a “Letter to the People” (Gao minzhong shu), which indicated that the “Cleaning-up” aimed to achieve social security and that it targeted villains (eren) and privately-possessed arms (wuqi). Possession of weapons would not be allowed, and people were required to hand over weapons voluntarily. In addition, people were obliged to report villains, especially rebels and traitors (luandang pantu) involved in the incident.¹⁴⁵ Thus, an island-wide cleaning-up campaign took place and its measures were promulgated to fulfill the Suiying mission in different regions including Taipei, Keelung, and Tainan. While details of the implementation of cleaning-up varied in various localities, key measures included household enumeration, collective punishment (lianzuo), seizure of arms, and the reporting of evil parties and those harboring arms.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ *Zhonghua ribao*, March 28, 1947:2.

¹⁴⁴ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 16, 1947:2; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 15, 1947:1.

¹⁴⁵ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 26, 1947:4.

¹⁴⁶ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 29, 1947:3; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 25, 1947:2; March 30, 1947:3.

The extent of the terror, however, was barely reported in the pro-KMT press in either Taiwan or the mainland. Such organs instead focused on the tension-reducing tour of Defense Minister Bai Chongxi, who was assigned by Chiang to placate the Taiwan population and investigate the disturbances; this took place from March 17, 1947 to April 2, 1947. Reports in pro-KMT organs thus trumpeted the benevolence of the central government and the reputed awe and support of the people of Taiwan.¹⁴⁷ In particular, they detailed Bai's broadcast of March 27 to the Chinese at home and abroad, condemning the February 28 Incident as a set of revolts caused by the distorted (*pianxia*) Japanese education system and by incitement from the communists, while reiterating the central government's intended reforms, in particular reorganization of the Executive Office into the Provincial Government of Taiwan.¹⁴⁸ Bai's accusation that Japanese elements were involved in the Incident was actually shared by *Dongnan ribao*, which speculated about the Incident being a result of the revival of Japanese power lurking in Taiwan.¹⁴⁹

After Bai's placatory tour, a series of measures were implemented. On March 31, the Taipei District Court (*Taipei defang fayuan*) brought indictments for murder or assault against six agents of the Taipei Monopoly Bureau who were involved in the case of investigating smuggling on the evening of February 27.¹⁵⁰ Also on March 31, the Department of Education of the Executive Office issued an announcement, excusing of any responsibility those students who had been incited by the communists to revolt.¹⁵¹ On

¹⁴⁷ Su, "Zhongguo baozhi youguan Ererba Shijian baodao zhi yanjiu," 76.

¹⁴⁸ *Zhongyang ribao*, March 28, 1947:2; *Shenbao*, March 28, 1947:1.

¹⁴⁹ *Dongnan ribao*, March 11, 1947:1.

¹⁵⁰ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 31, 1947:4; *Zhonghua ribao*, April 3, 1947:3. The indictment was written on March 28, 1947.

¹⁵¹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 31, 1947:1.

April 9, the Taiwan Garrison Command announced measures for “rehabilitation” (zixin) of participants in the uprising. Moreover, the Executive Yuan in Nanjing passed a resolution on April 22 to disband the Executive Office and reorganize it into the Provincial Government (sheng zhengfu).¹⁵² On May 11, Chen Yi left Taiwan for Nanjing. On May 15, Wei Daoming arrived in Taiwan as the new provincial governor, and the Taiwan Provincial government was formally established on the next day, May 16, 1947.¹⁵³ On the same day, Wei lifted martial law, called off the Cleaning-up order, ended censorship of news, publications, mail, and telecommunications, and also lifted military control generally over communications and news organizations.¹⁵⁴ In this way, the February 28 Incident was officially brought to an end.

Unlike the pro-KMT press, the CCP’s organs and its related leftist newspapers stressed the militant resistance of the Taiwanese in reaction to a KMT massacre and applauded their pursuit of self-government even after the military suppression had started on March 8, 1947. Since the CCP had been pushed into northern and northwestern China at this stage in the Civil War, it utilized various news agencies, even including the KMT’s own CNA, as sources of information. However, rather than pursuing accuracy, the CCP’s newspapers tended to manipulate facts to create false messages of its choosing. This is evident in the two respective reports by *Jiefang ribao* on March 11 and *Renmin ribao* on March 13, 1947. Both newspapers cited the CNA’s report about Taiwanese attacks on military and administrative institutes in Taipei and Keelung, along with their ambush of Yang Liangong. However, they simply depicted the attacks as an

¹⁵² *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, April 24, 1947:4.

¹⁵³ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, May 12, 1947:4 & May 15, 1947:4; *New York Times*, May 17, 1947:7.

¹⁵⁴ *New York Times*, May 18, 1947:46.

achievement of the “people’s resistance movement” (renmin fankang yundong).¹⁵⁵ In addition, *Jiefang ribao* cited the news, from CNA and AP in Nanjing, claiming that the Resolution Committee of the February 28 Incident had evolved into a temporary autonomous regime (linshi zizhi zhengquan) following its Outline for Settling the February 28 Incident (Chuli dagang), and speculating that Chen Yi’s order was only effective within the Executive Office.¹⁵⁶ While stressing Taiwan local militants’ armed and persistent resistance against the KMT, the CCP’s organs simultaneously fabricated stories claiming that Taiwanese militants controlled the vast countryside and three important cities while Chiang’s government currently only held seven cities.¹⁵⁷

Similarly, *Renmin ribao*, often citing Xinhua News Agency (Xinhuashe) in Yan’an, carried reports that stressed the corruption and cruelty of the Chiang regime, as well as local resistance against it. On March 8, 1947, its report stated that the insurrection had spread over the entire island of Taiwan.¹⁵⁸ Another story from this newspaper on March 13, 1947 reported the number of Taiwanese killed in the insurrection and the demands of Taiwanese people for political autonomy from earlier days.¹⁵⁹ It was not until March 16 that the newspaper actually reported the KMT’s military suppression of Taiwanese resistance, which had actually started eight days before.¹⁶⁰ Its report about the KMT’s Cleaning-up campaign appeared on March 29 under the headline “Chiang Kai-shek continued to massacre Taiwanese people.”¹⁶¹ In April, it used the headline “Chiang Kai-shek continued bloodbath on Taiwan, five thousand more people killed in Taiwan,”

¹⁵⁵ *Jiefang ribao*, March 11, 1947:1; *Renmin ribao*, March 13, 1947:1.

¹⁵⁶ *Jiefang ribao*, March 11, 1947:1.

¹⁵⁷ *Jiefang ribao*, March 20, 1947:1.

¹⁵⁸ *Renmin ribao*, March 8, 1947:1.

¹⁵⁹ *Renmin ribao*, March 13, 1947:1.

¹⁶⁰ *Renmin ribao*, March 16, 1947:3.

¹⁶¹ *Renmin ribao*, March 29, 1947:1.

to further illustrate the cruelty of the Chiang regime.¹⁶² These reports from Xinhua News Agency were often delayed, and temporal discrepancies often jeopardized the accuracy of the news and sometimes even generated errors. In general, these news reports presented an image of an island-wide insurrection as a response to the cruelty and oppression of the Chiang regime. In this way, they treated the actions of the Taiwanese people as justification for the broader revolutionary struggle of the CCP itself.

Reports in the Western media, such as those of major American newspapers, about KMT's military suppression offered alternative perspectives. As Su Yaochong indicates, although American newspapers initially presented stories about the KMT's armed purge in Taiwan similar to those in the pro-KMT press, due to the censorship of sources, they often revealed facts that were deliberately concealed in the reports of KMT news agencies. This is evident in their reports about Shanghai-based Taiwanese groups' accusations, in a series of press conferences, about KMT massacres and about the number of civilian casualties during the military suppression. Their reports also cited foreign witnesses, possibly UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) officials and American and British diplomats, exposing the cruelty of the KMT's military purge. Despite efforts of the KMT government to block such news and prevent foreign journalists from visiting Taiwan, in the end some American journalists, including John W. Powell, the chief editor of *The China Weekly Review* based in Shanghai, were finally permitted to visit Taiwan for on-the-spot interviews.¹⁶³

¹⁶² *Renmin ribao*, April 11, 1947:1.

¹⁶³ Su Yaochong 蘇瑤崇, "Ereba Shijian zhong de meiti xuanchuan zhan" 二二八事件中的媒體宣傳戰 (Media propaganda war in the February 28 Incident), *Taiwan Wen Hsien* (Taiwan Historica) 59, no.4 (December 2008): 388-90.

According to Su Yaochong's studies, Powell's reports were successively published in *The China Weekly Review* on March 29 and April 5, 1947. They drew the attention of the American media to the KMT's bloody suppression. The first article specified its sources as ten foreigners who were in Taipei and other localities of Taiwan when the suppression was occurring, and it covered major issues related to the Incident, including the arrest and execution of students, a death toll of up to 5,000 during the suppression, and the Taiwanese call for UN trusteeship. A second article indicated that the major causes of the Incident lay in the corruption of the government and its exploitation of the people. It reiterated that after the KMT's military suppression started, the Taiwanese turned to seeking UN trusteeship. Soon other American newspapers like the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Los Angeles Times* quoted Powell's reports.¹⁶⁴

In particular, *The New York Times* ran two reports by its special correspondent Tillman Durdin reporting from Nanjing on March 29 and March 30, 1947. This newspaper actually ran a total of twenty stories about the Incident between February 28, 1947, when it happened, and May 18, 1947, when martial law was lifted on Taiwan. All of these reports were sent from Shanghai or Nanjing, and nearly half of them drew sources from the AP or UP.¹⁶⁵ However, quoting foreign witnesses, Durdin's report of March 29 estimated the death toll for the Taiwanese slaughtered by KMT troops at nearly 10,000. It continued to point out the atrocities of the KMT troops, including beheadings, mutilation of bodies, rape, and the slaughter of unarmed protestors without provocation;

¹⁶⁴ Su, "Ereba Shijian zhong de meiti xuanchuan zhan," 390-94.

¹⁶⁵ Wang Jinghong 王景弘, "Meiguo baozhi chuli 'Ereba Shijian' xinwen zhi fenxi: yi 'Niuyue shibao' weili" 美國報紙處理二二八事件新聞之分析：以紐約時報為例 (Analyses of The *New York Times*' Reports on The February 28 Tragedy—A Case Study), in *Daguo baquan huo xiaoguo renquan: Ereba Shijian 61 zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui xueshu lunwenji* (Taiwan's human rights or China's hegemony: Proceedings of the international conference on the 61st anniversary of the 228 Incident), ed. Yang Zhenlong (Taipei: Ereba shijian jinian jijinhui, 2009), 370-71.

this reporting also stressed the absence of communists or Japanese elements in the protests. This newspaper also reported executions of Taiwanese elite leaders and the imprisonment of thousands. But above all, it noted that some Taiwanese looked for the support of UN, and had requested through foreign consuls the protection of the Allied Supreme Command or the establishment of an American protectorate on Taiwan.¹⁶⁶ In the report of March 30, Durdin stated that the harshness of military suppression had deepened local hostility toward the KMT government, and despite the absence of communist struggles on the island so far, the Taiwanese might turn to the CCP for support.¹⁶⁷

Generally, *The New York Times* seemed rather reserved and conservative about Taiwan's relation with China, whereas *The Washington Post* appeared more outspoken in an editorial published on April 4, 1947. This editorial stated that the peacemakers should take the KMT's cruel deeds into account and proceed "either to transfer the case to the United Nations or to withdraw the island from China."¹⁶⁸ The paper also ran a report the next day introducing and quoting Powell's aforementioned article published on April 5 of the *China Weekly Review*. Quoting Powell to the effect that Chen Yi had "stalled for time and radioed [Nanjing] for troops," this article presented a stark discrepancy between the promises of Chen Yi's government and its deeds, which exposed its unfaithfulness to the Taiwanese.¹⁶⁹ Thus, these foreign reports presented, through testimonies of foreign witnesses, graphic details of Nationalist atrocities during its military suppression that were not covered by KMT-controlled newspapers in Taiwan or mainland China. In

¹⁶⁶ *New York Times*, March 29, 1947:6.

¹⁶⁷ *New York Times*, March 30, 1947:27.

¹⁶⁸ "Formosan Scandal," *Washington Post*, April 4, 1947:10.

¹⁶⁹ *Washington Post*, April 5, 1947:2.

particular, they strikingly reported Taiwanese demands for future independence, even though there was far from a public consensus on that issue.

Therefore, though early non-partisan Taiwan newspapers provided relatively reliable reports about the February 28 Incident and gave a certain amount of information about the local resistance tradition represented in the Incident, their voices were largely unheard outside of the island. After the KMT's military suppression of Taiwanese pursuit of self-government in the February 28 Incident caused closure of most of these newspapers, the regime's censorship of relevant news reports limited the sources of information available for Western media, including the American press. In effect, the KMT's and CCP's news organs' reporting about the February 28 Incident essentially reflected their respective partisan stances and dominant views in 1947. That would continue to be the case in the following decades, as the next chapter will show.

Chapter Two
Partisan Policies and the Politicized History of
the February 28 Incident, 1947-1987

From 1947 to 1987, drastic political changes occurred on both sides of the Taiwan Straits and in the relations between Taiwan, mainland China and the US. The KMT lost the Civil War in 1947-1949 and then retreated together with its party state, the Republic of China (ROC hereafter), to Taiwan, and the CCP took control over the mainland and established its own party state, the People's Republic of China (PRC hereafter) in October 1949. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and the subsequent Cold War ensured American military protection of Taiwan's KMT regime for more than two decades. The latter also consolidated its power on the island through authoritarian military rule that forced public silence on the February 28 Incident, except for its official interpretations of the Incident.¹ However, the American government's rapprochement with the PRC from 1972 and subsequent recognition of the communist regime in 1979 removed its formal military protection of Taiwan² and forced the KMT regime to look for Taiwanese support through limited liberalization in the early 1970s, followed by subsequent political reforms from the late 1980s.³ As a result, local Taiwanese challenges to the KMT's authoritarian rule were able to break the long-term public silence over the February 28 Incident. Meanwhile, the PRC had to suspend its military plan to attack

¹ Harvey J. Feldman, "The Development of US-Taiwan Relations, 1948-1987," in *Taiwan in a Time of Transition*, ed. Harvey Feldman, Michael Y. M. Kau and Ilpyong J. Kim (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 133-39; Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: US-Taiwan Relations Since 1942* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2004), 4-5.

² "Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and the People's Republic of China, United States Statment, December 15, 1978," in *America and Island China: A Documentary History*, ed. Stephen P. Gibert and William M. Carpenter (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1989), 203.

³ Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 110-12, 131-33.

Taiwan after the Korean War ended in 1954,⁴ and turned to using the February 28 Incident for its political propaganda toward the island up to the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). However, post-Mao reforms in the PRC from the late 1970s also led the CCP to reinterpret the highly politicized incident during the 1980s and beyond.

This chapter will reveal both how and why the KMT and the CCP each interpreted the February 28 Incident in their respective political contexts in the four decades from 1947 to 1987, just before the KMT started its major political reforms in Taiwan. In fact, for nearly four decades after the February 28 Incident, the KMT and the CCP shared a paradoxical similarity in their respective interpretations of the Incident. The KMT long blamed the communists for inciting the Incident and used rhetoric to that effect to justify its Civil War against the CCP and its subsequent authoritarian rule over the island. Meanwhile, the CCP first stressed the anti-KMT purpose of the uprising and even claimed the Taiwanese were pursuing autonomy in the February 28 Incident as a part of its political propaganda during the Civil War; later the CCP boastfully claimed leadership in the Incident and used such narratives to claim sovereignty over Taiwan. Therefore, both the KMT and the CCP's official narratives about the February 28 Incident were highly politicized, and their respective revisions of the relevant historical interpretations naturally reflected changes in domestic politics in both Taiwan and mainland China as well as in international relations within and beyond East Asia. Unfortunately, such partisan interpretations of the February 28 Incident largely neglected its origin in the local resistance tradition of Taiwanese people and their increasingly organized political pursuits starting in the Japanese colonial period.

⁴ Jian Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 131-32.

The KMT-CCP Civil War and Wartime Policies toward the February 28 Incident, 1947-1949

The Interplay between the KMT-CCP Civil War and the February 28 Incident

The February 28 Incident occurred just after the KMT and the CCP fought over the right to accept Japanese surrender in mainland China and turned from peaceful negotiations to armed combat. While Chiang Kai-shek's regime faced not only military challenges by the CCP's regular armies on the battlefield, but also popular protests instigated by underground communist organizations in KMT-ruled areas, the playing out of this two-front war was extended to Taiwan around the time of the February 28 Incident. The KMT's policies toward the Incident naturally reflected its strong concern about communist threats in the two-front war, in addition to its political and military leaders' worries about residual impacts of Japanese colonialism on the island. On the other hand, the CCP appropriated the Incident for its propaganda, and based its policies toward the Incident on its strategies both in political competition at the negotiating table and in military confrontation with the KMT on the battlefields before and after the outbreak of the Civil War.

After the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, the power competition between the KMT and the CCP intensified. The KMT took over most Japanese-controlled areas in mainland China with American support, but it still failed to stop the CCP's expansion into these areas, especially in Manchuria, that fell under the control of the Soviet Red Army from August 1945 to May 1946. Despite the signing of an agreement between the KMT and CCP on October 10, 1945, negotiations and military clashes continued on and

off thereafter.⁵

Coincidentally, the KMT's takeover of Taiwan from the Japanese and its establishment of its actual rule over the island took place in late October 1945.⁶ Thus, even though Taiwan was outside the sphere of military confrontation in the KMT-CCP Civil War, it still became a pawn in the struggle between the two parties. Both applied their respective wartime policies toward the February 28 Incident in their political and military struggles before the outbreak of the Civil War and during the war. In particular, the KMT government's policies toward the Civil War, including its fiscal extractions from Taiwan, were a major cause of spontaneous Taiwanese protests at the beginning of the February 28 Incident.

Taiwan became an important source of supplies to the KMT in its struggle against the CCP in mainland China soon after the KMT accepted the Japanese surrender in late 1945. According to the Taiwan Garrison Command's report, the weapons the KMT gained from its takeover of the island included rifles, machine guns, and artillery, and they accounted for one-sixth of the weaponry in the whole Chinese theater. Among them, 10,000,000 rounds of ammunition were ordered shipped to mainland China, along with other military materials such as military observation- and communications-equipment.⁷

The KMT transported considerable amounts of weapons from Taiwan to mainland China

⁵ Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2015), 29-36; Jiang Yongjing 蔣永敬 and Liu Weika 劉維開, *Jiang Jieshi yu Guo-Gong hezhan, 1945-1949* 蔣介石與國共和戰 (Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist-Communist peace and war, 1945-1949) (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2013), 3-23; Deng Ye 鄧野, *Lianhe zhengfu yu yidang xunzheng: 1944-1946 nian jian Guo-Gong zhengzheng* 聯合政府與一黨訓政：1944-1946 年間國共政爭 (Coalition government and one-party political tutelage: KMT-CCP political struggles in the years of 1944-1946) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003), 173-180.

⁶ Yang Huyuan 楊護源, *Guangfu yu zhanling: Guomin zhengfu dui Taiwan de junshi jieshou* 光復與佔領：國民政府對台灣的軍事接收 (Restoration and occupation: The military takeover of Taiwan by the Nationalist government) (Taipei: Duli zhuojia chubanshe, 2016), 71.

⁷ Taiwan sheng jingbei zhongsilingbu, ed., *Taiwansheng jingbei zhongsilingbu zhounian gongzuo gaikuang baogao shu*, 125-6, 129.

mainly from November 1945 to December 1946,⁸ when its military clashes with CCP quickly turned into a full-scale Civil War. Moreover, the KMT further shipped more weapons and ammunition from Taiwan to the mainland in February 1947, when the February 28 Incident broke out. In March 1947, Chiang Kai-shek further ordered that all military materials taken from the Japanese army, except those equipping garrisons stationed in Taiwan, were to be shipped to mainland China.⁹ Thus, his concern about the February 28 Incident naturally reflected the KMT's overall policy toward the CCP on the eve of and at the beginning of the Civil War.

In addition, the KMT extracted enormous amounts of provisions and military personnel from Taiwan for the war with the CCP in mainland China. One available source shows that the KMT shipped out 895.5 tons of rice when the 62nd Division was re-dispatched from Taiwan back to mainland China in July-September 1946. Due to the shortage of rice in northern China, the Taiwan Garrison Command continued to provide the 62nd Division with provisions until October 1946.¹⁰ In particular, the KMT government extracted abundant revenue from Taiwan by imposing state control over the island's economy. The extractions reached such an extent that the annual revenue of the Monopoly Bureau and the Trade Bureau together amounted to two billion Taiwan dollars.¹¹ Such economic extraction was actually a cause of the February 28 Incident, as

⁸ According to Yang Huyuan, the amounts of artillery and weapons shipped from Taiwan to mainland China from November 1945 to December 1946 are estimated at about 95,000 rifles, 11,000 light or heavy machine guns, 500 artillery or mountain artillery, 42,000,000 rounds of ammunition, and 700,000 artillery shells. See Yang, *Guangfu yu Zhanling*, 170-1.

⁹ Yang, *Guangfu yu Zhanling*, 171.

¹⁰ *Taiwansheng jingbei zhongsilingbu, Taiwansheng jingbei zhongsilingbu zhounian gongzuo gaikuang baogaoshu*, 120-1, 130.

¹¹ In his address to Taiwan's provincial councillors and other public representatives and government employees during his pacification trip in Taiwan, Bai Chongxi stated that the revenue of the Trade Bureau and the Monopoly Bureau reached about half of the administrative budget, which was 4 billion Taiwan Dollar. See *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 28, 1947:2.

the foregoing discussion in Chapter One has shown, but the KMT's worries about Taiwan's economic stability during the Incident in turn affected its policy toward it. Moreover, the KMT also recruited Taiwanese people into its armies to fight in the Civil War. While accurate numbers of drafted Taiwanese are unavailable, unofficial records point to a number between 7,000 and 10,000. These Taiwanese soldiers were dispatched with the 62nd and the 70th Divisions to mainland China, confronting the PLA on the Qinhuangdao, Huludao, and Xuzhou battlegrounds.¹²

On the other hand, the CCP was also expanding its organization and influence into the island. Right after the Japanese surrendered in mid-August 1945, the CCP's central authorities dispatched a communist of Taiwanese origin, Cai Xiaoqian, as the Secretary (shuji) of the Taiwan Provincial Work Committee (Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui). Cai and a few other CCP members snuck back to Taiwan, and the CCP's Taiwan Work Committee was formally established in May 1946. However, despite their various efforts, they only recruited slightly more than 70 members in the whole island before the February 28 Incident took place.¹³ Nevertheless, the KMT was alert to possible communist activities. Chiang Kai-shek had already received a report about communist activities in Taiwan, and he ordered Chen Yi to prevent their expansion on February 10, 1947,¹⁴ just two weeks before the outbreak of the February 28 Incident. Thus, after its outbreak both Chen and Chiang quickly linked the Incident with communist activities, and meanwhile the CCP also showed special interest in the Incident and asserted the latter's connection with its own anti-KMT strategies from the beginning.

¹² Hua Yiwen 花逸文, *Guo-Gong neizhan zhong de Taiwan bing* 國共內戰中的台灣兵 (Taiwanese soldiers in KMT-CCP Civil War) (Taipei: Babilun, 1991), 11-21, 26-47.

¹³ Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 240-41.

¹⁴ Hou Kunhong 侯坤宏, ed., *Ererba Shijian dang'an huibian* v.17 二二八事件檔案彙編 (Archive materials on the February 28 Incident, v.17) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2008), 107.

Although political negotiations between the KMT and CCP continued in mainland China, CCP troops took advantage of the power vacuum in Manchuria,¹⁵ and seized Changchun on 18 April 1946 in violation of the armistice reached under the mediation of U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall in January of the same year. The KMT counterattacked and advanced from Siping toward Changchun. However, the intervention of Marshall led to a temporary truce that came into place again on June 7, 1946. In late June, however, the KMT launched a massive offensive on communist controlled-areas in Hubei and Anhui provinces that unfolded into full-scale Civil War. This led to the failure of Marshall's mission, which ended in January 1947,¹⁶ on the eve of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan.

Previously, the Democratic League (Minzhu tongmeng), which many students and intellectuals supported, had engaged in the establishment of an Anti-Civil War Association, first in mid-November 1945 in Chongqing, and then in other KMT-controlled areas thereafter. Moreover, popular protests, in particular student demonstrations, against the Civil War and in favour of a coalition government developed in late 1945, and grew into a national phenomenon in late December 1946 and early 1947, when students further protested the "violent actions of the American military personnel in China."¹⁷ This was followed by much larger waves of student protests in mid-1947 and April-June 1948 respectively. The students' anti-Civil War movements brought much unease to the KMT regime and were considered by the CCP as opening a second front in

¹⁵ The Soviet Army finished withdrawing from Manchuria in April 1946, and left a power vacuum there.

¹⁶ Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War 1946-1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 35-6, 40-7; Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-shek Lost China*, 29-42; Jiang and Liu, *Jiang Jieshi yu Guo-Gong hezhan, 1945-1949*, 44-50.

¹⁷ Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 42.

the Civil War. In these circumstances, the KMT readily attributed other popular protests, including the future February 28 Incident in Taiwan, to communist instigation.¹⁸

Indeed, the KMT-CCP military and political struggle led to a tendency among the KMT leadership to associate public protests with communist conspiracy by the time the movement spread to and affected Taiwan on the eve of the February 28 Incident. In January 1947, one month before the Incident happened on the island, students from universities and high schools in Taipei went into the streets to protest against American imperialism, in sympathy with the aforementioned anti-American student demonstrations across mainland China. These student protests had been sparked by outrage over a sexual assault committed on a female student, Shen Chong, by some American soldiers on the campus of Beijing University.¹⁹ This incident generated a nation-wide student protest against American imperialism, and accelerated the growth of anti-KMT sentiments. The CCP played a crucial role in mobilizing student strikes in mainland China, aiming at pushing the US Army out of China, and it used the sexual assault incident for its political propaganda against the KMT government.²⁰ To what extent the incident worked as a contributory cause for the US decision to hasten the withdrawal of its troops from China is ambiguous, and actually an American military presence remained in Qingdao and Nanjing afterward. However, the incident did fuel widespread anti-American and anti-KMT government sentiments, and the KMT suffered from both political and military setbacks as a result of this incident.²¹

¹⁸ Pepper, *Civil War in China*, 42-4.

¹⁹ Chen, "Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi," 39-40, 111.

²⁰ Zuo Shuangwen 左雙文, "1946 nian Shen Chong shijian: Nanjing zhengfu de duice" 1946 年沈崇事件：南京政府的對策 (The Shen Chong incident of 1946: The Nanjiang government's policies), *Jindai shi yanjiu* 1 (2005): 67-8, 103.

²¹ Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 57-8.

Thus, the KMT authorities readily thought of the Taiwan student protests and other social movements in terms of a communist conspiracy. When student demonstrations occurred in Taiwan, the KMT officials such as Ke Yuanfen, Chief of Staff of the Taiwan Garrison Command, were alerted, and quickly proceeded to assert that a communist conspiracy was behind the strikes calling for stopping the Civil War and opposing American interference in China's internal affairs. It is not surprising, then, when the February 28 Incident happened, Ke immediately concluded that the disturbance had been engineered by the communists.²² In fact, besides Ke, KMT authorities not only attributed the disturbances to communist incitement but also asserted the need for military suppression of popular protests such as the February 28 Incident.

The KMT suffered severe military setbacks in Shandong, even as it was planning an onslaught on the CPP's headquarters, Yan'an, when the February 28 Incident occurred in Taiwan in early 1947. In early January, the CCP had launched an attack on KMT troops in southern Shandong province. The KMT was defeated, and it lost about 53,000 troops in the 18-day battle. In late February, the KMT's 73th Corps and 46th Division were ambushed in the Laiwu campaign in Shandong province, suffering the loss of about 56,000 more troops, and its commander was captured by the CCP army. Chiang was quite distressed about this defeat and flew to Jinan on February 24-25 to assemble a tactical response in person,²³ just a few days before the Taiwan upheaval.

Coincidentally, at the time the February 28 Incident broke out in Taiwan, the

²² Ke Yuanfen 柯遠芬, "Taiwan Ererba Shibian zhi zhenxiang" 台灣二二八事變之真像 (The truth of the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba Shijian ziliao xuanji* vol. 1 二二八事件資料選輯 (Documentary collections concerning the February 28 Incident, vol. 1), ed. Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1992), 11.

²³ Lu Fangshang 呂芳上, ed., *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian* 蔣中正先生年譜長編 (A chronicle of Mr. Chiang Kai-shek) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2014), vol.8, 616-18; Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 157-59; Jiang and Liu, *Jiang Jieshi yu Guo-Gong hezhan*, 136-39.

decisive showdown in negotiations between the KMT and the CCP was taking place. On February 27 and 28, Chiang ordered CCP delegates present for negotiations to withdraw from their Nanjing, Shanghai and Chongqing offices by March 5,²⁴ signaling the final termination of discussions for peaceful solutions between the two parties. In the same way and at almost the same time, KMT authorities in Taiwan and Nanjing would quickly reject peaceful negotiations with Taiwanese elites over the February 28 Incident and turn to military solutions to the issue.

Indeed, the KMT's preparation for military suppression of Taiwanese protests proceeded while Chiang was planning the military seizure of the communist headquarters in Yan'an and as new battles in Shandong, Manchuria and other theatres were taking place or shaping up.²⁵ Two days earlier, on February 26, Chiang summoned Hu Zongnan, the director of the Xi'an Pacification Region (Xian suijing zhuren), to come to Nanjing. Hu arrived in Nanjing on February 28, and from February 28 to March 3, Chiang and Hu, along with other KMT military directors were in discussions about military tasks and strategy, in particular regarding the Yan'an offensive.²⁶ Meanwhile, the February 28 Incident happened in Taiwan, and disturbances there worsened, spreading from the north across the island to the south until the KMT rejected peaceful proposals from the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee and eventually turned to military suppression around March 8, 1947, as discussed in Chapter One.

From March 4 to March 8, the KMT was deploying troops to set in motion the

²⁴ Zhonggong daibiao tuan meiyuan xinchun jinianguan, 中共代表團梅園新村紀念館 ed., *Guo-Gong tanpan wenxian ziliao xuanji 1945.8-1947.3* 國共談判文獻資料選輯 (Selected archives and documents of KMT-CCP negotiations, Aug. 1945-March 1947) (Jiangsu: Renmin chubanshe, 1980), 489-91.

²⁵ Lu, *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, v.8, 618-19, 621-23; Jiang and Liu, *Jiang Jieshi yu Guo Gong hezhan*, 134.

²⁶ Hu Zongnan 胡宗南, *Hu Zongnan xiansheng riji v.1* 胡宗南先生日記 (Mr. Hu Zongnan's Diaries, v.1) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2015), 628-33.

offensive on Yan'an, while both Chiang and Hu carefully reviewed their military strategy regarding that campaign. In addition, Chiang was much concerned about the Shandong battlefield.²⁷ In Taiwan, the Resolution Committee was expanded into an island-wide organization on March 4, and further into a political organization demanding political reform, but its requests were refused by Chen Yi on March 7. During this period, local militants' armed resistance against the authorities intensified in the central and southern parts of Taiwan, where a guerrilla force called the "27 Brigade" (Er qi budui) was organized while southern local militants attacked Huwei airport. Meanwhile, communist slogans were found in Tainan city on March 6. As rumors and concerns about the dispatch of KMT reinforcements to Taiwan arose, all the Taiwanese members (Taiwan sheng canzhengyuan) of the Citizens' Political Council (Guomin canzhenghui) sent a joint letter to Chiang Kai-shek pleading with him to avoid military suppression in case of worsening conditions, and the Taiwan Political Association likewise appealed to Chiang, through the US consulate, not to dispatch more troops to Taiwan.²⁸

In the next two days, however, both the KMT's army's Yan'an offensive and the military suppression of the Taiwan Incident went on simultaneously. On March 9, the Battlefield Committee of the Xi'an Pacification Office was established under Hu Zongnan,²⁹ signifying the offensive was about to start, and an island-wide military suppression of the Taiwan disturbance began on the same day.³⁰ The military offensives on Yan'an were set in motion on March 13. On that day, the KMT launched air strikes on Yan'an with the dispatch of 94 airplanes from Shanghai, Xuzhou, and Xi'an, followed by

²⁷ Hu, *Hu Zongnan xiansheng riji* v.1, 633-34; Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian* v. 17, 4, 20-1, 23.

²⁸ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 64-6, 70-1, 89-94, 103-8, 111, 205-6.

²⁹ Hu, *Hu Zongnan xiansheng riji* v.1, 634.

³⁰ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 210.

the overland advance of Hu's 1st Army and the 29th Army, numbering about 140,000 people in total, from Yichuan and Luochuan respectively. They seized Yan'an on March 19. The CCP had actually retreated from Yan'an by March 19.³¹ Although the KMT's victory over the capture of Yan'an was largely symbolic, Chiang regarded this as a great strategic success of diplomatic significance.³²

The outbreak of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan and the KMT's subsequent suppression diverted its resources from the Civil War on the mainland at this crucial moment, given the KMT's policy of "suppression first, pacification later" (*xianjiao houfu*) on the island.³³ The decision for military suppression resulted in the dispatch of the 21st Division to Taiwan. According to the KMT's records, the battalions attached to the divisional headquarters and two regiments of the 21st Division landed in Taiwan between March 9 and March 11; they were followed by the landing of the remaining two regiments on March 19.³⁴ Thus, dispatching the troops to suppress anti-KMT activities in Taiwan more or less disrupted Chiang's military plans to fight against the CCP army in the mainland battlefields. At the same time, the CCP's political propaganda toward the Incident also reflected its own military and political considerations around the key battles in the Yan'an campaign in early 1947.

³¹ Hu, *Hu Zongnan xiansheng riji* v.1, 635-37; Ning Ling 寧凌 and Qing Shan 慶山, eds., *Guomindang zhijun dang'an* 國民黨治軍檔案 (Archives of the Nationalist Party's military management) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2003), vol. 2, 568-70.

³² Jiang and Liu, *Jiang Jieshi yu Guo-Gong hezhan*, 147-48.

³³ Bai Xianyong 白先勇 and Liao Yanbo 廖彥博, *Zhitong liaoshang: Bai Chongxi jiangjun yu Ererba* 止痛療傷：白崇禧將軍與二二八 (Relieving pains and healing wounds: General Bai Chongxi and the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 2014), 42.

³⁴ Guofangbu 國防部, "Ererba Shibian shimo dashi ji" 二二八事變始末大事紀 (Records of major events during the course of the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba yanjiu*, 3rd ed. 二二八研究 (Research on the February 28 Incident), ed. Li Ao 李敖 (Taipei: Liao chubanshe, 1991), 49-52.

The KMT Authorities' Reactions to and Reports of the February 28 Incident

Because the February 28 Incident occurred not long after Japan's war in mainland China and the end of Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan, as well as in the midst of the Chinese Civil War, the KMT's views of the Incident centered on its relations with the communist threat and Japanese colonial legacy among Taiwanese. As Steve Phillips puts it, the KMT authorities interpreted the Incident through the lens of "their centralization efforts on the mainland, the colonial legacy on Taiwan, and the growing challenge of communist power."³⁵ Indeed, both KMT leaders' personal reactions to the February 28 Incident and the party's official reports about the Incident stressed two major common themes—the communist elements and Japanese factors in the Incident. This fixed official view of the Incident would remain in place for about four decades following the KMT's consolidation of political control over Taiwan from early 1947.

As the top leader of the KMT's civilian and military authorities in Taiwan around the time of the February 28 Incident, Governor Chen Yi to great extent shaped the KMT's initial policies toward the Incident partly because of his close relations with Chiang Kai-shek. Chen and Chiang were both born in Zhejiang province, in 1883 and 1887 respectively, and both went on to study in Japanese military schools, with Chen going to the Japanese Army Academy in 1902 and Chiang to Shinbu Gakko Military School in 1908.³⁶ In 1924, the Shanghai-based warlord Sun Chuanfang appointed Chen Yi as the commander of the First Zhejiang Division and then as governor of Zhejiang province in 1926, but Chen switched his loyalty to Chiang after the latter commanded the

³⁵ Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence*, 84, 88.

³⁶ Tokyo Shinbu Gakko was a preparatory school especially for Chinese students who wished to enter the Imperial Japanese Army Academy. Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 17-8.

Northern Expedition that took Shanghai in 1927. Afterward, Chen Yi received Chiang's appointment to govern Fujian in 1934, but his implementation of a controlled economy there resulted in popular resentment and his resignation in 1941. Despite that, Chiang appointed Chen Yi as the Executive of Taiwan with responsibility for both political and military power in 1947. Chen Yi again imposed a controlled-economy in Taiwan,³⁷ a policy that further worsened the already-deteriorated local economy and contributed to the outbreak of the February 28 Incident.

From the beginning of the Incident, however, Governor Chen Yi blamed communist and Japanese influences on the local Taiwanese for its occurrence. In his first two telegrams to Chiang Kai-shek on the evening of February 28, Chen accused communists and Taiwanese repatriated from Japan of colluding with local hooligans (*liumang*) in seizing the opportunity to riot that caused public disturbances and attacks on mainlanders.³⁸ Although Governor Chen Yi accepted the Resolution Committee's requests and placated the populace in his two broadcasts on March 1 and March 2 respectively,³⁹ he actually had already decided to employ forces to suppress the disturbance and requested Chiang to dispatch troops to Taiwan on March 2. He held that, rather than simply being common riots, the disturbance had developed into a rebellion in the central cities, despite his initial intention to seek peaceful solutions due to insufficient military forces. In this telegram, Chen Yi still insisted on communist incitement as lying behind the Incident, but he made a new claim that communists coming from Hainan Island were utilizing the pro-Japan collaborationist gentry (*yuyong shenshi*) and local

³⁷ Dai Guohui 戴國輝 and Ye Yuyun 葉芸芸, *Aizeng Ererba: Shenhua yu shishi, jiekai lishi zhi mi* 愛憎二二八：神話與事實，揭開歷史之謎 (Love and hate about the February 28 Incident: Myth and historical facts, opening the mystery of history) (Taipei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 1992), 67-70, 84-87

³⁸ Hou, ed., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 111-12.

³⁹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 2, 1947:2, March 3, 1947: Extra edition.

hooligans, and advancing the slogan of Taiwanese self-rule, to generate social disorder. Thus, he argued, sufficient military forces were needed to thoroughly quell the disturbance.⁴⁰ This communication was followed by his subsequent telegram on March 4, in which Chen again asked Chiang to grant his previous request for military reinforcements. Although Chen admitted that the Taiwanese were unhappy with the KMT administration and the arriving mainlanders, he stressed that the disturbance would not have expanded so widely without communist (jiandang) incitement of public indignation.⁴¹

Governor Chen Yi did not alter his opinions despite his public assurance to the Taiwanese of the government's goodwill. On March 5, he received Chiang's positive response to his request,⁴² yet on the same evening, Chen made a third broadcast, this time, expressing a commitment to political reform and stating that the Governor-General's office had already requested that the Central government reorganize the Taiwan Administrative Executive Office into a Taiwan Provincial Government (Taiwan shengzhengfu) and to staff the higher offices in the provincial government with local Taiwanese. In addition, elections for mayors of counties and cities began to be organized for July 1, 1947. Chen Yi also called for the public to be alert to dangerous rumors and to trust the government.⁴³

On March 6, Chen Yi submitted a detailed report to Chiang on the course and cause of the Incident. In the report, Chen Yi added remaining Japanese, along with common Taiwanese who lacked Chinese national consciousness (*guojia yishi*) to the

⁴⁰ Xue Yueshun 薛月順, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian* 二二八事件檔案彙編 (Archive materials on the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2017), vol. 23, 229-32.

⁴¹ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian* v.17, 113-14.

⁴² Hou, ed., *Ereba shijian dangan huibian* v. 17, 115-6.

⁴³ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 8, 1947:1.

aforementioned three kinds of people responsible for the disturbance, with emphasis on their ethnic violence against mainlanders and their tendency toward Taiwanese separatism. Again he essentially claimed the disturbance amounted to a planned and organized rebellion.⁴⁴ This was followed by two telegrams on March 7 with further requests for the increase of the military reinforcements to Taiwan, and the thorough quashing of the revolts. In one of these telegrams, Chen Yi accused the US Consulate in Taipei of involvement in the Incident, and of its contacts with reactionaries and criticism of the Chen Yi government. He further claimed that the substance of the Taiwan disturbances lay in the action of reactionaries, who took advantage of military weakness and prepared for revolts at every opportunity.⁴⁵

However, it was mainly Chiang Kai-shek himself who set the tone for the KMT's response to the Incident. After the outbreak of the February 28 Incident, he received related reports from various KMT agencies. Chiang's initial reactions to the Incident were recorded in his diary entry of March 1⁴⁶ and in his reflection on the political events of the previous month around that day.⁴⁷ In that reflection, Chiang regarded February 1947 as the most difficult time for the KMT's military, economy and politics. He especially revealed his annoyance at critical public opinions in the US and other countries,

⁴⁴ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 122-29.

⁴⁵ Hou, ed., *Ereba shijian dangan huibian*, vol. 17, 138-40, 142-46, 153-55. At the time, the consul of the US Consulate in Taipei was Ralph J. Blake. Chen Yi actually pointed to the vice consul, George H. Kerr.

⁴⁶ Lu, ed., *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, vol.8, 621.

⁴⁷ This is written in the "Reflection of This Month" for the month of February, 1947 in his diary. According to Yang Tianshi's studies, it was not definitely at the end of the month when Chiang wrote the "Reflection." Rather, it was often written on some day of the next month. Indeed, according to official documents, the first telegram about the February 28 Incident was sent from Taiwan at 10:44 pm on February 28, and it was not received by Chiang's office until 3 am on March 1. Therefore, Chiang would not learn of the Incident until March 1. However, it cannot be ruled out that Chiang might have learned of it through other channels such as telephone calls before March 1. Yang Tianshi 楊天石, *Zhaoxun zhenshi de Jiang Jieshi: Jiang Jieshi riji jiedu* 找尋真實的蔣介石：蔣介石日記解讀 (Searching for the truth of Chiang Kai-shek: Interpretations of Chiang Kai-shek's diary, v.2) (Hong Kong: Sanlian, 2010), vol.2, 404.

and he denounced “the domestic reactionary elements (fandong fenzi), the so-called Democratic League that colluded with university professors to incite the public, and disturb the social order in an attempt to cause the economic and political collapse” of his regime.⁴⁸ This statement reflected Chiang’s anger at the Democratic League and similar organizations of intellectuals, who pursued democratic initiatives against the KMT’s Civil War policy. Thus, Chiang’s distrust of Taiwan’s civilian protests and later Taiwan elites’ political requests was not surprising.

Chiang’s diary entries from around March 1 also show that he had received reports about the outbreak of protests among Taiwanese at the tobacco monopoly office and about their attacks on mainlanders on the island. Because he regarded the relocation of KMT troops from Taiwan to the mainland battlefields as a major cause of the Incident, he had to plan to pacify the Taiwan rebellion and handle the aftermath while at the same time preparing for his anti-CCP campaigns in Yan’an, Shandong, northern Jiangsu and other provinces.⁴⁹ However, it was not until March 5 that Chiang responded to Chen Yi’s request for military reinforcements for Taiwan. According to Chen Cuilian’s studies, from February 28 to March 5, the KMT’s major party, political and military organs in Taiwan, including Chen Yi’s office, the Central Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (CBIS, an intelligence unit under the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, commonly known as Zhongtong) on the island, the Taiwan branch of CNA, and the gendarmerie, all either asserted the involvement of communist elements in the Incident or accused the protestors of being rebels and requested or suggested dispatching military

⁴⁸ Lu, ed., *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, vol.8, 619.

⁴⁹ Lu, ed., *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, vol.8, 620-21.

reinforcements to suppress the disturbance on Taiwan.⁵⁰ The report of the gendarmerie in particular indicated that the Taiwanese rioters were guilty of crimes of treason that included attacking military warehouses, seizing firearms, and disarming army units.⁵¹ While there is no direct evidence linking these reports and Chiang's decision, nevertheless, on the same day, Chiang informed Chen Yi of the dispatch of forces consisting of one army regiment and one battalion of military police to Taiwan in response to Chen Yi's requests made on March 2 and March 4.⁵²

Moreover, Chiang further decided on increasing reinforcements to Taiwan on March 6. This move included, according to Ke Yuanfen, sending the whole 21st Division, along with two battalions of the gendarmerie's 21st regiment.⁵³ The visit of the US ambassador John Leighton Stuart on the same day might have convinced Chiang of the severity of the Incident and affected Chiang's decision. Stuart informed Chiang that the US Consul in Taipei, Ralph Blake, had requested that the Embassy dispatch aircraft to Taiwan to evacuate the families of American diplomats in case the situation in Taiwan might further deteriorate. Meanwhile, Stuart also delivered to Chiang a telegram from a Taiwanese group, pleading with Chiang to avoid using military means in case of a worsening of the situation. In fact, during this period, Taiwanese groups such as the Resolution Committee, the Taiwan provincial councilors, and the Taiwan Political Construction Association also appealed to Chiang with a request for a peaceful resolution

⁵⁰ Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 346-8.

⁵¹ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, v.17, 119-20.

⁵² Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, v.17, 115-16.

⁵³ Ke Yuanfen 柯遠芬, "Shibian shiri ji" 事變十日記 (Entries of ten days during the February 28 Incident), in *Ereba yanjiu* 3rd ed. 二二八研究 (Research on the February 28 Incident), ed. Li Ao 李敖 (Taipei: Liao chubanshe, 1991), 253.

rather than military suppression.⁵⁴ However, Chiang in his diary criticized the Americans for being impetuous and apt to be utilized by these Taiwanese “reactionaries,” and he thus ignored the pleas.⁵⁵

Thus, Chiang did not change his mind about effecting a military solution to the Taiwan Incident. On March 7, he urged Chen Yi to report further on the recent situation while informing Chen of the number and schedule of the reinforcements arriving in Taiwan, and asking him to attend to strategic plans for military action once the troops landed.⁵⁶ On the same day, Chiang expressed in his diary the view that the Taiwanese had forgotten the mother country as a result of long-term enslavement by the Japanese, but that, although ungrateful to the KMT government’s benevolence (*huaide*), they would be fearful of its military might (*weiwei*). Meanwhile, Chiang also expressed his concerns about shortages of effective forces available for dispatch to Taiwan to purge the communists, even though communist cells had not yet even been consolidated on the island.⁵⁷ Chiang’s diary revealed his distrust of the Taiwanese and their democratic pursuits under the influence of Japanese colonial rule and of the communists. It should be noted that Chiang’s comments on the Taiwanese also reflected his own broader belief in the usefulness of force.

Over the following days, Chiang further considered military suppression and subsequent pacification tasks. On March 8, he instructed Chen Yi on tactics regarding military action.⁵⁸ The next day, on March 9, Liu Yuqing, the commander of the 21st

⁵⁴ Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 361-2.

⁵⁵ Lu, *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, v.8, 625; Hou, ed., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, v.17, 136, 149-51.

⁵⁶ Hou, ed., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, v.17, 147-50.

⁵⁷ Lu, *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, v.8, 625

⁵⁸ Hou, ed., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, v.17, 172-3.

Division, was summoned and given instructions on military policy and on the deployment of troops on Taiwan. Meanwhile, Chiang met Bai Chongxi, Minister of Defense, assigning Bai the task of bringing reconciliation to Taiwan.⁵⁹ The arrangement revealed Chiang's policy of "suppression first, pacification afterward" toward the Taiwan Incident.

On March 10, Chiang openly expressed views that would define the KMT's policy toward the February 28 Incident over the next four decades. In his talk at an event commemorating Sun Yat-sen, he maintained that communists among the former Taiwanese soldiers who had been conscripted by the Japanese colonial government and were then repatriated from Southeast Asia had incited the insurrection and demanded political reforms. Chiang indicated that the demands of the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee on March 7 for dissolving the Taiwan Provincial Garrison and disarming the military, as well as for staffing the army and navy forces with the Taiwanese, overstepped the line.⁶⁰ Chiang's allegation of the role of communists in the Incident undoubtedly had to do with information provided to him by KMT officials on Taiwan such as Chen Yi. But given the recent failure of KMT-CCP negotiations, the logic behind Chiang's linking of the communists to the Incident had to do as well with the two parties' power struggle. As mentioned before, the CCP's core demand in its negotiations with the KMT was in essence for political and military self-rule in the regions it controlled. The demand of the Taiwan elites for political and military autonomy listed in the Forty-Two Demands thus resembled that of the CCP and challenged the

⁵⁹ Lu, *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, v.8, 627.

⁶⁰ See Wei Yongzhi 魏永竹, ed., *Ereba Shijian wenxian xulu* 二二八事件文獻續錄 (The historiographical records of the Taiwan event of February 28, 1947 vol. 2) (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1992), vol.2, 473-74. Also see *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947: 1&2; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 11, 1947:1.

KMT's power on the island. Given the similarity of communist and Taiwanese demands as well as the presence of at least some communist agents on Taiwan, however minimal their number, Chiang's logic is understandable. In fact, in a telegram sent on February 10, 1947, he reassured Chen Yi as the highest commander on Taiwan of his power and discretion to settle the matter when he warned Chen Yi of the communists who had snuck into Taiwan.⁶¹ And given Chen Yi's determination to "purge evil bandits (*suqing jianfei*)" expressed in the March 2 telegram, Chiang's move suggests at least his consent to military suppression.

Following the aforementioned public speech on March 10, Chiang's belief in use of military force in Taiwan was further evident in his diary entry of March 15, which stated that "...the newly-recovered land and peripheral provinces are all to be maintained by force."⁶² Given the situation Chiang was encountering on the mainland, it seems logical that he would hope to eliminate any possible oppositional forces and to quickly put down the social disturbances occurring in Taiwan at the time as a way of ensuring a crucial source of supplies for his war against the communists. Chiang's distrust of the Taiwanese, along with reports about the American involvement in the Incident and his belief in principle in the need for using military means also contributed to his decision in favour of military suppression of the civil disturbance on Taiwan. Consequently, Chiang ignored the plea by the local Taiwanese elites and instead favored military suppression.

Following the armed suppression of the Taiwanese pursuit of self-governance, Bai Chongxi was appointed head of the conciliation mission to Taiwan. Bai was a former leader of the Guangxi military clique (*xin guixi*) inside the Nationalist Army from the

⁶¹ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, v.17, 107-8.

⁶² Lu, *Jiang Zhongzheng xiansheng nianpu changbian*, v.8, 633.

time of the Northern Expedition around 1926. In the anti-Japanese war, he and Li Zongren, another major leader of this military clique, achieved victory in the famous Battle of Taierzhuang in 1938. After the KMT-CCP Civil War broke out, Bai commanded a KMT army that defeated the CCP army under Lin Biao in the Siping Campaign (Siping huizhan) in April-May 1946. In June 1946, he became the minister of defense. Bai's involvement in Taiwan's February 28 Incident thus further confirms its relation with the KMT-CCP Civil War in mainland China.⁶³

The outbreak of the February 28 Incident directly pulled Bai's attention away from the battlefield in mainland China. As the minister of defense, also the vice chairman (fu zhuren weiyuan) of the Political Council for the Regions under Pacification (Quanguo suijing qu zhengwu weiyuanhui), he was supervising military operations in northern China around the time of the Incident. On March 7, Bai flew to Taiyuan in Shanxi, where he met with Yan Xishan, the director of the Shanxi Pacification Office (*Shanxi suijing gongshu*) and planned further discussions for next day. The next day, on March 8, however, he was called back by Chiang Kai-shek to Nanjing and left Taiyuan without attending the meeting. Though Bai did not leave Nanjing for Taiwan until March 17, he was engaged in dealings with the Taiwan Incident prior to his trip, including working on a draft of suggestions for handling the Incident.⁶⁴

Bai's conciliation-mission to Taiwan started from March 17 to April 2, during which he toured across the island and delivered a number of open talks and broadcasts. His views of the Incident were expressed with variations on different occasions, but like Chiang Kai-shek, he mainly listed evil Japanese colonial education and communist

⁶³ Bai and Liao, *Zhitong liaoshang*, 38.

⁶⁴ Bai and Liao, *Zhitong liaoshang*, 43-9.

incitement as the two major causes of the disturbance, such as in his broadcast to Chinese citizens and overseas Chinese on March 27, as has been noted in chapter one. Moreover, what was more important was his treatment of the aftermath of the Incident. On March 17, immediately after his arrival at Taiwan, Bai announced the principles of the central government's solution to the Incident in both the Defense Department Notice and a broadcast to the whole province. The key points of the four principles included commitments to restructure the Taiwan Executive Office into a Taiwan provincial government and to hold popular elections for county magistrates and mayors; as well as to appoint more Taiwanese staff in the provincial government and secure equal treatment of Taiwanese and mainland China-origin public employees; to revise or abolish the current economic system of Taiwan and decrease the scope of public enterprises; and to handle those people involved in the Incident leniently except for the communist instigators.⁶⁵

After the mission, Bai submitted a report to the central government on April 6 of 1947, followed by an oral report on the next day in a meeting during the commemorative week held by the central government for Sun Yat-sen (*zhongshu jinian zhou*). Bai's accounts gave the long-term (*yuanyin*) and short-term (*jinyin*) causes of the uprising. The former included the effects of evil Japanese education, the roles played by Japanese-cultivated collaborationist gentry and hooligans, and severe unemployment. As for the short-term causes, Bai pointed to communist instigation, the slim chances for political participation by Taiwanese, along with the post-war economic dislocation and the official policy of allowing economic monopolies. In short, Bai attributed the cause of the Incident mainly to the evil Japanese colonial legacy and the communist agents who made use of

⁶⁵ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 19, 1947:1.

the principle of freedom of speech to incite people to revolt, as he argued the communists did in mainland China. In addition, although Bai noted the mismanagement of the provincial government in political and economic affairs, he denied the uprising was a result of people's dissatisfaction with the current conditions, but rather regarded the Incident as a rebellious attempt to subvert the government and seize power.⁶⁶ Despite noting the defects of Chen Yi government, Bai's discussion of the central causes of the Incident actually resembled, to a great extent, that of Chen Yi.

Besides Bai Chongxi, Yang Liangong, then the Supervisor for Fujian and Taiwan (*Min Tai qu jiancha shi*) was sent by the Control Yuan of the KMT government to Taiwan to investigate the Incident. Yang actually arrived in Taiwan earlier than Bai, but it was not until April 16 that he submitted his report, which would be the most detailed official report about the February 28 Incident the KMT government would release to the public when it came under public pressure to expose the truth of the Incident in 1988, more than four decades later. After Yang arrived in Taiwan on March 8, 1947, he sent Yu Youren, head of the Control Yuan, a series of telegrams, reporting on his experience of being ambushed by Taiwanese mobs on March 9, his meeting with Chen Yi and his suggestions for both suppressing the rebellion and placating the population on March 10. Yang also blamed communist elements for the disturbance. On March 12, he continued to report on the current situation, reiterating the charge of communist instigation in the Incident. Yang held that the disturbance was a result of

⁶⁶ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol. 17, 362-418; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, April 9, 1947:2; *Zhonghua ribao*, April 9, 1947:3.

Taiwanese discontent with politics and of their mentality of excluding outsiders.⁶⁷ On March 26, Yang met with Defense Minister Bai Chongxi, together with He Hanwen, a member of the Control Yuan, who had arrived in Taiwan on March 22. They exchanged their opinions and observations about the February 28 Incident. From March 28 to March 31, Yang and He toured the island north to south, inspecting major localities, meeting with KMT officials and with local people to gather opinions. The two then finished their investigation tour and left Taiwan on April 11.⁶⁸

On April 16, 1947 Yang submitted his report on the February 28 Incident. Similar to Bai's report, Yang's account detailed the major causes of the Incident as Taiwanese misconceptions of the motherland and the poisonous legacy of Japanese colonization. Although Yang also indicated the economic and administrative mismanagement of the Chen Yi administration in addition to inflation and unemployment issues, he mainly blamed these problems on individual public employees and on external, uncontrollable factors such as insufficient human and economic capital to rebuild Taiwan in the initial post-war period, as well as on the economic deterioration already apparent in the later period of Japanese rule. Meanwhile, Yang also emphasized Taiwanese violence against the authorities and mainlanders and highlighted other issues, such as malicious criticisms against the government, a post-war security vacuum, the agitations of politically ambitious Taiwanese (*zhengzhi yexinjia*) and of communists as the causes of the Incident.⁶⁹ In terms of participants of the Incident, in addition to hooligans, repatriated Taiwanese soldiers from Hainan and Southeast Asia, members of Three People's

⁶⁷ Chen Xintang 陳興唐, ed., *Nanjing dier lishi dangangan cang: Taiwan Ererba Shijian dangan shiliao* 南京第二歷史檔案館藏：台灣二二八事件檔案史料 (Archives in Nanjing Second Historical Archives: Archive materials on the February 28 Incident of Taiwan) (Taipei: Renjian chubanshe, 1992), 185-87.

⁶⁸ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 28, 1947:4; March 31, 1947:4; April 1, 1947:4; April 12, 1947:4.

⁶⁹ Hou, ed., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 475-83.

Principles Youth League, Indigenous Taiwanese, remaining Japanese, and of course the communists, Yang also listed students, ambitious Taiwanese politicians, and former members of the Kominhokokai (*Huangmin fenggong hui*, or Public Service Association of Imperial Subjects)—that is, the educated Taiwanese political elite, the very groups that had been a major force pursuing Taiwan’s political autonomy since the 1920s during the Japanese colonial period.⁷⁰

While these evaluations by KMT authorities of the February 28 Incident all centered blame on the effects of the communists’ instigation and Japanese colonial legacy, their accounts, in particular those of Bai and Yang, of the course of the Incident simultaneously reflected a two-tier Taiwanese resistance, involving both political petitions and violent protests. Both Bai and Yang gave a day-by-day account of the development of the Incident before the landing of KMT troops. However, their graphic descriptions of civilian-military clashes, local armed rebellions and attacks by Taiwanese “thugs” on government institutions, paradoxically reflected, like the records of the Resolution Committee’s activities, a continuity with armed resistance in Taiwan’s past on the one hand, and the gradual organization of political activities on the other.⁷¹ Given the KMT’s political concerns at the time and its intense rivalry with the CCP, its evaluations of the Incident are understandable. Similarly, given the CCP’s position in the power struggle with the KMT, its wartime statements about the February 28 Incident naturally affirmed Taiwanese resistance to the KMT regime.

⁷⁰ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 483-89.

⁷¹ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 372-79, 449-75.

The CCP's Wartime Strategies and Its Statements on the February 28 Incident

Like the KMT, the CCP based its responses to the February 28 Incident on its strategies for the Civil War. As an oppositional force engaging in political and military struggles with the ruling KMT, the CCP was aware of the importance of promoting its own underground organizations and promoting popular protests on Taiwan to aid its war efforts in mainland China. As has been seen, it had furthered communist expansion in Taiwan soon after the anti-Japanese war. Not surprisingly, the CCP attempted a two-front war strategy during the February 28 Incident in Taiwan while utilizing the Incident for anti-KMT propaganda purposes. While the KMT blamed the communists for the Incident, the CCP articulated its support for the popular movement on Taiwan. In particular, it soon backed Taiwanese elites' political demands for self-rule, as it had similarly tried to negotiate with the KMT for self-governance for the communist areas on the mainland before and at the beginning of the full-scale Civil War.

The CCP established its Taiwan Provincial Work Committee by May 1946, as mentioned above. Although this underground communist organization attracted the attention of KMT authorities, including Chiang Kai-shek himself, from its beginning and especially during the February 28 Incident, its actual role in the Incident was in fact limited, as is detailed in Chapter 4. In fact, even the CCP's public or secret reports neglected covering the role of the Taiwan Provincial Work Committee in the February 28 Incident at the beginning. Nonetheless, the CCP seized on the Incident for its anti-KMT political mobilization and propaganda task regarding mainland China.

By using its propaganda organs *Renmin ribao* and *Jiefang ribao* to voice support of the Taiwanese protests and disseminate reports about a corrupt and despotic Chiang

regime in Taiwan as noted in Chapter One, the CCP originally tried to intensify the social upheavals on the island as part of its political strategy for its second-front war with KMT.⁷² However, after the local elites of Taiwan presented their proposals for a certain degree of autonomy from the KMT regime on the island, the CCP central authorities took the opportunity to incorporate the Taiwanese demands into their own wartime strategies and political propaganda against Chiang Kai-shek's government.

In fact, during Chiang and Mao's initial negotiations for postwar peace from August 28 to October 10, 1945, the KMT had already insisted on the restructuring of the national government within its current institutional framework and under the KMT's military domination. The CCP, on the contrary, demanded political democratization through various measures, including the opening of a multi-party political consultation conference, nationwide elections to the National Assembly, and most importantly, provincial autonomy, especially in areas under CCP military control.

Through the mediation of the US Special Envoy General George C. Marshall, an armistice between KMT and CCP was signed on January 10, 1946. From January 10 to January 31, the Political Consultative Conference (Zhengzhi xieshang huiyi) was held in Chongqing by the KMT and the CCP, together with minor parties like the Democratic League (Minzhu tongmeng) and the Youth Party (Qingnian dang), as well as some non-partisan participants. At this conference, the KMT insisted on central control over the entire country by the central government. On the contrary, the CCP, with the support of the minor parties, demanded provincial autonomy, on which it had insisted since late

⁷² For example, some CCP underground members, such as Wu Ketai, worked for *Zhongwai ribao* and utilized news reports to spread the news about the Taipei disturbances. See Ye Yunyun 葉芸芸, ed., *Zhengyan Ererba* 證言二二八 (Testimonies of the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Renjian chubashe, 1993), 70, 99, 173.

1945. Eventually all parties reached a consensus on five major resolutions that would in theory underwrite a coalition government, yet the conference ultimately failed because the KMT insisted on revising certain points of the resolutions, in particular that affirming provincial autonomy.⁷³ That move soon resulted in the outbreak of full-scale Civil War between KMT and CCP in late 1946.

On June 25, 1946, Mao's secret telegram to CCP general Lin Biao in Manchuria indicated that peaceful negotiations had broken down and that nationwide Civil War had started, but Mao still envisioned that peace could resume if the CCP's military forces could win successes over KMT armies in battlefields in the next six months or year. Moreover, he decided to let CCP delegates still continue peaceful negotiations with the KMT regime in its capital of Nanjing, still pursuing a compromise between the two parties.⁷⁴ Thus, the CCP continued its political competition with the KMT through political negotiations, including the demand for provincial autonomy, until its delegates were driven out of Nanjiang in early 1947, when the February 28 Incident happened on Taiwan. Naturally, the CCP used the Taiwanese self-government proposal in its political propaganda against the KMT.

On March 8, 1947, the CCP's central committee in Yan'an issued its first official statements in a radio broadcast as a response to the Taiwan uprising.⁷⁵ This broadcast was further articulated as an editorial entitled "Taiwan zizhi yundong" (Taiwanese self-government movement) both in the *Jiefang ribao* on March 20, 1947, and in *Renmin ribao* on March 22, 1947. The statements recounted the autocracy and corruption of the

⁷³ Pepper, *Civil War in China*, 137-8; Jiang and Liu, *Jiang Jieshi yu Guo-Gong hezhan, 1945-1949*, 26-35.

⁷⁴ Mao Zedong 毛澤東, *Mao Zedong junshi wenji*, v. 3 毛澤東軍事文集 (Selected military writings of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1993), 277-78, 283-84, 295, 301.

⁷⁵ Chen, "Zhonggong Ererba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian," 115-16.

Chiang regime, defined the aim of the Incident as the pursuit of the island's political autonomy, and offered the CCP's revolutionary experiences to the Taiwanese people in their struggle against the KMT. The opening sentence of the editorial directly stressed the mistreatment of the Taiwanese people by the Chiang regime as the major cause of the unrest: "[t]he Self-Government Movement of the Taiwanese people is peaceful. It was because of the massacre carried out by the armed forces of the Chiang regime that the Taiwanese people were forced to rise up." It further declared that the "Taiwanese Self-Government Movement is absolutely legitimate, lawful and peaceful." The editorial even allied with the Taiwanese by saying that "your struggle is our struggle; your victory is our victory; the soldiers and civilians in the liberated areas will certainly strive to support and help you." Thus, the CCP clearly and unmistakably characterized the February 28 Incident as a people's uprising against Chiang Kai-shek's autocratic rule and defined it as an autonomous movement aiming for democratic reform.⁷⁶

However, it is notable that the CCP did not claim its leadership or its role in the February 28 Incident in these early statements or its early news reports. Rather, it claimed that "it was a peaceful autonomous movement of the Taiwanese people," and that it was the Taiwanese people who organized the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee to demand political reforms.⁷⁷ In fact, as the statements reveal, the insurrection occurring in Taiwan and revolutionary struggles in the liberated areas were treated as two parallel struggles aiming for the same broad purpose. Therefore, the CCP offered to "contribute" their experience to assist Taiwan's struggle for autonomy.

⁷⁶ *Jiefang ribao*, March 20, 1947:1&2; *Renmin ribao*, March 22, 1947:1.

⁷⁷ *Renmin ribao*, March 22, 1947:1.

This official evaluation of the February 28 Incident by the CCP was rather part of a political strategy stemming from its current position in the Civil War against the KMT over political domination. The KMT regime was then the legitimate government of China, supported by the US and recognized by the UN. However, though ostensibly the KMT was the sovereign government, the two parties in essence controlled their own political and military powers in their respective regions, and KMT-CCP negotiations suggested that the KMT aimed at centralization while the CCP pursued power-sharing through local autonomy in its areas.⁷⁸ For that reason, the CCP's political negotiations with KMT for provincial autonomy led to its endorsement and confirmation of the February Incident as part of Taiwanese's struggle for self-rule. Evidently, the CCP's statements about the February 28 Incident can be considered as a strategic move to propagandize and justify both its armed resistance and political campaigns against the KMT regime. In other words, the CCP legitimated its power struggle against the KMT partly through endorsing the legitimacy of the Taiwan uprising against the KMT.

Meanwhile, the CCP's support of Taiwanese communists was also a factor in its propaganda. After the Incident, a few former members of the Taiwanese Communist Party, or the CCP's Taiwan Province Work Committee, fled to Hong Kong, and established there the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League (Taiwan minzhu zizhi tongmeng) with the assistance and support of the Chinese Communist Party on November 12 of 1947. According to Tong Xiangshun, the CCP indicated the need for an organized political group to mobilize the people in Taiwan for the revolutionary mission,

⁷⁸ Jiang and Liu, *Jiang Jieshi yu Guo Gong hezhan, 1945-1949*, 3-11; Deng, *Lianhe hengfu yu yi dang xunzheng*, 173-180.

and suggested these former Taiwanese communists establish the political organization of a united front.⁷⁹

The League then shared the CCP's anti-American political agenda at that stage and linked the February 28 Incident with the CCP's revolutionary movement. In February 1948, the League held an anniversary forum of the February 28 Incident in Hong Kong and released a special publication titled *Taiwan Eryue Geming zhounian teji* (An anniversary special on the February Revolution of Taiwan) with essays by CCP figures such as Guo Moruo to commemorate the anniversary of the Incident. These essays articulated the idea of “the uprising being part of the Chinese revolution” (Taiwan geming shi Zhongguo geming de yibufen), thus incorporating the February 28 uprising into the CCP's liberation mission and its revolutionary history.⁸⁰ In October 1948, the League attacked the collaboration between Chiang and the US government while denouncing support for Taiwan's “trusteeship” or “independence” as a traitorous initiative that would turn the island into an American colony or as a form of complicity with an American conspiracy in favor of Taiwanese separatism. It called for increasing the Taiwan people's political awareness and commitment to unification, staying aligned with the CCP's propaganda agenda for the elimination

⁷⁹ Tong Xiangshun 仝祥順, “Taiwan Minzhu Zizhi Tongmeng yu Ererba Shijian” 台灣民主自治同盟與二二八事件 (Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League and the February 28 Incident), in *Taimeng yu Ererba Shijian* 台盟與二二八事件 (Taiwan Democratic Self-Government and the February 28 Incident), ed. Wang Xiaobo 王曉波 (Taipei: Haixia xueshu chubanshe, 2004), 372-74. Also see Taiwan Minzhu Zizhi Tongmeng 台灣民主自治同盟, “Taimeng de chengli yu gangling” 台盟的成立與綱要 (The establishment and programs of Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League), http://www.taimeng.gov.cn/tmly/lfsz/t20061108_151059.htm (accessed 4 December 2016).

⁸⁰ Tong, “Taiwan Minzhu Zizhi Tongmeng yu Ererba Shijian,” 375-76.

of the KMT regime and the liberation of Taiwan, and expelling the American imperialists.⁸¹

In addition, in 1948 and 1949, two books about the Incident were published in Hong Kong by two communist members from Taiwan, Yang Kehuang and Su Xin respectively, further articulating the CCP's endorsement of the self-government purpose of the Incident, though they also linked the Incident with the CCP's liberation mission. Yang's *Taiwan Eryue Geming* (The February Revolution of Taiwan) details the course of the Incident, claiming that it was a result of the KMT regime's political oppression and economic exploitation. This book still states that the February 28 Incident embodied the Taiwanese peoples' pursuit of democracy and of self-government, and that it was of great significance to the revolutionary history of the Chinese people.⁸² Su Xin's *Fennu de Taiwan*, written under the pseudonym "Zhuang Jianong," gives a brief history of the local resistance to colonial powers and situates the February 28 Incident in the trajectory of this history. However, it links the Taiwanese tradition of resistance with the CCP's own revolutionary mission. It reproduces the message of the broadcast by the CCP's Central authority on March 8 of 1947. Based on that broadcast, however, it also argues that the February 28 Incident was the Taiwanese people's struggle for democracy and self-government against the KMT's rule rather than an independence movement.⁸³ Su further indicated that the relationship of the uprising to the communists' liberation war in mainland China was that the

⁸¹ Tong, "Taiwan Minzhu Zizhi Tongmeng yu Ererba Shijian," 382-83.

⁸² Yang Kehuang 楊克煌, *Taiwan Eryue Geming* 台灣二月革命 (The February revolution of Taiwan) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, (1948)1990), 6.

⁸³ Su, *Fennu de Taiwan*, 160.

uprising forced the KMT into the deployment of troops to Taiwan when it needed such forces for its war against the CCP. In this regard, the uprising helped the communists' liberation war in Mainland China.⁸⁴

Therefore, by maintaining the analysis of the CCP central authority's "1947 Statement" in emphasizing the place of Taiwanese self-governance in the incident, Yang and Su conveniently incorporated the Incident into the CCP's liberation campaign and its revolutionary history. However, after seizing power over mainland China, and with corresponding changes in its political position, the CCP central authority would adjust its interpretation of the February 28 Incident on Taiwan in the coming years.

KMT-CCP Confrontation and Construction of the February 28 Incident, 1950-1972

The Korean War, the Cold War, and Taiwan-strait Politics

Although the CCP successfully pushed the KMT regime out of mainland China in late 1949, changes in international politics paradoxically saved the KMT regime from its demise. After the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950 the US not only intervened in the war but also provided protection for the KMT regime and prevented the CCP's military actions against the island. Whatever the stated American intentions regarding its military involvement, the US intervention in the Taiwan Strait and its support of the KMT regime on Taiwan helped consolidate the KMT's authoritarian rule on the island, and allowed it to reiterate its anti-communist narratives about the February 28 Incident and ensure its imposition of public silence on the issue on the island.

⁸⁴ Su, *Fennu de Taiwan*, 164.

Meanwhile, the CCP regime, that of the PRC, shifted its military attention from Taiwan to the Korean War and postponed its campaign on Taiwan indefinitely. As a result, the CCP dropped its previous support for Taiwanese self-government in the February 28 Incident, but instead redeployed it to politically prepare for the “liberation” of Taiwan and to strengthen the PRC’s claim to sovereignty over the island.

Following the KMT’s loss of the Civil War to the CCP and its retreat to Taiwan in late 1949, the US was initially ready to give up the island. By the end of December 1949, the US government had determined to cease military assistance for Taiwan despite a contrary recommendation by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and pressure from pro-Chiang congressmen for an alliance with the ROC regime on Taiwan. On January 5, 1950, President Harry S. Truman further reaffirmed the US non-interventionist stance toward Taiwan in a press statement, which clarified that the US would neither interfere in KMT-CCP conflict nor provide the KMT regime on Taiwan with military aid or advice. One week later, on January 12, Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State, followed this stand and announced the US defense perimeter, one that excluded Taiwan and South Korea, and the cessation of further military provisions to the KMT regime on Taiwan. These statements explicitly suggested the American abandonment of the KMT regime and the island.⁸⁵

However, the US government soon changed its policy toward Taiwan. According to John Price, decolonization movements in East Asia, often led by communists, had undermined the US policy of “containment” by 1949, and this generated severe disagreements and debates among US policy-makers, in particular the debate over the “loss” of China. The result of the debate was the adoption of National Security Council

⁸⁵ Hsiao-ting Lin, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), 127-29.

Paper No. 68 (NSC-68) in April 1950, which embodied “the ascent of aggressive US military expansion” and “the basis for imperial over-reach.” The policy provided with the legitimacy for US military aggression aiming at combatting the purported Soviet Union attempt at global hegemony.⁸⁶ Therefore, despite its anti-communism ideology at the time, the US policy-turn from non-military engagement to military intervention in East Asia had in fact much to do with its strategic ambition in the region in its competition with the Soviet Union for spheres of influence.

The outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950 then provided an opportunity for the US to impose itself militarily on East Asia.⁸⁷ It also provided justification for US military intervention in the Taiwan Strait. Although the US said it would avoid interference in Chinese internal politics, it declared the status of Taiwan to be legally “undetermined,” while sending the Seventh Fleet to maintain the neutrality of the Taiwan Strait and resuming its military aid to the KMT regime, particularly after the CCP’s engagement in the Korean War in late October 1950.⁸⁸

This new policy also caused US to re-evaluate the role Taiwan would play in American presence in East Asia. The US government had actually hoped that the development of Mao’s Communist China, like the communist regime under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito in Yugoslavia, would deviate from the Soviet Union;⁸⁹ nevertheless, despite tensions behind the scene, the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of

⁸⁶ John Price, *Orienteering Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 213-216.

⁸⁷ Price, *Orienteering Canada*, 217.

⁸⁸ Before the outbreak of the Korean War, the US president Truman took the position that Taiwan was “for all intents and purposes Chinese territory.” However, he changed that stance after the outbreak of the Korean War, and held that the future status of Taiwan “must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the United Nations.” Lin, *Accidental State*, 172-73; Feldman, “The Development of US-Taiwan Relations, 1948-1987,” 135-36.

⁸⁹ Lin, *Accidental State*, 170.

Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in February 1950 dashed that prospect and led US leaders to reassess its Taiwan policy. The US was concerned, following the formation of the Sino-Soviet alliance, that a CCP take-over of Taiwan would effect a breach of the barrier chain of offshore islands that would allow Soviet submarines to gain access to the open Pacific and heighten Japan's isolation. Thus, the Sino-Soviet treaty in this regard enhanced the geopolitical importance of Taiwan and convinced the US to support a consolidated regime on Taiwan cooperative with Washington, in accord with US strategic interests in combatting Sino-Soviet expansion in East Asia.⁹⁰

That Taiwan regime, however, was not necessarily going to be under the rule of Chiang or the KMT, as the American government planned at that time. In fact, a "hypothetical" plan for a military coup to replace Chiang with General Sun Liren came up in the State Department on May 3 1950, and an official memorandum on that topic was submitted to Dean Acheson on June 9. The memorandum held that the US should inform Chiang not only that Taiwan was certain to fall, given the current situation, and that there would be no support from the US to his regime; but also that the only way out of the KMT's political crisis was to request UN trusteeship.⁹¹ On June 15, another top-secret memorandum even further depicted the procedures of the implementation of the "coup."⁹² Meanwhile, calls for Chiang to put Taiwan under UN administration and to personally leave Taiwan to prevent the island from falling in the hands of the communists appeared in major press organs such as the *New York Times*.⁹³ However, General

⁹⁰ Lin, *Accidental State*, 170-73; Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*, 118.

⁹¹ Lin, *Accidental State*, 159.

⁹² Lin, *Accidental State*, 159-160.

⁹³ Lin, *Accidental State*, 160-161. *The New York Times* published a letter entitled "To Rescue Formosa" on April 27, 1950. See Vicente Villamin, "To Rescue Formosa: Legal Procedures for Saving Island From Communists Suggested," *The New York Times*, April 27, 1950, Letters to The Times, 28.

Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan, did not support the idea of ousting Chiang. In fact, Chiang's anti-communist stance helped win re-support from MacArthur, who held that the US should assist Chiang as long as Chiang was combatting the communists. MacArthur's visit to Taiwan on July 31 and August 1, 1950 further strengthened Chiang's leading status and political legitimacy.⁹⁴

On the other hand, the outbreak of the Korean War diverted the CCP from any military campaign against Taiwan in the light of the strengthened US-ROC relationship. The CCP had won over popular support in China largely because of its land reform policies, and on that basis it had subsequently defeated the KMT in the Civil War and come to power in 1949.⁹⁵ It then planned to proceed to "liberate" Taiwan. According to Jian Chen, CCP authorities viewed the conquest of Taiwan as both bringing about the end of China's fragmentation and the demise of the KMT enemy-regime. In addition, after the CCP's victory on the mainland, the liberation of Taiwan was seen as a priority for ensuring the safety of Shanghai and other coastal areas. The CCP in 1949 had been convinced that the defeated KMT forces would be unable to bear a major attack on the island, and that the US would not militarily interfere in the CCP's takeover of Taiwan, given previous experiences. However, US intervention in Korea and its presence in the Taiwan Strait required readjustment of the CCP's Taiwan campaign. The Korean crisis brought the CCP concerns about the security of the Northeast, the consolidation of its rule, and possible trouble from reactionary elements remaining on the mainland, yet the crisis simultaneously also served as an opportunity for the CCP to enhance its authority

⁹⁴ Lin, *Accidental State*, 156, 159-161, 174.

⁹⁵ Price, *Orienting Canada*, 194.

and leadership by firmly combatting US imperialism. Therefore, with the presence of the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait, the CCP decided to postpone the Taiwan campaign, which was downgraded to a long-term task, and shifted its focus to combatting the US in Korea and assisting the North Korean regime.⁹⁶

US engagement in the Korean War and support for the KMT regime on Taiwan deepened the confrontation between the CCP and the US over the next two decades. Given that antagonism, opposition to American imperialism and to KMT rule on Taiwan became linked themes of CCP's political propaganda for the next two decades. During this period the CCP utilized the commemoration of the February 28 Incident as a propaganda platform characterized by a stress on opposing American-KMT collaboration, and by the claim that Taiwan was an inalienable part of Chinese territory.

In short, the US-PRC confrontation facilitated US patronage for the KMT regime. Besides the military aid given right after the outbreak of the Korean War, the US further signed the Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China in December 1954. It provided additional economic aid until 1965 and then increased military aid in the second half of the 1960s as the US went to war in Vietnam.⁹⁷ Throughout this time, the US suspended its relations with the PRC, blocked the PRC on the international sphere and imposed a trade embargo.⁹⁸ To prevent further communist expansion in Asia, the US built up a complex containment structure, and Taiwan served as part of this during the years of the Cold War.⁹⁹ Even though the US anti-communism policies arose from its concerns about its strategic, political and economic interests in both the global and

⁹⁶ Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*, 96-8, 125-132.

⁹⁷ Feldman, "The Development of US-Taiwan Relations, 1948-1987," 133-39.

⁹⁸ Bernice Lee, *The Security Implications of the New Taiwan* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16.

⁹⁹ Bush, *At Cross Purposes*, 4-5.

regional settings,¹⁰⁰ its attitude toward communism had a significant effect on the KMT's own policies and attitudes towards the February 28 Incident. Relying on US aid and support, the KMT was in a sense compelled to strengthen its own anti-communist stance. Because the February 28 Incident clearly demonstrated at least a temporary failure in security and governmental responsibility, the KMT realized a need to censor public discussion of this event.

The US support in turn helped consolidate the KMT's authoritarian rule over Taiwan for the following decades. As Nancy Bernkopf Tucker points out, "The United States... valued the strategic potential of Taiwan too highly to risk undermining mutual confidence by insisting upon the kind of liberalization that American's principles and traditions in theory demanded."¹⁰¹ Beneath the anti-communist rhetoric, US priorities towards Taiwan in these years were dictated by its strategic agendas rather than by any commitment to the introduction of democracy.

This American stance was particularly evident in the views of Karl Rankin regarding KMT repression of political dissidents. Rankin succeeded Robert Strong as the US Consul-General at Taipei in 1950, and his experience in Greece, where the communists posed a threat when he served there during the Civil War (1946-49), led him to value Taiwan's position against communist expansion. Despite understanding the downside of KMT rule, he did not consider its political repression as ultimately undermining US interests. His reports on political conditions in Taiwan to Washington often adopted a friendly tone toward the KMT regime. Indeed, in terms of priorities, Rankin placed Taiwan's strategic importance of preventing communist expansion and

¹⁰⁰ Price, *Orienteering Canada*, 213-214.

¹⁰¹ Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992: Uncertain Friendships* (New York: Twayne, 1994), 77.

achieving economic development above the pursuit of democracy, and he opposed altering Taiwan's political system because US policy gave priority to anti-communist containment. After it took power, the Eisenhower administration would agree with Rankin's perspective "on the need to accommodate to authoritarian regimes that supported US strategic objectives."¹⁰² In fact, the influence of the "China Lobby" for Taiwan won the KMT regime strong support in US politics in the 1950s. According to Harvey Feldman, the combination of "the debate over 'who lost China,' the rise of McCarthyism, the crushing defeat of the Democratic Party in the Congressional election of 1950 and the Presidential election of 1952, and PRC entry into the Korean War," all contributed to the support of American politicians for the ROC.¹⁰³

The 1950s and 1960s marked the high tide of the KMT's authoritarian rule over Taiwan. On May 10, 1948 the KMT regime there first implemented the Provisional Amendments for the Period of Mobilization of the Suppression of Communist Rebellion (Dongyuan kanluan shiqi linshi tiaokuan), generally known as the Temporary Provisions, that had been previously imposed on mainland China. These provisions essentially suspended the constitution and allowed the president unlimited tenure and power as long as the state of "Civil War" with the CCP remained. Martial law was further imposed from 20 May 1949 until 15 July 1987. Under martial law, demonstrations, popular gatherings, and the formation of new political parties were all banned, and the press and other media were kept under strict control and censorship.¹⁰⁴ The combination of the Temporary Provisions and martial law ensured the political domination of the KMT's regime on

¹⁰² Bush, *At Cross Purposes*, 52, 55-8.

¹⁰³ Feldman, "The Development of US-Taiwan Relations, 1948-1987," 130.

¹⁰⁴ Hung-mao Tien, *The Great Transition: Political and Social Change in the Republic of China* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1989), 108-112, 206-207.

Taiwan, and thus the effective silencing of public opinion concerning the February 28 Incident.

Nonetheless, the KMT regime's rigid control was not without challenges. Two cases that demonstrated the efforts of the Taiwan people for the pursuit of democratization were the 1960 case of Lei Zhen and the *Free China Fortnightly Magazine* (Zhiyou Zhongguo banyuekan) and the Peng Mingmin case of 1964. Both cases were attempts for Taiwan's democracy against the KMT's authoritative rule, and in both the primary participants ended up in jail or exile. Peng Mingmin actually went so far as to call for a "Self-determination" movement that would seek a democratic Taiwan independent from China.¹⁰⁵ After fighting off Lei Zhen's and Peng Mingmin's failed attempts at democratization, the KMT continued its political monopoly, and the opposition camp went into silence for nearly a decade. In the early 1970s, however, the Dangwai¹⁰⁶ group again attempted to organize various opposition forces. Their initiatives, along with other oppositional activities in the 1970s and 1980s, can all be considered part of Taiwan's democratic movement that culminated in the February 28 Peace Day Movement (Ereba heping ri yundong)¹⁰⁷ in 1987.

¹⁰⁵ J. Bruce Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 36-43. For the declaration, see *Ziyou Zhongguo* 自由中國 22, no.12 (June 16, 1960): 18-19. Peng Mingmin 彭明敏, *Ziyou de ziwei* 自由的滋味 (Taste of freedom) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1988), 131-147.

¹⁰⁶ "Dangwai" literally means "outside the party." The party refers to the KMT, which was the only powerful and legitimate political party that had dominated Taiwan's politics for decades despite the existence of some rubber-stamped political parties under its sponsors and surveillance. According to J. Bruce Jacobs, though the term Dangwai was popular in the late 1970s, it was first used in the "Fifteen Demands" issued by a group of oppositionists in March 1960, when the very document itself was published on *Free China* magazine. It originally referred to two satellites parties, the Youth Party and the Democratic Socialist Party, along with the non-partisan members. See Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 39n93, 39-40, 52. For the document "Fifteen Demands," see *Ziyou Zhongguo* 22, no.7 (April, 1960): 30.

¹⁰⁷ Strictly speaking, the February 28 Peace Day Movement was unlike the Lei Zhen or Peng Mingmin cases, which involved political movements directly calling for democracy and challenging the KMT's rule. It focused more narrowly on "rehabilitating" the February 28 Incident and its victims. However, revising the past cannot erase the KMT regime's political and military oppression but instead reflect on its current political authoritarianism and oppression. In this regard, therefore, the February 28 Peace Day Movement

Yet, through this period, mainlanders continued to dominate Taiwan politics in the ensuing decades until the late 1980s, and that also made it hard for the KMT regime to change its previous policies toward the February 28 Incident. From 1950 to 1952, there were no Taiwanese in the KMT's Central Standing Committee, while from 1952 to 1968, the mainlanders still controlled all crucial positions in the central and provincial party headquarters, as well as in the party branches at the county and municipal levels. This political policy resulted in Mainlander-Taiwanese political antagonism that extended to KMT's antagonistic views of the February 28 Incident.

The KMT's Control over the Historiography on the February 28 Incident

After its retreat to Taiwan, the KMT, with its political domination in Taiwan, continued policies aimed at suppressing information about the February 28 Incident. Although measures of political mollification were implemented to ease local resentment in the immediate post-February 28 era, much of the relaxation was soon overturned, in line with the KMT's actual attitude toward the Incident. While the regime set about reconstructing its narrative of the Incident, political control to monitor the parties involved and monopolize discourse on the Incident was strengthened. Meanwhile, the regime took political steps to prevent repercussions, contain further political disturbances or opposition, and eliminate public discord about the Incident. Its repressive policies ensured public silence within Taiwan except for the KMT's voice about the Incident in the following four decades.

in a way did contribute to the push for political democratization, though it did not call for it directly. In fact, Zheng Nanrong, one of the founders of the February 28 Peace Day Association, the organization that initiated the Movement, and many of the other participants were political activists.

The KMT's stance on the February 28 Incident was manifested from its measures regarding the Incident from the beginning. While the regime took some measures to placate the Taiwan populace immediately after the military suppression, its subsequent operations countered those efforts. In the same year of 1947, the KMT first prosecuted six government agents for their wrongdoings,¹⁰⁸ reorganized the Provincial Administrative Executive Office into the Provincial Government (Sheng zhengfu) on the island, and replaced Chen Yi with a non-military official, Wei Daoming, as the first Provincial governor (*sheng zhuxi*) of Taiwan.¹⁰⁹ Wei implemented a series of measures to relax political and media control.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Taiwanese political participation, at least for some elites, initially seemed promising, as twelve out of the twenty-two members of the cabinet of the restructured provincial government were Taiwanese.¹¹¹ However, following its defeat in the Civil War, the KMT soon reversed its policy. Martial law was re-imposed on May 20 of 1949, and control of public opinion on and interpretations of the Incident were assumed by the KMT regime as early as March that same year because the print media remained under censorship. By that time, even Wei himself had been removed and replaced by General Chen Cheng, one of Chiang's closest confidants, on January 5, 1949.¹¹²

The KMT also used an array of strategies to mute public opinion and monopolize discourse on the February 28 Incident. Chen Cuilian indicates that the KMT regime utilized official publications to reconstruct the Incident, in particular stressing ethnic violence of Taiwanese against mainlanders. In addition, the regime contained further

¹⁰⁸ *Zhonghua ribao*, April 4, 1947:3

¹⁰⁹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, April 24, 1947:4.

¹¹⁰ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 509-11.

¹¹¹ *Zhonghua ribao*, April 30, 1947:1.

¹¹² Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence*, 96.

possible opposition through pursuing legal prosecutions and surveillance of persons involved in the Incident, while eliminating oppositional public opinion on the Incident through media control.¹¹³ Indeed, the KMT regime's repressive policy on the Incident can be illustrated in four aspects: narrative reconstruction of the event, censorship, prosecution, and surveillance, all of which effectively served to mute discord about the February 28 Incident.

Immediately after the initial disturbance, the KMT actively engaged in the reconstruction of the Incident. In addition to its top leaders' responses, talks, and internal reports as discussed earlier in this chapter, the KMT reconstructed the story of the Incident through publications by various state- and party-affiliated organizations, such as the Taiwan Provincial Executive Office, the Ministry of National Defense, the Taiwan Garrison Command, the police apparatus, and affiliated agencies.¹¹⁴ These publications had two major characteristics: firstly, they followed the tone set by the KMT central authority to define the nature and causes of the Incident with an emphasis on Taiwanese violence against *waishengren* (mainlanders, or Chinese people from provinces other than Taiwan after the retrocession); secondly, they justified the KMT administration's military suppression of Taiwanese dissidents. For example, *Taiwan sheng Ererba Baodong Shijian baogao* (Reports on the February 28 Revolt in Taiwan), published by the Taiwan Provincial Executive Office in April 1947, classed the Incident as a rebellion, attempting to subvert the government. It listed long-term and short-term causes of the Incident, but

¹¹³ Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, "Lishi zhengyi de kunjing: Zuqun yiti yu Ererba lunshu" 歷史正義的困境：族群議題與二二八論述 (The predicament of historical justice: Ethnic issues and the discourses on the February 28 uprising), *Guoshiguan xueshu jikan* 16 (June 2008): 183-194.

¹¹⁴ Chen Cuilian listed and provided detailed information about these publications. There were at least nine publications by the official and affiliated organizations from March to May 1947. See Chen, "Lishi zhengyi de kunjing" 184-85. These publications have similar titles, and repeat many of the contents.

in general blamed communist influence, the evils of the Japanese colonial legacy, and economic problems as the major causes of the Incident. Meanwhile, it also stressed, even exaggerated, Taiwanese violence against mainlanders.¹¹⁵

Another official publication, *Taiwan sheng Ererba Shibian jishi* (Account of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan) by the Taiwan Garrison Command, was much a repetition of the aforementioned report by the Provincial Executive Office in terms of how it depicted the nature and causes of the Incident.¹¹⁶ Other official publications, such as *Taiwan Ererba Shibian shimoji* (The whole story of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan),¹¹⁷ published by an affiliated agency of Ministry of National Defense, further stressed ethnic violence against mainlanders in its portrait of alleged Taiwanese brutality in the Incident. It painted a picture of Taiwanese thugs engaged in inhuman activities against mainlander children and pregnant women, including twisting a child's neck and piercing an expectant mother's abdomen with a samurai sword.¹¹⁸ The violence was described and the samurai swords mentioned in a way geared to reminding readers of the war crimes committed by Japanese soldiers in China during WWII, and explicitly linked Taiwanese anti-KMT resistance to such actions of the Japanese soldiers.

¹¹⁵ Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu 台灣省行政長官公署. "Taiwan sheng Ererba Baodong Shijian baogao" 台灣省二二八暴動事件報告 (Reports on the February 28 Revolt in Taiwan) (April 1947), in *Ererba Shijian zhiliaoji* 二二八事件資料集 (A collection of materials on the February 28 Incident), ed. Deng Kongzhao 鄧孔昭, (Taipei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1991), 393-400, 410.

¹¹⁶ Taiwan jinbei zongsilingbu, 台灣警備總司令部 ed. "*Taiwan sheng Ererba Shibian jishi*" 台灣省二二八事變記事 (Account of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan) (1947), in *Ererba Shijian wenxian xulu* 二二八事件文獻續錄 (The historiographical records of the February 28 Incident, 1947, vol.2), ed. Wei Yongzhu 魏永竹 (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1992), 387-429.

¹¹⁷ The 1990 Qianwei edition of Yang Kehung's (Lin Mushun 林木順) *Taiwan Eryue Geming* (The February Revolution of Taiwan) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1990) included this publication as an "attached collection" (fu ji). See Lin Mushun, *Taiwan Eryue geming*, 121-205.

¹¹⁸ See Lin, *Taiwan Eryue Geming*, 178.

These publications downplayed or ignored both the accelerated deterioration of social and economic conditions of Taiwan under the KMT regime that had really caused the violent insurrection in the first place, and the brutality of the KMT regime's subsequent military suppression. Instead, they attributed responsibility for the Incident mainly to communist conspiracy, the ambitions of some Taiwanese and the pollution of Taiwanese minds by Japanese under conditions of colonial enslavement. In addition, their description of the islanders' irrational actions either lacked political and economic contexts, or were filled with official bias. Omitting the political and economic contexts of the Incident, they turned the discontent of the islanders with the ruling KMT authority into an ostensibly ethnic conflict.¹¹⁹ Thus, by defining the Incident as a rebellion incited by communists attempting to subvert the ruling government, and by shifting the focus from violent resistance against the regime onto ethnic antagonisms in a way that hid its own institutional failure, the KMT justified its use of armed forces in the Incident.

After its initial attempts to define and direct public discourse on the February 28 Incident, the KMT regime shifted its policy to maintaining tight control and even silencing public discussions of the Incident. It controlled the mass media including newspapers, television, and radio through direct ownership, and kept indirect control through the KMT-affiliated agencies and cooperation with loyal media enterprises. At the same time, it limited the number of newspaper licenses and radio frequencies, and strengthened censorship over publications by imposing strict regulations. All these measures aimed to ensure elimination of criticism, reporting or publications that might jeopardize the KMT dictatorship, including its dominance of the public discourse on the

¹¹⁹ Chen Cailian indicates that the KMT regime overstressed and utilized ethnic conflict as an excuse for military slaughter. See Chen, "Lishi zhengyi de kunjing," 179.

February 28 Incident.¹²⁰ One example of the KMT's suppression of public opinions on the Incident was its rejection of the request for resuming publication of *Xingtai ribao*, one of the civilian-run newspapers forced to shut down during the insurrection. In mid-June 1947, the press appealed for reissuing the paper, yet the authority instructed local governments in September to prevent its revival due to "excessive opinions" expressed by the press (*yanlun yuegui*) on the Incident.¹²¹ Indeed, the print media would long remain silent about this particular event after 1947. According to Xia Chunxiang's studies, there was only one news report related to the Incident in 1948; and between May 20, 1949 and July 15, 1987, or from the time the KMT government imposed martial law to the time it lifted it on the island, there were only 14 news reports concerning the February 28 Incident in the three major newspapers, including *Lianhebao* (United daily news), *Zhongguo shibao* (China times), and *Taiwan xinsheng bao* (Taiwan new life daily). Of these news reports, eleven pieces appeared in the 1980s with eight concentrated in February and March of 1987, the year when martial law was lifted. There was only one relevant report each in the years 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1957 respectively. Media was silent regarding the Incident during the entire 1960s and 1970s.¹²²

¹²⁰ The KMT regime limited the number of newspaper licenses to thirty-one until 1988 and froze the availability of additional radio frequencies except the existing 33 licensed radio networks and 177 local broadcasting stations from 1959 to 1993. See Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 73-4; Yang Xiujing 楊秀菁, *Taiwan jieyan shiqi de xinwen guan zhi zheng ce* 台灣戒嚴時期的新聞管制政策 (The policy on the mass media control during the martial law period in Taiwan) (Taipei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 2005), 90-95.

¹²¹ Wang Zhiping 王峙萍 and Lin Qiumin 林秋敏, eds., *Ereba Shijian dang'an huibian* 二二八事件檔案彙編 (Archive materials on the February 28 Incident, vol. 10) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2002), vol.10, 8-9. "The authority" here refers to Sheng zhengfu xinwenchu 省政府新聞處 (The Information Agency of Taiwan provincial government).

¹²² Xia Chunxiang 夏春祥, *Zai Chuanbo de miwu zhong: Ereba Shijian de meiti yinxiang yu shehui jiyi* 在傳播的迷霧中：二二八事件的媒體印象與社會記憶 (Fumbling through the foggy communication: Media images and social memory surrounding the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Weibo wenhua, 2007), 122-23.

Moreover, the content of the news reports that did appear tended to underline the rebellious and criminal nature of the February 28 Incident. For example, news items published in the period 1948-1957 concerned stories such as the following: the voluntary surrender of Jiang Weishui, one of the principal leaders of the February 28 Incident, after one-year of fugitive life; the KMT regime's lenient measures towards offenders whose participation in the February 28 Incident for which they were convicted and sentenced; and about Xie Xuehong's struggle during the PRC's Cultural Revolution and linked the communists to the February 28 Incident.¹²³ The language and descriptions of these news reports subtly enhanced an impression that the February 28 Incident was illegal and its participants acted contrary to law. In other words, such reports delivered a message embedded in the official version that the February 28 Incident was in nature a criminal incident, as was evidenced by the fugitive lives, voluntary surrender, trials, convictions, and sentences of its participants. Therefore, like the aforementioned official publications, these news reports asserted the subversive nature of the Incident while justifying the legitimacy of the KMT's suppression. By contrast, the eight news reports or editorials in February and March 1987 mainly called for reconciliation over the Incident.¹²⁴

Certain discussions about the Incident were tucked away in publications such as memoirs or autobiographies, but even these were often kept brief or even banned. Such political censorship on public opinions about the Incident was evident in the KMT's ban on the literary work of *The Fig Tree* (Wuhuaguo) by Wu Zhuoliu. Though formally an

¹²³ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, February 8, 1948; December 9, 1949; and December 13, 1957. Xie Xuehong was active in the February 28 Incident, in particular in Taizhong area, where Xie organized local students and militias against the KMT authorities. More details about Xie's activities in the Incident are discussed in Chapter Four.

¹²⁴ For example, *Lianhebao* published a feature article calling for social integration (shehui ronghe) and not stirring the historical past. See *Lianhebao*, February 28, 1987.

autobiography of Wu, part of the book concerned the February 28 Incident as Wu, who had lived under both Japanese and Nationalist rule, was himself a witness of the Incident. The book was published in 1970, but was banned the next year in April of 1971 by the Taiwan Garrison Command, which accused it of severely distorting the facts, provoking ethnic tensions, spreading separatist ideas and attacking the government. Despite these accusations against the book, the authorities did not give concrete examples to confirm or justify their claims. Chu Yuzhi thoroughly examines the book, and indicates that the first ten chapters of the book are basically about the life experience of the protagonist under Japanese colonial rule and contain nothing that can be identified to confirm the accusations by the authorities. The last three chapters of the book, however, concern the February 28 Incident, and this appears to be the political taboo that led to the banning of the book.¹²⁵

The KMT regime's continued political prosecution and surveillance not only ensured the decades-long collective silence about the Incident, but also simultaneously eliminated political dissidents and dissatisfied elements.¹²⁶ In fact, the regime's insistence on a communist plot behind the Incident provided ground for its continuing repression of potential political threats. It utilized judicial tools to prosecute political dissidents and kept constant surveillance over those potentially threatening to ruling authorities in the ensuing decades.¹²⁷ As has been seen, in October 1947, the KMT regime stated that the case of the February 28 Incident was over, and except for those who were still listed as

¹²⁵ Chu Yuzhi 褚昱志, *Wu Zhuoliu ji qi xiaoshuo zhi yanjiu* 吳濁流及其小說之研究 (Research on Wu Zhuoliu and his novels) (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun, 2010), 201-210.

¹²⁶ Chen Cuilian indicates that during the martial law period, the KMT regime banned discussions on the February 28 incident in the public sphere while keeping the relevant parties under constant surveillance or even arresting them. See Chen, "Lishi zhengyi de kunjing," 188-94.

¹²⁷ The KMT regime's prosecution of political dissidents did not limit itself to those involved in the February 28 Incident, but extended to the regime's many political opponents and created the so-called "white terror," particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.

wanted and had been prosecuted, persons involved in the Incident and suspected of “Offenses Against the Internal Security of the State” (*neiluan zui*) would no longer be prosecuted from October 25, 1947, the second anniversary of Taiwan Retrocession Day (*Taiwan guangfu jinian ri*).¹²⁸ The regime further concluded on May 23, 1950 that “the investigations and trials of those responsible for the February 28 Incident had been completed. The case was closed.”¹²⁹

However, the KMT regime’s political persecution in fact continued, as illustrated in the case of Wu Zhenwu. Wu received Japanese education and graduated from Tokyo Higher Normal School, today’s University of Tsukuba. After graduation, he entered the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy (Japanese: *Kaigun Heigakkō*; Chinese: *Haijun bing xuexiao*)¹³⁰ and served as an ensign in the Japanese Navy upon his graduation. During the Sino-Japanese War, he was assigned to Hainan Island in 1944. After the defeat of Japan, he was chosen to oversee the repatriation of Taiwanese soldiers back to Taiwan. When the February 28 revolts occurred, Wu was teaching in Taichung Normal School, and he became involved in organizing a security team (*zhian weichidui*) for order keeping. Because the Taizhong local resolution committee was then not comfortable with Xie Xuehong’s radical line, it assigned Wu as the chief commander of the local militia, replacing Xie to command the local force. After the military suppression of the uprising by the regime, Wu was listed as wanted for arrest, but he escaped prosecution under the

¹²⁸ Wei Yongzhu 魏永竹 and Li Xuanfeng 李宣鋒, eds., *Ereba Shijian wenxian bulu* 二二八事件文獻補錄 (The historiographical records of the Taiwan event of February 28, 1947, vol. 3) (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1994), 242.

¹²⁹ Edmondson, “The February 28 Incident and National Identity,” 29.

¹³⁰ The Imperial Japanese Naval Academy was a four-year naval school to train officers for the Imperial Japanese Navy before WWII. But what Wu Zhenwu entered was a kind of “preparatory class” (*Haijun bingke yubei xuesheng*), at which the students, who had already had college education, received training for one and a half years, and he was commissioned as an ensign after graduation. See “Yang Zirong xiansheng fangwen jilu” 楊子榮先生訪問紀錄 (Interview with Mr. Yang Zirong), *Koushu lishi* 口述歷史 (Oral history) vol. 4 (February 1993): 202-3.

protection of Gui Yongqing, then the Navy Deputy Commander, who had planned to establish a strong Marine Corps (Haijun luzhandui), and had originally recruited Wu to the ROC Navy, and sent him to Nanjing after the Incident. Later, Gui sent Wu back to Taiwan to recruit and train local recruits. However, Wu was arrested and investigated for about half a year after Gui died in 1954. Despite his release without charges, he was barred from going to study in the US and denied entry to the Naval Command and Staff College (Canmou daxue). Eventually, Wu left the Navy, and taught as an instructor of physical education in Kaohsiung Medical College and Kaohsiung Normal School.¹³¹ Wu's experience illustrates the discrepancy between the KMT regime's stated policy about clemency and its actual practice.

In addition to legal prosecutions and bureaucratic obstruction as with the case of Wu Zhenwu, the KMT regime also kept individuals related to the Incident under constant surveillance. Following the instructions of November 1955 from Chiang Ching-kuo (Jiang Jingguo), then deputy secretary general of the National Defense Council (Guofang huiyi fumishuzhang), the Taiwan Provincial Security Command (Taiwan sheng baoan silingbu) re-checked and rebuilt watch lists of activists engaged in the Incident. In August 1962, the chief-in-general of the Taiwan Garrison Command (Taiwan jinbei zongsiling), Huang Jie, gave new instructions to the Taiwan Provincial Police Agency (*Taiwan sheng jingwu chu*) regarding the monitoring of individuals related to the February 28 Incident.¹³² Miaoli and Yilan counties submitted watch-lists for surveillance of the former

¹³¹ See "Wu Zhenwu xiansheng koushu jilu" 吳振武先生口述紀錄 (Oral records of Mr. Wu Zhenwu), in *Ereba Shijian wenxian jilu* 二二八事件文獻輯錄 (Historiographical records of the February 28 Incident vol. 1), ed. Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1991), 620-24; "Yang Zirong xiansheng fangwen jilu," 201-8; Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 89.

¹³² Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol. 16, 266-69.

participants in the February 28 Incident in 1953 and 1956.¹³³ Moreover, evidence shows that the KMT regime's continued surveillance of people involved in the Incident lasted until at least the 1970s.¹³⁴ In addition, the KMT's claim for a communist plot behind the Incident led to a form of rigid control that eventually grew into political terrorism, culminating in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in what became known as the White Terror. This aimed to eliminate potential political dissidents and threats to KMT rule, from either mainlanders or islanders.¹³⁵

With the KMT's control over Taiwan politics, its version of the February 28 Incident remained in place for decades. In 1966, the KMT regime still insisted that communist manipulation and the evil Japanese colonial legacy were behind the Incident. It did so notably in the propaganda publication, *Taiwan sheng Ererba Shijian zi zhenxiang* (The truth of the February 28 Incident of Taiwan Province), which was published by *Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui* (The Historical Research Committee of Taiwan province). This claimed to be based on sources from the Taiwan provincial government and related official organizations, along with contemporary newspapers.¹³⁶ On June 1, 1948, the KMT government established the *Taiwan sheng tongzhi guan* (Institute of Taiwan Province's General History) responsible for compiling the history of Taiwan Province, which was restructured as *Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui* in July

¹³³ Hou Kunhong 侯坤宏 and Xu Jinfa 許進發, eds., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian* 二二八事件檔案彙編, vol. 2 (Archives materials on the 228 incident, vol. 2) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2002), 475-76, 489-94.

¹³⁴ Archives from Zhanghua county police station that were released in 2004 include a watch list made in 1971 registering people involving in the February 28 Incident in Zhanghua county, a total of 345 people. See Lu Xingzhong 呂興忠, ed., *Zhanghua xian Ererba Shijian dangan huibian* 彰化縣二二八事件檔案彙編 (Zhanghua xian archives materials on the February 28 Incident) (Zhanghua: Zhuanghua xian wenhuaju, 2004), 356-59.

¹³⁵ Lin, *Accidental State*, 185; Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence*, 98-99.

¹³⁶ Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui 台灣省文獻委員會, ed., *Taiwan sheng Ererba Shijian zi zhenxiang* 二二八事件之真相 (The truth of the February 28 Incident of Taiwan province) (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1966), 4, 13-27, 45-48.

1949.¹³⁷ Though this was an official research institute, it also operated as a propaganda organization during the decades of authoritarian rule of the KMT party-state. The KMT endorsed its evaluation of the Incident and thereby controlled the historiography by formally giving the story support by a governmental research institute. Given its anti-communist stance during the Korean War and in the Cold War, the KMT's narratives of a "communist plot" behind the February 28 Incident logically justified the armed repression of Taiwanese protests and denied any legitimacy to the islanders' actions.

It should be noted that after the KMT's military suppression, some activists in the Incident escaped to Hong Kong and Japan. Taiwanese activists in Hong Kong, such as Xie Xuehong and Su Xing, later moved to mainland China and joined the CCP.¹³⁸ Other Taiwanese groups, such as the one under the leadership of Liao Wenyi, who were active in Japan, became devoted to the Taiwan Independence Movement (TIM), which continued to be supported by overseas Taiwanese scholars and students. Similarly, in the United States, the first TIM organization called the Committee for Free Formosans' Formosa was established in January 1956 and eventually fed into the Worldwide United Formosans for Independence (WUFI, *Taiwan duli lianmeng*) which was formed and based in New York in 1969 and which eventually unified TIM organizations in the US, Japan, Canada, and Europe.¹³⁹ In fact, for many early TIM activists, such as Liao Wenyi and Wang Yude, who had witnessed the February 28 Incident and were exiled due to the

¹³⁷ Taiwan wenxian guan 台灣文獻館 (Taiwan Historica), "Brief Introduction," 簡介 (jianjie) https://www.th.gov.tw/new_site/07aboutus/01introduction.php (accessed 15 May 2019). On 1 January 2002, Taiwan sheng weixian weiyuanhui was renamed as Taiwan wenxian guan (Taiwan Historica), affiliated to Guoshiguan (Academia Historica).

¹³⁸ Chen Fangming 陳芳明, *Zhimindi Taiwan: Zuoyi zhengzhi yundong shilun* 殖民地台灣：左翼政治運動史論 (Colonial Taiwan: Historical essays on the leftist political movement) (Taipei: Maitian Chubashe, 2006), 182.

¹³⁹ Chen Yishen 陳儀深, "Taidu zhuzhang de qiyuan yu liubian" 台獨主張的起源與流變 (The origins and development of advocacy for an independent state of Taiwan), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* (Taiwan historical research) 17, no.2 (June 2010): 146-48.

KMT's regime's persecution, the February 28 Incident was a hallmark of the independence movement. Their activities aimed to bring attention both to the Incident and to the broader authoritarianism and injustice of the KMT regime. In 1964, Wang published a book in Japanese in Tokyo, but this was not translated into Chinese until 1979. Similar to Su Xin's *Fennu de Taiwan*, this book records a history of local resistance to incoming powers from the early seventeenth century, thus revealing an awareness of Taiwan's anti-colonial struggle. However, unlike Su's work, it underlines a different political ideology leading to Taiwan Independence.¹⁴⁰ When Wang Xiaobo, a Taiwanese scholar advocating Taiwan's unification with China, visited Harvard University as a visiting scholar in 1980, he found that this book, along with George Kerr's *Formosa Betrayed*, was popular among overseas Taiwanese students. This pushed Wang Xiaobo to gather historiographical materials in US libraries on the February 28 Incident and write a review to rebut the view of the two books about the Incident.¹⁴¹ Paradoxically that review helped reveal the concealed history of Taiwan's past at a time when there was still a political taboo on it on the island. In short, regardless of whether they were advocates of the TIM or of communism, these overseas Taiwanese activists pushed to reveal the truth of the February 28 Incident, and their records of the Incident provided new information that challenged the interpretation of the KMT regime.

It should also be noted that the US government published a China White Paper in 1967 that provided another view of the Incident. The contents that came from reports from the Taipei consulate were largely similar to those in Kerr's accounts. However, in

¹⁴⁰ The book is the aforementioned 台灣：苦悶するその歴史.

¹⁴¹ Wang's review was published in *Zhonghua zazhi* (China magazine), August 1980. See Wang Xiaobo 王曉波, "Pianjian buneng daiti lishi" 偏見不能代替歷史 (Prejudice cannot represent history), *Zhonghua zazhi* 18 (June 1980): 29-37.

those highly censored and authoritarian years the White Paper was beyond access for the local Taiwanese people, although it provided precious information for overseas researchers.¹⁴² The political taboo on the Incident was finally broken in the 1980s, and scholarly inquiry into the Incident started in Taiwan and overseas largely because of the change in Sino-American relations.

The CCP's Political Reconstruction of the February 28 Incident

While the KMT had declared that the evil legacy of Japanese colonialism combined with a communist conspiracy had led to the outbreak of the February 28 Incident, the Incident simultaneously was used early on by the CCP for its own political propaganda. After assuming control over mainland China in late 1949, the CCP soon adjusted its stance toward Taiwan and the February 28 Incident so as to accommodate the change in its political status and in contemporary international and cross-strait political relations. In particular, the CCP abandoned its previous, Civil War-era support of Taiwanese political autonomy, and its new rhetoric on the February 28 Incident shifted in 1950 to a stress on liberating the Taiwanese people from KMT rule. From the outbreak of the Korean War to 1972, a further call for “Opposing the Chiang Kai-shek regime and American imperialism,” along with an assertion that Taiwan was an integral part of China, became major themes of the CCP's political propaganda regarding the Incident. Consequently, the CCP's narratives and articulation of the Incident became a part of its own ideological propaganda and revolutionary history.

¹⁴² For example, Lin Zongguang utilized the China White Paper as a part of sources for his article. See Lin Zongguang 林宗光, “Meiguoren yanzhong de Ererba Shijian” 美國人眼中的二二八事件 (The February 28 Incident in the eyes of the Americans), in *Ererba Shijian xueshu lunwen ji* 二二八事件學術論文集 (Academic papers on the February 28 Incident), ed. Chen Fangming (Irvine, CA: Taiwan publishing co., 1988), 49-92.

Not surprisingly, when U.S. President Harry Truman's new statement¹⁴³ on Taiwan on June 27, 1950 gave rise to the so-called "Theory of the Undetermined Status" of the island, the CCP's strong anti-American sentiment, and high concern about the territorial integrity of China became crucial for the party's discourse on Taiwan and the February 28 Incident. The theme that "Taiwan has since ancient time been an integrated part of China" thereafter informed the contemporary PRC research on Taiwan, including on the February 28 Incident, in periodicals such as *Lishi jiaoxue* (Historical teaching) and *Xueshu yuekan* (*Academic Monthly*), and propaganda organs like *Renmin ribao* and *Guangming ribao* (Brightness daily).¹⁴⁴

The emphasis on Taiwan's historical relation with mainland China was woven into the CCP's new evaluation of the February 28 Incident, along with anti-Chiang and anti-American propaganda. Publications about the February 28 Incident that were published during this period, particularly in the 1950s, centered on these themes to echo the CCP central government's political agenda. These include Wang Sixiang's *Taiwan Eryue Geming ji* (Notes on the February Revolution in Taiwan) published in 1950, Li Zhifu's *Taiwan renmin geming douzheng jianshi* (A brief history of Taiwan people's revolutionary struggle) in 1955, and Wang Yunsheng's *Taiwan shihua* (History of Taiwan) in 1955. Two more books published in 1956 were Yang Kehuang's *Taiwan renmin minzu jiefang douzheng xiaoshi* (The brief history of Taiwan People's national

¹⁴³ On June 27, 1950, Truman declared that "The occupation of Formosa by communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area...The determination of the future status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the United Nations." See "Statement issued by the President," Office of the Historian, Department of State, United States of American, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v07/d119> (accessed 12 September 2020).

¹⁴⁴ Li Jinglin 李景林, "Taiwan shi Zhongguo lingtu buke fenge de yibufen" 台灣是中國領土不可分割的一部分 (Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory), *Guangming ribao*, February 12, 1951; Luo Rongying 羅榮應, "Taiwan genben bucunzai shenmo diwei wenti" 台灣根本不存在什麼地位問題 (There does not exist any status problem regarding Taiwan), *Guangming ribao*, February 6, 1955.

liberation) and Qian Junye's and Yang Sishen's *Taiwan renmin douzheng jianshi* (A brief history of the People's struggle in Taiwan).¹⁴⁵ These books shared not only similarities in their titles, but also the CCP's anti-Chiang and anti-American stance. While emphasizing that the February 28 Incident was an expression of Taiwanese patriotism and struggle for liberation under the leadership of the CCP against the authoritarian Chiang regime and its ally American imperialism, they subordinated the Incident to the CCP's revolutionary mission. The February 28 Incident of 1947 hence became part of the story of the grand Chinese liberation movement led by the CCP.

In particular, works of Li Zhifu and Wang Yunsheng representatively redefined the Incident as a part of the CCP's mission of opposition to the United States and the Chiang regime. Li called the Incident "the revolution of the people in Taiwan against the evil rule of the US and Chiang Kai-shek."¹⁴⁶ He stressed that Taiwan was one of China's provinces and accordingly the Taiwanese revolutionary struggle was part of the struggle of the Chinese people under the CCP's leadership. Li also linked the Incident to Mao Zedong's "New Democracy," stating that any form of struggle against the Chiang group must be part of that of the Chinese people, and therefore Taiwan's revolutionary struggle needed to be situated in the revolutionary context of New Democracy opposed to

¹⁴⁵ Wang Sixiang 王思翔, *Taiwan Eryue Geming ji* 台灣二月革命記 (Notes on the February Revolution in Taiwan) (Shanghai: Donglishe, 1950); Li Zhifu 李稚甫, *Taiwan renmin geming douzheng jianshi* 台灣人民革命鬥爭簡史 (A brief history of Taiwan people's revolutionary struggle) (Guangzhou: Huanan renmin chubanshe, 1955); Wang Yunsheng 王芸生, *Taiwan shihua* 台灣史話 (Stories of Taiwan's history) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1955); Yang Kehuang 楊克煌, *Taiwan renmin minzhu jiefang douzheng xiaoshi* 台灣人民民族解放鬥爭小史 (The brief history of Taiwan people's national liberation) (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1956); Qian Junye 錢君擘 and Yang Sishen 楊思慎, *Taiwan renmin douzheng jianshi* 台灣人民鬥爭簡史 (A brief history of the people's struggle in Taiwan) (Tianjin: Renmin chubanshe, 1956).

¹⁴⁶ Li, *Taiwan renmin keming douzheng jianshi*, 178.

American imperialism and its lackey, the Chiang group.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, Li utilized Chinese historical sources to claim historical relations of Taiwan with China, while mapping out a tradition of resistance by the Taiwan people over the previous centuries against alien imperialist rule from the Dutch to the Japanese. Inheriting that tradition, the particular struggle of the Incident became intertwined in Li's interpretation with the Chinese people's liberation movement led by Mao and the CCP.

Similar to Li's argument, Wang Yunsheng's articulation of the February 28 Incident bears the character of "an anti-Chiang and anti-American, patriotic struggle." Wang also briefly recounted Taiwan's tradition of resistance to alien rulers in the past, and he regarded the February 28 Incident as a refusal to accept the rule of American imperialism.¹⁴⁸ Other works, such as that by Yang Kehuang, accused the US of fabricating Taiwan separatism as ultimately an attempt to occupy Taiwan during the Incident, and he claimed the CCP's leadership over the uprising, thus incorporating it into the narrative of the CCP's liberation campaign.¹⁴⁹ It is notable that, like Li and Wang, Yang also traced historical relations of the island and its people with China, and linked the Incident to Taiwan people's past resistance against conquering powers. Interestingly, Yang centered his account around the Japanese colonial period because Yang himself was a Japanese colonial subject and a member of the former Taiwanese Communist Party. He based his accounts on personal experience. As Chen Fangming argues, the basic assumption of these works was that Taiwan was severely exploited by the KMT, which in turn was supported by the US; therefore, the people in Taiwan were severely oppressed by American imperialism. Following this logic, these authors concluded that the outbreak

¹⁴⁷ Li, *Taiwan renmin keming douzheng jianshi*, 188-91.

¹⁴⁸ Wang, *Taiwan shihua*. 107-8.

¹⁴⁹ Yang, *Taiwan renmin minzhu jiefang douzheng xiaoshi*, 204, 210-11.

of the February 28 Incident was the result of the resistance by the Taiwanese people to an invasion by American imperialism.¹⁵⁰

Thus, as the domestic and international political conditions changed, the CCP's depiction of the Incident turned from portraying it as a pursuit of self-rule to projecting a patriotic struggle under the CCP leadership against the Chiang regime and American imperialism. Such rhetoric continued through the 1960s. Shi Jin's "Taiwan renmin 'Ereba' wuzhuang qiyi," (The Taiwan people's February 28 Armed Uprising) which was published in February 1966, still repeated this theme, especially in its rhetoric of affirming the Incident's opposition to the US-Chiang collaboration and of stressing that Taiwan was an integral part of China.¹⁵¹ By subordinating the Incident to the CCP's revolutionary history, such propaganda provided the party with legitimacy for liberating Taiwan. The logic behind such rhetoric could be found in a series of arguments: based on the historical past and the 1943 Cairo Declaration, Taiwan was regarded as an part of China, and this made the CCP's desire for the liberation of Taiwan then became an internal Chinese affair. Meanwhile, through its incorporation into the CCP's revolutionary history of anti-Chiang Kai-shek and anti-imperialist policies, the February 28 Incident became part of the CCP's grand narrative of liberation of the Chinese people under the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, that is, of the CCP. Therefore, in claiming the responsibility for and leadership of the Incident, the CCP simultaneously asserted its legitimacy and sovereignty over Taiwan.

The CCP's reconstruction of the February 28 Incident was most evident in its

¹⁵⁰ Chen, "Zhonggong Ereba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian," 124.

¹⁵¹ Shi Jin 史津, "Taiwan renmin 'Ereba' wuzhuang qiyi" 台灣人民二二八武裝起義 (The February 28 armed uprising of the people of Taiwan, 1966), in *Ereba yanjiu xuji* 二二八研究 續集, 2nd ed. (Research on the February 28 Incident, a sequel), ed. Li Ao 李敖 (Taipei: Liao chubanshe, 1991), 121-28.

annual commemorations of the event. These commemorations were the embodiment of the CCP's policies toward the Incident, and they reflected the relational changes of the CCP's policies with international and cross-strait politics. Due to American support of the KMT regime and the subsequent dispute over Taiwan's status in the early 1950s, "opposition to American imperialism" and the "liberation of Taiwan" became twin themes in these commemorations during the period.

From 1950 to 1965, such commemorations of the February 28 Incident were often held in Beijing by the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, which moved its headquarters from Hong Kong to Beijing after the establishment of the PRC in 1949. The 1950 commemoration of the Incident on February 28, 1950, the first of its kind in Beijing, was mainly concerned with the liberation of Taiwan as the CCP was planning the invasion of Taiwan, and the commemoration served as propaganda geared to gaining Taiwanese support. Zhu De, then the Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Army (*Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun zongsiling*), attended the 1950 commemoration, and his personal attendance manifested the CCP's determination to liberate Taiwan, and the hope that the Taiwanese people would support and assist them in carrying forward the revolutionary spirit of the February 28 Incident.¹⁵²

After the outbreak of the Korean War, the CCP's narratives of the February 28 Incident made American imperialism an oppressor comparable to Japanese and European colonialism in Taiwan's history.¹⁵³ Subsequently, in the 1951 Commemoration held in Beijing on February 28, Li Jisen, a former senior member and high-ranking official of the KMT, who had defected to the CCP, further linked the CCP's involvement in the Korean

¹⁵² *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1950:1.

¹⁵³ *Renmin ribao*, Feb. 28, 1951:2.

War with the PRC's slogan of "liberation of Taiwan" and opposition to American imperialism of the kind said to have been expressed in the February 28 Incident.¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the attendance of Li Zhouyuan, the North Korean ambassador to China, at the 1951 commemoration better illustrated the CCP's response to the US intervention, as the Incident now represented in CCP discourse a response to the alleged invasion and conspiracy of American imperialism as seen in the February 28 Incident.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, when "the Provisional Government of the Taiwan Republic" (Taiwan gongheguo linshi zhengfu) was established by Liao Wenyi in Tokyo in 1956, the Beijing-based Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League denounced it at the 1956 annual Commemoration event chaired by Xie Xuehong as an American plot to occupy Taiwan.¹⁵⁶ In fact, in January of that year, Zhou Enlai released a message indicating an alteration of the "peaceful liberation of Taiwan" policy; the League soon followed his tone in its commemoration of the Incident that year.¹⁵⁷ In the 1958 and 1959 anniversary commemorations, the League further denounced the US for seeking to produce "Two Chinas."¹⁵⁸

It is notable that Li Chunqing replaced Xie Xuehong and presided over the 1958 commemoration. Until 1957, Xie was active in the commemorative activities; however, after she was labeled as a Rightist in the Anti-Rightist movement in November 1957, her being purged resulted in Li replacing her. However, Li himself did not escape criticism in the Anti-Rightist movement, and the 1959 commemoration was presided over by Xu

¹⁵⁴ *Remin ribao*, March 1, 1951:1.

¹⁵⁵ *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1951:1.

¹⁵⁶ *Renmin ribao*, February 28, 1956:1.

¹⁵⁷ *Renmin ribao*, February 28, 1956:1, 3.

¹⁵⁸ *Remin ribao*, February 28, 1958:4; February 28, 1959:4.

Mengshan, the secretary general of the League.¹⁵⁹ The fact that Xie and Li were replaced reflected internal political struggles of communist politics, and indicated that the CCP's approach of using the Incident and the parties involved in it were propaganda tools. The CCP's annual commemorations of the Incident came to a halt from 1966 until 1973 due to the Cultural Revolution. As various changes in relations occurred between the PRC and the US in the 1970s, the CCP would again adjust its interpretation of the February 28 Incident. Meanwhile, the KMT also initiated limited political liberalization in Taiwan as a result of changes in international politics.

Changes in International Relationships and Reinterpretations of the February 28 Incident, 1972-1987

The Shanghai Communiqué and Its Impact on Taiwan and Cross-strait Politics

Both the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s and the USA-USSR rivalry for global hegemony led to China's rapprochement with the U.S. and the American reassessment of US-PRC relations. As a result, President Richard Nixon's visit to mainland China in February 1972 ended with the signing of the Shanghai Communiqué by the two countries. The increasing normalization of US-PRC relationship, along with the PRC's rising profile in the UN, in turn led to shifts in the status of Taiwan and the PRC in the global setting. As a result, the KMT had to seek more internal support from the Taiwanese

¹⁵⁹ Chen, "Zhonggong Ererba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian," 123; *Renmin ribao*, February 28, 1958: 4; February 28, 1959:4; "Li Chunqing shengping ji qi guju" 李純青生平及其故居 (The life of Li Chunqing and his old residence), http://www.mnwhstq.com/szzy/qzwszlqwk/201608/t20160816_105116.htm (accessed 19 May 2019).

people by undertaking limited reforms, and local challenges to the KMT political hegemony naturally emerged from the 1960s onward culminating in the late 1980s, when demands and calls for a new inquiry into the February 28 Incident inspired oppositional activities. The Nationalist government was thus forced to adjust to the changing social and political reality, and to respond to demands for revisiting the suppressed past even though it continued to struggle against that current. Meanwhile, regardless of their intentions, efforts of overseas Taiwanese groups and individuals helped bring local Taiwanese people knowledge of the Incident. In mainland China, following the establishment of US-PRC diplomatic relations in 1979, the CCP opened the country while implementing economic reforms, and there was a soft turn in its Taiwan policy. As a part of the adjustment of its stance toward the US and Taiwan, the CCP altered its narratives regarding the February 28 Incident to accommodate new political trends. The changing policies and narratives of the KMT and the CCP toward the February 28 Incident illustrate the close interplay of relations between politics and historiography.

After the PRC replaced the ROC in the United Nations in November 1971 and thus became the sole legitimate representative of China in the international sphere,¹⁶⁰ President Nixon paid a formal visit to mainland China the next year and signed the Shanghai Communique on February 28, 1972. Regarding the Taiwan question in the Communique, the PRC claimed to exclusively represent China, including Taiwan, and identified the liberation of Taiwan as a Chinese internal affair; it also demanded the removal of all US forces and military installations from Taiwan.¹⁶¹ The US acknowledged “the Chinese position that there is but one China, and Taiwan is part of

¹⁶⁰ Hungdah Chiu, “The Question of Taiwan in Sino-American Relations,” in *China and the Taiwan Issue*, ed. Hungdah Chiu (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 184.

¹⁶¹ Chiu, “The Question of Taiwan in Sino-American Relations,” 179-180, 184.

China” while maintaining economic, cultural and other unofficial relations with Taiwan. The US further abandoned its diplomatic relations and Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan, and withdrew its military forces from Taiwan¹⁶² in December 1978, when US President Jimmy Carter announced the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with China on January 1, 1979. These American policy changes resulted in severe setbacks for Taiwan and the ROC in particular in its international relations and forced the KMT to change its policies toward the local Taiwanese people in ways that eventually resulted in changes in its long term attitude toward the February 28 Incident of 1947.

The increasing diplomatic isolation of Taiwan from the early 1970s put the KMT regime’s legitimacy in question and compelled its leaders to recognize the need for domestic reform to secure foreign and domestic support. As a result, more native Taiwanese were promoted to the higher party and government organs and supplementary elections were held for a limited number of seats in the national parliament. In fact, as early as 1966, the Temporary Provisions were amended to allow supplementary elections for the National Assembly (Guomin dahui) and Legislative Yuan (Lifayuan).¹⁶³ Subsequently, supplementary elections took place in 1969, and starting from 1972 supplementary elections for the Legislative Yuan took place every three-years. This brought non-KMT members into national-level politics. In addition, also starting from 1972, Chiang Ching-kuo, then the premier, implemented the so-called “Taiwanization policy” that allowed more Taiwanese into provincial leadership positions including even

¹⁶² “Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and the People’s Republic of China, United States Statement, December 15, 1978,” in *America and Island China: A Documentary History*, ed. Stephen P. Gibert and William M. Carpenter (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1989), 203.

¹⁶³ Both the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan were national-level parliamentary bodies. The former was mainly responsible for electing the President and Vice-President, while the latter is mainly for verifying bills and the budget of the central government. The National Assembly was abolished in 2005.

the party's most powerful organ, the Central Standing Committee. In other words, as the KMT recruited more Taiwanese party members, there was a corresponding increase of Taiwanese leaders in local and high-ranking party offices.¹⁶⁴

Nonetheless, due to the continued predominance in the National Assembly of members who held indefinite tenure due to their election in the late 1940s on the Chinese mainland, electoral reform in the 1970s was more a gesture than a sincere and genuine reform.¹⁶⁵ Yet such reforms allowed some local Taiwanese participation in national-level politics, which in turn fueled the ever-growing political consciousness in favor of democracy, challenged the KMT's authoritarian rule, and facilitated the organization of the Dangwai (non-KMT) movement that helped push for the re-evaluation of the February 28 Incident. The Dangwai movement had been seeking to exert political influence through institutional channels and made attempts at organizing political opposition forces prior to the formation of the DPP. But there was little room for its leaders to achieve much success given the KMT control of policy-making and state apparatus. To reach its goals and better facilitate and coordinate electoral campaigns and publicize their political views, Dangwai members formed campaign organizations, published magazines and books, and even held street demonstrations because of the bans on new political parties and newspapers as well as the KMT's control of the telecommunications. But campaign organizations and magazines, in particular the latter,

¹⁶⁴ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 110-112.

¹⁶⁵ The number of these senior parliamentarians allowed the KMT to control the central parliamentary bodies until their involuntary resignation in 1992 due to a court decision by the Council of Grand Justices. Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 49.

worked beyond platforms for the Dangwai electoral coordination or political propagandas. Indeed, magazines would have a central role in organizing the DPP.¹⁶⁶

Among the Dangwai magazines, the most notable was *Formosa* (Meilidao), which was founded in 1979 by Huang Xinjie, who later became one of the founders of the DPP as an opposition party in 1986. This magazine first brought attention to the February 28 Incident in an article published in 1979. On December 10 of that year, Huang and other staff of *Formosa Magazine* joined with other opposition activists for a street demonstration to commemorate Human Rights Day in Kaohsiung city. The demonstration called for democracy and protested against the KMT's authoritarian rule. More than forty protesters were subsequently arrested and tried, eight in military and thirty-three in civil courts, and all these defendants were imprisoned.¹⁶⁷ After the outbreak of the Meilidao Incident (or the Kaohsiung Incident), TIM advocates in the US issued a joint statement in which they compared it to the February 28 Incident of 1947.¹⁶⁸ Stefan Fleischauer points out,

¹⁶⁶ Alexander Ya-li Lu, "Political Opposition in Taiwan: The Development of the Democratic Progressive Party," in *Political Change in Taiwan*, ed. Tun-jen Cheng and Stephan Haggard (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 123-24; Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 55-6; Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 82.

¹⁶⁷ Besides these protesters, the KMT regime also arrested and prosecuted some Presbyterian Church members for helping to harbour Shi Mingde, who later became the Chairman of the DPP. See Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University, 2003), 167-69; Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 116-19.

¹⁶⁸ Stefan Fleischauer, "The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement's Construction of a Taiwanese Identity," *China Information* vol. 21, no.3 (2007): 318, 396n16. For the article in *Meilidao* see Liu Fengsong, "Yiqian babaiwan ren de Taiwan shi" (18 million people's history of Taiwan), *Meilidao* (Formosa) no. 3 (1979), 71; for the joint statement see "Taiwan jianguo lianhe zhenxian chengli xuanyan" (Founding declaration of the United Front for the establishment of a Taiwan nation), *Taidu yuekan* (Taiwan independence monthly) no. 94 (1979): 2.

228 [the February 28 Incident] was regarded as the root of a political power structure that had remained largely unchanged, namely the subjugation of the native Taiwanese and the one-party rule of the KMT. It was argued that during the 228 Incident, a whole generation of Taiwan's social and political elite had been disposed of, through either murder or exile, and the Taiwanese had been forced into submission. As a result of the traumatic experience of the 228 massacre, a whole generation of Taiwanese had been scared away from politics, thereby facilitating the mainlanders' unchallenged domination of the island.¹⁶⁹

Thus, in their pursuit of political democratization against the KMT's authoritarian rule, the Dangwai activists inevitably viewed the February 28 Incident as "evidence of [the KMT's] atrocities and injustices." However, in their critiques of the KMT's authoritarianism, they also stressed ethnic inequality and ethnic divisions on the island. In January 1987, Zheng Nanrong, a former editor from the Dangwai magazines, along with others organized the February 28 Peace Day Association (*Ereba heping ri cujinhui*), which initiated an island-wide movement for reevaluating the February 28 Incident in Taiwan, as will be discussed later in this chapter. For this reason, the February 28 Movement cannot be dissociated from the Dangwai movement's pursuit of democracy.

The growth of the Dangwai movement eventually led to the establishment of the DPP. On September 28 of 1986, opposition leaders assembled at the Grand Hotel in Taipei and voted for the establishment of a new Taiwanese party. The DPP's competition with the KMT in the 1986 National Assembly and Legislative Yuan elections marked the first time true multi-party politics occurred in Taiwan's history; and the DPP gained many seats in the 1986 elections for Legislators and National Assembly members despite

¹⁶⁹ Fleischauer, "The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement's Construction of a Taiwanese Identity," 382. It should be noted that not all domestic political activists engaged in this argument. For example, Lei Zhen in the 1960s and Fei Xiping, Li Ao, Zhen Nanrong in the 1970s and 1980s, were themselves mainlanders. They were against the KMT's authoritarian rule and pursued political democratization, but were not against mainlanders in general, nor did they necessarily advocate for the TIM. See Fleischauer, 382.

the still overwhelming domination of the KMT.¹⁷⁰ Along with efforts by various religious and social groups, the importance of the DPP as an organized political opposition force in pressing the KMT regime to rehabilitate the February 28 Incident cannot be overestimated.

From the beginning, the DPP played a crucial part in the “February 28 Peace Day Movement.”¹⁷¹ In fact, the DPP’s platform promised to “get to the truth of the February 28 Incident, and set up the anniversary of the February 28 Incident as ‘Peace Day’ designed to reconcile disputes among different ethnic groups” when it was established in September 1986.¹⁷² Most of the party’s prestigious figures had been involved in the movement, and they organized commemorative activities, delivered lectures and led demonstrations. In January 1989, the party, along with the February 28 Peace Day Association, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights (Taiwan renquan cujinhui), the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) and other groups jointly launched the February 28 Justice and Peace Movement (Ereba gongyi heping yundong). Moreover, the DPP legislators would work to press the KMT government on actions for a reevaluation of the February 28 Incident. The February 28 Peace Day Association had published the February 28 Peace Day Declaration (Ereba heping ri xuanyang) upon its establishment in early 1987, and toured the island to promote the activities, calling for rehabilitating and

¹⁷⁰ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 125-30.

¹⁷¹ Since its establishment in early 1987, the leaders of the February 28 Peace Day Association had toured the island, calling for rehabilitation and revealing the truth about the Incident. In early 1989, the Association, the DPP, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, along with other groups, jointly launched the February 28 Justice and Peace Movement. All these activities were part of an overall movement calling for reevaluating the February 28 Incident. The Memorial Foundation of 228 called this “Ereba pingfan yundong” (the February 28 Rehabilitating Movement), while Stefan Fleischauer simply terms them “the 228 Movement.” In case of confusion, the author of this dissertation terms the overall movement as “the February 28 Peace Day Movement.” Stefan Fleischauer, “The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement’s Construction of a Taiwanese Identity,” 383.

¹⁷² Zheng Mingde 鄭明德, “Ereba Shijian pingfang yundong de xingcheng” 二二八事件平反運動的形成 (The formation of the February 28 movement), *Shilian zazhi* 30/31 (December 1997): 150.

revealing the truth about the Incident. The movement unified and transformed the calls of these different social forces into political demands.¹⁷³

Facing the increasing social and political challenges that had been growing since the signing of the Shanghai Communiqué by the US and PRC in 1972, the KMT regime accelerated its political reforms, including through initiating changes in its mainland policy, particularly in the last years of Chiang Ching-kuo's reign. Besides the decision to allow the formation of the DPP in September 1986, Chiang's KMT regime lifted martial law and replaced it with a new national security law in July 1987.¹⁷⁴ The conditional liberalization of Taiwan politics more or less loosened political taboos that had previously blocked inquiries into the past, especially the February 28 Incident of 1947. Yet the KMT government continued to struggle against the current of social demands from Taiwanese on the island and overseas, who pressed for and contributed to the uncovering of the truth about the February 28 Incident and who sought justice for its victims.

Meanwhile, political reform had created a relatively friendly political environment for democratic development that eventually altered the political landscape on Taiwan and in cross-strait relations.¹⁷⁵ Actually, as early as in December 1985, the KMT government softened its long-term mainland policy against "coexistence with the mainland in international organizations" by stating that Taiwan "will not dodge or shy away from private organizations in which Communist China is a member."¹⁷⁶ According to Wakabayashi Masahiro, indirect trade with mainland China via Hong Kong was

¹⁷³ Zheng, "Ereba Shijian pingfang yundong de xingcheng," 150-2.

¹⁷⁴ Steven M. Goldstein, *China and Taiwan* (Cambridge, UK: Polity press, 2015), 76.

¹⁷⁵ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 76.

¹⁷⁶ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 75.

prosperous and so was illegitimate marine trade carried on by Taiwanese fishing boats along the coastal area of Fujian.¹⁷⁷ The Taiwan authorities estimated that as of March 1987 more than ten thousand Taiwanese residents had visited mainland China, and by 1988 that number increased to almost a half a million. Therefore, though officially the “Three Nos” policy was still in place,¹⁷⁸ Chiang tacitly consented to cross-strait unofficial and non-political contacts. Economically, indirect cross-strait trade had been tolerated since 1985 on the condition that it was free of any official engagement.¹⁷⁹ Socially, the KMT government formally allowed veterans to travel across the Strait to the mainland for family reunions in November 1987.¹⁸⁰ These economic and social exchanges would accelerate and eventually grow into political contacts in the 1990s. Chiang’s liberalization of cross-strait policy, along with his reform of politics on Taiwan, therefore, softened the long-term antagonism between the two sides of the Strait. This in turn indirectly affected the CCP’s policy toward Taiwan, including its partisan propaganda regarding the February 28 Incident of 1947.

On the other side of the Taiwan Strait, normalization of US-PRC relations also led to the CCP’s adjustment of its Taiwan policy. In the post-Mao era, Deng Xiaoping led reforms in the party’s foreign and cross-strait policy. As Deng’s vision of China prioritized the country’s modernization, the CCP in 1978 implemented economic reforms

¹⁷⁷ Wakabayashi Masahiro 若林正丈, *Zhan hou Taiwan zhengzhi shi: Zhonghua Minguo Taiwan hua de licheng* 戰後台灣政治史：中華民國台灣化的歷程 (A political history of postwar Taiwan: The progress of ROC’s Taiwanization), trans. Hong Yuru et al. (Taipei: Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2016), 140.

¹⁷⁸ The “Three Nos” policy was a political policy that Chiang Ching-kuo adopted to respond to Deng Xiaoping’s “one country, two systems” call. This policy held asserted the principles of “no contacts, no negotiations, no compromise.” Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 107.

¹⁷⁹ Wakabayashi, *Zhan hou Taiwan zhengzhi shi*, 140, 140n15; Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 75.

¹⁸⁰ Vincent Wei-cheng Wang, “The Evolution of the Institutional Structure of Taipei’s Mainland Policy Making Since the 1980s,” in *Cross-Taiwan Straits Relations Since 1979: Policy Adjustment and Institutional Change across the Straits*, ed. Kevin G Cai (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2011), 248.

and an “open-door” policy, which has since continued. Deng’s priority in economic development, along with the establishment of US-PRC diplomatic relations on January 1 1979, in turn resulted in the CCP adopting a reconciliatory Taiwan policy largely because of Taiwan’s importance for providing capital, technology, and capitalist knowledge for mainland China to “develop a market economy and integrate itself further into the world economy.”¹⁸¹

Accordingly, the CCP replaced its previous Taiwan policy of “military liberation” with that of “peaceful unification.” On January 1, 1979, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) issued the “Message to Taiwan Compatriots.” This was followed and further elaborated in a speech on September 30, 1981 by the NPC leader Ye Jianying, who raised the so-called “nine-points” that proposed most importantly the so-called “three links” (santong) in commercial, postal, and travel aspects, and “four exchanges” (siliu) concerning the academic, cultural, economic, and sports sectors, in addition to talks between the CCP and the KMT. In 1983, Deng Xiaoping brought up the idea of the “peaceful unification, one country, two systems,” under which the CCP would pursue the integration of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait under the premise of furthering the “One China” principle through peaceful means, regardless of their difference between socialist and capitalist systems.¹⁸² This policy would continue to serve as the guideline for the CCP to shape and define cross-strait relations. Consequently, as Chen Fangming indicates, the CCP’s portrait of the February 28 Incident as an outpouring of patriotism against the Chiang regime and American imperialism no longer

¹⁸¹ Quansheng Zhao and Guoli Liu, “Beijing’s Shifting Positions in the New Era of Cross-Taiwan Strait relations,” in *Taiwan’s Politics in the 21st Century: Changes and Challenges*, ed. Wei-Chin Lee (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 196-97.

¹⁸² Zhao and Liu, “Beijing’s Shifting Positions in the New Era of Cross-Taiwan Strait relations,” 198-99.

fit the new political situation after the PRC's normalization of relations with the US, and the Dengist commitment to political negotiations and the "three links" with Taiwan.¹⁸³

Not surprisingly, these changes led the CCP to modify its rhetoric about the Incident.

Actually, throughout the decades since 1947, the CCP's policies toward the February 28 Incident had consistently adjusted to each new political situation, although its theme of "unification" remained unchanged since 1949.

Challenges to the KMT's Control over Discourse on the February 28 Incident

Despite the KMT-regime's continued control of public opinion on the February 28 Incident in Taiwan, challenges to its long-held verdict on the Incident started to crack its monopoly of discourse on the Incident in the 1980s. Outside of Taiwan, efforts by overseas Taiwanese scholars and activists to investigate the Incident continued to help unveil this historical past. Within the island, as a result of KMT political reform in response to both external and internal crises, challengers from the Dangwai movement called to reverse the KMT regime's long-held repressive policy toward the Incident. Meanwhile, the February 28 Incident itself inspired political opposition activities, which in turn facilitated popular calls to rehabilitate the Incident. Such calls culminated in the February 28 Peace Day Movement in 1987, in which popular demands and demonstrations for truth and justice regarding the February 28 incident swept the island. Faced with these challenges, the KMT regime continued to struggle against the trend but could no longer withstand the tide. The KMT's calls for peaceful reconciliation over the Incident reflected the social and political changes that were fueling revision of the

¹⁸³ Chen, "Zhonggong Ererba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian," 127.

historical past and breaking down its long-term domination and repressive control over the narratives of the Incident.

Overseas Taiwanese had been making efforts to raise the level of knowledge of the February 28 Incident when the KMT regime continued to repress public opinions on the Incident in Taiwan. The Taiwan Independence Movement had risen among overseas Taiwanese students, who were then influenced by works and periodicals that had been launched on the February 28 Incident, in particular by the aforementioned works of Wang Yude and George Kerr.¹⁸⁴ Besides, in 1983 TIM advocate Lin Qixu published a work in Tokyo about the Incident, in addition to the collaborative work by Wang Jiansheng, Chen Wanzhen and Chen Yongquan titled *1947: Taiwan Ererba Geming* (1947: the Taiwan February 28 Revolution) published in Los Angeles in 1984.¹⁸⁵ These studies tended to link the Incident with the pursuit of Taiwan independence, treating the Incident as either an uprising or a revolution of Taiwanese people against Chinese governance, and as a milestone of Taiwanese national consciousness. For example, Lin Qixun delinked Taiwanese identity from Chinese identity, stressing a Taiwanese nationalist consciousness and defining the nature of the February 28 Incident as a movement characterized by “resistance,” “pursuit of democracy,” and “self-rule.”¹⁸⁶ The Incident was thus turned into an example of ethnic antagonism of Taiwanese against Chinese, and of *benshengren* (or local Taiwanese) against *waishengren* (or mainlanders).

¹⁸⁴ Wang Xiaobo 王曉波, ed., *Ererba zhenxiang* 二二八真相 (Truth of the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Haixia xueshu, 2002), I-III.

¹⁸⁵ Lin's book was first published in Toyko in 1983. In 1984, the book was also published in the US. See Lin Qixun 林啟旭, *Ererba Shijian zonghe yanjiu* 二二八事件綜合研究 (Overall synthetic research on the February 28 Incident) (Long Island, NY: Taiwan Tribune, 1984). The two books later were also published in Taiwan. Lin Qixun, *Ererba Shijian zonghe yanjiu* (An overall synthetic study on the February 28 Incident) (Kaoshiong: Xintai zhenglun zaizhishe, unknown.d.); Wang Jiansheng 王建生, Chen Wanzhen 陳婉真 and Chen Yongquan 陳湧泉, eds, *1947: Taiwan Ererba Geming* 1947 : 台灣二二八革命 (1947: The Taiwan February 28 Revolution) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, (1984) 1988).

¹⁸⁶ Lin *Ererba Shijian zonghe yanjiu*, 212-18.

It was against this development that some non-TIM advocates fought to “deconstruct” TIM activists’ narratives of the February 28 Incident. In 1983, Ye Yunyun, daughter of Ye Rongzhong, a key member of the Taiwan Cultural Association during the Japanese colonial period, and of the Taizhong branch of the Resolution Committee in the February 28 Incident,¹⁸⁷ launched the monthly *Taiwan yu shijie* (Taiwan and the world) in the US with a special column for the publication of historical data of the Incident. It was in this monthly that Dai Guohui¹⁸⁸ published annotated historical materials on the Incident under the pseudonym Mei Cunren.¹⁸⁹ In addition, alert to the growing consciousness of Taiwan independence, Wang Xiaobo made efforts in works on the February 28 Incident in an attempt to delink TIM and the Incident. Besides his review article rebutting such links, Wang further published a serial of articles from 1982 to 1985 attempting to “clarify” and resolve historical questions about the Incident. Moreover, Wang utilized the historical materials he had collected to edit and publish a book titled *Ereba zhenxiang* (Truth of the February 28 Incident), yet the book was banned by the Taiwan Garrison Command upon its release.¹⁹⁰

Wang Xiaobo, Ye Yunyun, and Dai Guohui were not advocates of the TIM. On the contrary, they endorsed Chinese unification. Wang strongly condemned the TIM advocates’ manipulation of the ethnic issue to promote the independence movement and independence consciousness at the cost of social harmony and cross-strait relations. Ye was much concerned about cross-strait communication. Dai also criticized the TIM

¹⁸⁷ “Guanyu Ye Rongzhong” 關於葉榮鐘 (About Ye Rongzhong),

<http://archives.lib.nthu.edu.tw/jcyeh/main-track.htm> (accessed 5 June 2019).

¹⁸⁸ Dai was a prominent scholar based in Japan, receiving a PhD degree in Agriculture from Tokyo University but was known for his study of Taiwan history.

¹⁸⁹ Dai and Ye, *Aizeng Ereba*, 9-11.

¹⁹⁰ The book was published without any publication information, but it was apparently first published in 1985 and republished in 2002. See Wang, ed., *Ereba zhenxiang*, II-V.

promoters for exploiting the Incident to accumulate political capital and to construct the theory of a Taiwanese nation and Taiwanese identity for their ultimate seizure of political power at the cost of ethnic reconciliation.¹⁹¹ Despite the ideological difference between the two groups of scholars and regardless of their political positions, their efforts helped push scholarly research forward, promoted the collection of historical materials related to the February 28 Incident, and helped increase the public awareness of the Incident.

Given the difficulty the KMT regime faced in trying to extend its repressive control over overseas Taiwanese, and given the knowledge about the Incident that overseas Taiwanese had learned, the KMT government adjusted its stance. It condemned the overseas TIM activists' discourse on the February 28 Incident and regarded that discourse as part of the TIM propaganda for independence; meanwhile it attempted to construct a policy of ethnic reconciliation over the Incident through propaganda. According to Chen Cuilian's studies, to rebut the TIM activists' calls for independence over the February 28 Incident, the KMT regime in 1983 had the National Security Agency (Guojia anquanju) gather relevant historical and historiographical data from several state agencies, ranging from the Taiwan Garrison Command, the Military Intelligence Bureau, the Ministry of the Interior Investigation Bureau to the Taiwan Provincial Police Agency and other intelligence agencies (qingzhi jiguan). The regime then had a group of scholars produce, based on the data collected, a book titled *Fuqu lishi mingjingzhong de chenai* (Brushing away the dust in the historical mirror), which was published in California in 1986. This book maintains the KMT's early claim that a communist conspiracy was responsible for inciting the insurrection, but emphasizes the innocence of the Taiwanese people as victims of the communists' manipulation and

¹⁹¹ Dai and Ye, *Aizeng Ererba*, 9-10, 383.

utilization. Moreover, unlike the regime's early propaganda portraying the islanders as thugs, the new book highlights the empathy of the Taiwanese people for mainlanders during the upheavals of the Incident.¹⁹² However, the KMT regime's newly adjusted claim was less than persuasive. By the time a group of overseas Taiwanese scholars and activists, including Peng Mingmin, Xie Congmin, Zhang Fumei, Chen Fangming, Chen Ju and others held a conference on the February 28 Incident in San Francisco in February 1987,¹⁹³ movements for redressing the Incident were already under way in Taiwan.

Although the February 28 Peace Day Movement of 1987 marked the watershed of Taiwan's pursuit of justice for the Incident, relatively scattered efforts had already started in the early 1980s. In 1982, it was revealed that there were still more than 20 people in prison for their involvement in the February 28 Incident. One KMT legislator, Hong Zhaonan, questioned why and wished the KMT government to attend to the issue, but the then Minister of Defense, Song Zhongzhi, simply denied that there were still any political prisoners, who were arrested in the case before 1950 and were still in prison.¹⁹⁴ Hong was afterward placed under surveillance by the authorities; however, the Taiwan Garrison Command did subsequently release the political prisoners in question the next year.¹⁹⁵ Following this discussion in the Legislative Yuan, more lawmakers from both the KMT

¹⁹² Chen, "Lishi zhengyi de kunjing: Zuqun yiti yu Eerba lunshu," 195-98.

¹⁹³ At least one of the participants of the conference, Chen Ju, was one of the major activists prosecuted by the KMT regime in the Meilidao Incident. And some of the major activists prosecuted in the Meilidao Incident have overseas studies experience, such as Lu Xiulian, who later became Taiwan's Vice President when the DPP won the presidential election in 2000. The conference proceedings published in 1988 include Chen Ju in a photo of the participants, though the book does not include any of her work. See Chen Fangmin, ed., *Eerba Shijian xueshu lunwenji* (Essays on the February 28 Incident) (Irvine, CA: Taiwan chubanshe, 1988).

¹⁹⁴ *Lifayuan gongbao* 立法院公報 (Gazettes of the Legislature Yuan) vol. 71, issue 77 (September 25, 1982), 8-9, 13.

¹⁹⁵ "Jiechuan Eerba Shijian shouxingren rengzai ludao" 揭穿二二受刑人仍在綠島 (Exposing the fact that the victims of the February 28 Incident are still imprisoned in Greed Island), *Yatai xinwen wang* (ATA News), March 28, 2016, <https://www.atanews.net/?news=19695> (accessed 5 October 2020).

and other parties raised subsequent questions related to the February 28 Incident in 1983 and 1984, calling on the KMT government to clarify accounts of the event and grant amnesty to the related political prisoners of the February 28 Incident and the 1979 Meilidao Incident. The KMT authorities maintained their early claims of communist and Taiwan separatist conspiracies and continued to deny any political oppression of the people.¹⁹⁶ The following year, a non-KMT legislator, Jiang Pengjian, who took up Wang Xiaobo's suggestion, posted a written and oral question about the February 28 Incident on March 1 and March 19, 1985 successively, and suggested the government heal the historical wound by promulgating the truth and setting the anniversary date of the February 28 Incident as Peace Day. However, in his oral reply to Jiang's questions, the prime minister, Yu Guohua, still insisted on communist responsibility for the incitement and for the attempted subversion of the government,¹⁹⁷ and he continued to maintain this position when answering Jiang's written question about the issue again in 1986.¹⁹⁸ Nonetheless, the regime did soon adjust its stance after the February 28 Peace Day Movement of 1987. During a policy debate in March 1987, when answering a question regarding the February 28 Incident from the KMT legislator Wu Demei, the prime minister Yu Guohua recognized the Incident as a "wound" and called for ethnic reconciliation through transcending the controversy over the Incident.¹⁹⁹

Meanwhile, scholarly research on issues related to the Incident started to break the political taboo on the island. In 1985, Li Xiaofeng's MA thesis *Taiwan guangfu chuqi de minyi daibiao* (The elected representatives in early period of postwar Taiwan)

¹⁹⁶ *Lifayuan gongbao* vol. 72, issue 24 (March 1983), 37-8; *Lifayuan gongbao* vol. 73, issue 22 (March 17, 1984), 13-6.

¹⁹⁷ *Lifayuan gongbao* vol. 74, issue 23 (March 1985), 36.

¹⁹⁸ *Lifayuan gongbao* vol. 75, issue 29 (April 1986), 46.

¹⁹⁹ *Lifayuan gongbao* vol. 76, issue 20 (March 1987), 79-82.

pioneered research on the February 28 Incident by studying the life stories of the Taiwanese elite who had served as political representatives (*minyi daibiao*) in early period of postwar Taiwan.²⁰⁰ Due to political sensitivities, Li's indirect narrative of the February 28 Incident was far from being comprehensive, but it initiated research of this kind in Taiwan's academic field. In 1987, upon the request of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly (*Taiwan sheng yihui*), the Historical Research Committee of Taiwan Province (*Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui*) implemented a project to collect data related to the Incident, including the collection of historiographical materials and archives, and interviews with local elders who had experienced the Incident.²⁰¹ The outcome was the publication of three collections of historiographical materials on the Incident between 1991 and 1994.²⁰²

Above all, it was the February 28 Peace Day Movement (*Ereba hepingri yundong*) initiated by the February 28 Peace Day Association (*Ereba hepingri chujinhui*) in 1987 that brought attention to the Incident by a broader audience and forced the authorities to confront the issue. Until February 1990, when the Legislative Yuan under KMT control passed a resolution to offer condolences to the February 28 victims, expressions of opinion over the Incident could still be subjected to state oppression. For many Taiwanese people, the February 28 Incident itself was a symbol of counter-democracy and KMT despotism. Above all, the significance of the event and its links to the TIM strongly challenged the KMT's political ideology and implicitly threatened the

²⁰⁰ The thesis later was published as *Taiwan zhanhou chuqi de minyi daibiao* (The elected representatives in early period of postwar Taiwan) by Zili wanbao chubanshe in 1986.

²⁰¹ Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, "Bian yan" (preface), in Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui ed., *Ereba wenxian jilu*, 1-2.

²⁰² Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, ed., *Ereba Shijian wenxian jilu* (Historiographical records of the February 28 Incident vol. 1); Wei Yongzhu, ed., *Ereba Shijian wenxian xulu* (vol.2.); Wei Yongzhu and Li Xuanfeng, eds., *Ereba Shijian wenxian bulu* (vol. 3) (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1991, 1992, 1994).

existence of the party state. Consequently, the KMT regime would not allow different interpretations of the Incident.²⁰³

When the February 28 Peace Day Association was formed in February 1987, Chiang Ching-kuo was still in power, and martial law was still in force, which meant parades, assemblies, and demonstrations remained prohibited. However, in defiance of martial law, the Association pushed to pursue rehabilitation of the February 28 Incident and its victims, and brought the subject to public consciousness through successive public lectures, commemorations and peaceful demonstrations across the island. They were meant to “enlighten” the public on the tragedy in Taiwan’s repressed history and to demand the correcting of injustices of the past. In 1987 alone, more than twenty events were held to commemorate the February 28 Incident.²⁰⁴ The organizers’ demands included: holding public commemorations of the February 28 Incident, revealing the truth about the Incident, redressing related grievances, and establishing a February 28 Memorial Day.²⁰⁵

Faced with this mass movement, the KMT regime continued its repressive policy. Between 1987 and 1990, the February 28 Peace Day Movement’s island-wide consciousness-raising lectures and demonstrations were often under the police’s check and even oppression. The KMT regime sent out thousands of members of the security forces, including military personnel and riot control police, to regulate the assemblies and

²⁰³ In March 1987, then Prime Minister Yu Guohua argued that the KMT government had never banned the discussion of, or academic research into, the Incident. However, given the political persecution during and after the February 28 Incident and the subsequent treatment of the event in the 1950s and 1960s, along with related political measures such as martial law, the Incident was virtually a political taboo.

²⁰⁴ Fleischauer, “The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement’s Construction of a Taiwanese Identity,” 383.

²⁰⁵ Ererba Heping Ri cujinhui 二二八和平日促進會, ed., *Zouchu Ererba de yinying: Ererba Heping Ri cujin yundong shilu 1987-1990 走出二二八的陰影：二二八和平日促進運動實錄 1987-1990* (Walking out of the shadow of the February 28 Incident: Records of the February 28 Peace Day promotion movement, 1987-1990) (Taipei: Zhili wanbao, 1991), 22-54.

demonstrations, and sometimes even to engage in their violent repression. In 1987, the most violent confrontation occurred on March 7, when demonstrators led by Zheng Nanrong and Chen Yongxing marched to the Zhanghua County governmental building and demanded the truth about the Incident and redress for it. They were met with hundreds of riot police, who engaged in violent confrontations with the crowd.²⁰⁶

Even after Chiang Ching-kuo died in January 1988, the KMT regime continuously struggled against calls for redress over the Incident during the period of power transition. It was not until March 1990, when Lee Teng-hui overcame powerful KMT party rivals to become the President elected by the National Assembly, that the party under Lee's leadership would make drastic changes in facing the demands of Taiwanese society for redressing the effects of its long-term policy toward the February 28 Incident of 1947.

The CCP's Reinterpretation of the February 28 Incident in the Years 1972-1987

After the issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972 and the subsequent normalization of relations between the PRC and US, the CCP too readjusted its evaluations of the February 28 Incident to accommodate the new political realities. It continued to link itself with the Incident, and officially claimed leadership in it, yet it downplayed its previous anti-US stance. Then, in accordance with the new Taiwan policy directed by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1980s, the CCP reinterpreted the pursuit of the Taiwanese people for democratic autonomy in the February 28 Incident to fit into its

²⁰⁶ The Memorial Foundation of 228 二二八紀念基金會, "Ererba pingfang yundong jiyao" 二二八平反運動紀要 (Summary of the February 28 redress movement), Memorial Foundation of 228, http://www.228.org.tw/288_redress.html (accessed 8 May 2018).

current rhetoric of peaceful unification. Although the CCP's reinterpretations of the Incident seemed opposite to those of the KMT, the CCP similarly utilized the Incident to advance its legitimacy and its own claims regarding sovereignty over Taiwan.

The CCP's reevaluation was perhaps best illustrated in its annual commemorations of the Incident. In 1973, when US-PRC relations were moving toward conciliation, the CCP resumed and expanded the scale of its commemorations of the Incident that had been discontinued from 1966. The commemorations from 1973 until at least 1979 were no longer held by the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, but by the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC, *Zhengzhi xieshang huiyi quanguo weiyuanhui*),²⁰⁷ which in 1973 was presided over by high-ranking leaders of the party-state, such as: Zhou Jianren, the Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; Fu Zuoyi and Xu Deheng, vice chairmen of the CPPCC's National Committee; and Liao Chengzhi and Luo Qingchang, members of the CCP Central Committee.²⁰⁸ The presence of such high-ranking party and state leaders as well as the subsequent publication of both Chinese and English booklets chronicling the conference suggested to the international community the importance of the Taiwan issue, including the February 28 Incident, to the CCP. Through its annual commemorations of the Incident, the CCP continually signaled to the world its sovereignty over Taiwan.

The 1973 commemoration adjusted the CCP's old tones that had stressed the Incident as a patriotic act of the anti-Chiang regime and anti-imperialism and of Taiwan

²⁰⁷ In September 1949, the League joined the CPPCC held by the CCP in Beijing, and participated in formulating the "Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (*Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi gongtong gangling*).

²⁰⁸ *Renmin ribo*, March 1, 1973:1.

being an inseparable part of China. Liao Chenzhi held that the Incident was the result of the Taiwanese people's response to the call of Chairman Mao to "Welcome the new high tide of the Chinese Revolution" (Yingjie Zhongguo geming de xin gaochao), which stressed the liberation of Taiwan and its unification with the mainland. However, instead of placing emphasis on anti-US sentiment, Liao mentioned the PRC's newly developing relations with the United States; this was clearly meant to accommodate the new political changes between the countries. Liao also made a point of condemning any form of "Taiwan secessionism," a stance that was reinforced by Fu Zuoyi, who in particular noted "the US recognition of Taiwan as part of China's territory in the Shanghai Communique" in his speech.²⁰⁹ This could be regarded as a rebuttal of a recent statement by the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, Marshall Green. Soon after the signature of the Communique, the CCP had articulated its conditions for normalization of US-PRC relations, including the removal of US military forces and posts from Taiwan, the termination of US-ROC diplomatic relations and of the Mutual Defense Treaty. Green, however, denied that the Communique represented any change in the position that the US had held since 1950 regarding the undetermined legal status of the island.²¹⁰ Thus, Liao's statement reflected the CCP's use of commemorations of the February 28 Incident as a platform to address its political concerns over the Taiwan issue.

Thereafter, the CCP would maintain the same tone and continue to hold high-profile commemorations of the Incident annually until 1979, and Liao Chengzhi became the key figure who gave talks at those commemorations. In the 1974 commemoration, Liao again claimed that "the February 28 armed uprising of the Taiwan people was a part

²⁰⁹ *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1973:2.

²¹⁰ Chiu, "The Question of Taiwan in Sino-American Relations," 180-81.

of the popular democratic revolution carried out under the leadership of the communist Party against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism.”²¹¹ The 1975 commemoration was an expanded affair chaired by Xu Deheng, who had been a vice chairman of the CPPCC’s National Committee, but in 1975 also held the position of vice-chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. Attendees included high-rank party leaders and military officers such as Ye Jianying, the vice-chairman of the CCP Central Committee, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the party’s Central Committee, and the vice-chairman of the CPPCC; Xu Xiangqian, the vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the party’s Central Committee and vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress; Liao Chengzhi, a member of the CCP Central Committee; and Yang Chengwu, the PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff and head of the United Front Work Department of the party’s Central Committee. The 1975 commemoration reaffirmed the CCP’s rhetoric about Taiwan being an integral part of China, the CCP’s leadership in the 1947 Incident, and the need for the liberation of Taiwan and reunification, as Liao Chengzhi elaborated in his own speech. That speech reinforced the aforementioned statement about the February 28 Incident by the CCP in 1947, but left out the “democratic autonomy” dimension of the Incident, instead subordinating the Incident to the CCP’s leadership.²¹²

In addition, the 1975 commemoration re-emphasized historical and ethnic relations between the people of China and Taiwan. Similar to the 1973 commemoration, it stressed the liberation of Taiwan and again condemned ideas of secessionism, such as

²¹¹ *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1974:3.

²¹² “Zai jinian Taiwan sheng renmin ‘Ereba’ Qiyi 28 zhounian zuotanhui shang Liao Chengzhi tongzhi de jianghua” 在紀念台灣省人民二二八起義 28 週年座談會上廖承志同志的講話 (Speech by Comrade Liao Chengzhi in Meeting on the 28th Anniversary of the “February 28” Uprising of the People of Taiwan Province), *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1975:4.

those affirming “Two Chinas,” “One China, Two Governments,” and “Taiwan Independence.”²¹³ This stance, though aligned with the CCP’s position from the 1950s, reflected the CCP’s concerns about the US continued support of Taiwan given the forced resignation of US President Richard Nixon in August 1974 and conservative Republican sympathy for Taiwan in Congress.²¹⁴ The 1975 commemoration of the February 28 Incident, thus, was itself a political indication of the CCP’s Taiwan policy.

After the announcement of the formal establishment of US-PRC diplomatic relations and the release of the aforementioned “A Message to Compatriots in Taiwan” by PRC’s Standing Committee of the National People’s Council issued on January 1 1979, the political climate changed once again. Accordingly, in the 1979 commemoration the CCP placed stress on “peaceful unification” and on “three links and four exchanges,” and defined the 1947 Incident as a patriotic, democratic movement without making any anti-Chiang and anti-US claims.²¹⁵ Evidently, the CCP’s narratives of the February 28 Incident were closely linked to changes in the international and internal political contexts and to its readings of those contexts, which meant the Incident was not much more than a vehicle of the CCP’s political manifesto.

Besides the annual commemorations, the CCP also carried out various activities to emphasize the leading role it claimed in the Incident during this period. In 1973 the CCP published an English booklet entitled *The Twenty-Sixth Anniversary of the “February 28” Uprising of the People of Taiwan Province*. This included a report on the commemorative meeting of the Incident held that year by the CPPCC, and the speeches

²¹³ *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1975:4.

²¹⁴ Chiu, “The Question of Taiwan in Sino-American Relations,” 180-83, 188.

²¹⁵ *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1979:2.

Liao Chengzhi and Fu Zuoyi gave there.²¹⁶ As it was published in English, it apparently primarily targeted a foreign audience. Given that Taiwan was then still under the KMT regime's firm control with its enforced silence about the February 28 Incident, the publication seemed to aim at increasing the visibility of the Incident in the international community. Furthermore, on February 28, 1977, the CCP issued commemorative stamps for "The 30th Anniversary of the People's Uprising in Taiwan Province" (Taiwan sheng renmin Ererba qiyi sanshi zhounian) to memorialize the Incident, an expression of the CCP's attempt to support the Taiwan people's patriotic struggle against imperialism and the Chiang regime, as well as its sovereignty over the island "province."²¹⁷

Interestingly, the CCP halted the commemoration activities from 1980 to 1986.²¹⁸ Some scholars hold that this was because the CCP's portrayal of the Incident as an act of patriotism against the Chiang regime and American imperialism no longer fit the new political situation after the PRC's formal establishment of diplomatic relations with the US in 1979, and given its call to the KMT for political negotiations and "peaceful unification" with Taiwan.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, the CCP did allow discussions on the Incident, in particular the publication of *Ererba Qiyi zhiliao ji* (Collection of materials about the February 28 Uprising) by Xiamen University in 1981, which brought together the accounts of witnesses to the Incident, as well as KMT official reports, documents, public talks, announcements, and diverse other accounts of the Incident, along with other

²¹⁶ *Twenty-Sixth Anniversary of the "February 28" Uprising of the People of Taiwan Province* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1973).

²¹⁷ *Hangzhou ribao*, February 28, 1977:4.

²¹⁸ The author of this dissertation has searched *Renmin ribao*'s online database, and the search result indicates the absence of news reports about commemorations of the February 28 Incident published by *Remin ribao* in the years from 1980 to 1986, though *Renmin ribao* published an essay about the Incident on August 26 1983, and a news report about the moving of Xie Xuehong's grave on September 16 1986. *Remin ribao*, August 26, 1983:5; September 16, 1986:4.

²¹⁹ See Chen, "Zhonggong Ererba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian," 127-28.

materials including announcements by the February 28 Resolution Committee, Taiwanese groups residing in mainland China, and the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League. Many materials in this book either echoed the CCP's accusation of KMT corruption and oppression, or supported the CCP's claim for leadership in the Incident.²²⁰ Yet the inclusion of the editorial of *Jiefang ribao* of 1947, "Taiwan's Self-Government Movement" and the announcements of the Taipei Resolution Committee contradicted the CCP's new claim for leadership in the Incident, although the theme of Taiwan's pursuit of autonomous rule in the Incident could be interpreted as support for the CCP's new "one country, two systems" policy.

Academically, besides brief discussions on the Incident in PRC history textbooks for university students published by various local branches of the People's Publishing House (renmin chubanshe) or by university institutes from 1982 to 1987,²²¹ scholarly research also attended to the Incident, as seen in particular in Deng Kongzhao's "Shi lun Taiwan Ererba Shijian zhong de minzhu yu difang zizhi yaoqiu" (On the demand for democracy and local self-autonomous rule in the February 28 Incident of Taiwan), and Chen Zhengqing's "Shi xi Taiwan Ererba Qiyi qian de si da jingji maodun" (Analyses on the four major economic issues before the outbreak of the February 28 Uprising of Taiwan), both published in 1987. Deng's work focuses on the Taiwan people's demand

²²⁰ The book was published in Taiwan in 1991. Deng Kongzhao 鄧孔昭, ed., *Ererba Shijian ziliao ji* 二二八事件資料集 (Collection of materials about the February 28 Uprising) (Taipei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1991).

²²¹ According to Du Jidong, brief discussions about the Incident started to appear in history textbooks for post-secondary students during this period. From 1982 to 1987, the Incident was included in various history textbooks published by various local branches of People's Publishing House (renmin chubanshe) and university outlets, such as *Modern Chinese History* (Zhongguo xiandai shi) published in Henan in 1982, another version of *Modern Chinese History* by Beijing Normal University in 1983, and *New Modern Chinese History* (xinbian Zhongguo xiandai shi) in Nanchang, Jiangxi in 1987. These textbooks were still closely aligned with the CPP's revolutionary view on the February 28 Incident and treated the Incident as a part of the CCP's revolutionary struggle in modern Chinese history. More details about these publications see Du, "1949 nian yilai zhongguo dalu Ererba Shijian yanjiu pingjie," 21-2.

for autonomous self-rule and democracy during the Incident. It divides the participants into three categories based on social class and political ideology, and argues that despite differences in the demands and political goals between the participants from the three categorized groups, the major appeal was for “democracy and local autonomous self-rule,” which was in accordance with the contemporary democratic inspiration embodied in Sun Yat-sen’s *Fundamentals of National Reconstruction* (*jianguo dagong*), the KMT-CCP political agreements in 1945-1946, and the ROC Constitution promulgated on January 1 1947.²²² Chen Zhengqing, on the other hand, looks from an economic perspective into the effects of the KMT’s economic policies on postwar Taiwan before the outbreak of the Incident. Chen argues that exploitive policies that drained Taiwan’s resources and people’s wealth to meet the needs of the KMT in the Civil War, along with the incompetence and corruption of the KMT government, severely worsened the already weakened economy of postwar Taiwan, and eventually led to the outbreak of the February 28 Incident.²²³ These two works attempt from political and economic perspectives to analyze the nature and cause of the Incident, rather than simply applying the prescribed CCP’s revolutionary rhetoric, despite Deng’s link of the Incident with the CCP’s political claims during the Civil War.

Official publications, nevertheless, either revised the CCP’s previous claims or translated Taiwan’s pursuit of local autonomy to fit the CCP’s current Taiwan policy. In 1987, when demands for justice and for revisiting the history of the Incident reached their

²²² Deng Kongzhao 鄧孔昭, “Shi lun Taiwan Ererba Shijian zhong de minzhu yu difang zizhi yaoqiu” 試論台灣二二八事件中的民主與地方自治要求 (On the demands for democracy and local self-rule in the February 28 Incident of Taiwan), *Taiwan yanjiu qikan* (Taiwan Research Quarterly) 2 (1987): 1-12.

²²³ Chen Zhengqing 陳正卿, “Shi xi Taiwan Ererba Qiyi qian de si da jingji maodun” 試析台灣二二八起義前的四大經濟矛盾 (Analyses on the four major economical issues before the outbreak of the February 28 Uprising of Taiwan), in *Ererba yanjiu* vol. 2 (Studies on the February 28 Incident, vol. 2), ed., Li Ao (Taipei: Liao chubanshe, 1991), 159-182. Originally published in 1987.

peak in Taiwan, the CCP published two books that revised its previous narratives of the February 28 Incident. One of these books, *Chen Yi shengping ji beihai neimu* (The life of Chen Yi and the inside story of his being killed), consists of essays by witnesses of the February 28 Incident, some of whom were former KMT officials or Chen Yi's subordinate administrators. This book was co-edited by the CPPCC, Zhejiang PCC (Zhejiang sheng zhengxie, or Zhejiang Province Political Consultative Conference), and the Fujian PCC (Fujian sheng zhengxie, or Fujian Province Political Consultative Conference); therefore, it can be regarded as an official publication. The book re-evaluates Chen Yi and reverses the CCP's previous definition of Chen Yi as a "war criminal" (zhanfan) and imitator of Japanese colonial rule of Taiwan.²²⁴ Instead, the book praises Chen Yi's moral values, personal qualities and abilities, as well as his good will toward the people of Taiwan; it also defends Chen Yi and explains his failures as due to the limits of the times.²²⁵

Another book, *Lishi de jianzheng: Jinian Taiwan renmin "Ereba" Qiyi sishi zhounian* (The testimony of history: Commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Taiwan people's February 28 Uprising), was a product of the CCP's commemorative activities in 1987. In that year, the CCP not only resumed its annual commemoration of the February 28 Incident, but also allowed former participants or witnesses of the February 28 Incident from mainland China to attend a conference co-organized by *Taiwan and the World*

²²⁴ Li, *Taiwan Renmin keming Douzheng Jianshi*, 167.

²²⁵ Chen Haibin 陳海濱, *Chen Yi shengping ji beihai neimu* 陳儀生平及被害內幕 (The life of Chen Yi and inside story of his death) (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1987). This book was republished in Taiwan in 1989 under the title *Ereba yanjiu* vol. 3 (Research on the February 28 Incident, vol. 3). In 2004, it was republished in Taiwan again, and the whole content of the book was included in the book *Chen Yi yu Ereba Shijian* (Chen Yi and the February 28 Incident). See Li Ao 李敖, ed., *Ereba yanjiu* 二二八研究 vol. 3 (Research on the February 28 Incident, vol. 3) (Taipei: Li ao chubanshe, 1989); and Wang Xiaobo 王曉波, ed., *Chen Yi yu Ereba Shijian* 陳儀與二二八事件 (Chen Yi and the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Haixia xueshu chubanshe, 2004).

magazine and *Taiwan Sichao* (Taiwan Tide) magazine and held at Columbia University in New York for the 40th anniversary of the Incident.²²⁶ Afterward, the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League based in Mainland China published this collection, which included speeches and presentations at conferences in Beijing and New York as well as other related writings. As is evident in the introductory article to this collection, “Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the February 28 Uprising” (Jinian Ererba qiyi sishi zhounian) by Cai Zimin, then the executive director (changwu lishi) of the League, the book promotes the application of “One country, two systems” and “three types of communications,” (santong) calling for “peaceful reunification.” It argues that the “One country, two systems” policy allows a high degree of autonomy that would accord with the aims of the Taiwan people during the February 28 Incident, and would meet the fundamental interests of the Taiwanese people.²²⁷ Moreover, the book defines the nature of the Incident as a rebellion resulting from the oppression of the authorities (guanbiminbian), and aimed at achieving Taiwan’s democratic autonomy (minzhu zizhi) rather than its independence, and it rebuts the KMT’s accusation that the 228 Incident was “incited by the communists.”²²⁸ This narrative obviously contradicted the CCP’s long-held claim to leadership in the Incident. Since the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League was allowed to publish the book, the CCP must have consented to its publication. Thus, it can be said to have more or less reflected official positions about

²²⁶ “Haixia liangan tongbao zai Niuyue jihui” (Meeting of compatriots from the two sides of the strait in New York), *Renmin ribao*, March 2, 1987:6.

²²⁷ Cai Zimin 蔡子民, “Jinian Ererba Qiyi sishi zhounian” 紀念二二八起義四十週年 (Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of February 28 Uprising), in *Lishi de jianzheng: Jinian Taiwan renmin “Ererba” Qiyi sishi zhounian* 歷史的見證：紀念台灣人民二二八起義四十週年 (The testimony of history: Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Taiwan People’s February 28 Uprising), ed. Taiwan minzhu zizhi tongmeng 台灣民主自治同盟 (Beijing: Taiwan minzhu zizhi tongmeng, 1987), 5.

²²⁸ Li Chunqing 李純青, “Xie zai qianmian” 寫在前面 (Writing in front), in *Lishi de jianzheng*, 2.

the February 28 Incident. This raises the question, why did the CCP reverse and contradict its early stance?

Chen Fangming remarks that the CCP's historical interpretation of the February 28 Incident of Taiwan has always been subject to whatever its Taiwan policy has been; therefore, when the policy changed, it has been necessary to adjust its interpretations of the Incident. As the February 28 Peace Day Movement brought an end to the monopolies of the respective KMT and CCP's interpretations of the Incident, and given the calls for reconciliation presented in the PRC's "A Message to Compatriots in Taiwan," the anti-Chiang and anti-American imperialism stance no longer suited the new political climate. A new interpretation of the Incident, then, was needed to take into account both the positions of the KMT and the people of Taiwan. And the result in 1987 was the two publications just discussed, with the former considering the KMT's position on the Incident and the latter approximating to the Taiwan people's perceptiveness.²²⁹ Indeed, praising Chen Yi and stressing "the limit of the times" in a way eased criticism of the Chen Yi government for its maladministration of Taiwan, given Chen Yi's alleged good intentions. And since it was "the times" that failed Chen Yi and his administration, this simultaneously shifts the blame away from the KMT leadership behind Chen Yi. This approach is actually echoed by the KMT in a 1992 official report, which states that the complexity of the situation prevented Chen Yi from applying his talents and abilities despite the power in his hands and his political ideals.²³⁰ Chen Fangming's argument does not go further into the implication of this stance toward Chen Yi. For, if "the times"

²²⁹ Chen, "Zhonggong Ererba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian," 128-130.

²³⁰ Xingzhengyuan yanjiu Ererba Shijian xiaozu 行政院研究二二八事件小組, *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao* 二二八事件研究報告 (The research report on the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Xingzhengyuan, 1992), 9-10.

failed Chen Yi, and if his failure in administering Taiwan was a result of the “limit of the times,” the same logic can be also applied to the KMT regarding its failure in postwar Taiwan.

On the other hand, the latter publication re-inscribed the definition of “self-government” onto the Incident, returning to the CCP’s initial claim during the Civil War. However, it did so by inserting the idea of “One country, two systems” into the argument, stating that Taiwan would enjoy a high degree of autonomy under the “One country, two systems” policy.²³¹ Chen argues that the CCP’s re-interpretation was meant to accord with its adjusted Taiwan policy, and so the book by the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League implies that the demands of the Taiwan people for self-rule, originally advanced during the February 28 Incident, would come true under the “one country, two systems” formula.²³² Indeed, the revised expressions presented in these books suggest a readjusted official stance that fit the Incident into the CCP’s present political propaganda for “unification” under the “one China” banner.

Throughout the decades, as part of its political discourse, the CCP’s narratives about the February 28 Incident have drastically changed to accommodate the political currents of the day, but its ultimate theme of “unification” has remained unchanged despite shifts in its rhetoric. Before 1950, its power struggle against the KMT regime led to a wartime policy endorsing the Incident as an example of a democratic movement for autonomy. This position on the February 28 Incident shifted significantly to an emphasis on the anti-US and anti-KMT nature of the armed uprising on Taiwan when the antagonism between the CCP’s PRC and the KMT’s ROC under US support grew after

²³¹ Cai, “Jinian Ererba Qiyi sishi zhounian,” 5.

²³² Chen, “Zhonggong Ererba Shijian shiguan de zhengcexing zhuanbian,” 129-130.

the outbreak of the Korean War. After the PRC became the only legal representative of China in the global community and after the establishment of US-PRC diplomatic relations, the CCP once again reevaluated the Incident, skillfully integrating its early claim with the new political situation. As a result, the historical meaning of the Incident in the trajectory of the Taiwan people's political aspirations was then transformed as a political function of the CCP's grand narrative of communist liberation or its mission of peaceful unification. Meanwhile, the KMT's long suppression of historical knowledge of the Incident in a way served its own interpretive monopoly on the island. After Chiang Ching-kuo died in early 1988, Taiwan underwent drastic political changes that further facilitated revisionist explanations for the February 28 Incident.

Chapter Three
Political Changes and the Revised Historiography of
the February 28 Incident, 1988-2008

Dramatic political changes happened in Taiwan after Chiang Ching-kuo's death in January 1988 and in mainland China after the Tiananmen Square incident in June 1989, as well as in cross-strait relations after Hong Kong's return to the PRC in 1997, and especially after the DPP's rise as the ruling party in Taiwan in 2000-2008. All of these historic changes caused unprecedented revisions in the historiography about the February 28 Incident on the island, in mainland China and even in the Western academic world.

Lee Teng-hui, a Taiwan native, was the vice president of the ROC when Chiang died, and he soon became both the president in January 1988 and the KMT party chairman in July of the same year.¹ However, at the beginning of his tenure, the mainlander establishment remained in control, and the KMT continued its repressive policy toward the February 28 Incident until the 1990 presidential election in Taiwan.² Lee's victory in that election allowed further democratic reforms to take place, and the KMT also made a political turn toward a policy of rehabilitating the February 28 Incident. That move entailed a series of activities ranging from rehabilitation of its victims and re-interpretation of the Incident itself, to memorial services held during the Lee administration. Meanwhile, the changing political climate permitted the expression of various shades of public opinion about the Incident.

¹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 131-32.

² Shi-shan Henry Tsai, *Lee Teng-hui and Taiwan's Quest for Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 163-64; Wakabayashi, *Zhanhou Taiwan zhengzhi shi*, 192; *Da Jiyuan shibao* (The Epoch Times), February 25, 2007. <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/7/2/25/n1629661.htm>.

The DPP's rule of Taiwan from 2000 to 2008 inevitably aggravated political rifts on the island and across the strait. With a political platform to promote strong Taiwanese consciousness and a separate Taiwanese identity from Chinese nationalism, the DPP's political measures deepened Taiwan's political antagonism with mainland China, but also inside Taiwan society, especially between the so-called Pan-Blue Coalition, which consisted of supporters of the KMT's pro-Chinese unification stance, and the Pan-Green Coalition of advocates of the DPP's pro-Taiwanese independence platform. Meanwhile, the DPP continued to redress judgments on the February 28 Incident. At the same time, the DPP also appropriated the Incident, especially the elite pursuit of Taiwanese autonomy from the KMT regime in 1947, to support the DPP's call for Taiwan independence.³

Meanwhile, after the Tiananmen Square Incident happened in mainland China in June 1989, the CCP emphasized a kind of political "stability" that best served its national interest.⁴ The CCP leadership insisted on maintaining a monopoly on power and tightened social and political controls, while encouraging and utilizing nationalism to strengthen political domination.⁵ Talks between Koo Zhenfu and Wang Daohan held in Singapore in April 1993, which marked the first official contacts between the KMT and the CCP since the late-1940s Civil War, resulted in the two parties reaching the so-called "one China, respective interpretations" accord,⁶ but from the mid-1990s the CCP shifted

³ Fleischauer, "The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement's Construction of a Taiwanese Identity," 389-90.

⁴ Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Kate Markel-Hess, "Tiananmen and its Aftermath, 1989-1999," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 263.

⁵ Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 943; Wasserstrom and Markel-Hess, "Tiananmen and its Aftermath, 1989-1999," 257.

⁶ According to Su Chi, the NUC passed a "Definition of One China" resolution on 1 August 1992, which states that "The two sides of the Taiwan Strait uphold the One China Principle, but the interpretations of the

back to a more aggressive stance toward Taiwan.⁷ Following the return of Hong Kong to the PRC in July 1997, the CCP's policy of "Fang Du" (preventing [Taiwan] independence) and "Cu Tong" (promoting unification) appeared more explicitly.⁸ In response to the DPP's forming the government in Taiwan in 2000 and its refusal of the "one China principle," the CCP turned to utilizing "united front" tactics to entice the KMT while maintaining an aggressive stance toward the DPP government.⁹ Not surprisingly, the CCP continued to utilize the commemorations of the February 28 Incident as a mechanism for its political propaganda. While unofficial contacts across the strait allowed the introduction of research findings and materials on the Incident from Taiwan to mainland China, Chinese scholars on the mainland also paid attention to the subject, and a relatively less restricted scholarship on the Incident emerged from the 1990s.

As a result, many of the revisionist views in circulation offered new perspectives on the February 28 Incident. But the new discourses competed with each other about what the "truth" of the Incident was, and they were complicated by the political division within the island and across the Strait. In mainland China, the range of academic analyses of the Incident was more diverse than the CCP's official interpretation of the Incident.

two sides are different..." Later, after the Hong Kong talks failed, the SEF suggested each side express its own interpretation verbally, and the ARATS agreed with it. But the term "one China, respective interpretations" was used by the Taiwan media rather than formally addressed by either government. Moreover, the term the "92 consensus" was actually "invented" by Shu Chi, as he himself admitted in February 2006, after the DPP won the presidential election in 2000. The DPP has been rejecting the so-called "92 consensus" since then. See Su Chi, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China: A Tail Wagging Two Dogs* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 13-4; and *Pingguo ribao* (The apple daily), February 22, 2006, <https://tw.appledaily.com/headline/daily/20060222/2420410/> (accessed 12 2019).

⁷ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 155, 169; Su, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*, 18-21, 34-5; Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 144, 148, 155.

⁸ Quansheng Zhao and Guoli Liu, "Beijing's Shifting Positions in the New Era of Cross-Taiwan Strait Relations," in *Taiwan's Politics in the 21st Century*, ed. Wei-Chin Lee (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 201.

⁹ Steven M. Goldstein, *China and Taiwan* (Cambridge, UK: Polity press, 2015), 105-6, 113-117.

Even in the West, limited studies on the Incident presented different views on its historical contexts and on the relationship between the historical event and scholarly representations. Therefore, despite new insights on the Incident provided by revisionist thinkers, the changing political contexts in Taiwan and on the Chinese mainland still shaped scholarly reinterpretations of the Incident.

The KMT's Reform of Taiwan Politics and Its Policies on the February 28 Incident, 1988-2000

The KMT's Political Reforms and Its New Policy toward the February 28 Incident

Reforms introduced by the KMT under the leadership of Lee Teng-hui from 1988 to early 2000 not only transformed Taiwan's politics but also modified the official evaluation of the February 28 Incident. Before Lee consolidated his power in March 1990, the KMT still maintained an authoritative stance on the island concerning the February 28 Movement initiated in 1987. Afterward, however, Lee implemented a series of constitutional reforms that accelerated democratic transformation, and he initiated a rehabilitation policy that revised the official stance toward the Incident, yet avoided taking political responsibility for it. As Lee's measures inevitably facilitated an increase of Taiwanese consciousness over the Chinese nationalism upheld by KMT hard-liners, those measures fed factionalism within the KMT, which in turn led to increasing political antagonism between pro-Taiwan identity and pro-Chinese unification forces. Amidst growing political confrontation, various revisionist theories of the Incident came to flourish and competed in claiming to represent the "truth" of the Incident in the newly

democratizing political environment.

Lee's personal experience,¹⁰ including his involvement in the February 28 Incident of 1947, actually exemplified Taiwan's historical and political complexity in regard to this historic event. Lee was born in 1923 to a Hakka family in Sanzhi, Taipei, during the Japanese colonial period. Therefore, Lee received a Japanese education in his early years and later entered Kyoto Imperial University in 1943. After the war, he returned to Taiwan and continued his studies in agricultural economics at National Taiwan University (NTU) in 1946. It was during his college years that the young Lee Teng-hui was attracted to socialist theories, in particular Marxist works. He not only engaged in the Student Self-governing Union (Xuesheng zizhi hui) at NTU, but also participated in protests over the "Shenchong case" against the US in January 1947.

When the February 28 Incident occurred, Lee fled from NTU to hideout in homes of his friends. Most of the time, he hid in the house of one particular friend, but he would sometimes wander around to meetings of the Taipei Resolution Committee during the day. To the young Lee, those meetings were impractical, and the Committee was ignorant of the dangers of suppression by the KMT regime. Actually, Lee himself even attended meetings organized by underground Communist Party members, who attempted to mobilize students against the authorities, but those activities were aborted on March 4, 1947. On the day the KMT reinforcements landed in Taiwan, Lee happened to be on the street in Taipei, and he witnessed KMT soldiers firing randomly into the street.

¹⁰ This paragraph along with the following ones regarding Lee's personal experience are derived from Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲, *Li Denghui zongtong fangtanlu* 李登輝總統訪談錄, v.1 (Interviews with President Lee Teng-hui) (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 2008), 152-195; and "Li Denghui xiansheng jian zhuang" 李登輝先生簡傳 (A brief biography of Mr. Lee Teng-hui), in Lee Teng-hui 李登輝, *Jingying da Taiwan* 經營大台灣 (Managing great Taiwan) (Taipei: Yuanliu, 1995), no page number. This brief biography of Lee does not list the name of author.

Though it seems no one in Lee's family was arrested in the Incident, some members of the study group, and people with whom he was otherwise acquainted, were arrested later. It was because of the Incident that Lee grew disillusioned with the "mother" country and gradually turned to Taiwanese autonomy. For him, though he does not seem to have considered it deeply at the time, the idea of communism was an alternative solution for Taiwan's plight. Lee set about participating in the Communist Party as a way to combat and reform the authoritarian government (*ducai zhengfu*) of the KMT. Later, in the 1990s, speculation about Lee's communist affiliation surfaced during his presidency, and he responded to the controversy in 2008 with the publication of his oral interviews conducted from 2002 to 2004. Lee's opponents claim that he had twice joined and quit the Communist Party.¹¹ According to Lee, however, he had first joined a Marxist study group with four other members that called itself the "New Democratic Comrade Society" (*Xin minzhu tongzhihui*) sometime after the February 28 Incident, and only later did he join the Communist Party around October 1947. However, for the young Lee, the tasks the party assigned, such as criticizing the KMT government in public or scrawling anti-KMT graffiti, was meaningless. In any case, he argued, he was soon disillusioned with the Communist Party. Thereafter, Lee withdrew from the party in June 1948 mainly because he thought that, from his experience, the Communist Party did not appreciate the value of people. Since then, Taiwan has been the center of his thoughts (*yi Taiwan wei zhuti*).

This personal experience in 1947 may partly explain Lee's actions regarding democratic reform and rehabilitation of the February 28 Incident as he set about

¹¹ Lan Bozhou 藍博洲, *Gongchan qingnian Li Denghui* 共產青年李登輝 (The communist youth Lee Teng-hui) (Mianli: self-published, 2000), 259-60.

consolidating his power in the early 1990s. After withdrawing from the Communist Party in 1948, Lee stayed away from politics and focused on his academic studies; yet because of his past political engagements, he was haunted for two or three decades by the fear of being arrested by the KMT at any time.

In 1951, Lee went to the US for post-graduate education at Iowa State University, and he returned to Taiwan in 1953. Before he was recruited into Chiang Ching-kuo's cabinet as a minister without portfolio (*zhengwu weiyuan*) in 1972, Lee first went to work briefly for the Taiwan Cooperative Bank (TCB, *Hezuo jinku*) in 1955, and then gained employment with the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, (JCRR; *Zhongguo nongcun fuxing lianhe weiyuanhui*) from 1957, contributing his professional skills to Taiwan's development in agricultural economics. It was during his work at the JCRR that Lee obtained the chance to return to the US for further advanced study, and he received his doctorate from Cornell University in 1968. Afterward, he was promoted by Chiang as a part of the reform initiatives starting in 1972 to promote local Taiwanese. Lee then advanced in his political career in 1978, when he was appointed mayor of Taipei City, and later the ROC governor of Taiwan province in 1981. In 1984, Lee was selected and promoted by Chiang to serve as his vice president. That set him up to become president when Chiang died in early 1988.¹²

Nevertheless, Lee was not in complete control when he assumed both the presidency of the ROC and the KMT chairmanship in 1988. In fact, Lee's rise was a result of a competition for power among the KMT leading elites. Before his death, Chiang Ching-kuo had positioned his trusted men in key positions. They included Lee

¹² The above paragraphs about Lee's personal experience are derived from Zhang, *Li Denghui zongtong fangtanlu*, v.1, 152-195. "Li Denghui xiansheng jian zhuang," no page number.

Huan, secretary-general of the KMT; Yu Guohua, the premier (Chief of the Executive Yuan), and Hao Bocun, the chief of the general staff of the army, navy, and air force. These three were in control of the party, state affairs, and the party-state's armed forces respectively. This arrangement ensured mutual checks and balances in power.¹³ Thus, few expected Lee to stay in power. However, with the support of Lee Huan and other elites among the KMT leadership who were opposed to the Mme. Chiang Kai-shek camp, Lee Teng-hui became the formal party head in July 1988.¹⁴ Nevertheless, though Lee on paper was the head of the party-state, in practice the power continued to be held by mainlander-origin elites. Lee soon moved to consolidate his power, and eventually won the power struggle through the 1990 presidential election. Nonetheless, in the end, Lee compromised with his competitors by appointing Hao as the Premier, replacing Lee Huan in May 1990.¹⁵ Meanwhile, after the lifting of martial law, significant social movements became active in these years, and they included those of farmers, Indigenous peoples, and Hakka groups. According to Tsai, there were in total 1,433 protests and demonstrations in 1988, 5431 in 1989, and 7775 in 1990.¹⁶ On February 28, 1989, the DPP-led demonstration in Keelung demanded an official apology and justice for victims of the February 28 Incident of 1947.¹⁷

During this transitional period from 1988 to early 1990, the KMT regime was still reluctant to follow social and political calls for justice for the February 28 Incident. At his

¹³ Besides these three powerful men, the president of the Legislative Yuan, Ni Wen-ya, and the national security chief, Song Xinlian, also held considerable power. Tsai, *Lee Teng-hui and Taiwan's Quest for Identity*, 163-64.

¹⁴ Zhou Yukou 周玉蔻, *Li Denghui de yiqian tian, 1988-1992* 李登輝的一千天 (Lee Teng-hui's one thousand days, 1988-1992) (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1993), 23.

¹⁵ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 132, 150-51; Wakabayashi, *Zhan hou Taiwan zhengzhi shi*, 192, 194-95, 200; Zhou, *Li Denghui de yiqian tian, 1988-1992*, 117-25.

¹⁶ Tsai, *Lee Teng-hui and Taiwan's Quest for Identity*, 170.

¹⁷ Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 70.

first presidential press conference in February 1988, Lee faced a question about the Incident, but he stressed forgiveness and called on the public to look forward, instead of being obsessed with the past.¹⁸ Lee was strongly criticized for this, yet some pointed out that it was then impractical to expect him to resolve the issue given the fragility of his power.¹⁹ However, this attitude reflected the KMT's amnesia over its responsibility for its conduct in the Incident. In November 1988, when Yu Zhengxian, a member of the Legislative Yuan, questioned the KMT regime's persecution of victims of the February 28 Incident and demanded an apology, Premier Yu Guohua still held that it was meaningless to keep discussing the issue given the fact that it occurred forty years ago, and that relationships among the islanders had become intricate after years of integration.²⁰

In 1988, the KMT regime also released its official report as conducted by Yang Lianggong and He Hanwen back in 1947,²¹ indicating the KMT regime's continued insistence on its previous stance regarding the Incident. Even in April 1989, Minister of Defense Zhen Weiyuan still blamed incitement by "people with particular purposes" (youxin renshi) and the communists for the Incident in his report to the Legislative Yuan.²² Likewise, in April 1989, when delivering a report about the February 28 Incident for the Legislative Yuan, both Xu Shuide, minister of the Interior, and Xiao Tienzan, minister of Justice, repeated the party's early interpretations of the nefarious impact of Japanese colonialism in sparking the February 28 Incident. While Xu's account of the causes of the Incident appeared as an abbreviated version of Yang Lianggong's report of

¹⁸ *Zhongguo shibao* (China Times), February 23, 1988.

¹⁹ Chen, "Lishi zhengyi de kunjing," 207-208.

²⁰ *Lifayuan gongbao* vol. 77, issue 92 (November 1988), 29-33.

²¹ *Jianchayuan gongbao* 監察院公報 (Gazettes of the Control Yuan) issue 1627 (March 1988), 374-387.

²² *Lifayuan gongbao* vol. 78, issue 62 (April 1989), 6.

1947, Xiao apparently recycled Bai Chongxi's account of causes of the Incident.²³ In addition to avoiding its political responsibility, the regime even attempted to censor forms of cultural expression that suggested alternative memories of the Incident from that held by the KMT regime. In 1989, KMT government censors required Hou Hsiao-hsien, the director of *A City of Sadness*, the first film touching on the subject of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan, to edit out the scenes showing the KMT soldiers' atrocities against the local Taiwanese, although in the end international recognition saved it from censorship.²⁴

Nonetheless the regime continued to repress the February 28 Movement. On August 19, 1989, Taiwan's first February 28 monument was dedicated in Jiayi city. However, during the construction of the monument it was vandalized several times, and individuals involved in its creation were intimidated and monitored by the KMT regime, which even arrested and jailed the monument's designer, Zhan Sanyuan.²⁵ It was after Lee Teng-hui assumed his second presidency in March 1990 that the KMT under Lee's leadership took a drastic turn away from its early repressive actions and toward a new policy of rehabilitating the February 28 Incident.

After winning his own term of presidency, Lee implemented a series of constitutional reforms. From 1990 to 2000, the KMT-controlled National Assembly²⁶ passed six sets of constitutional amendments, which included abolition of the Temporary Provisions, the election of all members of the national parliament, direct presidential

²³ Yang Jiayi 楊家宜, ed., "Ereba de guanfang shuofa" 二二八的官方說法 (Official interpretations of the February 28 Incident), *Zhongguo luntan* 31, no.5 (February 1991): 52-3, 55-6.

²⁴ Hsiang-chun Chen, "Beyond Commemoration: The 228 Incident, the Aesthetics of Trauma and Sexual Difference," (PhD Dissertation, University of Leeds, 2005), 42.

²⁵ *Da Jiyuan shibao*, February 25, 2007. <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/7/2/25/n1629661.htm>.

²⁶ The National Assembly was abolished in June 2005 as a result of the seventh set of constitutional amendments. Wakabayashi, *Zhan hou Taiwan zhengzhi shi*, 283-84.

elections, and the suspension of provincial governments, all crucial to democratization and to reshaping Taiwan's political structure.²⁷ As a result, the KMT had now to compete for electoral support to form government, and power shifted gradually between the KMT and the opposition within that one decade until the DPP actually claimed victory in the 2000 presidential election. A similar power shift also happened in the balance between mainlanders and local Taiwanese people inside the KMT, in the sense that political power would be no longer in the hands of the mainlander establishment.²⁸ Shelley Rigger argues that Lee utilized "reform initiatives" to increase his own popularity while ridding the system of control by the powerful, conservative mainlander elite.²⁹ These shifts were gradual, but, given Lee's early experiences, perhaps "reforming the authoritative government" had long been in his vision of Taiwan.

Lee also moved to redress judgments about the February 28 Incident, and commemorations and rehabilitation of the Incident indeed became a stake in the competition for power and popular support between Lee and Hao Bocun, the mainlander defense minister. In December 1990, both Lee and Hao, along with other officials of the central government, attended the February 28 Christian Mass (Ereba pingan libai) to commemorate the February 28 Incident of 1947. Also in presence were the clergyman Gao Junming of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and families of the victims of the Incident.³⁰ Moreover, on February 24 of 1992, Lee and Hao both attended a concert

²⁷ Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 80-90, 93-4, 129-132, 138-141.

²⁸ Though democracy suggests a majority would rule, however, it does not suggest the local Taiwanese would necessarily monopolize the political power, as became evident in the victory of Ma Yingjiu, who had a mainlander background, in the 2008 presidential election.

²⁹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 132.

³⁰ The Memorial Foundation of 228, http://www.228.org.tw/288_redress.html (2018/05/08). The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan had long devoted itself to pursuing Taiwan's democracy and human rights, and has been a major force to push for justice for the February 28 Incident. In fact, Clergyman Gao was jailed because of his harboring of Shi Meingde in the Meilidao Incident.

commemorating the Incident, the first of the kind taking place in the National Concert Hall, which, ironically, was located in the same area where the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall stands. According to Su Nanzhou, the concert's organizer, Lee gave a speech and paid his condolences to the families of the victims of the Incident, and this earned him considerable media attention. The next day, Hao contacted Su and asked to meet with the families.³¹ Hao was Lee's major political rival, with different visions on reform, Taiwan's identity and relations with China. Though he accepted Lee's appointment as the prime minister, he competed with Lee for power within the KMT and for public support outside the party. Having been an important person loyal to Chiang Kai-shek and his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, and a mainlander with conservative views on political reform, Hao's participation in the February 28 Christian Mass represented a statement that the party hard-liners' attitude was changing in response to public demand, considering that the KMT regime had jailed the designer of the Jaiyi February 28 Incident monument only a year ago.

Lee's political reform, however, did upset and frustrate his party rivals, mostly mainlanders led by Hao Bochun, enough that eventually the KMT split. The hard-liners, who adhered to the notion of unification with China, were strongly against Lee's reforms leaning toward independence, in particular policies that reshuffled the fabric of central parliamentary bodies and the pragmatic diplomacy that prioritized Taiwanese interests and identity over Chinese unity. In fact, they regarded Lee's move as a betrayal of the KMT's commitment to the ROC Constitution and to Chinese nationalism. As a result,

³¹ Li Yuxia 李玉霞, "Xinling chongjian de gongchengshi: Wenroude gaibian ni de diren" 心靈重建的工程師：溫柔地改變你的敵人 (The engineer reconstructing the mind: tenderly changing your enemy), *Kuangye zazhi* (Wilderness magazine) no. 189 (May-June, 2014), <http://www.cap.org.tw/W/w-189-4.html> (January 3 2018).

they established a new political party, Xindang, the New Party, in August 1993.³²

Afterward, despite Lee's triumph again in the 1996 presidential election, disputes over the distribution of power resulted in a rift between Lee and his previously strong advocate, James Soong (Song Chuyu). The splits eventually resulted in a electoral disadvantage for the KMT that contributed to the DPP's winning of the presidency in 2000.³³ The splits would then in the future aggravate the island's political polarization and the confrontation between the Pan Blue and the Pan Green camps, with their antagonistic views on the February 28 Incident.

The KMT's Rehabilitation of the February 28 Incident

In face of the demands from the February 28 Movement integrating various social and political forces, the KMT under Lee Teng-hui's leadership took redress initiatives on the February 28 Incident after Lee consolidated his power in March 1990. These measures ranged from material compensation for its victims, redefinition of the event, and physical commemorations, to political responses to public demands for "a correction of the injustice done to victims of the February 28 Incident."³⁴ In other words, the KMT regime formally admitted its wrongdoing in the Incident, and implemented a full spectrum of activities ranging across its political, economic, social, cultural and historiographical aspects in order to rehabilitate it and institutionalize commemoration of

³² Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 133, 151, 155, 167.

³³ James Soong first ran as an independent candidate in the 2000 presidential election, and only after the election did he establish the People First Party (Qinmin dang) on March 31, 2000. Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 168; Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 141-42, 170.

³⁴ According to The Memorial Foundation of 228, the public "urged the government to apologize, compensate the victims, disclose historical materials about the massacre, get the truth out, build 228 monuments and memorial halls, and designate February 28 as a national memorial day." The Memorial Foundation of 228, "Preface," <https://www.228.org.tw/en/preface.html> (accessed 1 August 2019).

the Incident. This wide-ranging initiative indicated a political reversal of official attitudes toward the Incident. Not only did it reverse the KMT's early policy toward the Incident but it also revises its early construction of knowledge about, and memory of, the Incident.

In making this shift, the KMT regime hoped to “put an end to the longstanding feud between different ethnic groups, heal historical wounds, and promote reconciliation among the people.”³⁵ The political atmosphere encouraged the expressions of varied opinions about the Incident. Rehabilitation, therefore, seemed to be the KMT government's new approach to the February 28 Incident, and with the implementation of these changes, the KMT government ostensibly met the public demand. However, despite its efforts, shortcomings of the KMT government's rehabilitative work suggested it was continuing to avoid responsibility.

Actually, as early as in February 1990, the regime had given official recognition of the February 28 Incident in a new way. On February 27, members of the Legislative Yuan, which was dominated by the KMT, stood up silently for one minute in mourning for the victims of the Incident. This is the first time that the national-level parliament expressed its new attitude toward the Incident, signaling a change in official stance toward it.³⁶

One of the most important steps the KMT government did take toward rehabilitation of the February 28 Incident was its revision of the official historiography of the Incident. The KMT regime first allowed the February 28 Incident to be written into history textbooks for senior high schools in August of 1990, though the relevant passage

³⁵ The Memorial Foundation of 228, “Preface.”

³⁶ At the time, those legislators elected on the mainland in 1948 were not yet forced to retire. Therefore, this could be regarded as a formal response of the KMT regime to the public calls. The Memorial Foundation of 228, <http://www.228.org.tw/english/index.aspx> (accessed 12 January 2018).

was less than sixty characters long, even with punctuation included.³⁷ Despite that, the February 28 Incident was in this way formally introduced into the high school curriculum for young students, a group whose predecessors were one of the major forces to press for future political reform during the February 28 Incident of 1947.

In fact, no sooner had Lee won the presidential election in 1990 than he had the Executive Yuan re-evaluate the February 28 Incident. On November 29, 1990, the Executive Yuan set up a special committee (zhuanan xiaozu) under which a research team (yanjiu xiaozu) was established in January 1991. The research team oversaw a work team (gongzuo xiaozu), which was headed by Lai Tse-han, a renowned historian and then a research fellow in the Academia Sinica; it was responsible for the actual investigation and research work.³⁸

The result was an official report entitled “*Ereba Shijian*” *yanjiu baogao* (The Research Report on “the February 28 Incident”) promulgated by the Executive Yuan on February 22, 1992. The release of this report marked a new turn in the official historiography of the February 28 Incident. This 1992 official report included the reproduction and analysis of primary sources that were not available previously. Not only did it collect and utilize a substantial number of relevant government documents, but it also included relevant materials from archives in overseas institutes in mainland China, the United States and England, in addition to interviews with witnesses and families of victims of the Incident. Moreover, the investigation behind the report was conducted by a team of historians and other scholars who researched the subject while attempting to

³⁷ The Memorial Foundation of 228, “*Ereba pingfan yundong jiyao*” (Summary of the February 28 Rehabilitation Movement), http://www.228.org.tw/288_redress.html (accessed 12 January 2018).

³⁸ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ereba Shijian xiaozu, *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 1-2.

maintain a professional academic neutrality.³⁹

As a result, unlike the KMT's previous narratives and official accounts of the Incident, the 1992 official report provides an account of the Incident based on broad-ranging evidence, and it briefly reviews and comments on the actions of the KMT leaders during the course of the Incident. As a result of its re-examination of the Incident, the report disputes the KMT's pre-1992 versions of official accounts; it also revises the official definition and history of the Incident. According to the authors of the report, the primary objective of the report is to re-present the facts of the Incident from a factual perspective.⁴⁰ It details the background, the outbreak and the expansion of the ferment, as well as the government's responses to and treatment of the disturbance and its aftermath. Indeed, the report was the most comprehensive account of the February 28 Incident at the time of its publication. By presenting the historical facts, it reverses accusations in earlier official narratives of the Incident as a rebellion in which Chinese communists, Taiwanese gangsters and Japanese colonial collaborators were all involved. Instead, it indicates an array of social, political, cultural, and economic factors that caused this tragic event, along with the authorities' misguided approach to and mismanagement of the crisis. The report confirms the fact that General Ke Yuanfen of the Chen Yi regime defined the Resolution Committee's activities as a "conspiracy" from the beginning of the Incident and utilized secret agents to infiltrate and divide the Committee, precisely in order to legitimize armed suppression once the situation deteriorated. In other words, the Chen Yi government pre-determined the nature of the Incident and deliberately fueled it as an

³⁹ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ererba Shijian xiaozu, *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 2-3.

⁴⁰ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ererba Shijian xiaozu, *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 365.

excuse for a military crackdown.⁴¹

This confirmation of what happened disputed the regime's early narratives of the Incident. Moreover, though the report only briefly evaluates the handling of the major official personages in the Incident, it more or less indicates their responsibility, particularly that of Generals Ke Yuanfen and Peng Mengqi, as well as Colonel Zhang Mutao.⁴² However, as discussed below, the 1992 report avoided addressing the responsibilities of Chiang Kai-shek and Chen Yi, and, despite its claims of being objective, it even attempts to erase the role Chiang played in KMT's military suppression.⁴³

After the release of the official report, the KMT government published other official documents and archives for public review. Apart from the historiographical materials published by the Historical Research Committee of Taiwan Province,⁴⁴ as mentioned in Chapter two, Academia Sinica selected and edited the official files and archives collected for the research behind the 1992 official report, and published a sequel of six volumes of official documents between 1992 and 1997. Moreover, Academia Historica edited and published three volumes of archives and historical materials in 1997. In addition, both the official and the private organizations conducted interviews with the various witnesses of the February 28 Incident, including victims, their families and KMT officials, giving voices to both the repressed and the repressors. These oral history materials recorded and reflected the social and political conditions experienced by the local Taiwanese that were left largely unstated in the official files; they therefore provide

⁴¹ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Eerba Shijian xiaozu, *Eerba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 1, 7-24, 361-66.

⁴² Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Eerba Shijian xiaozu, *Eerba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 365-66.

⁴³ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Eerba Shijian xiaozu, *Eerba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 1, 7-24, 361-66.

⁴⁴ The Historical Research Committee of Taiwan Province was later affiliated with Academia Historica in 2002.

a different impression than the official archives, which mainly presented official views on the Incident.⁴⁵ Later, toward the end of Lee Teng-hui's presidency in the late 1990s, the KMT regime passed the Public Records Act (*dangan fa*), which was promulgated on December 15 of 1999 and formally implemented on the first day of 2002. Based on the Act, the National Archives Administration (*Guojia dangan guanliju*) was established in November 2001 to manage the national archives and keep them open for public review.⁴⁶

Reevaluation of the early official discourse on the February 28 Incident was also embodied in the KMT regime's institutionalization of the commemoration of the Incident. The KMT central government had decided to commemorate the Incident through the creation of physical sites as early as 1991. In fact, the Lee era witnessed the building boom of February 28 Incident monuments, memorial museums and parks. Jiayi City set up the very first February 28 monument on the island in 1989. Thereafter, Pingdong, Kaohsiung, and Tainan governments installed their February 28 monuments from 1992 to 1993. Joining their actions, many other local governments erected February 28 monuments in their localities over the following years.⁴⁷ In 1995, the first National February 28 monument, without epitaphs, was erected in Taipei City in the February 28 Peace Memorial Park, where the National February 28 Museum was also opened in 1997.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲 et al., *Eerba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao* 二二八事件責任歸屬研究報告 (The research report on the accountability for the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: the Memorial Foundation of 228, 2006), 7-9.

⁴⁶ National Archives Administration, "Our History," <https://www.archives.gov.tw/english/Publish.aspx?cnid=510> (accessed 27 July 2019).

⁴⁷ Chen Wenwei 陳文蔚, "Eerba zhuan ti: Ni buneng bu zhidao de qi zuo Eerba jinian bei" 二二八專題：你不能不知道的七座二二八紀念碑 (Special topic on the February 28 Incident: Seven monuments of which you must be aware), *Minbao*, February 28, 2016, <https://www.peoplenews.tw/news/b6f49b7d-61c6-413c-9082-b56c1c15ab6b> (accessed 27 July 2019).

⁴⁸ The February 28 Peace Memorial Park was originally named Taipei New Park. The DPP-elected mayor of Taipei city, Chen Shui-bian, renamed Taipei New Park as the "Taipei February 28 Peace Memorial Park"

Like the official report, the physical sites of commemoration were reminders of the past, making the past “visualized.” However, as deconstructing the constructed past inevitably involves a reconstruction of memory, it opens the ground for dispute and bargaining. This is evident in the fact that the national February 28 monument in Taipei was first erected without epitaphs, and it then took two years to inscribe epitaphs on the monument, due to disputes over various issues including the membership of the Preparation Committee, the location of the site, the content of the epitaph, and the representation of the victims. As Hsiang-chun Chen has put it, “Every contention, negotiation and compromise...involved in the construction of a complicated memory and embodied different stances and desires in the making of Taiwan’s contemporary nationhood.”⁴⁹ The building of physical memorial sites thus subtly revealed the political sensitivities regarding the action of rehabilitating and rehistoricizing the February 28 Incident.⁵⁰

Above all, the KMT government officially admitted its faults and legalized commemoration of the February 28 Incident. The KMT government took the further crucial step toward reconciliation when President Lee Teng-hui made an open apology on behalf of the state on the occasion when the National February 28 Monument was installed on February 28 of 1995, the 48th anniversary of the February 28 Incident. In the next month, March 1995, the Legislative Yuan passed the February 28 Settlement and Compensation Act (*Ereba Shijian chuli ji buchang tiaoli*), which was promulgated in

in 1996 and had the Taipei February 28 Memorial Museum, located in the park, established in the following year. http://www.228.org.tw/288_redress.html (accessed 27 July 2019).

⁴⁹ Chen, “Beyond Commemoration: The 228 Incident, the Aesthetics of Trauma and Sexual Difference,” 45-6.

⁵⁰ Even in 2012, Hao Baochun, former Minister of the Executive Yuan, sent a letter to a *Lianhebao* (United daily news), contesting the death toll of the February 28 Incident recorded in the history textbooks for senior high schools and in the epitaphs of the Taipei National February 28 Monument. *Ziyou shibao* (the Liberty Times), February 22, 2012, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/focus/paper/562726> (accessed 27 2019).

April of that year and became effective in October. The government then, based on the Act, in October 1995 had the Executive Yuan establish the Memorial Foundation of 228 (Ereba Shijian jinian jijinhui) which was placed in charge of dealing with the aftermath of the February 28 Incident, particularly financial compensation.⁵¹ It also designated the anniversary of the February 28 Incident as the Peace Memorial Day (Heping jinianri), also called February 28 Memorial Day (Ereba jinianri), in the same year, and further revised the Act so as to make the Peace Memorial Day a national holiday in February 1997.⁵² Ever since, the “rehabilitation” of the February 28 Incident has been institutionalized and legalized, and commemoration of the Incident has become part of national activities. Given the fact that the KMT dominated and controlled the central government and the Legislative Yuan, passage of the Act can be regarded as a clear gesture of a desire by the KMT regime to reconcile itself with the tragic past.

Nevertheless, the further controversy surrounding the 1992 official report suggests that the KMT still avoided taking its full historical and political responsibility. The report still treats the effects of Japanese colonization as a background element in the Incident, holding that long-term Japanese colonial control had hindered Taiwanese comprehension of the motherland. As a result, the discrepancy between expectations and reality, and the contrast between KMT governance and Japanese colonial rule, caused the local Taiwanese to be disillusioned with the motherland and its government. This phenomenon took the form of anti-government (fa zhengfu) sentiment when clashes over

⁵¹ The Memorial Foundation of 228 has also organized and held several major conferences on the Incident and published their proceedings, particularly in the 2000s under the DPP government. More detailed discussions are discussed in the latter parts of this chapter.

⁵² The Memorial Foundation of 228, http://www.228.org.tw/288_redress.html (accessed 27 July 2019).

the illegal sale of cigarettes occurred on the evening of February 27, 1947.⁵³ Moreover, the report failed both to present and to critically review the KMT regime's early interpretations of the February 28 Incident, and thus failed to fully clarify the political and historical responsibility for the February 28 Incident. In particular, the report avoided substantial discussion of the regime's policy that led to discrimination against, and differential treatment of, the local Taiwanese people. Consequently, the report failed to effectively explain the ethnic dimension of the conflict during the Incident, and which diminishes its value as an official report.⁵⁴

Indeed, given the fact that the KMT government was the successor of the party-state responsible for mismanaging the Incident, the regime would hope to avoid the ethnic issue in the Incident that might reinforce the KMT's image as a "colonial" or "alien" regime already imprinted on the mind of many Taiwanese people. The KMT government had already started to stress ethnic reconciliation as early as 1988 when the February 28 Peace Day Movement generated wide-response, and it utilized the press, including in particular the *China Times* (*Zhongguo shibao*) and the *United Daily News* (*Lianhe bao*), to direct public opinion toward ethnic reconciliation.⁵⁵ Therefore, the avoidance of the ethnic issue in the report might be regarded as a part of KMT's reconstruction of the February 28 historiography. After all, if the KMT regime admitted ethnic discrimination against, and political exclusion of, the local Taiwanese in its early management of Taiwan, this could confirm the opposition's accusation of its being a colonial or alien regime.

Another controversy regarding the report concerned its avoidance of aspects of

⁵³ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yunjiu baogao*, 26-7.

⁵⁴ Chen, *Tansuo Taiwan shiguan*, 145-48.

⁵⁵ Chen, "Lishi zhengyi de kunjing," 203-5.

Chiang Kai-shek's responsibility despite its comments to the effect that Chiang should take responsibility for it politically. Chen Fangming argues that the report's statements regarding Chiang's being misinformed and his "benevolence" in handling the Incident are incorrect. According to Chen, based on Chiang's warning to Chen Yi, Chiang was fully aware of the on-going process of armed suppression. This was especially true from March 9 of 1947 as Chiang ordered Chen Yi to report three times a day about the situations developing in Keelung and Taipei. And given the number of daily reports Chiang required, the delivery of messages would not have been limited to written texts but would have included phone calls and telegrams. Chen further remarks that the KMT power-holders up to the 1990s were all directly or indirectly indebted to Chiang, which explains why they continued to dodge the issue of Chiang's responsibility so long.⁵⁶

The KMT regime's reluctance to release crucial documents also stirred controversy. Scholars have pointed out that one crucial shortcoming of the report was the incomplete release of official documents.⁵⁷ Many expected that the release of the official documents related to Chiang Kai-shek, the so-called "Daxi Archives" (Daxi dang'an), could clarify some crucial historical questions and resolve long-held political and academic disputes. However, the initial release of the official files, later published by Academia Sinica, missed the most crucial telegraphs regarding Chen Yi's request to Chiang for military reinforcements.⁵⁸

The official retention of decisive pieces of evidence jeopardized any definitive

⁵⁶ Chen, *Tansuo Taiwan shiguan*, 152-53.

⁵⁷ For example, Chen Fangming indicates such a shortcoming in the 1992 official report. Chen, *Tansuo Taiwan shiguan*, 152-53.

⁵⁸ Scholars have noticed this issue, and have compared and analyzed several sources, indicating their belief that the KMT government removed key files when they provided the documents to the research team responsible for the 1992 official report. Chen Cunlian gives a detailed account on this question. See Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 334.

conclusion. Therefore, the 1992 official report did not offer a reasonable interpretation on the issue of Chen Yi's request for reinforcements. However, as has now been revealed, the KMT had retained crucial documents that affected interpretations of the Incident and even shaped the conclusions of the report. Though it is hard to speculate about what political wrestling was involved in the release of the archives, this incompleteness indicates the KMT regime's continued avoidance of responsibility despite its stated rehabilitation policy toward the Incident.

Meanwhile, issues surrounding the versions of the 1992 official report also suggest some political complications. For whatever reasons, the 1992 official report appears to exist in at least two versions, both dated to February 1992, but with different points made in their respective conclusions.⁵⁹ Version A (with a red cover) includes a paragraph commenting on Chiang Kai-shek's responsibility.⁶⁰ In version B (with a black cover), however, the paragraph regarding Chiang Kai-shek in the conclusion is removed, and instead, an additional paragraph has been added blaming Japanese colonial rule, the Chen Yi administration, and the local Taiwanese for the Incident, but not Chiang Kai-shek. This second version also states that the occurrence of the tragedy was actually beyond the administration's complete control due to various subjective and objective factors.⁶¹ This additional passage reiterates the KMT's original policy toward the Incident and apparently attempts to shrug off the responsibility for the tragedy from the KMT regime and from Chiang Kai-shek personally.

⁵⁹ It is not clear why the Executive Yuan published two versions of the official report in February 1992. However, it is clear, given the logical relation in terms of the order of publication between the Executive Yuan versions and Shibao chubanshe versions, that this official report attempts to dodge Chiang's responsibility.

⁶⁰ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ererba Shijian xiaozu (version A), *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 366.

⁶¹ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ererba Shijian xiaozu (version B), *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 366.

Later, in 1994, because of the publication of new materials and findings after completion of the report, the 1992 version was revised and republished by a private publisher, Shibao chubanshe (Shibao Publishing Co.).⁶² Nevertheless, the revision and republication further revealed subtle political influence. Shibao published the revised 1992 report on February 20, 1994, and later the second printing of the Shibao first edition was released on March 25, 1994.⁶³ A comparison of these versions shows that the paragraphs commenting on the role of official personnel in the conclusion of the 20 February 1994 edition were almost identical to those of Version B of the 1992 official report published by the Executive Yuan. In other words, the comments on Chiang were removed, and an additional paragraph blaming Japanese colonial rule was added.⁶⁴ In other words, the 1994 version by Shibao chubanshe attempted to obscure the responsibility of the KMT regime and of Chiang Kai-shek in particular. Later, in the second printing (25 March 1994) of the Shibao version, the paragraph evaluating Chiang was put back in while that additional paragraph was still retained.⁶⁵ Interestingly, the founder of Shibao chubanshe was Yu Jizhong, who also launched the newspaper *Zhongguo shibao* (China times daily), one of the island's major newspapers back in the 1990s. Yu was a senior member of the KMT and a member of the Central Standing Committee, enjoying considerable influence within and beyond the party. Nevertheless, the fact that the titles of the Executive Yuan, the research team, its organizers, and the chief author all appear on the cover of the Shibao version of the report together make it

⁶² Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yunjiu baogao* (Taipei: Shibao chubanshe, February 1994), 7.

⁶³ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yunjiu baogao*, 2nd print (Taipei, Shibao chubanshe, March 1994), copy right page.

⁶⁴ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ereba Shijian xiaozu (version B), *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 365-66; Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yunjiu baogao* (Taipei: Shibao chuban, February 1994), 410-12.

⁶⁵ Lai et. al., *Ereba Shijian yunjiu baogao*, 2nd print, 410-12. One reader Wu Junying points this out in his website, along with the fact that the 1994 Shibao version of the report is more widely circulated than that of the Executive Yuan version of 1992. <https://www.facebook.com/nccuwucy> (accessed January 25, 2017).

quite possible that the particular revisions and additions were made with the consent of the Executive Yuan and were hardly editorial mistakes. The comparisons of these various versions of report indeed suggest the KMT regime's manipulation of interpretation of history.

It is notable that the 1992 report was conducted and completed during the tenure of Hao Bocun as the head of the Executive Yuan. In 2005, Hao even condemned the accusation that Chiang Kai-shek was the ringleader and, on the contrary, held that Chiang was lenient in dealing with the February 28 Incident. Hao even remarked that, based on the investigation conducted when he headed the Executive Yuan, the reported total number of victims including the dead and missing was less than one thousand people.⁶⁶ It seems quite possible that his stance toward the Incident and the position he held in 1992 may explain the ambiguities regarding Chiang in the conclusions of the two versions of the 1992 report. More importantly, this reflects the paradox of the ruling KMT government serving as the arbiter judging its repression in the past. This paradox was further reflected in the constitution of the research team. For example, one of the members, Ye Mingxun, was the director (zhuren) of the Taipei branch of the *Central News Agency* (CNA) during the February 28 Incident.⁶⁷ Chapter one has already discussed how the CNA reconstructed and presented the Incident to readers in mainland China. In fact, the 1992 report illustrates an absurdity in terms of the relationship between politics and the interpretation of past. On the one hand, the changing political climate forced the KMT regime to respond to the public demand that eventually led to its

⁶⁶ *Ziyou shibao*, March 5, 2015, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/1248169> (accessed 24 June 2018).

⁶⁷ Hou Kunhong 侯坤宏, *Yanjiu Ererba 研究二二八* (Research on the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Boyang wenhua, 2011), 181, 184; Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ererba Shijian xiaozu, *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 1.

reinterpretation of the Incident. On the other hand, the concealing of crucial documents and the revisions that appeared in different versions of the report suggest the KMT's re-manipulation of the Incident. However, as the official files were made available, new perspectives were facilitated that would rewrite the KMT regime's early narratives of the February 28 Incident. It is these new perspectives that must be addressed.

Unofficial Research and Publications on the February 28 Incident in Taiwan

As the KMT's political democratization unleashed the free expression of scholarly and public opinion on the February 28 Incident, various unofficial academic and popular writings about the Incident flourished during this period. These works, ranging from academic monographs, personal memoirs, autobiographies and oral histories, to popular pamphlets and opinion pieces in newspapers and magazines, re-examined and re-presented the Incident from various perspectives and in its different aspects, attempting to reinterpret the Incident. Despite the appearance of perspectives differing from those of the KMT's long-held definition of the Incident, the new political circumstances of the post-Chiang era came to shape new partisan interpretations of the February 28 Incident.

Following the lifting of martial law and the subsequent political reforms implemented from the late 1980s, publishing on the February 28 Incident started to thrive. At least 148 monographs on the Incident, along with 70 academic papers (excluding those in conference proceedings or personal anthologies of essays) and 276

non-academic papers, were published during the period from 1988 to 2000.⁶⁸ Table 4 shows the number of publications (excluding MA theses and PhD dissertations) relevant to the historic Incident in 1988-2000. In addition, as is shown in Table 5, there were at least two conferences held by a non-official Taiwan-centered organization or co-organized by them with an official institution, and their proceedings about the Incident were published in 1992 and 1998, respectively. In addition, the proceedings of the conference held by overseas Taiwanese scholars in the US in February 1987, as mentioned in Chapter two, was republished in Taiwan in 1989.⁶⁹ Moreover, Academia Sinica published a collection of essays edited by Lai Tse-Han in 1993, with seven of the eleven essays in this anthology on subjects related to the February 28 Incident.⁷⁰

In fact, however, although the KMT government was forced to respond to social and political demands for rehabilitating the February 28 Incident, the officially-led KMT initiative of rehabilitation of the Incident still allowed some official control over the reconstruction of the February 28 Incident discourse.⁷¹ Meanwhile, even with the claim

⁶⁸ In this dissertation, the author utilizes Huang Zhongxiang's data from individual years in the period 1988-2000. Huang Zhongxiang mainly utilized the database of the National Central Library of Taiwan to conduct the examination of statistics for the publications relevant to the February 28 Incident, covering the period from 1988 to 2015. Though Huang's study is more comprehensive compared to others of its kind, it still misses some publications. For example, Huang does not include Dai Guohui's *Taiwan zongti xiang* (the overall image of Taiwan) published in 1989. Though there is only one chapter that covers the 228 Incident, Dai's interpretation of the Incident in the chapter is controversial. See Huang, "Ereba Shijian yanjiu shi," 51-3, 63, 95.

⁶⁹ It was republished by Qianwei chubanshe in 1989. See Chen Fangming 陳芳明, ed., *Ereba Shijian xueshu lunwenji: Taiwan ren guoshang shijian de lishi huigu* 二二八事件學術論文集：台灣人國殤事件的歷史回顧 (Essays on the February 28 Incident of 1947: A historical review of the national martyrdom of the Taiwanese) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1989).

⁷⁰ Lai Tse-han 賴澤涵, ed., *Taiwan guangfu chuqi lishi* 台灣光復初期歷史 (Taiwan history during the early post-war period) (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1993).

⁷¹ It is notable that Yan Shipei utilizes the examples of the establishment of the National monument of the February 28 Incident by the KMT government, and of the February 28 Memorial in Taipei led by the Taipei city government administrated by the DPP, to suggest that representations of the Incident could be drawn to serve the political need of the present regardless of political ideology. See Yan Shipei 顏世佩, "Lishi shuxie de zhezhi: Ereba Shijian zhenxiang de zhengduo zhao" 歷史書寫的政治：二二八事件真

Table 4

Numbers of Taiwan's Publications relevant to the February 28 Incident, 1988-2000

Year of publication	Academic papers	Non-academic papers	Monograph books
1988	4	15	7
1989	2	8	11
1990	4	1	15
1991	6	21	19
1992	9	52	14
1993	5	63	11
1994	15	11	9
1995	3	13	14
1996	5	22	14
1997	5	37	10
1998	7	14	12
1999	3	11	6
2000	2	8	6
Total	70	276	148

Source: Huang Zhongxiang (Huang Chung-xiang), "Ereba Shijian yanjiu shi: Yi Taiwan de xiangguan yanjiu yu chubanshen wei zhongxin (A history of historical research on the February 28 Incident: With focus on relevant studies and publications in Taiwan)," (PhD diss, Chinese Culture University, 2016), 51-3, 63, 95.

Table 5

Conferences and the Proceedings on the February 28 Incident by Non-official
Organizations or Groups in Taiwan, 1988-2000

Conference title	Major organizers of the conference	Conference proceedings	Number of essays collected	Year of conference	Publishers/Year of Publication
Ererba Shijian sishi zhounian jinian xueshu yantaohui (Symposium on the 40 th Anniversary of the February 28 Incident)	North American Taiwanese Professors' Association (NATPA); and Taiwanese Association of America (TAA)	<i>Ererba Shijian xueshu lunwenji: Taiwan ren guoshang shijian de lishi huigu</i> (Essays on the February 28 Incident of 1947: A historical review of the national martyring of the Taiwanese)	7	1987	Taiwan Publishing Co. (1988); Qianwei Chubanshe (1989)
Ererba xueshu yantaohui (Symposium on the February 28 Incident)	Non-governmental research team on the February 28 Incident (Ererba minjian yanjiu xiaozu)	<i>Ererba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji</i> (Proceedings of the symposium on the February 28 Incident)	12	1991	Non-governmental research team on the February 28 Incident; and <i>Zili wanbao</i> (Independence evening post)/1992
Ererba Shijian wushi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui (International conference on the 50 th anniversary of the February 28 Incident)	Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation (Wu Sanlian Taiwan shiliao jijinhui); Taipei City government; and Taiwan Historical Association (Taiwan lishi xuehui)	<i>Ererba Shijian yanjiu lunwenji</i> (Proceedings of the international conference on the February 28 Incident)	19	1997	Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation/1998

Source: Huang Zhongxiang, "Ererba Shijian yanjiu shi," 37-8.

of academic neutrality, the scholarly official report paradoxically continued to endorse the KMT regime's re-evaluation of the Incident.⁷²

Perhaps, foreseeing the paradoxical character of the official redefinition of the Incident, pro-Taiwan non-governmental groups and even some official institutions actively engaged in both academic research and the construction of non-academic narratives of the Incident. For example, as Table 5 shows, the Non-governmental Research Team on the February 28 Incident (*Ererba minjian yanjiu xiaozu*) organized a symposium on the Incident (*Ererba xueshu yantaohui*) in Taipei in 1991, and published the proceedings the next year, in 1992. Founded in 1991, this Non-governmental Research Team consisted mainly of pro-Taiwan scholars, such as Chen Yongxing, Zhang Yanxian, Chen Fangming, and Lin Zongyi.⁷³ While Chen Yongxing was one of the activist initiators of the February 28 Peace Day Movement, both Zhang and Chen Fangming advocated constructing a historical perspective on the Incident from the views of the local Taiwanese; and Lin for his part was from a family that had had a member who was a victim of the Incident. Still unable to access the official archives and documents about the Incident,⁷⁴ participants in the symposium based their research on various available materials, including official and non-official materials, and academic and non-academic sources.

Meanwhile, as the major party in the political opposition, the DPP also engaged in academic representation of the Incident. In 1997, on the 50th anniversary of the February

⁷² Yan, "Lishi shuxie de zhezhi," 60.

⁷³ Huang, "Ererba Shijian yanjiu shi," 39; Yan, "Lishi shuxie de zhezhi," 42n87.

⁷⁴ At that time, official documents and archives were exclusively used by the official research team. See Chen Yanyu 陳琰玉 and Hu Huiling 胡慧玲, *Ererba xueshu yantaohui luwenji* 二二八學術研討會論文集 (Proceedings of the symposium on the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Ererba minjian yanjiu xiaozu, 1992), 7.

28 Incident, the Taipei municipal government under the DPP mayor Chen Shui-bian, together with the Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation (Wu Sanlian Taiwan Siliao Jijinhui)⁷⁵ and the Taiwan Historical Society (Taiwan lishi xuehui) sponsored and co-organized an International conference on the February 28 Incident (Ereba Shijian wushi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui) in Taipei, attempting an inquiry into the historical background, the course, and the effects of the Incident from various aspects.⁷⁶ While the Taipei municipal government's involvement in the conference showed the political influence of the DPP, the Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation was an important non-official institution committed to the publication of historical materials related to Taiwan and crucial to the reconstruction of the Incident, in particular the non-official oral history materials.

A close examination of Tables 4 and 5 reveals the effect of politics on the production of these publications. The distribution of the publications listed in Tables 4 and 5 shows that overall the peak periods fall in the years of 1991-1993 and 1996-1998. Huang indicates that the first peak of 1991-1993 is largely because of the release of the official archives, documents, publications, and the publication of the 1992 official report and of oral interviews, all of which facilitated both academic and popular writings on the Incident. Not surprisingly, the second peak in 1996-1998 coincided with the fiftieth

⁷⁵ Wu Sanlian had been an activist during the Japanese colonial period. After the war, he served as a public representative and was the first elected-mayor of Taipei City. Wu was also a successful entrepreneur, managing *Zili wangbao* (Independence evening post), devoting energies to social and political movement, and concerning himself with the promotion of local culture. In fact, Wu's eldest son had been a victim of the White Terror, being jailed for more than 12 years. After Wu died, his children established the Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation to memorize Wu. See Wu Sanlian Taiwan Siliao Jijinhui, <http://www.twcenter.org.tw/about> (accessed 2 September 2019).

⁷⁶ Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲, Chen Meirong 陳美蓉, and Yang Yahui 楊雅慧, eds., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu lunwenji* 二二八事件研究論文集 (Proceedings of the international conference on the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation, 1998), 8.

anniversary of the Incident. Nevertheless, both the formation of the Memorial Foundation of 228 and Lee Teng-hui's victory in the 1996 presidential election, which furthered "indigenization" (bentuhua, or so-called Taiwanization), also stimulated diverse opinions on the Incident.⁷⁷ In short, the flood of works appearing in these particular years seems to have resulted from a political fever over the Incident during these periods.

Moreover, there was a diversity of opinion among publishers, in particular non-academic ones, following different political ideologies that directed their choice of what to publish. A contrast between *Qianwei Press* (Qianwei chubanshe) and *Haixia Academic Press* (Haixia xueshu chubanshe) illustrates such a division. *Qianwei* was found in 1982 by Lin Wenqin, a local Taiwanese from southern Taiwan, who had worked as a chief editor for the publisher *San min books* (San min shuju). From his work with *San min*, Lin came to realize that local Taiwanese authors were far from being valued by publishers. Meanwhile, Lin witnessed his employer being watched and intimidated by the KMT authorities due to the White Terror. It was mainly because of such experiences during his time at *San min* that Lin determined to publish works centering on Taiwan for the Taiwanese, and that commitment gave birth to *Qianwei*. While *Qianwei* was committed to expanding Taiwanese consciousness and promoting Taiwanese literature and culture, Lin himself was a member of the World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI; Taiwan duli jianguo lianmeng) and was engaged in various organizations concerning Taiwan's literature, culture, and even politics. Since 1988, *Qianwei* has published numerous works mainly from Taiwanese perspectives about the February 28 Incident, although it also republished in 1990 works by former Taiwanese communists, such as Su Xin's *Angry Taiwan* (Fennu de Taiwan) and Yang Kehuang's (publishing under the name Lin

⁷⁷ Huang, "Ereba Shijian yanjiu shi," 61, 74,

Mushun) *Taiwan February Revolution* (Taiwan eryue geming).⁷⁸

In contrast, *Haixia publishing house* focused on publications promoting communist ideas or Chinese unification. However, little information was known about this publishing house except that it was founded in 1997 by Huang Xinan, who once served as vice chairman of Zhongguo tongyi lianmeng (The Alliance for the Reunification of China), an organization established by Chen Yingzhen advocating Chinese nationalism and unification. Though it published only two books relevant to the Incident by 2000, *Haixia Publishing House* would become prolific on this topic after 2000, and its publications tend to be different from, or even contrary to, general opinions on the Incident.⁷⁹

As new publications about the Incident flourished especially after 1986, opinions and perspectives on the Incidents also diversified. Prior to the late 1980s, there generally had been three major approaches to the Incident, including those of the KMT regime, the CCP, and civil-society narratives (minjian guandian).⁸⁰ The civil-society narratives consisted of views from former Taiwanese communist participants,⁸¹ overseas advocates of Taiwan independence, and other witnesses,⁸² generally countering the KMT official claims of the Incident, and most often based on personal experience. Afterwards, a flood

⁷⁸ Before the early 1990s, when the Incident was still a political taboo, these two books, along with Kerr's *Formosa Betrayed*, were the major sources for people, such as Chen Fangming, to learn about or even understand the Incident. Huang, "Ereba Shijian yanjiu shi," 94, 96-97, 112.

⁷⁹ The DPP won the presidential elections in 2000 and 2004 respectively and administered Taiwan from May 2000 to May 2008. *Haixia publishing house* mainly published works of pro-Chinese unification authors, and tended to stress either the role of the communists in the Incident, or Taiwanese resistance to the Japanese colonialism with an emphasis on Chinese nationalism. Huang Zhongxiang, "Ereba Shijian yanjiu shi," 94, 98-99.

⁸⁰ See Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 15-7.

⁸¹ Such as the early works of Yang Kehuang and Su Xin. However, afterward they would adjust their views to accommodate to that of the CCP.

⁸² Besides the former Taiwanese communists and the overseas Taiwan independence activists, there were also views from mainland-originated journalists (such as Tang Xianlong), foreigners (such as George Kerr), and Taiwanese elites (often hidden in their autobiographies or memoirs).

of works relevant to the Incident emerged. Some scholars made efforts to classify the various kinds of views that had appeared over the years. For example, Lai Tse-han et al. identified in 1991 four major interpretations of the Incident, including those of the CCP, the KMT, the Taiwan Independence Movement, and the US government, as represented in the *China White Paper*. They also argued for their own interpretation of the Incident, one that emphasized the clash in worldviews between the mainlanders and the local Taiwanese after fifty-years of Japanese colonial rule. Hou Kunhong further synthesized various views that had appeared over the years and suggested ten theories about the Incident in 1994.⁸³

Among such unofficial publications, were many narratives based on personal experience, published in both academic and non-academic formats in the forms of memoirs, autobiographies, diaries, and oral interviews. Not surprisingly, such publications became competing sites for different cultural memories of the Incident. Actually, as mentioned in a previous section, both official and non-governmental organizations conducted and published oral interviews offering opinions that differed from the long-held KMT view on the Incident. Yan Shipei argues that, while the KMT's official forms of oral history purporting to present a neutral view nonetheless served to diminish the regime's responsibility, non-official oral histories, whether pro-Taiwan or favoring Chinese nationalism, likewise served to promote different authors' respective political or ideological goals.⁸⁴

⁸³ See Lai, Myers and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 3-12. The book was translated and a Chinese-language edition was published in Taiwan in 1993. See also Lai Tse-han, Ma Ruomeng, and Wei Wou, *Beiju xing de kaiduan: Taiwan Ererba Shibian* (A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947), trans. Luo luojia (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1993); and Hou, *Yanjiu Ererba*, 30-44. Hou Kunhong first published on this topic in 1994, and later his writings were collected in this book, published in 2011.

⁸⁴ Yan, "Lishi shuxie de zhezhi," 55-60, 65-84.

Most academic studies focused on historical inquiry into the “truth” of the Incident, attempting to clarify either its causes or particular aspects of the event, and they sought to do so in order to revise or supplement existing knowledge of the Incident. Xia Chunxiang argues that individual scholars/authors tend to stress particular factors as major causes of the Incident based on their concerns, ideologies, and availability of evidence, and they generally attributed the causes of the Incident to political, economic, social, cultural, or psychological elements.⁸⁵ Du Jidong reviews various publications from the period 1987-2004 and generalizes from various discussions on Taiwan about the Incident, but also includes some works published in mainland China.⁸⁶ A summary of Xia’s and Du’s generalizations not only allows a general picture regarding discussions of publications that appeared in this period, but also throws light on significant scholarly and popular concerns about the Incident. After the DPP assumed power in 2000, expressions of opinion about the February 28 Incident continued to thrive. Nevertheless, as political antagonisms grew, discourses of the February 28 Incident also became more contradictory.

A New Era of Partisan Politics and Policies toward the February 28 Incident, 2000-2008

The DPP’s Rise and Divergent Partisan Policies toward the February 28 Incident

From its establishment in 1986, the DPP had fought with the KMT for power by

⁸⁵ Xia Chunxiang 夏春祥, “Meijie jiyi yu xinwen yishi: Ererba Shijian xinwen de wenben fenxi, 1949-2000” 媒體記憶與新聞儀式：二二八事件新聞的文本分析 (Memory and rituals of news media: A textual analysis of news coverage on the February 29 Incident, 1947-2000), (PhD diss, National Zhengzhi University, 2000), 7-23.

⁸⁶ While Du’s review of published works covers 1987-2004, his classification is useful as a point of reference for the publications from 1988-2000 that has been treated here. Du, “Taiwan ‘Ererba’ Sijian yanjiu zong shu,” 258-290.

seeking Taiwanese electoral support, and it openly adopted a pro-Taiwan independence platform in 1991. Because such partisan politics echoed both the broad Taiwanese opposition to the KMT regime and its earlier pursuit of political autonomy during the February 28 Incident of 1947, the DPP attempted to appropriate that historical Incident for its political purposes. The KMT, on the other hand, insisted on upholding Chinese nationalism and attempted to avoid its historical responsibility through re-theorization of the Incident. Thus, the two parties wrestled over the continued construction and deconstruction of the Incident.

From its beginning in 1986, the DPP had been a major force of political opposition to, and an electoral competitor of, the KMT. In that year of 1986, in defiance of martial law,⁸⁷ the DPP ran as a political party challenging the KMT⁸⁸ and gained around 20 percent of the Taiwan vote share in the National Assembly elections and 25 percent in the Legislative Yuan elections.⁸⁹ The 1989 elections at the local level further demonstrated the DPP's potential to compete with the KMT for administrative positions at the national level. With the implementation of the Law on the Organization of Civil Groups that regulated multi-party contests in early 1989, candidates from both political parties and non-partisan independents participated in the supplementary election of the Legislative Yuan in December 1989 and the three other simultaneous elections for the

⁸⁷ The end of martial law in July 1987 lifted the ban on new political parties. Thus, the DPP was still not legalized in 1986. Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 129.

⁸⁸ The KMT somehow did not take action to crush the DPP at this time, but silently acquiesced in its formation. It possibly did so because of two scandals occurring in 1984 and 1985 respectively, when the KMT regime killed an American citizen Henry Liu (Liu Yiliang, also known as Jiang Nan) in the US; and when a major financial institution went bankrupt because of corruption and illegal loans to KMT officials. If the KMT regime had continued in taking such oppressive actions, it might have risked weakening its electoral support. On the other hand, Chiang Ching-kuo recognized that "the times are changing," and the KMT needed to reform "to be with the people all the time." Jacob, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 60-1, 65; Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 126.

⁸⁹ Shelley Rigger, "The Democratic Progressive Party: From Opposition to Power, and Back Again," in *Taiwan's Politics in the 21st Century: Changes and Challenges*, ed. Wei-Chin Lee (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 42.

Provincial Assembly of Taiwan, Taipei and Kaohsiung city councils, and municipal (county and city) executives.⁹⁰ The results showed that the KMT continued to dominate the Legislative Yuan and the Provincial Assembly with a significant majority, and held 14 out of 21 municipal executiveships. Nonetheless, the KMT suffered severe declines in both seat share and vote rate while the DPP enjoyed much growth in terms of electoral support, despite the fact that the DPP as a political party was still in a weak position. In particular, the DPP's winning about one third of municipal executive seats implied its potential and suggested the possibility that the party in future might take control of the national administration.⁹¹ Afterward, the DPP's electoral performances fluctuated and its vote share in the supplementary elections for the Legislative Yuan, municipal executive, National Assembly and presidential elections over the years lingered at around 40-50 percent of the electorate from the late 1990s.⁹²

In 1991, the DPP adopted its so-called "Taiwan independence" platform because many of its radical activists and some moderates regarded this platform as "a logical extension of the party's quest for democracy" and as a strategy to end the KMT's political monopoly.⁹³ The party's National Party Congress on 13 October 1991 allowed Taiwan's residents the option of choosing political independence through a plebiscite:

"Based on the principle of popular sovereignty, the establishment of a sovereign, independent and self-governing Republic of Taiwan and promulgation of a new constitution should be carried out by all residents of Taiwan through a national referendum."⁹⁴

⁹⁰ The 1989 elections did not include mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung cities, who were appointed by the government at that time.

⁹¹ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 129, 138-9.

⁹² Rigger, "The Democratic Progressive Party," 42-3.

⁹³ Rigger, "The Democratic Progressive Party," 49.

⁹⁴ Rigger, "The Democratic Progressive Party," 50.

Though later the DPP modified this option for a plebiscite, and instead in 1999 adopted the “Resolution Regarding Taiwan’s Future,” which defended Taiwan’s de facto independence rather than looking to formally shift the status quo, the DPP has persisted on its “Taiwan-centric” ideology.⁹⁵

Not surprisingly, the DPP linked its pursuit of democracy with the February 28 Incident of 1947. Taiwan’s politics prior to the early 1990s was characterized by institutional political inequality between the local Taiwanese and the mainlanders who came to the island in the late 1940s. Stefan Fleischauer argues that the Dangwai movement (the DPP’s organizational predecessor in opposing the KMT) aimed to break this political power structure in which the local Taiwanese were subjugated to the mainlander minority. The latter remained in control of overall power as embodied in the KMT’s one-party rule. In the Dangwai’s narratives of the Incident the unequal political structure between Taiwanese and mainlanders originated from the Incident. However, despite the utilization of the ethnic dichotomy, the opposition’s struggle targeted mainly the KMT authoritarian leadership rather than mainlanders in general, and the Incident in this political context functioned as a political weapon against the KMT’s one-party dictatorship in particular, as enforced from the time of the February 28 Movement in 1987.⁹⁶

Consequently, the DPP’s narratives of the February 28 Incident often compared it to the Meilidao Incident (or the Kaohsiung Incident) of 1979, when Dangwai activists held a street demonstration calling for democracy, and most of the Dangwai leaders were

⁹⁵ Rigger, “The Democratic Progressive Party,” 52.

⁹⁶ Fleischauer, “The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement’s Construction of a Taiwanese Identity,” 382-83, 391-92.

arrested and jailed. While the Taiwanese people in the February 28 Incident of 1947 sought Taiwan's political autonomy, these native people also struggled for Taiwan's democracy in the Meilidao Incident, yet the actions of both symbolized the struggle of the Taiwanese people for political freedom against the authoritative KMT regime. Lu Xiulian, the DPP's vice president, remarked in December 2000 that the February 28 Incident had shaped the consciousness of many activists in the Meilidao Incident.⁹⁷ You Xikun (Yu Shyi-kun), the DPP premier under president Chen Shui-bian in 2002-2005, and the chairman of the DPP in 2006-2007, remarked in February 2003 that the pursuit of democracy from the February 28 Incident of 1947 to the Meilidao Incident of 1979 had been crucial for the Taiwanese people in their struggles for freedom and democracy and against military violence.⁹⁸ Chen Shui-bian briefly summarized the trajectory of Taiwan's democratic movement originating from the movement of the League for the Establishment of a Taiwan Parliament and the establishment of the Taiwan Cultural Association in 1921, to the Meilidao Incident in 1979. However, the KMT regime's military suppression and massacre in the February 28 Incident of 1947 caused severe setback in Taiwan's democratic evolution. The subsequent political oppression and persecution in the following decades completely deprived Taiwanese of their right to self-governance. The February 28 Incident thus marked the beginning of a half-century of suffering for the peoples of Taiwan under KMT rule.⁹⁹ Chen's remarks thus outlined a

⁹⁷ “Fu zongtong zhichu Eerba Shijian mai xia Taiwan minzhu renquan zhongzi” 副總統指出二二八事件埋下台灣民主人權種子 (Vice president indicated that the February 28 Incident embedded the seeds of Taiwan's democracy and human rights), *CNA*, December 25, 2000.

⁹⁸ “You kui qiangdiao huanyuan Eerba zhenxiang; zheng yuan ni ban mingyu zhengshu” 游揆強調還原二二八真相; 政院擬頒名譽證書 (the Premier emphasized restoration of the truth of the February 28 Incident; the Executive Yuan planned to issue rehabilitation certificates), *CNA*, February 28, 2003.

⁹⁹ *Da jiyuan shibao*, January 18, 2007, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/7/1/18/n1594333.htm> (accessed 3 July 2019).

history of Taiwan's struggle for autonomy and in it the crucial role the Incident played, and the DPP's continuing struggles in pursuit of Taiwan's political democracy.

The DPP's struggle for power culminated in the 2000 presidential election. The DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian¹⁰⁰ defeated Lian Zhan of the KMT and independent runner James Soong, a former KMT senior official and provincial governor. Chen's victory was much indebted to the Pan-Blue vote split resulting from the division in the KMT between the Lee and Soong factions. Soong had been President Lee Teng-hui's major supporter during Lee's power struggle with KMT conservative establishment. However, tensions arose between the two as the dysfunction of the Provincial Government jeopardized Soong's political interests. Their relationship further deteriorated when Lee chose Lian over Soong as the party's presidential nominee.¹⁰¹ Soong then ran his presidential campaign as an independent candidate and, with his popularity accumulated during his tenure as provincial governor, he diverted large numbers of votes from Lian.¹⁰²

Despite Chen Shui-bian's victory, political divisions in Taiwan were aggravated. Chen and his Pan-Green camp did not win a majority of the votes, nor did the DPP enjoy an advantage position in the legislature.¹⁰³ Chen was thus faced with division between the

¹⁰⁰ Chen Shui-bian was the elected mayor of Taipei city in 1994-1998 and; later, during his presidency, also served as the DPP chairman in 2002-2004, and in 2007-2008 respectively.

¹⁰¹ Zou Jingwen 鄒景雯, *Li Denghui zhizheng gaobai shilu* 李登輝執政告白實錄 (A record of the confession of Lee Teng-hui's administration) (Taipei: Yinke chuban, 2001), 107-117.

¹⁰² Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 163-6.

¹⁰³ Though the DPP gained the largest percentage of the vote and the most seats in the 2001 and 2004 legislative elections, the DPP and its allies together failed to gain a majority in the legislature. Throughout Chen's eight-year presidency, the Pan Blue group (the KMT and its allies) controlled the legislature. Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 103-4, 109-110.

“Green executive” and “Blue legislative.”¹⁰⁴ Although Chen initially attempted a “government for all people” (quanmin zhengfu) and chose a mainlander premier, Tang Fei, as a conciliatory gesture to the Pan-Blue camp, the Chen administration’s political initiatives were often impeded, and its policies were paralyzed as a result of the control of the Legislative Yuan by the Pan-Blue camp during Chen’s entire presidency.¹⁰⁵ Under these conditions, it could not initiate and implement radical policies for the rehabilitation of the February 28 Incident.

Divergence in the political ideology between the two blocs further deepened the political gridlock. Chen later pushed for Taiwan-centric policies and implemented a series of measures promoting Taiwanese identity and de-Sinicization. These included the promotion of Taiwanese history, especially the February 28 Incident, in senior high school curricula,¹⁰⁶ stressing Indigenous cultures and the legacies of early colonial powers such as the Dutch and the Spanish in historical exhibits, and the re-naming of public facilities and institutions.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the Chen administration successfully carried out a national referendum accompanying the presidential elections of 2004 and 2008. The holding of these two referenda, the abolition of the National Assembly in June 2005, and the invalidation of the National Unification Conference and the National Unification Guidelines in 2007, all pushed Taiwan further away from unification with mainland China.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ The terms “Green executive” and “Blue legislative” are borrowed from Cal Clark, “Taiwan Enters Troubled Waters: The Elective Presidencies of Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian,” in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), 503.

¹⁰⁵ For example, the KMT attempted to impeach Chen during his early presidency, and later refused to pass the budgets for arms purchases from the US. See Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 173-7.

¹⁰⁶ Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 221.

¹⁰⁷ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 110.

¹⁰⁸ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 103-4, 109-115; Rigger, “The Democratic Progressive Party,” 57; Wakabayashi, *Zhan hou Taiwan zhengzhi shi*,” 278-9, 283.

To the contrary, the leaders of Pan Blue coalition doubled down on the demand for Chinese unification as embodied in both KMT's and the People First Party's (Qinmindang; PFP) communiques with the CCP in regard to the so-called "1992 consensus," underlying the "one China" policy in place during the trips of KMT chairman Lian Zhan and PFP head James Soong to China in April 26-May 3, 2005 and May 5-13, 2005 respectively.¹⁰⁹ As a result, the political antagonisms and divergences around this issue translated to the respective stances of the two camps toward the February 28 Incident.

In fact, in some ways the DPP government merely continued the KMT's previous rehabilitation policy regarding the Incident, but it further sought to clarify the responsibility of individuals and groups. Strictly speaking, perhaps due to political constraints as a result of the Pan-Green minority status in the legislature, the Chen administration's measures about the Incident did not bring a major breakthrough in the pursuit of justice over the Incident. Nevertheless, given its various measures, the DPP government did clearly demonstrate a historical view from the standpoint of the Taiwanese people, devoting energy in particular to historical truth-seeking and reparatory justice. In regard to its efforts to reveal the historical truth of the Incident, the DPP government not only continued the reform of high school history textbooks about Taiwan's history in general and the February 28 Incident in particular, as mentioned above, but it also had the National Archives Administration (Guojia dangan guanliju)

¹⁰⁹ Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 201-5; Zhao and Liu, "Beijing's Shifting Positions in the New Era of Cross-Taiwan Strait Relations," 202-3.

established in November 2001.¹¹⁰ It then used this new institution to further release and publish official documents and archives regarding the Incident in 2002-2008.¹¹¹ Beyond that, in addition to the already discussed June 2003 academic conference on the Incident following the release of new historical materials of the Incident, the Memorial Foundation of 228 also hosted academic conferences in 2007 and 2008 respectively, examining the Incident and its relations with human rights and “transitional justice.”¹¹² The latter concept refers to the redressing of crimes and injustices committed by former authoritative or totalitarian regimes (like the KMT) in the process of their political transformation to democracies.

Most important of all, a new research report with a stress on the accountability of the persons and groups responsible for the Incident was published by the Memorial Foundation of 228 (*Ereba Shijian jinian jijinhui*) in 2006.¹¹³ This report pointed outright at Chiang Kai-shek as the major culprit, who should have borne major responsibility for the Incident, a charge that sparked a huge controversy that eventually led to a lawsuit against the authors and sponsors of the report.¹¹⁴ The lawsuit itself vividly illustrates the

¹¹⁰ The KMT government promulgated the Public Records Act (*Dang'an fa*) in December 1999; the establishment of the National Archives Administration was based on this Act. National Archives Administration, <https://www.archives.gov.tw/English/Publish.aspx?cnid=510> (accessed 2 September 2019).

¹¹¹ From 2002 to 2008, Academia Historica (Guoshiguan) published in total of 18 volumes of *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian* 二二八事件檔案彙編 (Archive materials on the February 28 Incident).

¹¹² According to the International Center for Transitional Justice, transitional justice is not a particular type of justice, but “a response to systemic or widespread violations of human rights...[it is] justice adapted to societies transforming themselves after a period of pervasive human rights abuse.” See “What is Transitional Justice?” International Center for Transitional Justice, <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Global-Transitional-Justice-2009-English.pdf> (accessed 17 August 2018).

¹¹³ Zhang Yangxian et al., *Ereba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao* (A report on the study of accountability for the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Memorial Foundation of 228, 2006).

¹¹⁴ Shortly after the release of the report in 2006, Jiang Xiaoyan, Chiang Ching-kuo's adulterine son, filed a lawsuit against both the president of the Memorial Foundation of 228 and the writer of the section about Chiang in the report, asking for 5 billion yuan (New Taiwan dollar) for compensation. *Ziyou shibao* (Liberty times), February 20, 2011, <https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/paper/470033> (accessed 11 September 2019).

complexities and difficulties of pursuing justice for the February 28 Incident in Taiwan.

In terms of redress for the victims, President Chen Shui-bian in 2003 presented families of the victims of the Incident with a certificate (*mingyu zhengshu*) exonerating the victims from blame for the Incident. Furthermore, Chen made an open apology to the victims of the Incident on behalf of the ROC government in 2007.¹¹⁵ In the same year, the National 228 Memorial Museum was established. Meanwhile, under continued pressure from families of the February 28 Incident's victims, the Legislative Yuan revised the February 28 Incident Settlement and Reparation Act so as to replace the term "compensation" (*buchang*) with "reparation" (*peichang*), effective on March 21 of 2007.¹¹⁶ Though the change in the act was one of wording rather than substance, the connotation of the term "reparation" did imply a payment to undo a past injustice; hence, the political implication of the revised term suggested that the state's exercise of force in the February 28 Incident was illegitimate. Thus, the DPP's measures, both practical and ideological, leaned evidently on the side of the victims of the February 28 Incident.

In fact, both the Pan Green and Blue camps, or more precisely the DPP and the KMT, appropriated the Incident for their own political interests. The DPP needed to expand its popular support, and the Incident was a vehicle to mobilize its supporters to vote, while the KMT sought to minimize the damage to the party the Incident might still cause. Political exploitation of the Incident by rival parties for securing their political capital became particularly explicit in the electoral arena.¹¹⁷

In the 2004 presidential election, the DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian utilized the

¹¹⁵ *Da jiyuan shibao*, February 27, 2007, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/7/2/27/n1631630.htm> (accessed 17 August 2018).

¹¹⁶ *Lifayuan gongbao*, vol. 96, issue 21 (March 21, 12007), 89-94.

¹¹⁷ Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan*, 149, 194.

commemoration of the February 28 Incident to facilitate his campaigns in the context of the CCP's military threat. On the fifty-seventh anniversary of the February 28 Incident the party held a "hand-in-hand to protect Taiwan" rally, in which more than two million people lined up holding hands to form a long chain over 487 kilometers long from Keelung in the north to Pingdong in the south, calling for peace and "great ethnic unity" (zuqun da tuanjie) and opposing the CCP's missile threats.¹¹⁸ The political meaning of the rally extended beyond the election itself. To many Taiwanese, the February 28 Incident was a result of the KMT's cruelty, and for years the KMT had been seen as a foreign regime transplanted from the Chinese mainland. Meanwhile, the CCP, another foreign regime from the Chinese mainland, was claiming its sovereignty over Taiwan and threatening to force the integration of Taiwan into the PRC by military means. The parallel inevitably caused Taiwan people to echo Lee Teng-hui's words in his interview with Shiba Ryotaro in 1994, when Lee called unification with China another form of Chinese oppression that would be experienced by Taiwan people as another February 28 Incident.¹¹⁹

Whereas the legacy of the February 28 Incident had for years generated barriers and misunderstandings between the local Taiwanese and mainlander groups, the rally of 2004 called for ethnic unity, transforming the February 28 Incident from a symbol of ethnic conflict to one of ethnic reconciliation. Actually, it was Taiwan independence advocates who first promoted multiculturalism as a strategy to integrate all of the island's ethnic groups into a Taiwanese national identity.¹²⁰ Therefore, the symbolic meaning of

¹¹⁸ *Ziyou shibao*, February 29, 2004, <http://old.ltn.com.tw/2004/new/feb/29/today-fo1.htm> (accessed 15 July 2018).

¹¹⁹ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 82.

¹²⁰ Wakabayashi, *Zhan hou Taiwan zhengzhi shi*, " 442.

the February 28 Incident was no longer about the “grief of being born on the island,”¹²¹ but the birth of the Taiwan nation in the face of threats from an alien power, represented at this point by the CPP. Lee actually attended the rally and gave a speech there, openly showing his support of Chen,¹²² and Chen and his party subsequently defeated the KMT and its ally in the election.

Similarly, the KMT attempted to appropriate the Incident for its political interests as well. During the 2000 presidential campaigns, the KMT presidential candidate Lian Zhan ran a full-page ad in major Taiwan newspapers, in which he claimed his love for Taiwan was evident in his efforts to facilitate academic research on and support memorials of the February 28 Incident when he served as the Taiwan provincial governor in 1990.¹²³ Lee’s democratic reforms had resulted in increased consciousness about Taiwan, which in turn forced many politicians to identify with Taiwan in order to win over the support of the voters. Therefore, Lian’s adoption of such electoral strategy was not surprising. However, his linking of his own “love for Taiwan” to the action of rehabilitating the February 28 Incident had a subtle political implication. As the ruling party and the perpetrator of the February 28 Incident, the KMT had been forced under the pressure of the populace demanding justice to undergo a series of measures to correct the wrongs of the past. This is common in countries in search of transitional justice under democratic transition. What is less common, as in Taiwan, is for the ruling political party initiating the rehabilitation to also be the perpetrator of the injustice. Lian’s interpretation of the rehabilitation of past wrongs as “love for Taiwan,” then, in a way played down the

¹²¹ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 82.

¹²² *Ziyou shibao*, March 29, 2004, <http://old.ltn.com.tw/2004/new/feb/29/today-fo1.htm> (accessed 15 July, 2018).

¹²³ *Ziyou shibao*, March 9, 2000:11; *Zhongguo shibao*, March 9, 2000:16.

aspect of KMT autocracy and suppression in the Incident. It also transformed political redemption into political capital for the KMT, ready for political consumption.

The power shifts within the KMT and from the KMT to the DPP in 2000 also generated a redefinition of the February 28 Incident by the KMT as a party. The KMT's reconstruction of its explanation of the Incident was engineered by Ma Yingjiu, a new leader of the party in opposition. As early as February 1999, not long after assuming his tenure as the Mayor of Taipei municipality, Ma openly stated that the Incident had resulted from the then KMT government's abuse of power rather than from any ethnic conflict.¹²⁴ In February 2002, Ma first tried out this new discourse when he commented on the 55th anniversary of the Incident in an article that referred to the Incident as an act of "resistance" (*kangzheng*) of the Taiwan people caused by the corruption and misgovernance of the Chen Yi government. That government's official oppression and corruption in the end caused the people to rise against the authorities (*guan bi min fa*). In addition, Ma stressed ethnic mutual-help between mainlanders and local Taiwanese people in the Incident.¹²⁵ In the following years of 2003 and 2004, Ma repeatedly referred to the Incident as "*guan bi min fan*," or civil revolts driven by the officials.¹²⁶

In 2005, Ma Yingjiu succeeded Lian Zhan as the KMT party head. Recognizing the electoral importance of the Incident, and competing with the DPP authorities over how to interpret it, Ma further elaborated on his new analysis. On October 25, 2005,¹²⁷ he

¹²⁴ *Zhongguo shibao*, February 28, 1999.

¹²⁵ Ma Yingjiu 馬英九, "Fayang zuqun tuanjie de liliang: 'Ereba Shijian' wushiwu zhounian jinian ganyan" 發揚族群團結的力量：二二八事件五十五週年感言 (Promoting the power of ethnic unity: Remarks on the 55th anniversary of the February 28 Incident), *Ziyou shibao*, February 27, 2002, <http://old.ltn.com.tw/2002/new/feb/27/today-p4.htm> (accessed 19 September).

¹²⁶ *Zhongguo shibao*, March 1, 2003; February 27, 2004.

¹²⁷ The day used to be a national holiday celebrating Taiwan's recovering from the Japanese colonization. In December 2000, the Implementation Regulations on Memorial Days and Holidays (*Jinianri ji jieri banfa*) was revised, and it has been since no longer been a national holiday. Public institutions or civil

published an article in *China Times* to emphasize and commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of “the restoration of Taiwan.” Here he blamed the failure of the Chen Yi administration for the occurrence of the tragedy and emphasized that the February 28 Incident was not a Taiwan Independence Movement, neither was it caused by “ethnic conflicts,” nor was it an instance of “resistance to a foreign regime.” Instead, he maintained the theory of “guan bi min fan” in the Incident. Coincidentally, portraits of Taiwanese sages resisting Japanese colonial rule appeared on the outer wall of the KMT headquarters building.¹²⁸

Given Ma’s account of Taiwan’s efforts in opposing Japanese colonialism and his associating Taiwan’s anti-Japanese sentiment to the Chinese Nationalist revolution, Ma’s commemoration of Taiwan’s recovery functioned to reintegrate not only Taiwan into the history of China, but also Taiwan’s anti-Japanese struggle into the KMT’s revolutionary past. Moreover, Ma subtly praised the KMT’s achievement in its management of Taiwan despite the failures of the early administration due to corrupt officials, and despite the fact that those failures had resulted in the February 28 Incident. In doing so, Ma rejected the DPP government’s “de-Sinicization” campaign and denied any link of the Incident to the Taiwan Independence Movement. Thoughts of Taiwan independence, according to Ma, actually originated from discontent with the KMT government’s land reform program. Ma’s association of Taiwanese anti-Japanese activities with the Nationalist revolution and his attempt to delink the Taiwan Independence Movement from the Incident, then, had further important implications. Since in his view the local Taiwanese

organizations can hold commemorations on the day, but officially it is not a holiday that grants a workday off.

¹²⁸ Ma Yingjiu 馬英九, “Jinian Taiwan guangfu yi jiazi” 紀念台灣光復一甲子 (Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the recovery of Taiwan), *Zhongguo shibao*, October 25, 2005.

anti-Japanese movement was incorporated into the KMT's national revolution, as Ma remarked, the nature of the local political movement became part of Chinese nation building.¹²⁹

In this regard, the history of colonial Taiwan's political movement embodied an instance of Chinese nationalism as characteristic of the history of Chinese nation-building under the leadership of the KMT, which was hence *not* an alien regime. Ma's redefinition of the Incident thus confined the nature of the 1947 conflict within the boundaries of the Chinese nation: it was a clash between the authorities and people, not between Taiwanese and mainlanders. Therefore, rather than having ethnic roots, the Incident resulted from the mismanagement of corrupt officials; nor was it an action stemming from pre-conceived political ideas, and thus it was not a matter of ideology. It was, on the contrary, an expression of the frustrations of people responding to ineffectual government administration such as had commonly been seen in China's long dynastic history of which Taiwan was a part: it was therefore not exceptional. Thus, Ma's redefinition of the Incident carried a political implication of Taiwan's Sinicization that countered the DPP's de-Sinicization approach.¹³⁰

Moreover, in his talks made at the meeting of the KMT Central Standing Committee held on February 22 of 2006, Ma reiterated that the Incident was "a civil revolt driven by the officials" (*guan bi min fan*) rather than the result of ethnic conflicts, revising the party's definition in the 1992 official report of this historical past. Thus, it shifted the responsibility of the KMT central government for the Incident onto corrupt

¹²⁹ Ma, "Jinian Taiwan guangfu yi jiazi," *Zhongguo shibao*, October 25, 2005.

¹³⁰ Ma, "Jinian Taiwan guangfu yi jiazi," *Zhongguo shibao*, October 25, 2005.

“officials.”¹³¹ Two days later, on February 24, 2006, when attending an art exhibition in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, Ma further attempted to dissociate the actions of the KMT as a party from those of the government in the Incident. Yet while reiterating this theory, Ma conceded that the KMT was the ruling party when the Incident occurred, and therefore, as the Chairman, he apologized on behalf of the party. However, as the Party itself did not get involved in the repression directly, he maintained, it was not consistent with normal procedure to require the Party to make financial reparations to the victims of the Incident.¹³² In other words, Ma separated the KMT as a party from the government of the time to shirk responsibility for the Incident. Ma’s new theory of the Incident, as historian Chen Cuilian indicates, can be synthesized as following: The February 28 Incident was neither an ethnic conflict nor an instance of resistance against a foreign regime, nor was it a Taiwan Independence Movement, but rather a series of “civil revolts driven by the officials.”¹³³ It is notable that the term “fan” can be translated as “resistance” (fankang) or “rebellion” (fanpan). In either case, it has the implication of “illegal” and “illegitimate” behaviors of an inferior party violating a superior party in the context of traditional Chinese culture and politics. Therefore, rather than utilizing more proper terms that could reflect an “equal status” between the government and the citizens, and thus place the civil demands of Taiwan people in a modern political context, Ma’s use of the term “fan” retains an authoritarian implication. For this reason, Chen Shui-bian rebutted

¹³¹ *Da Jiyuan shibao*, February 22, 2006, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/6/2/22/n1233515.htm> (accessed 26 June 2018).

¹³² *Da Jiyuan shibao*, February 24, 2006, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/6/2/24/n1236229.htm> (accessed 21 September 2018).

¹³³ Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, “Lishi Zhengyi zai Taiwan: Jian lun Guomindang de Ererba lunshu” 歷史正義在臺灣：兼論國民黨的二二八論述 (Historical justice in Taiwan: Also on the KMT’s discourse on the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba Shijian liushi zhou nian guoji xueshu yantaohui: renquan yu zhuanxing zhengyi xueshu lunwenji* (Proceedings of the international conference on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident: Human rights and transitional justice), ed. Yang Zenlong (Taipei: Memorial Foundation of 228, 2007), 374.

Ma's theory in January 2007, indicating that the democratic pursuit of the Taiwan people was expressed in the Incident.¹³⁴ The KMT's and DPP's competing views on the Incident reflected a new political context that had emerged since 2000, one in which two political parties competed for Taiwan's future.

Thus, while the pursuit of justice for the February 28 Incident remained part of the DPP's party policy, the party sought a way to revisit Taiwan's past and to deconstruct the mythology and sense of Chinese nationhood constructed by the KMT. In response, the KMT and its supporters accused the DPP of exploiting the Incident for its political interests. As the Pan-Blue's attempt to redefine the Incident countered that of the Pan-Greens, the partisan antagonism would heighten polarized interpretations of the Incident among scholars.

Revisionist Historiography of the February 28 Incident

During the period of the DPP's administration from 2000 to 2008, expressions of scholarly and public opinion on the February 28 Incident continued to propagate. The DPP government released and published more official documents and archives, as previously mentioned, and this facilitated academic discussions on the Incident. In fact, owing to political changes since Lee Teng-hui's presidency, there had been a shift of the narratives of the Incident from the KMT-centric views to the perspective of the Taiwanese people. At the same time, while scholarly inquiries about the Incident showed a tendency toward academic neutrality, political antagonism over the Incident deepened between the so-called Pan-Blue and Pan-Green Coalitions, and there appeared competing

¹³⁴ *Da Jiyuan shibao*, January 18, 2006, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/7/1/18/n1594333.htm> (accessed July 3 2019).

views on the Incident between the two political camps and their respectively affiliated scholars. Consequently, the revisionist interpretations of the February 28 Incident were still shaped more or less by their respective political ideologies.

Encouraged by the release of more official materials and by the favorable political climate under the DPP government, academic inquiries into the February 28 Incident further thrived during this period. As Table 6 shows, compared to 70 academic papers that had appeared in the previous thirteen years under KMT rule in 1988-2000, papers on the topic published in the eight years of DPP's rule in 2001-2008 numbered 81. In other words, the annual number of these academic papers rose from 5.3 in 1988-2000 to 10.1 in 2001-2008, almost double. Although non-academic papers and monographic books did not show such dramatic increases, the numbers of publications in 2007-2008, including academic and non-academic ones, appeared higher than in other years. Such academic and popular interest reflects the continuing importance of the Incident in Taiwan's politics in 2007, the 60th anniversary of the Incident, and 2008, the year of a presidential election.

Three major academic conferences were held in the thirteen years of 1988-2000, and their proceedings published only thirty-eight papers. But five major academic conferences were held in the eight years of 2001-2008, and their proceedings included 50 presentations.¹³⁵ In fact, DPP governments at the central and provincial levels sponsored and participated in the major academic conferences about the Incident in 2000-2008. As is indicated in Table 7, in 2003, following the release of new official documents and archives by the DPP government, the Memorial Foundation of February 28 Incident held

¹³⁵ Huang, "Ereba Shijian yanjiu shi," 79, 82, 84-91.

Table 6
 Numbers of Publications relevant to the February 28 Incident in Taiwan,
 2001-2008

Year of publication	Academic papers	Non-academic papers	Non-official monograph books
2001	6	7	6
2002	8	9	14
2003	6	8	6
2004	9	33	13
2005	8	9	15
2006	16	11	5
2007	4	28	18
2008	24	26	3
Total	81	131	80

Source: Huang Zhongxiang, "Eerba Shijian yanjiu shi," 46, 53-58, 63, 95.

Note: In 2007, Kaohsiung shi wenxian weiyuanhui (Kaohsiung City Archives Committee) published a volume of conference proceedings consisting of six papers. Huang counts this as five papers and includes them in his statistics about academic papers here. In this dissertation, however, this number is removed but instead counted in the statistics for the conference proceedings.

Table 7

Conferences and the Proceedings on the February 28 Incident in Taiwan,
2001-2008

Conference title	Major organizers of the conference	Conference proceedings	Number of essays collected	Year of conference	Publishers/Year of Publication
Ererba Shijian xin shiliao xueshu yantaohui (Symposium on new historical materials about the February 28 Incident)	Memorial Foundation of the February 28 Incident	<i>Ererba Shijian xin shiliao xueshu luwenji</i> (Essays on new historical materials about the February 28 Incident)	7	2003	Memorial Foundation of 228/2003
Jinian Ererba Shijian liushi zhounian xueshu taolunhui (Symposium on the 60 th anniversary of the February 28 Incident)	Kaohsiung shi Wenxian weiyuanhui (Kaohsiung City Archives Committee)	<i>Jinian Ererba Shijian liushi zhounian xueshu taolunhui lunwenji</i> (Proceedings of the symposium on the 60 th anniversary of the February 28 Incident)	6	2007	Kaohsiung shi Wenxian weiyuanhui /2007
Ererba Shijian liushi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui (International conference on the 60 th anniversary of the February 28 Incident)	Memorial Foundation of the February 28 Incident	<i>Ererba Shijian liushi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui: renquan yu zhuanxing zhengyi xueshu lunwenji</i> (Proceedings of the international conference on the 60 th anniversary of the February 28 Incident: Human rights and transitional justice)	7	2007	Memorial Foundation of 228//2007

Jinian Eerba Shijian liushi zhounian xueshu yantaohui (Symposium on the 60 th anniversary of the February 28 Incident)	Academia Sinica; Taipei city government; and Taipei 228 Memorial Museum ^a	<i>Eerba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji</i> (The February 28 th Incident of 1947, in Retrospect on its 60 th Anniversary) ^b	17	2007	Academia Sinica/ 2008
Eerba Shijian liushi yi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui—Daguo baquan huo xiaoguo renquan: Eerba Shijian yu renquan zhengyi (The International conference on the 61 st anniversary of the February 28 Incident-Taiwan's human rights or China's hegemony: the February 28 Incident and human rights justice)	Memorial Foundation of the February 28 Incident	<i>Eerba Shijian liushi yi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui: daguo baquan or xiaoguo renquan xueshu lunwenji</i> (Proceedings of the international conference on the 61 th anniversary of the February 28 Incident: Taiwan's human rights or China's hegemony)	13 ^c	2008/2	Memorial Foundation of 228/ 2009
Total	5 conferences		50		

Source: Huang Zhongxiang, "Eerba Shijian yanjiu shi," 38.

- a. Note that the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum and the National 228 Memorial Museum are different institutions. Though both are located in Taipei city, the former is overseen by the Taipei city government while the latter is a national institution devoted to the February 28 Incident.
- b. After the conference, Academia Sinica compiled and released proceedings of the conference in 2007, which was titled *Jinian Eerba Shijian liushi zhounian xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* (Proceedings of the symposium on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident), consisting of two volumes that collected 21 papers presented at the conference. In 2008, Academic Sinica republished these proceedings and titled them *Eerba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji* (The February 28th Incident of 1947, in Retrospect on its 60th Anniversary), collecting only 17 papers. Huang Zhongxiang indicates the publications in 2007 and 2008, but seemed to treat them as different publications with different contents. See Huang, "Eerba Shijian yanjiu shi," 38, 41-2, 85.
- c. The proceedings brought together 23 papers, but only 13 papers were about the February 28 Incident.

a major conference and published the proceedings in the same year. In 2007, three officially sponsored conferences were held to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Incident. Likewise, the Kaohsiung City Archives Committee (Kaohsiung shi wenxiang weiyuanhui) under the administration of the DPP mayor Chen Ju and the Memorial Foundation of February 28 Incident each held conferences and published their respective proceedings, while the KMT-ruled Taipei City government and Academia Sinica co-organized and held a conference on the Incident.¹³⁶ Therefore, given the importance of the Incident in the DPP's political discourse, it is not surprising that the DPP utilized its advantage as a ruling party¹³⁷ to promote academic research into the Incident, but the KMT-controlled Taipei municipal government still tried to share the historical legacy.

Benefiting from the availability of more official documents and archives, as well as a more encouraging political and research environment, scholars inquired about more specific and even sensitive aspects of the Incident in more academically oriented manner. For example, in a paper presented to the aforementioned symposium on new materials about the February 28 Incident held in 2003, Hou Kunhong looked into the role of the KMT's secret agencies in the Incident.¹³⁸ Similarly, in the essay collected in the conference proceedings of the symposium on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident held in Kaohsiung in 2007, Wong Jiayi focused on the KMT's economic policies

¹³⁶ Xu Xueji 許雪姬, ed., *Ereba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji* 二二八事件六十週年紀念論文集 (the February 28th Incident of 1947, in Retrospect on its 60th Anniversary) (Taipei: Taipei City government and Academia Sinica, 2008), 486.

¹³⁷ The period of the DPP's administration of Taiwan as a ruling party was from May 2000 to May 2008. The first five months of the year of 2000 and the latter seven months of the year of 2008 were under the KMT's administration.

¹³⁸ This essay was collected in the conference proceedings published in 2003; and reprinted in Hou's *Yanjiu Ereba* (Research on the February 28 Incident). See Hou, *Yanjiu Ereba*, 7.

in Taiwan around the period of the Incident and their effects.¹³⁹ Apart from such inquires into the actions and policies of the KMT, Wang Zhaowen looked into students and their armed activities in the Jiayi area during the Incident,¹⁴⁰ while Fan Yanqiu discussed the reactions to the Incident of the Atayal people in northern Taiwan, with stress particularly on an Atayal elite. That is, it specifically explored the experience of Taiwanese Indigenous peoples during the February 28 Incident and thereafter.¹⁴¹ Therefore, though in a way facilitated by political elements, scholarly investigations of the Incident to great extent focused on academic issues. This is not to suggest that academic works could fully avoid political influence. In fact, there also appeared antagonistic interpretations of the Incident in the works or opinions of some scholars and individual researchers, who leaned towards one or another political ideology, in particular pro-Taiwan nationalism or pro-Chinese nationalism.

The Taiwan-centric group was critical of the KMT regime in the Incident and advocated a revision of interpretations of the Incident from the perspective of the Taiwanese people. Among such discussions about the Incident, perhaps the most controversial concerned the relations of culture, ethnicity and Taiwanese independence with the Incident, and the responsibility of the KMT and its officials for the Incident. Views on those topics were most bluntly presented in the works of academics such as Li

¹³⁹ Wong Jiayi 翁嘉禧, “Ereba Shijian shiqi Taiwan jingji zhengcche de tezhi ji qi yingxiang” 二二八事件時期台灣經濟政策的特質及其影響 (Qualities and effects of Taiwan’s economic policies during the period of the February 28 Incident), in *Jinian Ereba Shijian liushi zhou nian xueshu taolunhui lunwenji* (Proceedings of the symposium on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident), ed. Kaohsiung wenxian weiyuanhui (Taiwan, Kaohsiung: Kaohsiung shi Wenxian weiyuanhui, 2007), 117-149.

¹⁴⁰ Wang Zhaowen 王昭文, “Ereba Shijian zhong Jiayi diqu de xuesheng yu wezhuang xingdong” 二二八事件嘉義地區的學生與武裝行動 (Students and their armed activities in Jiayi area in the February 28 Incident), in *Ereba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji* (The February 28th Incident of 1947, in Retrospect on its 60th Anniversary), ed. Xu Xueji (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2008), 255-279.

¹⁴¹ Fan, “Lexin Wadan yu Ereba Shjian zhong Taiya zu de dongtai,” 365-391.

Xiaofeng, Chen Yishen, and Zhang Yanxian. Li Xiaofeng, currently a college professor and a director (dongshi) of the Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation, was the first academic in Taiwan who released a work relevant to the February 28 Incident, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Educated under the KMT regime's patriotic education system, Li had viewed Chiang Kai-shek as an idol, and he had been a Chinese nationalist in his youth. However, Li experienced a political conversion after his encounter with the *Free China* magazine and the works of Bertrand Russell and Friedrich Hayek in senior high school. Li had come across Taiwan historical materials in the university, and these led him to the study of the history of Taiwan. Afterward, he briefly worked for the Dangwai magazine *Bashi niandai* (The Eighties), which was banned after the 1979 Meilidao Incident. Nevertheless, it was not until Li went on to advanced education, and during his course of graduate studies, that he more deeply pondered Taiwan's past and future, and gradually turned from a Chinese nationalist to a Taiwanese nationalist.¹⁴² In 1991, Li published "Ereba Shijian qian de wenhua chongtu" (The cultural conflict before the February 28 Incident), considering cultural factors behind the Incident. Li held that the divergence in historical trajectories resulting from the fifty-year separation between Taiwan and mainland China led the two places to develop different cultures, resulting in a great discrepancy between the two societies. Taiwan consequently appeared as a more advanced society. And the February 28 Incident was the result of severe conflicts caused by the governance of the side with the lower cultural level over the side with higher level

¹⁴² Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, "Juexing zhihou" 覺醒之後 (After awakening), on Li Xiaofeng jiaoshou geren wangzhan (Professor Li Xiaofeng's personal website), https://jimlee.org.tw/article_detail.php?SN=8773¤tPage=4&ArticleCategory=3 (accessed 13 October 2019).

of culture. Therefore, from the cultural perspective, the Incident was a result of cultural conflict between mainlander group and local Taiwanese people.¹⁴³

Li maintained this position, and re-stressed this view in 2007, when he presented a paper to the Symposium on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident held by Academia Sinica, Taipei city government, and the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum. Li's discussion of the ethnic dimension of the Incident in "Ereba Shijian yu zuqun wenti" (February 28 Incident and the ethnic question) argued that ethnic conflict and confrontation was indeed one of the causes of the Incident. However, he saw such conflict rooted in socio-cultural differences resulting from diverse historical development between Taiwan and mainland China.¹⁴⁴

Such revisions to interpretations of the Incident in terms of cultural and ethnic conflict were shared by Chen Yishen. Chen is the director of Academia Historica,¹⁴⁵ and he has been a researcher at Academia Sinica, while also teaching in universities. As a member of the Taiwan Association of University Professors (Taiwan jiaoshou xiehui), an organization consisting of academics advocating for Taiwan sovereignty,¹⁴⁶ Chen has studied the February 28 Incident issue since the early 1990s. In the paper "Lun Taiwan Ereba Shijian de yuanyin" (On the causes of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan)

¹⁴³ See Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, "Ereba Shijian qian de wenhua chongtu" 二二八事件前的文化衝突 (Cultural conflict before the February 28 Incident), *Silian zazhi* (Silian magazine) no.19 (December 1991): 105-119; and Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, *Daoyu xin taiji: Ccong zhongzhan dao Ereba* 島嶼新胎記：從終戰到二二八 (Rebirth of the island: From the end of the War to the February 28 incident) (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1993), 75-105.

¹⁴⁴ Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, "Ereba Shijian yu zuqun wenti" 二二八事件與族群問題 (February 28 Incident and the ethnic question). Lee presented this paper in the symposium, but it was not collected in the proceedings *The February 28th Incident of 1947, in Retrospect on its 60th Anniversary* (Ereba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji) published by Academia Sinica in 2008.

¹⁴⁵ The position of director of Academia Historica is not tenured. Chen assumed this position on July 1, 2019.

¹⁴⁶ Taiwan Jiaoshou Xiehui, <http://taup.net/index.php/abouttaup> (accessed 14 October 2019); and Academia Sinica, <http://www.mh.sinica.edu.tw/UserDetail.aspx?userID=85&mid=16&tmid=2> (accessed 14 October 2019).

presented in the symposium held by the Non-Governmental Research Team on the February 28 Incident in late 1991, Chen examined previous theories regarding the causes of the Incident and argued that a “cultural gap” (wenhua chaju) was one of the crucial elements resulting in the Taiwanese disturbance in the early stage of the Incident. Chen held that Japanese colonial rule did have considerable effects on Taiwanese culture and society; nevertheless, such a historical experience was itself neutral, and only under authoritarian rule and political discrimination did it have any political implications. In fact, according to Chen, it was aggravated and intensified by economic and social difficulties, political corruption and ethnic discrimination in such a way that the “cultural gap” escalated into ethnic conflict and civilian-official conflict. Chen further argues that ethnic conflict can only explain the disturbance in the early stage of the Incident, and that the later period of the Incident was characterized by the military slaughter carried out by KMT government forces. Notably, while others had blamed the Chen Yi administration for the Incident, Chen Yishen reminded readers of the role of the KMT central government.¹⁴⁷

In short, both Li and Chen, in particular the former, revisited the Incident from a Taiwan-centric perspective. Instead of situating Taiwan in relation to mainland China’s historical trajectory, they focused on Taiwan’s own historical experience and development to argue for the existence of a Taiwanese society with different traits from those of the mainland Chinese society. Accordingly, they maintained, the February 28 Incident was the result of a clash after the encounters of two groups of people from two distinct societies with different cultural practices and social behaviors. Clearly, this view not only rebutted the KMT regime’s “cultural deficiency” theory about the enslaved

¹⁴⁷ Chen, “Lun Taiwan Ererba Shijian de yuanyin,” 27-75.

culture of Taiwan after fifty years of Japanese colonization, but it also drew a line between local Taiwanese and mainland Chinese groups on the island, with the subtle implication that the KMT was a foreign regime.

In 2007, Chen Yishen elaborated on the idea of ethnic conflict in an attempt to define the nature of the Incident. In an apparent response to Ma Yingjiu's re-theorization of the Incident, Chen reiterated his views on the roles of ethnic conflict and the massacre in the Incident. He argued that the Incident could not be explained in a generalized way by the so-called "guan bi min fan" theory, which could only effectively account for the early stage of the Incident, which also happened to be complicated by ethnic conflict. Nor is it appropriate to describe the Incident as an "uprising," "revolution," or "rebellion," or to stress the importance of communist elements in the Incident. Instead, by utilizing the accounts and testimonies of witnesses and participants, along with official archives and publications, Chen illustrated the entanglement of ethnic confrontation, civil-official clashes and military suppression and killings in the early and latter stages of the Incident.¹⁴⁸ Chen's clarification thus covered what Ma's theory left out, thus reposing the question of the responsibility of the KMT regime for the Incident.

Neither Li Xiaofeng nor Chen Yishen supported the claim that the pursuit of Taiwanese independence was the central theme of the February 28 Incident. Rather, they argued that it was the Incident that influenced the Taiwan Independence Movement. Li briefly examines resistance activities relevant to pursuit of Taiwan independence, and

¹⁴⁸ Chen Yishen 陳儀深, "Zuqun chongtu, guan bi min fa yu baofu tusha: lun Ererba Shijian de xingzhi dingwei" 族群衝突、官逼民反與報復屠殺：論二二八事件的性質定位 (Ethnic conflict, civil revolts against oppressive authorities, and retaliatory slaughters: On defining the nature of the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba Shijian liushi zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui: Renquan yu zhuanxing zhengyi xueshu lunwenji* (Proceedings of the international conference on the 60th anniversary of the February 28 Incident: Human rights and transitional justice), ed. Yang Zhenlong (Taipei: Memorial Foundation of 228, 2007), 314-342.

indicates that some people were engaged in such a pursuit before the February 28 Incident despite different political circumstances and motivations. In the February 28 Incident, nevertheless, regardless of the two lines of resistance—political negotiation or violent actions, the local Taiwanese were calling for a high degree of self-government. However, the impact of the Incident caused many Taiwanese to turn away from Chinese national identity, as was the case, for example, with Liao Wenyi who, as an exile after the Incident, became the initiator and promoter of the post-war Taiwan Independence Movement.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, Chen Yishen disputes the claim of early Taiwan Independence Movement activists, who regarded the Thirty-Two Demands as equivalent to the demand for independence.¹⁵⁰ However, the February 28 Incident resulted in the exile of some Taiwanese activists and in changes in their political identity, and they in turn contributed theoretically to the formation of Taiwanese nationalism. They also affected overseas Taiwanese, in particular students, who further accelerated the Taiwan Independence Movement. Thus, Chen argues that the formation of Taiwanese nationalism was a result of the Incident and its aftermath, rather than its cause.¹⁵¹

What might have sparked the most controversy was the attempt by the group promoting Taiwan consciousness to clarify the responsibility for the February 28 Incident. In fact, prior to the release of the *Research Report on Responsibility for the February 28 Incident* in 2006, suggestions that KMT political and military leaders, in particular Chiang Kai-shek, were responsible for the Incident had appeared in scholarly

¹⁴⁹ Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, “Ereba Shijian yu Taiwan duli yundong” 二二八事件與台灣獨立運動 (February 28 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement), in *Ereba Shijian xin shiliao xueshu lunwenji* 二二八事件新史料學術論文集 (Essays on new historical materials about the February 28 Incident), ed. Zeng Meili 曾美麗 (Taipei: Memorial Foundation of 228, 2003), 126-143.

¹⁵⁰ Chen, “Zuqun chongtu, guan bi min fan yu baofu tusha,” 321-22.

¹⁵¹ Chen, “Taidu zhuzhang de qiyan yu liubian,” 146-151, 159-160.

discussions.¹⁵² Afterward, as part of the effort by the Chen Shui-bian government to redress the Incident, the aforementioned research report commissioned by the Memorial Foundation of 228 was published. That project was completed by a research team consisting of historians and legal scholars led by Zhang Yanxian. As the KMT regime's rehabilitation program for the Incident had shirked its responsibility, the Report attempted to clarify the accountability of those responsible for the Incident and its aftermath. It concludes that Chiang Kai-shek should be listed as the major culprit and should bear the largest responsibility, while other major political or military figures, including Chen Yi, Ke Yuanfen, and Peng Mengqi, are named as the accessories. The list of the accused also includes some key military figures, KMT secret agents, Taiwanese serving the KMT regime, and KMT-affiliated organizations and media.¹⁵³

The Report sparked much dispute. A group of pro-Chinese unification academics, intellectuals, and civilian researchers¹⁵⁴ rebutted the views of the Taiwan-centric group on the Incident and argued instead from the perspective of Chinese nationalism about the Incident. Though the emphases of individual works of this type varied, such works shared a stance that generally aligned with that of the KMT. One of the controversial aspects of their rebuttals was how they defended the KMT and its leaders, in particular Peng

¹⁵² Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, "Jiang Jieshi yu Eerba Shijian: Jian lun qi zeren wenti" 蔣介石與二二八事件：兼論其責任問題 (Chiang Kai-shek and the February 28 Incident: Also on Chiang's responsibility question), in *Eerba Shijian yanjiu lunwenji* (Proceedings of the international conference on the February 28 Incident), ed. Zhang Yanxian et. al. (Taipei: Wu Sanlian Foundation, 1998), 455-469; Chen Yishen 陳儀深, "Qizhi shi 'weichi zhian' eryi: Lun Jiang Jieshi yu tai sheng jun zheng shouzhang dui Eerba Shijian de chuzhi" 豈止是維持治安而已：論蔣介石與台省軍政首長對二二八事件的處置 (More than 'maintaining public security': On the handling of the February 28 Incident by Chiang Kai-shek and Taiwan's military and political leaders), in *Eerba Shijian xin shiliao xueshu lunwenji* (Essays on new historical materials about the February 28 Incident), ed. Zeng Meili (Taipei: Memorial Foundation of 228, 2003), 144-160.

¹⁵³ Zhang et al., *Eerba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao*, 3-4, 95-489.

¹⁵⁴ Other than Huang Zhangjian, this group also includes Ju Hongyuan, a research fellow at Academia Sinica; Qi Jialin, a former diplomat, and chairman of Alliance for the Reunification of China (Zhongguo tongyi lianmeng); Wu Zhizhang, and other pro-unification people.

Mengqi and Chiang Kai-shek, in the Incident. The defense for Peng is represented in the views of Huang Zhangjian. Huang was a researcher at Academia Sinica, specializing in the history of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Utilizing a research method of textual criticism (*kaozheng*) to examine source materials and drawing on some new documents provided by Peng Mengqi's son, he attempted to reverse the previous conclusion of the 1992 report about Peng, who had ordered the suppression of the disturbance in Kaohsiung and who was believed to be responsible for killings by the military in the Incident there. Huang argued that Peng had intended to solve the issue with political negotiation, and that his adoption of a military solution was a result of an attempted shooting at Peng by one representative who was part of a conspiracy for Taiwan independence but who acted as a civilian negotiator with Peng. It also resulted from shooting by the rioters who had taken control of the city hall. Despite the death of some innocent people during the suppression, argued Huang, indiscriminate killing was not Peng's intention.¹⁵⁵

Much argument was also made to defend Chiang Kai-shek. Wu Zhizhang, a researcher promoting Chinese unification, used official telegrams sent during the February 28 Incident to argue that Chiang ordered the maintenance of "military discipline" and forbade "revenge killing" despite his decision for military suppression. Given the situation in Taiwan and mainland China, Wu argued, Chiang's decision was appropriate.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, utilizing official archives and Chiang's diaries, Su Shengxiong,

¹⁵⁵ Huang Zhangjian 黃彰健, *Ereba Shijian zhenxiang kaozheng gao* 二二八事件真相考證稿 (A manuscript of textual criticism on the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 2007), 3-206.

¹⁵⁶ According to one newspaper report, the pro-Chinese unification group formed a study group and in February 2006 held a forum, in which Wu Zhizhang presented research titled "Jiang Jieshi yu Ereba" (Chiang Kai-shek and the February 28 Incident). This work is published on Wu's blog, and was later collected in his book published in 2017. It should be noted that the pro-unification group's works discussed in this section are academic in nature. See, *Da Jiyuan shibao*, February 25, 2006,

currently an assistant researcher at the Academia Historica, argued that the military suppression should be put in historical context, in particular those of the KMT-CCP Civil War and the institutional constraints of the KMT government on Chiang to effectively receive and evaluate information about the Incident and manage the Incident, especially in relation to his order of military suppression and the military's irresponsible behavior in killing people.¹⁵⁷

According to Su, Chiang's decision for military suppression mainly resulted from constraints of the institutional system, under which less urgent or important information was filtered out, which compromised the communication of reasons against military suppression. In addition, biased reports from Chen Yi and various secret agencies in Taiwan—Chiang's major sources of information about the Incident at the early stage—also affected Chiang's judgment on the Incident. Following this logic, Chiang's decision to employ the armed forces seemed understandable to Su under the circumstances. Meanwhile, Su tried to explain Chiang's reactions and rationalize Chiang's handlings of the event by situating this issue in the context of current political and economic circumstances, including international diplomacy regarding the Soviet Union's interference in Northeast China, the KMT-CCP Civil War, and the Nationalist government's restructuring in response to the country's economic crisis.¹⁵⁸ In short, Su placed the issue in historical context, by indicating the constraints limiting Chiang, their

<http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/6/2/25/n1237369.htm> (accessed 6 August 2018); “Jiang Jieshi yu Eerba” 蔣介石與二二八 (Chiang Kai-shek and the February 28 Incident). Wu Zhizhang's blog, <http://blog.udn.com/jasonwu0211/1990713> (accessed 6 October 2019); & Wu Zhizhang 武之璋, *Eerba de zhenxiang yu huangyan* 二二八的真相與謊言 (Truth and lies of the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Fengyun shidai, 2017), 114-119.

¹⁵⁷ Su Shengxiong first articulated the views in his MA thesis in 2009, and the thesis was published in 2013. See Su Shengxiong 蘇聖雄, “*Jian dang shanhuo*”: *Jiang Zhongzheng dui Eerba Shijian de taidu yu chuzhi* 奸黨煽惑：蔣中正對二二八事件的態度與處置 (“Induced by Communist Party”: Chiang Kai-shek's opinion and handling of the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Huamulan chubanshe, 2013).

¹⁵⁸ Su, *Jian dang shanhuo*, 26-37, 40-2, 53-69, 75.

impact on him and the logic of the decisions he made. In other words, Su tried to rationalize Chiang's actions without regard for historical justice.

Another major rebuttal formulated by the pro-Chinese unification nationalists against the claims of the pro-Taiwan group assigned responsibility for the February 28 Incident to a foreign conspiracy, rather than to Chiang and the KMT regime. On February 27, 2007, a group, including Ju Hongyuan, Wu Zhizhang, and Qi Jialing, held a press conference, in which they claimed that Japan and the US should be held accountable for the February 28 Incident.¹⁵⁹ Subsequently, several works were published in 2007-2009, reiterating these claims. Their argument was that the February 28 Incident was a result of a conspiracy by the outgoing Japanese colonial government, which, before its departure from Taiwan, deliberately lifted food rationing in a way that led to the overconsumption of food by the Taiwanese people, causing grain shortages and inflation that exacerbated social disorder and undermined stability, leading local Taiwanese people to the mistaken conclusion that the catastrophe was being caused by the Chen Yi government.¹⁶⁰

The US, on the other hand, was accused by this group of being the accomplice responsible for the cause of the Incident, on the grounds that George H. Kerr, vice consul of the US Taipei Consulate, worked for the CIA, which was conspiring to take over Taiwan and conniving with Taiwan independence advocates to do so. Kerr even forged fake information in the Consulate's telegrams and reports, these authors charged, while utilizing a few local Taiwanese to bring forward an appeal for UN trusteeship, in an

¹⁵⁹ Huang Zhangjian was absent from the conference due to health reasons. "Zhongyanyuan: Ererba Riben shi yuanyong, Meiguo shi bangxiong" 中研院：二二八日本是元兇，美國是幫兇 (Academia Sinica: Japan was the major culprit and the US an accomplice for the February 28 Incident), *Aboluo xinwen*, <http://tw.aboluowang.com/2007/0303/32253.html> (accessed 7 July 2017).

¹⁶⁰ Qi Jialin 戚嘉林, *Taiwan Ererba da jiemi* 台灣二二八大揭密 (Uncovering the secrets of the February 28 Incident of Taiwan) (Taipei: Haixia xueshu, 2007), 19-36.

attempt to alienate Taiwan from China.¹⁶¹ This attempt to place Taiwan under UN trusteeship led to the KMT authorities' conclusion that the insurrection was stirred by the local Taiwanese colluding with the US consulate, and that it was this that led to the KMT's military suppression, which caused the deaths of Taiwanese people. Thus, Kerr was the one who should be held responsible for the tragedy of the Incident.¹⁶²

Such views not only disputed the DPP government's report on responsibility for the Incident but also contradicted the KMT's 1992 official report, though in a way it did echo the KMT's earlier interpretations of the Incident regarding the KMT's accusation of Japanese colonial impacts on the Incident.¹⁶³ Such antagonistic views by the pro-KMT and pro-DPP scholars on the February 28 Incident reflected the new political situation on the island, in particular after 2000, when new political ideologies came to shape national and even cultural identity, which in turn have affected the way the related parties perceive the past.

¹⁶¹ Ju Hongyuan 朱宏源 and Huang Wenfan 黃文範, "Ge Chaozhi zai Ererba Shijian zhong de jiase" 葛超智在二二八事件中的角色 (The role George Kerr played in the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba Shijian liushi zhounian jinian lunwenji* (The February 28th Incident of 1947, in Retrospect on its 60th Anniversary), ed. Xu Xueji (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2008), 423-462.

¹⁶² Wang Chengxiang 王呈祥, *Meiguo zhu Taipei fu lingshiguan Ge Chaozhi yu 'Ererba Shijian'* 美國駐台北副領事葛超智與二二八事件 (George Kerr, the vice consul of the US Taipei Consulate and the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Haixia xueshu, 2009), 264-291.

¹⁶³ In 2011, Ju Hongyuan even claimed that the Presbyterian church, together with hooligans, former Taiwanese soldiers who had served in the Japanese army, and CCP underground party members, participated in the revolts. *Zhongguo shibao*, December 12, 2011, <http://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20111212000387-260108> (accessed May 15, 2018).

Political Changes in Mainland China and Its New Scholarship on the February 28 Incident

Political Changes in Mainland China and the CCP's New Taiwan Policies

Deng Xiaoping's open door policy and economic reforms from the late 1970s brought incredible prosperity yet also political challenges to mainland China; however, despite political disturbances in the PRC in the 1980s and the generational transition of power, the fundamentals of the CCP's Taiwan policy remained unchanged. Though certain severe side effects of Deng's reform resulted in social and political agitation that eventually led to the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, the CCP stressed "stability," for which it prioritized its political monopoly while continuing its economic reforms. Meanwhile, the CCP continued to uphold Deng's Taiwan policy to shape and define cross-strait relations. The CCP was thus at first responsive to and engaged with cross-strait political contacts; however, the pursuit of a Taiwanese national identity and of international recognition that resulted from democratization and the subsequent period of DPP rule of Taiwan from 2000 led the CCP to shift its Taiwan policy.¹⁶⁴ Facing the rising Taiwan-consciousness on the other side of the Strait, the CCP turned to both political and military intimidation in an attempt to repress Taiwan's independence while promoting Chinese unification. Consequently, as a part of the CCP's propaganda mechanism, commemorations of the February 28 Incident continued to be designed to serve the CCP's political aims.

¹⁶⁴ Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 155, 169; Su, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*, 34-5.

The decade after Deng's economic initiatives brought new challenges that eventually had repercussions on domestic politics in mainland China, which culminated in the Tiananmen Incident of early June of 1989.¹⁶⁵ After the 1989 protests, the CCP adopted a policy of more openness in economics yet more constraint in politics, in addition to stepping up nationalist indoctrination, to ensure its continued monopoly of power. This was evident in Deng's talks during his 1992 Southern Tour, which prioritized economic development on the basis of reform and opening, and welcomed foreign investment and technology, but also emphasized stability as fundamental to economic development.¹⁶⁶ The country's new national confidence, facilitated by continued economic prosperity and political authoritarianism, not only re-consolidated CCP rule but also reshaped cross-strait relations. In fact, following the return of Hong Kong and Macao in 1997 and 1999 respectively, the integration of Taiwan was seen crucial to the completion of national unification.

Therefore, the CCP actively engaged in cross-strait contacts before the mid-1990s. From the late 1980s, cross-strait relations had been relatively conciliatory. In this, the CCP was actually both proactive and reacting to Taiwan's own political turn regarding cross-strait relations in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Quansheng Zhao and Guoli Liu argue that post-Mao China's need for modernization, together with its rising nationalism and political assertiveness based on its growing economic strength, led the CCP to adopt a moderate Taiwan policy.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the CCP not only initiated the secret meetings with

¹⁶⁵ Wasserstrom and Markel-Hess, "Tiananmen and its Aftermath, 1989-1999," 259-63.

¹⁶⁶ Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 946.

¹⁶⁷ Zhao and Liu, "Beijing's Shifting Positions in the New Era of Cross-Taiwan Strait Relations," 198.

the KMT,¹⁶⁸ but also engaged in a number of cross-strait meetings aimed at establishing mutual agreements.¹⁶⁹ Following the formation of the Straits Exchange Foundation (Haixia jiaoliu jijinhui, SEF) in Taiwan in February 1991, the CCP created the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (Haixia liangan guanxi xiehui, ARATS) in December 1991, the mainland's counterpart of the SEF, to mould, carry out and evaluate its Taiwan policy.¹⁷⁰ The cross-strait relations culminated in the Koo-Wang talks in 1993, as discussed above. In fact, owing to the development of cross-strait relations, members of the February 28 Incident Research Work Team of the KMT government were able to obtain relevant archives in the PRC's Second Historical Archives (Zhongguo dier lishi danganguan; SHAC) located in Nanjing for work on the 1992 report.¹⁷¹ The CCP also continued to utilize the idea of "peaceful unification" to appeal to Taiwan people. However, as "peaceful unification" was bound to the "One China" premise in the CCP's unification formula, Taiwan's democratic reforms inevitably challenged that very formula as democratization had a profound impact on cross-strait relations. As that democratic evolution inevitably caused Taiwanese to reflect on and address their national identity and international status, it also inevitably affected Taiwan's approach to cross-strait relations. Besides, political reform also led to changes

¹⁶⁸ According to Lee, there were 27 secret KMT-CCP meetings in total in the venues of Hong Kong, Zhuhai, and Macao. These secret meetings continued until 1995 when former legislator Yu Muming of the New Party made the information public. But Su Qi put the stress on Lee's Cornell visit, stating that these meetings were held up until Lee's Cornell visit in 1995. See Zou, *Li Denghui zhizheng gaobai shilu*, 192-3; and Su, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*, 10.

¹⁶⁹ Su, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*, 18-21.

¹⁷⁰ According to Kevin G. Cai, various party, government and military organs of the CCP had engaged in the making of its Taiwan policy since the early 1990s. See Kevin G. Cai, "The Evolution of the Institutional Structure of Beijing's Taiwan Policy Making Since the Late 1970s," in *Cross-Taiwan Straits Relations Since 1979: Policy Adjustment and Institutional Change Across the Straits*, ed. Kevin G. Cai (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2011), 227-8, 232.

¹⁷¹ Xingzheng Yuan yanjiu Ererba Shijian xiaozu, *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 2.

in Taiwan's political landscape as a result of electoral support for an elected government that leaned toward independence, and that further altered Taiwan's stance on unification.

As the February 28 Incident continued to be an important issue in Taiwan, the CCP continued to use commemorations of the Incident to convey or propagandize its Taiwan policy. While the CCP actively engaged in cross-strait contacts after Chiang Chiang-kuo's death in 1988, it kept a low profile regarding commemorations of the Incident before the mid-1990s. Not only were commemorations of the Incident in the PRC mainly held by the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, but the participants were also in general of minor political importance. Besides, other than repeating the rhetoric that the Incident was against KMT corruption and authoritarianism and in favor of Chinese unification, the commemorations were largely to echo or convey the CCP central authority's current cross-strait policy. For example, in accord with the CCP's approach to Lee Teng-hui in early 1988, the 1989 commemoration held by the League called for further cross-strait contacts and urged the KMT regime to rehabilitate the Incident.¹⁷² After the formation of SEF in Taiwan and ARATS in mainland China, both in 1991, the 1992 commemoration, also held by the League, stressed the desirability of cross-strait political negotiations and peace talks and urged the KMT regime to act accordingly.¹⁷³

However, the CCP changed its policy towards Taiwan from the mid-1990s. Zhao and Liu argue that Fang Du (preventing Taiwan independence) and Cu Tong (promoting unification) have been the two major tactics in CCP's Taiwan policy.¹⁷⁴ Given Taiwan's effort to seek its own national identity and international recognition since the mid-1990s

¹⁷² *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 1989:2.

¹⁷³ *Renmin ribao*, February 28, 1992:4.

¹⁷⁴ Zhao and Liu, "Beijing's Shifting Positions in the New Era of Cross-Taiwan Strait Relations," 201.

and given the PRC's reintegration of Hong Kong in 1997, the unification of Taiwan to the CCP seemed to become imminent. The CCP turned more aggressively to diplomatic containment and military intimidation, which was evident in its military exercises attempting to affect Taiwan's presidential election in 1996 and in its success in getting the US to lean to its side in policy terms.¹⁷⁵ The CCP also tried to force Taiwan into its unification formula.

After Chen Shui-bian of the DPP assumed the presidency in 2000, the CCP maintained an aggressive stance, but simultaneously adopted a "united front" strategy toward Taiwan. At the same time, the CCP fostered partisan competition, ignoring the DPP and favoring the KMT and the PFP, and the Pan-Blue Coalition generally. That policy culminated in the visit of KMT party head Lian Zhan and of PFP Chairman James Soong to mainland China in April and May 2015. Apparently, it was seeking with its united front tactics to build connections with the Pan-Blue forces opposed to the DPP and Pan-Green alliance.¹⁷⁶ In addition, the CCP appealed to the Taiwan business community, which was inclined to maintain a friendly cross-strait relationship that would benefit commercial exchanges.¹⁷⁷ Consequently, the CCP's "One China" principle and promotion of unification continued to dominate its Taiwan policy. Under the CCP's guidelines, the "One China" principle and unification policy were at the center of its treatment of the February 28 Incident, which functioned as a platform publicizing its Taiwan policy.

Therefore, commemorations of the February 28 Incident in the PRC continued to be used in accord with the CCP's cross-strait policy after the mid-1990s as well. The

¹⁷⁵ Su, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*, 35, 41; Zou, *Li Denghui zhizheng gaobai shilu*, 268-74.

¹⁷⁶ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 117.

¹⁷⁷ Goldstein, *China and Taiwan*, 105-6.

CCP turned more aggressive toward Taiwan after Lee Teng-hui's trip to Cornell in June 1995. It thus cancelled the second scheduled round of Koo-Wang talks in Singapore and intensified its military intimidation as well. Nevertheless, though the CCP became more hostile toward Taiwan, it simultaneously appealed to the people of Taiwan for unification. On February 28 of 1996, for instance, *Renmin ribao* ran a front page article entitled "Ji xiwang yu Taiwan renmin" (Placing hope on the people of Taiwan), which included accounts of the commemorations of the February 28 Incident in Taiwan. In this article, the CCP purported to align itself with the Taiwanese people, stressing the legitimacy of their actions in the Incident while strongly criticizing the KMT regime. Moreover, it praised the patriotism of the people of Taiwan throughout the history of their resistance against foreign invasions and condemned the collusion of the current leaders of Taiwan with international counter-Chinese forces that opposed cross-strait unification. It further specifically accused Lee Teng-hui of separatism, and condemned attempts by the Taiwanese authorities to seek any form of Taiwan independence through the so-called "democratization."¹⁷⁸ Apparently, the charge of "collusion" implicitly referred to the US government's granting permission, over the CCP opposition, for Lee's visit to Cornell the previous year. Thus, while the article ostensibly commemorated the February 28 Incident, in fact it was an implicit statement about current politics. Not surprisingly, the commemoration of the year held by the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League repeated the same rhetoric as the article in *Renmin ribao*.¹⁷⁹

In 1997, the year of the 50th anniversary of the February 28 Incident, and the year of the return of Hong Kong to China, the CCP expanded PRC commemorations of the

¹⁷⁸ *Renmin ribao*, February 28, 1996:1.

¹⁷⁹ *Renmin ribao*, February 29, 1996:4.

Incident in both scale and scope. The organization of the commemoration event by the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, and the presence of high-profile political figures, including Li Ruihuan, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and also Chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC, and Qian Qichen, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and vice-chairman of the State Council, as well as other political leaders,¹⁸⁰ suggested the intention to increase the visibility of the commemoration and to draw attention to it. Qian also gave a speech at the event, criticizing the KMT, its resistance to building the “three links” across the strait, and the “New Taiwanese-ism” (xin Taiwanren zhuyi) that was currently being promoted in Taiwan.¹⁸¹ Besides the commemoration held in Beijing, commemorative activities were also carried out in other locales, including Fujian and Macao.¹⁸² Clearly, such high-profile commemorations were staged to appeal not only to people in Taiwan but also to the international community. By commemorating the past in this way, the CPP manifested to the world China’s historical connection to Taiwan and its own call for unification of the island with the mainland following the return of Hong Kong.

In the 2000s, commemorations of the Incident remained a part of the CCP’s cross-strait agenda. In 2000, following the CCP’s release of the White Paper regarding “the One China principle and the Taiwan question” immediately before the anniversary of the February 28 Incident, the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League celebrated the

¹⁸⁰ Such as Cheng Siyuan, Vice-chairman of Standing Committee of the NPC; and Wang Zhaoguo, Vice-chairman of National Committee of the CPPCC, and also head of the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee. See *Renmin ribao*, February 27, 1997:3.

¹⁸¹ *Renmin ribao*, February 27, 1997:3.

¹⁸² Macao was not returned to China until 1999, but *Aomen ribao* (Macao daily news) held a forum to commemorate the Incident on February 26, 1997. See *Renmin ribao*, February 27, 1997:3.

release of this document together with the commemoration of the Incident in a single forum in which the League linked “one country, two systems” with the “high degree of autonomy” (gaodu zizhi) championed in 1947 and stressed that the demand for “autonomous rule” in the February 28 Incident was to great extent aligned with the spirit of the “one-China” policy. Accordingly, the League called for cross-Strait unification through political negotiations under a one-China framework.¹⁸³ The statement appears to have been nothing more than a reiteration of the White Paper. Despite the seemingly intensified cross-strait political tensions after the DPP rose to ruling status in May 2000, non-official cross-strait contacts, in particular economic exchanges, actually became more vigorous. In addition, the visit of Lian Zhan, the KMT chairman, to mainland China in 2005 suggested a new KMT-CCP “united front” based on the two parties’ shared interest regarding Chinese unification. Therefore, except in 2007, the 60th anniversary of the Incident, the CCP again was downplaying commemorative activities from 2001 to 2006, during the years when the commemorations were mainly held by the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, which generally repeated official rhetoric opposing Taiwan’s independence, and the Incident was interpreted as a patriotic, anti-corruption patriotic action. In fact, *Renmin ribao* ran similar articles each year, with some content identical.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in response to the DPP government’s constitutional amendments and its promotion of a referendum on future *de jure* independence, the League attacked the Taiwan government’s attempts at producing so-called *de jure*

¹⁸³ The CCP released the White Paper on February 21, 2000. *Renmin ribao*, February 22, 2000:1; February 27, 2000:2.

¹⁸⁴ *Renmin ribao*, February 24, 2001:2; February 26, 2002:4; February 27, 2003:4; February 20, 2004:4; February 26, 2005:4; February 28, 2006:4; February 27, 2008:2.

independence in the 2006 and 2007 commemorations.¹⁸⁵ The CCP's attitude toward and interpretation of the February 28 Incident therefore actually demonstrated little change, despite constant adjustments of its rhetoric. In the years under consideration, it either stressed or downplayed the commemoration in accordance with its current Taiwan policy or in response to the cross-strait politics of the day. To put the matter simply, commemorations of the February 28 Incident in the PRC have been a mechanism for the CCP's united front work since 1949.

Mainland China's Revisionist Scholarship on the February 28 Incident

Although the CCP's political control in mainland China intensified from the late 1980s, academic explorations of the February 28 Incident appear to have flourished compared to previous periods. Not only did official publications contribute to the studies, but the circulation of research materials and findings from Taiwan that expanded as a result of increasing cross-strait encounters also facilitated scholarly discussions on the subject. Scholarly views on the Incident also appeared more diverse, looking beyond politics into other important aspects of the Incident. Therefore, unlike in previous periods when studies were dominated or directed by a prescribed revolutionary view, scholarship on the February 28 Incident after 1987 seemed to suffer less political interference.

Du Jidong, a Chinese scholar based in mainland China, conducted a review of studies on the February 28 Incident that were published in mainland China during the years from 1949 to 2006. According to Du, changes in domestic politics and in foreign and cross-strait relations affected the CCP's Taiwan policy, and policy shifts in turn

¹⁸⁵ *Renmin ribao*, March 1, 2006:5; February 28, 2007:4.

affected scholarly perspectives on the February 28 Incident. After 1979, the relatively looser policies regarding academic activities and the availability of sources and research findings from Taiwan allowed more diverse and substantial research to appear on the mainland. Because this academic research was still constrained by political influence and limitations of sources, the scope and depth of mainland China's scholarship on the February 28 Incident did not surpass that in Taiwan.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, the relevant articles that appeared in mainland China were often short in length, and mostly published in journals and magazines.¹⁸⁷ Further, although there had been scattered academic works on the subject in the 1980s, scholarly inquiry into the Incident only became relatively active from the 1990s and more productive in the 2000s. Academic investigations of the Incident also appeared more diverse than in previous scholarship. Besides inquiring into the politics of the Incident, scholars have also attempted to reinterpret the Incident in its social, cultural, media, economic, ethnic and even psychological aspects and focused on particular themes, such as analysis of the institutions of the Chen Yi government, and the relationships of individual figures with the Incident.¹⁸⁸

The availability of new source materials indeed facilitated academic inquiries in the PRC into the February 28 Incident. The CCP authorities compiled, edited and published official materials related to the Incident stored in mainland institutes, such as the Second Historical Archives of China, located in Nanjing. For example, the book *Taiwan guangfu han guangfu hou wunian shengqing* (Taiwan restoration and five years

¹⁸⁶ Du, "1949 nian yilai Zhongguo dalu 'Ereba' Shijian yanjiu pingjie," 34-5.

¹⁸⁷ According to Du, by 2006, there were not any monographs or symposiums on the February 28 Incident. See Du, "1949 nian yilai Zhongguo dalu 'Ereba' Shijian yanjiu pingjie," 34. Note: A mainland China scholar, Chu Jingtao, published a monograph on the February 28 Incident in Taiwan in 2007 and 2011 respectively.

¹⁸⁸ A search of the Chinese Academic Journal (CAJ) database with the key word "ererba" (literally two-two-eight) for relevant works indicates that most articles relevant to the February 28 Incident were published after the 1980s.

after the restoration) was edited by Cheng Mingzhong and Chen Xingtang and published in 1989; it was followed in 1991 by the release of *Taiwan Ererba Shijian dangan shiliao* (Archive materials on Taiwan February 28 Incident), edited by the Second Historical Archives of China.¹⁸⁹ In addition, increasing cross-strait social and cultural communication also enabled academic exchanges that further stimulated scholarly discussions on the Incident. For example, relying almost solely on sources published in Taiwan, including the 1992 official report and the official archives and documents published by Academia Sinica, Deng Kongzhao, then serving as the associate dean at the Taiwan Research Institute of Xiamen University, conducted a pioneering piece of research. Based on the telegram exchanges between Chen Yi and Chiang Kai-shek, he detailed and analyzed their dealings during the Incident and its aftermath.¹⁹⁰ Notably, based on his analysis of the telegrams, Deng indicates that Chen and Chiang's linking of the Incident to communist instigation impeded their perception of the nature of the Incident in a way that led to poor judgments on their part, which in turn had catastrophic consequences, an observation clearly at odds with the CCP's long-held claim of its leading role in the Incident.¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, political ideology still proved an important factor in scholarly interpretations of the February 28 Incident in the PRC, given the CPP's official stance toward the Incident and its Taiwan policy. In particular, the official publication about Chen Yi, which appeared in 1987, indicates the CCP's "rehabilitation" of Chen. To align with this revised official definition of Chen Yi, Chu Jingtao, then a researcher at the

¹⁸⁹ Du, "1949 nian yilai Zhongguo dalu 'Ererba' Shijian yanjiu pingjie," 23.

¹⁹⁰ Deng Kongzhao 鄧孔昭, "Cong dianwen wanglai kan 'Ererba Shijian' zhong de Chen Yi yu Jiang Jieshi" 從電文往來看二二八事件中的陳儀與蔣介石 (View on Chen Yi and Chiang Kai-shek by their telegram contacts in the February 28 Incident), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan research quarterly) no. 4 (2006): 70-78.

¹⁹¹ Deng, "Cong dianwen wanglai kan 'Ererba Shijian' zhong de Chen Yi yu Jiang Jieshi," 75, 78.

Institute of Taiwan Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), argued that Chen was an honest and upright official rare in the KMT government, and that, despite the existence of official corruption in his administration, this was limited to some individual officials rather than being a prevailing phenomenon. Nevertheless, Chu argued, media exaggerations of the corruption sowed prejudice in the minds of the Taiwanese people against the mainlanders. In fact, he maintained, Japanese colonialism in Taiwan was to blame for Taiwan's economic difficulties in the early postwar period, and Japan's invasion had laid the groundwork for the difficulty facing post-war reconstruction in Taiwan.¹⁹² Moreover, in rebuttal of the cultural conflict theory advanced by Taiwanese scholars, Chu insisted that the February 28 Incident was a result of the Taiwanese people's pursuit of political reform, and was in its nature a case of class conflict and of conflict between civilians and official, rather than a cultural or ethnic clash. For Chu, it was the influence of the democratic movement on mainland China that fostered the appeal of local autonomous rule.¹⁹³ Given the CCP's current Taiwan policy stressing the possibility of "one country, two systems," this emphasis on the pursuit of local autonomy in the Incident seems to have accorded well with the CCP's political view on Taiwan. Nevertheless, it should be noted that despite thematic adjustments and shifts of emphasis in the CCP's rhetoric, its interpretation of the Incident as a patriotic action opposed to the authoritarian and corrupt KMT regime has remained central in the CCP's narratives of

¹⁹² Chu Jingtao 褚靜濤, "Taiwan guangfu chuqi de tanwu wenti" 台灣光復初期的貪污問題 (The corruption question in the early period of Taiwan retrocession), *Nanjing shehui kexue* (Nanjing Social sciences) no. 2 (2006): 62-7.

¹⁹³ Chu Jingtao 褚靜濤, "Taiwan guangfu chuqi de wenhua chongtu" 台灣光復初期的文化衝突 (Cultural conflict in the early period of Taiwan retrocession), *Xiandai Taiwan yanjiu* (Modern Taiwan research) no. 2 (2008): 64.

the Incident. Thus, while defending Chen Yi and his policies, scholars also continued to indicate defects in his administration.¹⁹⁴

Yet, although official ideology remains a factor to shape interpretations, many discussions on the Incident in the PRC did make academic contributions. For example, Bai Chun utilized official archives and publications, and his research materials and findings were drawn from both mainland China and Taiwan. By focusing on Taiwan's monopoly system and policies regarding trade and grain control in the early post-WWII era, he offers a reevaluation of Chen Yi's economic policies.¹⁹⁵ In addition, focusing on the Taiwanese public mood in 1947, Bai reconsiders the cause of the Incident, arguing that the discrepancy between social expectations and the policies and measures of the Chen Yi administration resulted in a change of public mood from high enthusiasm and patriotism to great disappointment, discontent, and indeed resentment to the Nationalist government. In particular, the KMT government's dealing with the remaining Japanese civilians and soldiers, its adoption of the Japanese colonial political system of the Office of Governor-General of Taiwan, and its discriminatory employment practices all severely contradicted what the Taiwanese population had expected. On top of these factors, the economic crisis involving severe unemployment, high inflation and shortages of rice, worsened by official corruption and exploitation, jeopardized people's lives and livelihood. It was under such circumstances that social expectations were soon

¹⁹⁴ See Sun Caixia 孫彩霞, "Chen Yi yu Taiwan" 陳儀與台灣 (Chen Yi and Taiwan), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* no. 2 (1996): 69, 71.

¹⁹⁵ Bai Chun 白純, "Jian lun guangfu chuqi Taiwan de zhuanmai zhidu" 簡論光復初期台灣的專賣制度 (Brief discussion on Taiwan's monopoly system in the early era of Taiwan restoration), *Nanjing zhengzhi xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of PLA Nanjing Institute of Politics) vol. 18, no. 2 (2002): 71-5; "Guangfu chuqi Taiwan de maoyi guanzhi zhidu, 1945-1948" 光復初期台灣的貿易管制政策 (Taiwan's policy on trade control in the early era of restoration, 1945-1948), *Nanjing shehui kexue* (Social sciences in Nanjing) no. 12 (December 2005): 30-7; and "Guangfu chuqi Taiwan de liangshi guanzhi zhidu, 1945-1948" 光復初期台灣的糧食管制政策 (Taiwan's policy on grain control in the early era of restoration, 1945-1948), *Nanjing shehui kexue* (Social sciences in Nanjing) no. 2 (February 2008): 60-7.

transformed into social resentment, fueling the outbreak of the Incident. Yet ultimately Bai concludes that the fundamental causes of the outbreak of the Incident lay in the incompetence and corruption of the KMT government despite impractical expectations of the Taiwanese people.¹⁹⁶ Though far from a necessary indication of the scholar's personal political inclination, such views did interestingly echo those of the group promoting Taiwan-consciousness on the island.

On the other hand, some scholarly opinions on the Incident present a different kind of interest. This is evident in the views of Chen Kongli, who re-narrated the Incident from an ethnic perspective. Chen based his discussions on sources that were mostly drawn from the works of pro-Chinese nationalists in Taiwan, and that centered on the victimization of mainlanders in the Incident. By distinguishing the mainlander group as a whole from the KMT regime in particular, and emphasizing the sufferings of the mainlanders, Chen argued that they were the real victims of local Taiwanese violence against the corrupt KMT regime. However, Chen also stressed mutual protection between the local Taiwanese and mainlanders in the Incident, and held that such mutual protection and ethnic harmony, rather than ethnic conflict, were the themes before and during the Incident. Therefore, both local Taiwanese and mainlanders were in fact victims of the corrupt KMT government.¹⁹⁷ Given the emphasis placed by the group on Taiwan favoring Chinese unification on the victimization of the mainlanders during the

¹⁹⁶ Bai Chun 白純, "Taiwan guangfu hou de mingzhong xingtai yu Eerba Shijian" 台灣光復後的民眾心態與二二八事件 (The public mindset in Taiwan after restoration and the February 28 Incident), *Minguo Dangan* 3 (2000): 102-108.

¹⁹⁷ Chen Kongli 陳孔立, "Eerba Shijian zhong de beshengren yu waishengren" 二二八事件中的本省人與外省人 (The local Taiwanese and the mainlanders in the February 28 Incident), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan research quarterly) no.3 (2006):

Incident,¹⁹⁸ and given the stress Ma Yingjiu placed on mutual ethnic protection, Chen's presentation indeed resembles both of these parties in this particular aspect.

To conclude, political developments within the PRC and across the Strait in this period allowed the emergence of a new scholarship on the February 28 Incident in mainland China. Although politics remained a crucial factor that affected scholarly opinion on the Incident in the PRC, nevertheless, this new scholarship appeared less defined by a single voice. While the CCP continued to maintain its interpretations of the Incident, academic discussions did manifest more diverse views. Politics continued to color interpretations strongly both on the island and on the mainland. In Taiwan, political confrontation had shaped antagonistic views on the Incident among intellectuals subscribing to different political ideologies. Meanwhile in the PRC, scholarly inquiries into the Incident could hardly remain free from political interference since the Incident continued to be treated as a vehicle for the CCP's political propaganda.

¹⁹⁸ See Zhu Hongyuan 朱宏源, "Ereba Shijian zhenxiang huanyuan" 二二八事件真相还原 (Restoration of the truth of the February 28 Incident), *Haixia pinglun* no.4 (2006), <https://www.haixia-info.com/articles/4499.html> (accessed 11 June 2017).

Chapter Four

Reexamining Political Myths and Historical Facts concerning the February 28 Incident

In the approximately six decades from 1947 to 2008, the KMT, CCP, and DPP each presented their own interpretations of the February 28 Incident, and they all more or less revised their partisan explanations as political changes occurred in Taiwan and mainland China, and in cross-strait and international relations. Their partisan versions of the Incident also simultaneously affected, and were influenced by, scholarly studies at home and abroad, especially by those published in Taiwan and mainland China. In this chapter, it is necessary to re-examine whether these partisan interpretations simply presented political myths subscribed to by the three parties, or more or less reflected historical facts concerning different aspects of the Incident. It is also imperative here to reevaluate previous studies, including those that support or dispute the different partisan interpretations of the February 28 Incident, and those that present different explanations for the course of the Incident as well as its causes and consequences.

As has been discussed in previous chapters, for almost four decades after 1947, the KMT and the CCP dominated political discourse regarding the February 28 Incident on respective sides of the Taiwan Strait. Starting from outset of Taiwan's political reform around 1988, the DPP advanced new assessments of the Incident that came to challenge the previously long-held partisan discourses. In general, both the KMT and the CCP situated the February 28 Incident within the framework of their own power struggle, although the former denounced the Incident mainly as a result of the impact of Japanese colonialism, and the latter praised it as an anti-Chiang uprising. In addition, ironically,

the two mutually antagonistic parties also shared one point in their partisan interpretations of the Incident in asserting communist leadership in (and elsewhere where it might occur) the movement, condemning or commending it respectively. It is even more ironic that the CCP's early claim about the Taiwanese pursuit of political autonomy in the February 28 Incident somewhat resembled the late-coming DPP's interpretation of the Incident, espoused from the perspective of its platform for Taiwan independence.

These different partisan claims more or less impacted studies of the February 28 Incident up to the 1980s, but historical scholarship on the subject in Taiwan, mainland China and the West thereafter has also shown a tendency to pursue more varied interpretations of the event. This chapter traces this tendency by offering a comprehensive examination and re-evaluation of both the partisan and the scholarly interpretations of the February 28 Incident.

Disputing the KMT's Claim about Japanese Colonial Influences on the February 28 Incident

Debate over the Japanese Colonial Legacy in the February 28 Incident

The emphasis on Japanese colonial impacts on the February 28 Incident was, as has been argued, one of the major themes in the KMT's early judgment of the February 28 Incident. Soon after the outbreak of the Incident, the KMT leaders, including Chen Yi, Chiang Kai-shek, Bai Chongxi, and Yang Lianggong, pointed at the poisonous legacy of colonialism, along with a communist conspiracy, as the major causes of the event. Yet having insisted on such partisan claims for about four decades, the KMT changed its

official stance to some extent in its revised official report, *Ereerba Shijian yanjiu baogao* (The Research Report on the February 28 Incident) released in 1992, as discussed in Chapter Three, although Japanese colonial legacy was still listed as a background factor for the Incident. Because of the KMT's political control in Taiwan, it was not until the late 1980s and thereafter that this partisan claim came under scholarly scrutiny. This section will begin by re-examining the KMT's interpretation of the Japanese colonial legacy in the Incident through carrying out an analysis of primary and other sources, and a critical review of the relevant scholarship.

In the KMT leaders' internal reports and their public denunciations of negative factors in the February 28 Incident, the KMT regime generally pointed to a pernicious legacy of Japanese colonialism among Taiwanese people as the overriding cause of the Incident. The KMT regime held that the Taiwanese people were deeply poisoned ideologically by Japanese colonialism, which had allegedly distorted their conception of the motherland, leading to unrealistic expectations of the mother country and inappropriate comparisons between the KMT government and the previous Japanese colonial regime, and generating disappointment with and alienation from the motherland. While blindly adoring the Japanese colonial authorities and believing in the superiority of Japan, the local Taiwanese were short of Chinese patriotism and national consciousness, and thus vulnerable to anti-state incitement. In particular, former Taiwanese soldiers repatriated from Japanese armies stationed on Hainan Island and in Southeast Asia were deeply indoctrinated by Japanese colonialism, and for this reason they actively caused and joined the revolts. Similarly, according to this KMT diagnosis, the collaborationist

colonial gentry, including members of the Kominhokokai,¹ had failed to seek advancement in official careers and personal prosperity after the KMT's takeover of Taiwan in 1945, and they instead used any excuse to attack the government, even to the extent that some of them harbored the ideas of Taiwan independence or International joint administration (*guoji gongguan*) of the island, while exploiting opportunities to agitate against the mainlanders and to rebel against the government.²

Such claims by the KMT leaders made it clear that they blamed the Japanese colonial legacy for the February 28 Incident not only for contributing general factors, such as the impact of colonial education among Taiwan residents, but also more specifically for fuelling the agitation for and participation in anti-KMT violence during the February 28 Incident by the repatriated Taiwanese soldiers and former Kominhokokai members. Such interpretations remained strong for decades, with some KMT officials and official publications still maintaining such claims into the late 1980s and even to the turn of the century, as Chapters 2 and 3 have demonstrated.

Although scholarly responses to the KMT's narratives of the Japanese legacy vary, some previous studies still endorse or support those early KMT's views. Among them,

¹ The Kominhokokai was the crucial organization for Japan's wartime mobilization in Taiwan. See more detailed discussions about the Kominhokokai in later sections of this chapter.

² For detailed analysis of KMT interpretations of the February 28 Incident, see Chapter Two. For typical examples of such KMT interpretations, see "Chen Yi cheng Jiang Jieshi you guan Taipei Ererba qingkuang" 陳儀呈蔣介石有關台北二二八情況 (Report about the condition in Taipei from Chen Yi to Chiang Kai-shek), in Hou, *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 124-26; "Chen Yi dian cheng Nanjing Jiang zhuxi Taipei yi pingjing zheng jieyan zhong" 陳儀電呈南京蔣主席台北已平靜正戒嚴中 (Telegram from Chen Yi to Chairman Chiang about the situation in Taipei being calmed and Taipei under martial law), in Hou, *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 266; "Xuanwei Taiwan baogao shu" 宣慰台灣報告書 (Report on the pacification trip to Taiwan), in Hou ed., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol. 17, 366-68; "Yu Youren zhuan cheng Min Tai qu jianchashi Yang Lianggong deng chengbao diaocha Taiwan shijian qingxing ji jianyi shanhou banfa" 于右任轉呈閩台區監察使楊亮功等呈報調查台灣事件情形及建議善後辦法 (Yu Youren forwards the report by Yang Lianggong, ombudsman of the Supervisory Yuan for Fujian and Taiwan about the investigation of and suggestions for the Taiwan Incident), in Hou ed., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 475-89; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947:1; March 24, 1947: 2; April 9, 1947: 2.

the most notable is in the aforementioned 1991 publication, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947*, by Lai Tse-han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou. To be precise, the authors do not simply align themselves with the KMT's particular claims about Japanese education as a mechanism of enslavement or about some general "enslavement of the Taiwanese by Japanese colonial rule" that was a poison (yidu) remaining after the Japanese left the island. Nevertheless, they do emphasize Japanese colonial influences on the formation of the Taiwanese worldview, a worldview that had become irreconcilable with that of the mainland Chinese authorities, and they see a clash between these worldviews as having contributed crucially to the outbreak of the February 28 Incident.³

In fact, the authors of this book argue that the Taiwanese under Japanese colonization had developed a set of cultural, social and political perspectives and values different from those of the mainland Chinese. Thus, right after the arrival of the KMT in Taiwan there had already existed conflicting worldviews. The Taiwanese expected a modern and efficient government that would bring economic prosperity and political freedom to the island and would sympathize with their plight during Japanese colonial rule. Due to their scant knowledge of conditions on mainland China, the Taiwanese had unrealistic expectations of the mainland authorities and made inappropriate comparisons between the KMT and the Japanese colonial regime, factors that inevitably led to disappointment and resentment. The mainland authorities, on the other hand, not only regarded the Taiwanese as being contaminated by Japanese colonization and by a lack of appreciation for the Nationalist fight against Japanese invasion, but also unrealistically expected the Taiwanese to devote themselves to the causes of unification and the anti-

³ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 168-170.

communism. Such discrepancies between the two groups' expectations and priorities eventually led to the clash of political visions in the February 28 Incident of 1947.⁴

The KMT's revised official report in the early 1990s held similar views. The report similarly stresses the existence of a barrier between mainland China and Taiwan due to their long-term political separation, while also agreeing with Lai, Myers, and Wei's views about the deficiencies in the Chen Yi government's political and economic policies, its official corruption, and the poor discipline of the Nationalist troops that went to the island from mainland China. Nevertheless, unlike the collaborative book of these scholars, the report drew no conclusions about a "defense void" and about "the excessive freedom of the mass media" that various KMT reports on the Incident in the past had advanced.⁵ This is understandable, since the report claimed to reinterpret the Incident from a neutral standpoint, and was conducted in the context of KMT political reform that downplayed military force as a means for maintaining social order and treated the mass media as a threat to this.

The theory of a "clash of world views" in *A Tragic Beginning* suggests not only the Japanese colonial impacts but also a cultural conflict between China and Taiwan. Such views are also integrated into the works of Li Xiaofeng in a distinctive way. As discussed in Chapter Three, Li too holds that there was a clash of the two cultures, but with that of Taiwan at the higher level as a result of Japanese colonization, and that this contributed largely to the February 28 Incident. Because of the cession of Taiwan to Japan since 1895, the island had been spared the turbulence and chaos that occurred in mainland China in the first half of the 20th century. Despite the exploitative and

⁴ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 63-96, 169-170.

⁵ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 12-27.

monopolistic nature of colonization, economic construction and development had accompanied exploitation during the course of the Japanese colonial rule of Taiwan. Taiwan thus appeared more advanced than the mainland in terms of industrialization, living standard, basic education, and even civil customs.⁶ In other words, Li posits the beneficial influence of Japanese colonization on Taiwanese society, which inevitably came into conflict with the mainlander groups with a relatively lower-level culture.

In contrast to Li Xiaofeng, Dai Guohui suggests Taiwan society had a so-called “structure of complicity” (*gongfan jiegou*), a reading that stressed the negative impacts of Japanese colonial rule of Taiwan. Dai holds that the Japanese colonial government employed coercive laws on Taiwan to maintain discipline and social order of the colony. This legal system and disciplinary regime were constructed to further the consolidation of Japanese colonial rule rather than for the welfare of the colonized. However, the Taiwanese people gradually became accustomed to the legal and political order under Japanese colonialism and fell into Dai’s so-called “structure of complicity,” in which Japanese colonialists made efforts to develop the colony, yet restricted the Taiwanese people to the lower end of the colonial economic, educational, and political systems. In particular, the Taiwanese from the upper and middle classes became docile in and ingratiated with Japanese colonial rule in exchange for some benefits, and in this way they actually became the accomplices of the Japanese imperialists. Meanwhile, the Taiwanese people were trapped in the myth of an “advanced” modern Japan and thus felt

⁶ Li, *Daoyu xin taiji*, 75-92.

disappointed at the “backwardness” of China, which had been engulfed in constant turbulence that had obstructed its road to modernization.⁷

According to Dai and his collaborator, Ye Yunyun, after the KMT established its control of Taiwan, there emerged a new “structure of complicity,” in which the so-called “banshan” (literally meaning “Half-Mountain”), i.e. the Taiwanese who went to mainland China and joined or served the KMT before or during the war, later returning to Taiwan after the war, served as accomplices of the KMT government. Following the KMT’s retreat from mainland China, the power struggle among KMT factions also migrated to Taiwan. These KMT factions utilized local Taiwanese discontent with the current situation to struggle against their rivals. On the other hand, Banshan and some members of the Taiwanese elite also competed for power (particularly within the Resolution Committees during the February 28 Incident) and then respectively affiliated with different KMT factions in line with their interests. During the February 28 Incident, they took advantage of the situation to threaten or extort the victims for financial gain, or exploited the opportunity to eliminate their competitors or opponents by informing against them.⁸ Consequently, the “structure of complicity” contributed to the tragedy during the Incident rather than constituted the direct causes of the Incident. Given Dai’s argument, his views to a large extent were a compromise between the KMT’s claim about the impact of Japanese colonialism and the anti-KMT views of other authors in regard to the causes of the February 28 Incident.

Among opinions that dispute the KMT’s accusations against the Taiwanese, Xu

⁷ Dai Guohui 戴國輝, *Taiwan zhongti xiang: Renjian, lishi, xinxing* 台灣總體相：人間、歷史、心性 (Overall manner of Taiwan: People, history, disposition), trans. Wei Tingchao (Taipei: Yuanliu, 1989), 78-79, 93-94, 116; Dai and Ye, *Ai zeng Ererba*, 310-311. *Taiwan zhongti xian* was originally published in Japanese in Japan. See Dai, *Taiwan zhongti xiang*, 231.

⁸ Dai, *Taiwan zhongti xiang*, 105, 111-116; Dai and Ye, *Ai zeng Ererba*, 225-250.

Xueji's studies on the Kominkohokai's members in the February 28 Incident offer a new insight into this particular subject. Utilizing testimonies in personal memoirs, diaries, and interviews, Xu documents how prestigious or prominent members of the Taiwanese elite involuntarily cooperated with the Japanese colonizers during the colonial era, but also later played a leading role in petitioning for Taiwanese political interests during the February 28 Incident of 1947. In particular, Xu focuses on the case of Lin Xiantang, a prestigious and influential Taiwanese leader who was active in the Petition Movement for the Establishment of a Taiwan Parliament in the 1920s and early 1930s as well as in the Resolution Committees in Taipei and Taizhong during the February 28 Incident.

According to Xu, members of the Taiwanese elite, especially a leading one like Lin, were often compelled to join the Kominhokokai because of their social influence. Despite Lin's participation in the Kominhokokai and his related cooperation with the colonial authorities, Lin insisted on some principles in an endeavor to preserve his Chinese identity and spirit, including maintaining his Chinese name, language and way of dressing. He also organized and engaged in Chinese cultural activities such as the study and appreciation of Chinese poetry. Despite Lin's cooperation with the Japanese, his family members were still subject to political, economic, and cultural harassment by the Japanese colonial government. During the February 28 Incident, although Lin Xiaotang participated in both the Taipei and the Taizhong Resolution Committees, he maintained a collaborative attitude toward the KMT authorities and even protected one of Chen Yi's men, Yan Jiagan, during the disturbance. Subsequently, he was not prosecuted afterward.⁹ Xu utilizes Lin's case mainly to dispute the KMT's claim that the Taiwanese

⁹ Xu Xueji 許雪姬, "Huangmin fengong hui de yanjiu: Yi Lin Xiantang de canyu wei li" 皇民奉公會的研究：以林獻堂的參與為例 (A study on Kominhokokai: Exemplifying the participation of Lin Xiantang),

were “enslaved” by Japanese colonialism, or were “Japanized” and had thus been alienated from the Chinese motherland and its culture before their involvement in the February 28 Incident.

Besides Xu, Chen Cuilian published a study that challenges the KMT’s claim about “the enslavement of Taiwanese” by Japanese colonialism. Focusing on the 1946 debate over the theory of Japanese “enslavement of the Taiwanese” as it unfolded between the KMT officials and Taiwanese intellectuals in newspapers and periodicals of the time,¹⁰ Chen demonstrates a pre-Incident prejudice against local Taiwanese among the mainlander officials, who asserted the local Taiwanese were “enslaved” because of their colonial experience as Japanese imperial subjects. These KMT officials held that local Taiwanese should be denied political equality and equal treatment until they had undergone a proper transformation through “Sinicization.” Nevertheless, while the Chen Yi government employed discriminatory policies and forced Sinicization onto local Taiwanese, and used Chinese nationalist arguments to justify such discrimination and its own maladministration, local Taiwanese on the other hand saw the KMT regime as engaged in a revival of “colonialism.” Consequently, Chen further argues, Taiwanese intellectuals turned to recognizing the progress of Taiwan under Japanese colonial rule as a part of a process of evaluating the KMT’s “Sinicization” program and reevaluating the colonial legacy. Such self-assertion, combined with an increasing disappointment at the KMT government, fed local Taiwanese eagerness for autonomous political rule, which

Jindai shi yanjiusuo jikan no.31 (June 1999): 171-196.

¹⁰ It should be noted that, although those engaged in the debate can be divided into the mainlander and local Taiwanese groups in general, not all the supporters of KMT claims engaged in the debate were actually mainlander Chinese. See Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, “Qu zhimin yu zai zhimin de duikang: Yi 1946 nian ‘Taiwan nuhua’ lunzhan wei jiaodian” 去殖民與再殖民的對抗：以一九四六年「臺人奴化」論戰為焦點 (Decolonization against recolonization: Focusing on the 1946 debate about the “enslavement of Taiwan”), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* 9, no.2 (December 2002): 186-8.

later became an important demand of the Resolution Committees after the outbreak of the February 28 Incident.¹¹

From Chen's perspective, it was the growing desire of Taiwanese elites for political autonomy in opposition to Japanese colonial rule and their postwar resentment against the KMT's postwar prejudices toward the former victims of Japanese colonialism that led to their pursuit of self-government in the February 28 Incident of 1947. Thus, these scholarly inquiries, which either share or dispute the KMT's views, brought into discussion new historical facts about Japanese colonial impact on the February 28 Incident. In this regard, the KMT's claims were put into context and simultaneously became questionable.

Historical Reassessment of Japanese Colonial Impacts on the February 28 Incident

Japan's colonial measures, especially its wartime policies in colonial Taiwan, certainly did have a considerable effect on the February 28 Incident. To ensure the loyalty of its colonial subjects and mobilize Taiwan's resources and manpower for its war effort, the Japanese colonial government implemented the *kominka* movement (Huangmin hua yundong; or the Japanization movement) in 1937,¹² and subsequently established the Kominhokokai in 1941 to enhance and accelerate the *kominka* movement. Consequently, the whole island was swept up in this movement that deep impacted Taiwan's society. Many members of the Taiwanese elite voluntarily or involuntarily

¹¹ Chen, "Qu zhimin yu zai zhimin de duikang," 145-201.

¹² The term "kominka" literally means "to transform [colonial peoples] into imperial subjects." The term was first introduced by the seventeenth governor-general of Taiwan, Kobayashi Seizo in late 1936, as one of his three principal policies, but the ban on the use of Chinese in newspapers on April 1, 1937 marked the practical initiation of the policy. See Wan-Yan Chou, "The Kominka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations," in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 41, 44.

engaged in the Kominhokokai, a body charged with implementing Japan's wartime mobilization in colonial Taiwan, through which thousands of Taiwanese were mobilized and served the Japanese military.¹³ Because of this colonial experience, the KMT regime accused local Taiwanese of being "enslaved" by Japanese colonialism after the KMT's takeover of Taiwan, and further identified this alleged Taiwanese enslavement as an overriding cause of the February 28 Incident. In particular, the KMT regime pointed fingers at former members of the Kominhokokai who participated in the Resolution Committee for peaceful negotiations, and at Taiwanese former Imperial Japanese soldiers repatriated from overseas who joined local militants in armed revolts during the February 28 Incident.¹⁴ This section will re-examine whether the KMT's claims accord with historical facts.

The Japanese kominka movement from 1937 onward listed as its four major tasks: 1) "religious reform;" 2) the "national language movement;" 3) "the name-changing campaign;" and 4) the "military volunteer program." While the promotion of the Japanese state religion, Shintoism, and the campaign to adopt Japanese names were less fruitful, Japanese colonial language policies and military recruitment policies appear to have been relatively successful and had lingering effects even after the takeover of Taiwan by the KMT.¹⁵ Since the returned Taiwanese soldiers played an important role in the February 28 Incident of 1947, it is necessary to examine the Japanese military recruitment and its impacts on the Incident.

¹³ Xu, "Huangmin fengong hui de yanjiu," 171, 177-181.

¹⁴ Chen, "Qu zhimin yu zai zhimin de duikang," 147-149; Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 124-125, 266, 268, 475-476, 484-485, 488.

¹⁵ Chou, "The Kominka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations," 40-41, 45, 50-51.

In terms of military recruitment, whether it was truly “voluntary” is debatable,¹⁶ but it appeared relatively successful, at least on paper, given the increase in the numbers of Taiwanese military volunteer applicants from 425,921 in 1942 to 759,276 in 1944.¹⁷ Although general conscription on the island was not implemented until April 1945, up to 207,183 Taiwanese in total were recruited to serve in the Japanese military from 1942 to the end of the war in August 1945.¹⁸ This group of people with military experience would have been powerful if they were indeed involved in armed activities against the KMT regime during the February 28 Incident.

In fact, the Japanese colonial government also utilized other official or social groups to expand the kominka movement and promote wartime mobilization, and the most important organization of which was the Kominhokokai. In April 1941, the Japanese colonial government established the Kominhokokai to maximize wartime mobilization in Taiwan. As an organization, it covered the whole island with local branches penetrating into individual streets and villages, while its members included leaders from all strata of society as well as prestigious Taiwanese.¹⁹ In fact, even Taiwanese activists for political autonomy, such as Lin Xiantang and Lin Chenglu, who had joined the Petition Movement for the Establishment of a Taiwan Parliament in the Japanese colonial era, were included in the preparatory committee. This committee included 33 Taiwanese out of 124 members, most of whom were Japanese. The 33

¹⁶ Kondo, *Zong li zhan yu Taiwan*, 373-76.

¹⁷ Chou, “The Kominka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations,” 64-5; Kondo Masami 近藤正己, *Zongtizhan yu Taiwan: Riben zhimindi de bongkui* 總力戰與台灣：日本殖民地的崩潰 (Total war and Taiwan: Collapse of a Japanese colony), trans. Lin Shiting (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2014), 372.

¹⁸ This number included soldiers and civilian employees. Of the number, 30,304 died in service. See Chou, “The Kominka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations,” 65.

¹⁹ The basic unit of the Kominhokokai was a Kominhokokai team (feng gong ban). There were about 67,000 feng gong ban in total in Taiwan. A kominhokokai team consisted of 10 households. See Xu, “Huangmin fengong hui de yanjiu,” 174-75n12, 178-181.

Taiwanese were later all assigned as members of the Kominhokokai central organization by the colonial authorities.²⁰ According to KMT internal reports, an estimated 20,000 people joined the Kominhokokai, and major Kominhokokai members included Taiwanese elites from such diverse fields as landlords, politicians, lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, educators, and the president of newspaper agency etc.²¹ These former Kominhokokai members, along with repatriated Taiwanese soldiers, were later especially accused by the KMT regime of being the instigators of the February 28 upheavals, as is evident in the reports of KMT leaders such as Chen Yi, Bai Chongxi, and Yang Lianggong, as mentioned earlier.

Given the social and economic status, and influence, of these elite figures, their engagement in the Kominhokokai would lead local Taiwanese to follow them and contribute to the wartime mobilization organized by the Japanese colonial authorities. Although the possibility of voluntary or opportunistic participation cannot be ruled out, it was hard under colonial rule to escape from serving these Japanese-initiated organizations, especially for prominent Taiwanese. Therefore, contrary to the KMT's claims about members of the Taiwanese elite serving the Japanese for social and economic interest and advancement,²² they were often pressured into the Kominhokokai because of their pre-existing status. In other words, rather than gaining access to "status" and "prosperity" after acquiring Kominhokokai membership, it was precisely because of their previous status that they were enlisted by Japanese colonial authority. However, because of their social status and influence, their service for Japanese colonial

²⁰ Kondo, *Zong li zhan yu Taiwan*, 364-66.

²¹ Chen, ed., *Taiwan Ererba Shijian dangan shiliao*, vol. 2, 649; Hou Kunhong 侯坤宏 and Xu Jinfa 許進發, eds., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian, vol.1* 二二八事件檔案彙編 (Archive materials on the 228 incident, vol. 1) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2002), 98-127.

²² Hou and Xu, eds., *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian, vol.1*, 99-100.

propaganda had a considerable effect on Taiwanese society. This is evident in the enlistment of those social and political activists in the 1920s in the Kominhokokai preparatory committee, as is mentioned earlier. On 10 August 1940, *Taiwan xinmin bao* (Taiwan new people's newspaper), managed by former Taiwan rights activists, ran an editorial calling for early implementation of military conscription, and for the islanders to support the empire.²³ As they were mostly prominent Taiwanese in terms of economic and social status, influence, and/or education, many of them continued to be social leaders after the war, when they continued to engage in political activities and in the Resolution Committees during the February 28 Incident.

After the outbreak of the Incident in Taipei on February 28, 1947, chaos and violence soon spread to various areas across the island. Popular participation in such activities tended to be voluntary yet unorganized, as shown by the attacks on the mainlanders or their properties, governmental and military organizations and facilities, in the taking of arms, and even in the occupation of radio stations to call for people to join the actions. For example, major cities and townships from the north to the south of the island, such as Taipei, Keelung, Taoyuan, Xinzhu, Jiayi, and even Pingdong, all saw attacks on mainlanders.²⁴

Examination of these spontaneous and unorganized actions offers a glimpse at the role of returned soldiers in anti-KMT militant operations. Indeed, with military training and wartime experience, the former soldiers did take active action to join or lead local militant groups during the February 28 Incident. Many repatriated Taiwanese soldiers involved themselves in radical conflicts with the authorities to the extent that they

²³ Kondo, *Zong li zhan yu Taiwan*, 366-369.

²⁴ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 55, 76, 79, 105, 129, 136.

Table 8

Local Militias and Repatriated Soldiers during the February 28 Incident

Administrative level	Anti-KMT militias ^a		Order-keeping militias ^b		All militias	
	Subtotal	With RS No.(%)	Subtotal	With RS No.(%)	Total	With RS No.(%)
Municipality ^c	6	4 (66.7%)	15	3 (20%)	21	7 (33.3%)
County/Township	20	17 (85%)	35	15 (42.8%)	55	32 (58.2%)
Total	26	21 (80.8%)	50	18 (36%)	76	39 (51%)

Sources: Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 63-64, 73, 75-76, 79-83, 85-91, 94-5, 97-107, 110-116, 119, 127-35, 138, 142, 145-49; Hou, “Chong tan ‘Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui’ de jiaose,” 10, 17-20, 22, 25, 27-31; Zhang Yanxian, ed., *Ereba Shijian cidian* (Dictionary of the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2008), 121, 258, 325, 410; Cai Xiaoqian An (The case of Cai Xiaoqian), Zhang Zhizhong xunwen bilu (Interrogation records of Zhang Zhizhong), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/1/014; Cai Xiaoqian An, Yang Chunlin gongci (Confessions of Yang Chunlin), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/2/023, both files in Guofangbu Junshi Qingbaoju Dangan (Archives of Military Intelligence Bureau, MND), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju (National Archives Administration, NDC).

- a. Anti-KMT militias mainly included minjun (civilian contingents) that engaged in violent attacks on KMT authorities, and local militias that used force to attack official institutions or take over arms from police forces. But they also included two militant groups engaging in criminal or hooligan activities, such as a security service team (zhian fuwudui) in Xinzhuan of Taipei county and a self-rule team (zijingtuan) in Jiayi city, of which the former group attacked local district and police offices, killed its officials, and also committed crimes such as robbing and plundering common people, while the latter was organized by Jiayi hooligans, and its leader led the members to take over weapons in various parts of the city, causing chaos.
- b. Militias involved in maintaining order were mainly zhiandui (security teams) and so on, some of which peacefully took over arms from the police and maintained local order later on. In some cases, local authorities or the Resolution Committees asked these militant groups to engage in keeping the peace.
- c. In 1947, Taiwan’s administrative divisions included 9 province-ruled municipalities (shengxiashi) and 8 counties. See Ou Suying, “Ereba Shijian zhong xian shi canyihui de jiase yu siying” (The roles of county and city councilors in and their responses to the February 28 Incident), in *Qishi nian hou de huigu: Jinian Ereba Shijian qishi zhounian xueshu lunwenji* (In retrospect on its 70th anniversary: Essays on the February 28 Incident), ed. Xu Xueji (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2017), 338-39.

engaged in armed combat against the Nationalist troops. Nonetheless, it is hard to prove that the returned Taiwanese soldiers always initiated, led, or organized social violence during the February 28 Incident in Taipei or other places on Taiwan island because of their previous connections with the Japanese armies. In fact, these returned soldiers not only engaged in armed resistance against the KMT but also joined local security organizations that were soon established following the initial disturbance, and they were mostly directed by local Resolution Committees or launched by local people for the purpose of maintaining order.²⁵

Table 8 uses available data to show the numbers of local militias²⁶ that appeared during the February 28 Incident, including those featuring repatriated soldiers.²⁷ It lists two kinds of local militias: first, the anti-KMT militias including so-called *minjun* and other militias, some of the latter groups were composed of criminal members or local hooligans; second, security teams with various titles organized either by local Resolution Committees or civilians for the purpose of maintaining order. According to the table, at least 76 local militias were set up during the February 28 Incident of 1947 across Taiwan. In total, 39 out the 76 militias, or 51% of them, that were opposed to the KMT or were

²⁵ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 85-8.

²⁶ According to Zhou Wanyao (Wan-yao Chou), up to 207,083 Taiwanese in total were recruited to serve in the Japanese military from 1937 to August 1945. Of the number, 80,433 were soldiers and 126,750 were civilian employees, and 30,304 died in the service. Table 8 shows that at least 76 militia or security teams or groups were formed during the February 28 Incident. The numbers of participants in local militias or security organizations varied, from a few to several hundreds. For example, a youth self-defense team in Xihu township contained only about 20 some people, while the self-defense team organized by Chen Cuandi in Douliu had about 200 people. However, it is not clear how many former soldiers participated in local militias. See Zhou Wanyao (Wan-yao Chou), “Ribei zai Tai junshi dongyuan yu Taiwanren de haiwai canzhan jingyan, 1937-1945” (Japan’s military mobilization in Taiwan and the Taiwanese overseas war experiences, 1937-1945), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* 2, no.1 (June 1995): 96; Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 98, 102. Note: in an English article, Zhou notes that the total numbers of the Taiwanese recruited to serve in the Japanese military up to August 1945 were 207,183. See Chou, “The Kominka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations,” 65.

²⁷ It should be noted that the table does not reflect the total numbers of various groups or local security teams established during the February 28 Incident due to limitation of the sources.

involved in maintaining order included returned Taiwanese soldiers.

Evidently, the military experience of the repatriated soldiers was a major reason for their participation in these militant groups. In particular, the involvement of the repatriated Taiwanese soldiers in 21 of 26 anti-KMT militias, or 80.8% of them, might be taken to confirm the KMT's accusation of their relations with the Japanese colonial legacy and responsibility for anti-KMT violence during the February 28 Incident. However, repatriated Taiwanese soldiers also joined 18 of the 50 peace-keeping militias, or 36% of them, and contributed to social stability during the February 28 Incident. In particular, among all the 39 militias that featured repatriated soldiers, the 21 anti-KMT militias and 18 peace-keeping militias respectively account for 53.8% and 46.2% of the total. In other words, nearly similar percentages of these militias featuring returned soldiers engaged in anti-KMT violence and in peace-keeping activities, respectively. Moreover, the anti-KMT militias mostly acted in central and southern areas of the island, particularly in Taizhong and Tainan counties, rather than in the centers of the February 28 Incident, such as Taipei.²⁸ Thus, contrary to the KMT's accusation, the relations of repatriated Taiwanese soldiers with the Japanese Imperial Army was not necessarily responsible for their anti-government violence, especially the outbreak of the Incident in Taipei and other major cities. Rather, many of them contributed to maintaining social stability.

An examination of the KMT's charges in the verdict of former Taiwanese officers and soldiers serving in the Japanese army in the February 28 Incident further raises questions about its claims about their motives having been shaped by their colonial experience under Japanese indoctrination. One of them, Zhong Yiren, who once served as

²⁸ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 82-115.

a skilled military personnel in the Japanese army in Taiwan,²⁹ was charged and convicted of “Offenses Against the Internal Security of the State” (neiluan zui), and initially sentenced to death according to martial law. Later, a retrial based on civil law altered the sentence to jail for 15 years, and Zhong was released in 1964 after 17 years in jail.³⁰ According to the verdict by the Taiwan High Court (Taiwan gaodeng fayuan), Zhong was regarded as a major plotter (shoumou) for attempting to, and carrying out, subversion of the state.³¹ In the verdict, the court did mention the Japanese colonial impact on Zhong, but it listed that as the reason for both his offense and the reduction of his punishment. The verdict claimed that lack of understanding of the motherland caused Zhong willingly to bring disaster to the people, but it treated the Japanese colonial impact as a legitimate reason for reducing his sentence because Taiwanese people under long-term colonial rule were vulnerable to incitement by evil parties (jianfei) and the CCP.³² Therefore, while the verdict implied that evil Japanese colonial influences on such returned soldiers had led to their anti-KMT violence, that very element on the other hand allowed for a reduction of the sentence of punishment. This self-contradiction suggests the KMT regime’s ambiguity about the “true” cause of involvement by former Taiwanese soldiers in the February 28 Incident.

In fact, the KMT’s charges against most returned Taiwanese soldiers in militias during the February 28 Incident failed to connect their actions to Japanese colonial

²⁹ His post was called “Zhutuo,” which refers to higher-ranked technical employee supporting the military. Such figures were hired by the Japanese army to undertake tasks requiring professional technical expertise or skill. See Wu Xinhua 吳欣樺, “Xiaoyan yu baiyi: ri zhi moqi de Taiwan congjun kanhufu” 硝煙與白衣：日治末期的台灣從軍看護婦 (Gunsmoke and white uniform: The enlisted Taiwanese nurses at the latter stage of the Japanese rule), (MA thesis, National Chengchi University, 2014), 17.

³⁰ Zhang, ed., *Ereba Shijian cidian*, 724.

³¹ Chen Hongchang 陳宏昌, Ou Suying 歐素瑛, and Zhou Xiuhuan 周琇環, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.3 二二八事件檔案彙編 (Archive materials on the 228 incident, vol. 3) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2002), 323.

³² Chen, Ou, and Zhou ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.3, 326-27.

influences, the verdict of Zhong Yiren being an exception. This again suggests that the impact of Japanese colonialism was not necessarily the cause of their involvement in the February 28 Incident, as the KMT regime on occasion claimed. Although the lack of availability of the sources limits a fuller or more precise examination of the KMT regime's accounts of these militia leaders' offenses, the case of Zhong Yiren suggests that the Japanese colonial influence was to large extent an excuse used by the KMT regime to limit the social, economic and political issues involved in judging the motives of the these former soldiers, or even local Taiwanese, for their participation in the anti-KMT actions.

Besides the repatriated Taiwanese soldiers who participated in militias opposed to the KMT and/or involved in keeping the peace, many former Kominhokokai members acted as local leaders in the February 28 Incident of 1947. Examination of their roles in the Incident raises further questions about the KMT's accusation about how Japanese colonial legacies related to them. In late December 1945, the KMT central government announced its plan for the establishment of bodies representing the people (*minyì jìguān*) at all levels in Taiwan; it subsequently held direct and indirect elections of county and municipal councillors (*xian shì cānyìyuán*), as well as provincial councillors (*sheng cānyìyuán*) in March and April 1946. By April 15, 1946, all county and municipal councils had been established. Among the 523 elected councillors, 70 were former Kominhokokai members.³³ The Chen Yi government was not happy about the political vitality of former Kominhokokai members. In fact, in an aborted attempt to suspend the

³³ Ou Suying 歐素瑛, "Ereba Shijian zhong xian shi canyihui de jiashe yu siying" 二二八事件中縣市參議會的角色與肆應 (The roles of county and city councils in and their responses to the February 28 Incident), in *Qishi nian hou de huigu: Jinian Ereba Shijian qishi zhounian xueshu lunwenji* 七十年後的回顧：紀念二二八事件七十週年學術論文集 (In retrospect on its 70th anniversary: Essays on the February 28 Incident), ed. Xu Xueji 許雪姬 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2017), 338-346.

political rights of former Kominhokokai members and prevent them from competing in the election of councilors, the Chen Yi government ordered an investigation and later compiled a list of 192 people who had held essential positions or tasks in the Kominhokokai.³⁴ Eventually only the aforementioned 70 persons, or 37% of the 192 former Kominhokokai members, were elected as the county and city councillors (*xian shi caiyiyuan*) as well as provincial councilors.

After the outbreak of the February 28 Incident, as many KMT officials and police personnel fled the chaos, rendering local administration dysfunctional, local county and municipal councils either followed the precedent of the Taipei Resolution Committee, or responded to its call of March 4, 1947, by establishing their own local Resolution Committees to maintain order, propose solutions and political reforms, and even negotiate with local authorities.³⁵ Thus, it was more likely that it was their direct relations with the elected councils rather than their earlier involvement in the Kominhokokai that led to their participation in the February 28 Incident of 1947 as members of local social elites.

In any case, quite a few former Kominhokokai members were involved in local Resolution Committees during the Incident, and the KMT regime seemed quite alarmed by their influence and participation. The report submitted by the director of the Taiwan branch of the KMT Secret Bureau in April 1947 contained an expanded list of 234 former Kominhokokai members and indicated that they had served the Japanese colonial regime

³⁴ Ou, “*Ereba Shijian zhong xian shi canyihui de jiase yu siying*,” 373. It should be noted that this list included only those who held relatively important or executive positions in the Kominhokokai. Later, the Chen Yi regime would press and ask local governments to provide it with more inclusive lists that were to include people with much less important profiles in the Kominhokokai.

³⁵ In some places, a local Resolution Committee was formed on the orders of the government. For example, in Shilin township of Taipei county, the township head was notified by the Executive Administrative Office (Chen Yi’s government) to form the Resolution Committee. Lai, et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baoga*, 74; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 5, 1947; Ou, “*Ereba Shijian zhong xian shi canyihui de jiase yu siying*,” 353.

for personal gains. Yet many became public representatives of the new regime after KMT's takeover of Taiwan and retained their social influence. They were accused by the KMT regime of controlling public opinion by launching newspapers or periodicals and delivering distorted speeches. The accusations went further to argue that after the outbreak of the February 28 Incident, such former Kominhokokai members had even schemed to aggravate the situation for the purpose of promoting Taiwan independence.³⁶ This reflected the KMT regime's prejudices about former Kominhokokai members and its projections concerning the role of former Kominhokaokai members in the February 28 Incident. In other words, the KMT regime obviously linked the Kominhokokai members to the spread of the Incident.

However, membership in the Kominhokokai was not necessarily the real cause behind the KMT's prosecution of these social elite leaders in the February 28 Incident. According to Hou Kunhong's studies of the Resolution Committees and their membership across Taiwan, 24 of these members were executed by the KMT regime.³⁷ Of those 24, only two were listed as former Kominhokokai members by the KMT regime. Besides those executed or killed, at least 87 people who participated in the Resolution Committees across Taiwan were detained, convicted or subject to long-term surveillance by the KMT regime.³⁸ Among them, only 8 (9%) were former Kominhokokai members.³⁹ Of those eight, five were arrested and charged with "Offenses Against the Internal

³⁶ Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.1, 100.

³⁷ Hou, "Chong tan 'Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui' de jiaose," 32-34.

³⁸ Hou, "Chong tan 'Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui' de jiaose," 34-41.

³⁹ The eight people were Huang Huoding, Su Zhenhui, Zheng Zhan, Chen Huazong, Chen Kunlun, Ma Youyue, Lin Guixing, and Xu Manhui. Hou, "Chong tan 'Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui' de jiaose," 34-41; Hou and Xu, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.1, 101-126; Huangmin Fenggonghui 皇民奉公會 (the Kominhokokai), A301010000C/0036/0003/36, Neizhengbu Jingzhengshu dangan 內政部警政署檔案 (Archives of National Police Agency, MOI), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju 國家發展委員會檔案管理局 (National Archives Administration, NDC).

Security of the State” (neiluan zui), or the crime of “attempted subversion of the government” (yitu dianfu zhengfu), or “riot” (baodong), but were released after being detained for periods of three to ten months.⁴⁰ Of the remaining three people, Su Zhenhui, a councillor of Zhanghua city, was subjected to long-term surveillance, while Lin Guixing, a civilian in Hualian who had engaged in a local Resolution Committee, was detained for about three months with the charge of “participating in the Resolution Committee, and requiring disarming of the military and closing customs.”⁴¹ As for the last person, Ma Youyue, an interim provincial councilor appointed by the KMT authority, his offenses included utilizing the Three People’s Principles Youth Corps to assemble a meeting, inciting criticism of the government to foment rebellion, and also being elected as a candidate for the county leader.⁴² Ma was detained for about nine months before he was released.⁴³

Therefore, although the KMT accused former Kominhokokai members of having undergone evil Japanese influences, the KMT’s indictments of such members failed to sustain that accusation. In fact, even the KMT’s accusations in its reports on arrested ex-Kominhokokai members of the Resolution Committees still failed to assert any connections with the Japanese colonial legacy other than their having previously been involved in the organization of the Japanese colonial era, even though the Nationalist

⁴⁰ Hou, “Chong tan ‘Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui’ de jiaose,” 34-41.

⁴¹ Zhang, ed., *Ereba Shijian cidian: Biece*, 160, 611; Zhangyang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Ereba Shijian ziliao xuanji* (The February 28 Incident: A documentary collection) (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1997), vol. 5, 671.

⁴² According to the KMT’s secret reports, Ma Youyue led a meeting in which township representatives elected candidates for the position of county head, in response to Chen Yi’s announcement that urged local people to elect three candidates should the current county head lose the trust of the people. Xu Xueji 許雪姬, ed., *Baomiju Taiwan zhan Ereba shiliao huibian* 保密局台灣站二二八史料彙編 (Historical material collections of the Secret Bureau, Taiwan Branch on the February 28 Incident) vol.3 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2016), 95.

⁴³ Zhang ed., *Ereba Shijian cidian: Biece*, 230; Hou Kunhong 侯坤宏 and Xu Jinfa 許進發, eds., *Ereba Shijian dang’an huibian*, vol.16 二二八事件檔案彙編 (Archive materials on the February 28 Incident, vol. 16) (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2004), 188.

leaders publicly charged them for that connection. Instead, the KMT's reports suggested that it was mainly their involvement in the Resolution Committees themselves and their current political activities, rather than the colonial impact, that had led to the KMT's prosecution.⁴⁴

In short, although the KMT regime's claims about the evil effects of Japanese colonialism on the Incident to some extent reflected a historical fact, close examination of the issue largely contradicts the KMT's accusation. Japanese army experience did not necessarily lead to the returned Taiwanese soldiers' participation in the anti-KMT militias, nor did the relations of former Kominhokokai members with the colonial authorities lead those former members to participate in the Resolution Committees in the February 28 Incident. As for the KMT's claim that the engagement of repatriated Taiwanese soldiers in the February 28 Incident was done under communist auspices, this was partly echoed by the CCP's propaganda after its success in mainland China. This is a claim that the following section of this chapter will consider more closely.

Questioning Claims by the KMT and CCP about Communist Roles in the February 28 Incident

Controversies over Communist Leadership in the February 28 Incident

Similar to its claim about Japanese colonial influences on the February 28 Incident, the KMT had long insisted on communist instigation of the Incident, although this view did not enter the CCP's political propaganda until well after 1947. No sooner

⁴⁴ Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.16, 94-146.

had the February 28 Incident broken out than the KMT blamed a communist conspiracy for its occurrence, and Chiang Kai-shek in particular made such accusations in his public speeches. Such an accusation had circulated for about four decades, during which the CCP also came to lay claim to leadership in the Incident as a part of its post-1949 political propaganda in support of the policy of unifying Taiwan with the mainland, i.e. incorporating it into the PRC. Therefore, the two rival parties paradoxically arrived at similar points of view on this issue whether by denouncing or claiming a significant communist role in the actions. Nonetheless, their partisan views still diverged, especially from the 1990s. Following democratic reform in Taiwan from the late 1980s and onward, however, academic inquiries have largely discredited such partisan claims, but this issue still deserves further examination.

Despite the KMT's and CCP's shared judgment on there being a communist role in the February 28 Incident, their narratives of the role varied. The KMT regime attributed the cause of the disturbances on Taiwan primarily to the impact of Japanese colonialism and only secondarily to communist instigation. The KMT even alleged that communists among the repatriated Taiwanese from the Japanese armies on Hainan Island, together with those others who snuck from mainland China to Taiwan, had sought any and all opportunities to cause social disorder. In collusion with pro-Japanese collaborationist gentry and hooligans, the communists also took advantage of the civil protests to incite public revolts, according to the KMT.⁴⁵

The CCP, on the other hand, initially endorsed the Taiwanese pursuit of political autonomy in the February 28 Incident. Soon after its victory on the Chinese mainland,

⁴⁵ Hou, *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 111-12, 124, 368-372; Xue, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol. 23, 229-32; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947: 1.

however, it began to assimilate the Incident to its own opposition to the Chiang regime and to American imperialism, and it thus likewise incorporated it into its historiography of the revolution. In particular, the CCP further claimed leadership in the Incident by subordinating it to the so-called New Democratic Revolution under its leadership.⁴⁶

In other words, the KMT seems to have regarded the communists as traitorous accomplices of pro-Japanese agents, while the CCP emphasized its leadership in the Incident. Although such partisan views had shaped the KMT's and the CCP's respective narratives of the Incident in the decades after 1950, the KMT revised its position with the release of its official report of the Incident in early 1992. The CCP on the other hand has retained the claim despite readjusting its rhetoric about the Incident in order to accommodate new political situations.

Many scholars tended to discredit such partisan claims, but one notably supportive voice was that of the Taiwan scholar, Liu Shengji. Liu held that communists had infiltrated and controlled many Resolution Committees during the Incident, in particular the key ones in Taipei and Taizhong. Thus, he argued there was communist leadership in the February 28 Incident. According to Liu, after the Anti-Japanese War, former Taiwanese communists and leftists set up new organizations or joined related groups on the island, particularly the Taiwan Provincial Political Construction Association (Taiwan sheng zhengzhi jianshe xiehui), which was the most active group during the February 28 Incident. Despite friction among the former Taiwanese communists, they unified to propagandize, organize, and lead anti-Chen Yi government activities. Besides that, the CCP established a work team, the Taiwan Provincial Work

⁴⁶ *Jiefang ribao*, March 20, 1947:1-2. *Renmin ribao*, Feb. 28, 1951:2; March 1, 1975:4; Li, *Taiwan renmin keming douzheng jianshi*, 178, 188-191.

Committee (Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui) after the Anti-Japanese War, an organization that had considerable development in north, central, and south Taiwan. Its agents had also infiltrated Chen Yi's government, various KMT's party branches, and the Three People's Principles Youth League in Taiwan, along with various other public, student and mass organizations by the eve of the February 28 Incident.⁴⁷

Therefore, Liu asserted CCP leadership in the Incident. Liu argued that the CCP actually directed and led the Incident after its outbreak on grounds that the actions of its underground party members effectively mobilized popular protests, instigated and then aggravated the disturbances, and that they indirectly controlled or led the Taiwan Provincial Political Construction Association and the Resolution Committees. In particular, the actions of Wang Tiandeng, an active leader of the Taipei Resolution Committee, were regarded as being influenced and directed by the CCP.⁴⁸

Wang Tiandeng himself was a successful tea merchant, and the president of the newspaper *Renmin daobao*. During the February 28 Incident, Wang served as member of the Taipei Resolution Committee and was in charge of its propaganda team.⁴⁹ Right after the establishment of the initial Resolution Committee, Wang was one of the representatives to negotiate with Governor Chen Yi on March 1, 1947.⁵⁰ More importantly, Wang was the person who proposed the Thirty-Two Demands, and was one of the representatives who presented the Thirty-Two Demands to Chen Yi. He was also

⁴⁷ Liu Shengji 劉勝驥, "Gongdang fenzi zai Ererba Shijian qian hou de huodong" 共黨分子在二二八事件前後的活動 (Communist activities before and after the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba yanjiu* 二二八研究 (Research on the February 28 Incident), ed. Ma Qihua 馬起華 (Taipei: ROC public order research society, 1987), 104-108, 111-115, 142-143.

⁴⁸ Liu, "Gongdang fenzi zai Ererba Shijian qian hou de huodong," 121-134, 138-140, 143.

⁴⁹ *Zhonghua ribao*, March 4, 1947.

⁵⁰ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 2, 1947.

the one who broadcast the Demands after the request was refused by Chen Yi.⁵¹ Liu Shengji regarded his actions on the Taipei Resolution Committee as shaped by CCP's influence and even following the ideological leadership of the CCP.⁵²

Besides affecting Taipei, Liu Shengji also considered armed resistance in north, central, and south Taiwan, apart from Taizhong, to be directed by the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee, given the penetration of its underground members in various organizations and areas. Even though the relatively independent Xie Xuehong did not follow the leadership of this CCP's Committee during the Incident, she still inspired other former communists, such as Chen Chuandi, to join her uprising, and they and other communists did actually play a leading role in the Incident in Taizhong.⁵³

Nonetheless, Liu Shengji's argument suffers from some deficiencies. Because it was published in 1987, and due to limited access to primary sources, Liu inevitably relied on certain individuals' recollections and on some unreliable secondary sources that even included KMT propaganda.⁵⁴ This is evident in his adoption of a secondary source that carelessly lumps leaders of resistance camps in various areas during the Incident together as the communists, including figures such as Chen Fuzhi in Jiayi, and Tu Guangming in Kaohsiung.⁵⁵ This lumping compromises the credibility of his discussions about "the communist" leadership in these areas. Moreover, Liu's discussions about some individual

⁵¹ Some say that Wang relied on his assistants for the draft of the Thirty-Two Demands, and was not its major author. *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 7, 1947; Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 66-71.

⁵² Liu, "Gongdang fenzi zai Ereba Shijian qian hou de huodong," 122, 126, 128.

⁵³ Liu, "Gongdang fenzi zai Ereba Shijian qian hou de huodong," 121-134, 138-140, 143.

⁵⁴ For an example, Su Seng 蘇僧 and Guo Jiancheng 郭建成, *Fu qu lishi mingjing zhong de chenai* 拂去歷史明鏡中的塵埃 (Brushing away dust in the mirror of history) (Alhambra, CA: Meiguo nanhua wenhua, 1986).

⁵⁵ Liu, "Gongdang fenzi zai Ereba Shijian qian hou de huodong," 132-33. The secondary source is Gancheng, "'Taigong' fuhuo le: Bu rong fenqi fenzi jiang 'Ereba' lishi niuqu" (Revival of the 'Taiwanese Communists': Against the separatists' distortion of the February 28 Incident history), *Longqi* (February 1987): 48. See Liu, "Gongdang fenzi zai Ereba Shijian qian hou de huodong," 178n118.

communists engaging in incitement during the Incident and about some communist members' participation in the Taipei Resolution Committee does not adequately support his conclusion that the communists controlled the Resolution Committee or provided leadership in the Incident in Taipei or Taiwan as a whole. His discussion about Wang Tiandeng also ignores Wang's own personal ideal of Taiwanese political autonomy, and instead stresses only the influence of Wang's communist staff on his political thoughts and actions.

In fact, the majority of scholarly works on this particular topic tend to discredit this claim. One of them is the aforementioned collaborative work of Lai Tse-han, Roman H. Myers, and Wei Wou. As discussed earlier, the authors emphasize a clash of worldviews between local Taiwanese people and mainlander Chinese among other factors as the cause of the Incident. They give a brief description of the development and the activities of communists in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period and after the KMT takeover of the island, and argue that "the main tensions and circumstances leading to the Uprising had little to do with sporadic communist activities."⁵⁶ According to these authors, those who took charge of the Taipei Resolution Committee actually all supported the KMT. The communists accounted for a very small proportion of the people who advocated political reform and Taiwan self-governance, though one of them, Xie Xuehong, became a leader in Taizhong and engaged in the local Resolution Committee. However, the KMT government's claim about her leadership in the so-called "Er qi budui" (Two-seven Brigade, or 27 Brigade)⁵⁷ was doubtful given the testimonies of Zhong Yiren,

⁵⁶ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 139.

⁵⁷ According to Zhong Yiren, the naming of the Brigade as "Er qi budui" was meant to commemorate an event that occurred on the evening of February 27, 1947. Lin Zhenghui 林正慧, "Ererba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'" 二二八事件中的中共台灣省工作委員會 (The CCP's

who maintained in his memoirs that rather than directing 27 Brigade, Xie instead took refuge in the Brigade shortly before she fled to Hong Kong. Moreover, another former Taiwanese communist indicated in an interview that the four cadres sent by the CCP from the mainland were neither able to mutually maintain close contact and cooperation, nor were they successful in establishing stable relations with civil organizations. Hence the CCP had no significant influence on Taiwan during the February 28 Incident. Therefore, the KMT leadership somewhat exaggerated the communist influence in the Incident.⁵⁸

Another scholar, Chen Cuilian, who specializes in Taiwan's postwar political history, also disputes this shared view of the KMT and the CCP and argues instead that the communists, including former members of the Taiwanese Communist Party and the CCP's underground members on Taiwan, played a minimal role in the February 28 Incident. Because of the weak development of its organization and its misjudgment about social conditions in postwar Taiwan, Chen argues, the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee remained passive in response to the outburst of the Incident, lacking a comprehensive plan and a central and unified command system. Moreover, the secrecy of its organization, and the long-term disconnection of Cai Xianqian, a veteran Taiwanese communist and the leader of the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee, with Taiwanese society meant that its operations were far from influential in scale and development. The sudden outbreak of the disturbances thus caught the CCP members unprepared, and their lack of preparedness was aggravated by the lack of efficient connections even between its members due to the secrecy of the organization. As a result,

'Taiwan provincial work committee' in the February 28 Incident), in *Qishi nian hou de huigu: Jinian Eerba Shijian qishi zhounian xueshu lunwenji* (In retrospect on its 70th anniversary: Essays on the February 28 Incident), ed. Xu Xueji (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2017), 197.

⁵⁸ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 135-140.

they failed to provide any effective and efficient leadership, and even the armed struggles in Taipei that could be truly counted as activities organized by and under the leadership of the CCP were aborted in the end. Moreover, although Xie Xuehong's activities and leadership in Taizhong were more apparent, Chen agrees with Liu Shengji on the point that Xie was beyond the control and direction of the Taiwan Provincial Work Committee during the Incident. Moreover, challenging Liu's view on Wang Tiandeng, Chen argues that although Wang did have his communist staff draft the Thirty-Two Demands, former Taiwanese communists seeking refuge on the mainland after the Incident exaggerated the influence of the CCP underground members on the Resolution Committee. In particular, there was a discrepancy between exaggerated statements by Su Xin about the influence of the CC's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee and the reflections of the Work Committee about the mistakes it had made that led to its failure in the Incident.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Lin Zhenghui confirms that former Taiwanese communists, particularly Xie Xuehong, did establish relations with the Work Committee during the Incident. According to Lin, despite the controversy over Xie's membership in the CCP at that time, she actually did accept and follow the leadership and orders of the Work Committee. Her relations with the committee are also suggested by her escape from Taiwan with the assistance of the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee. However, due to the secrecy of the Work Committee and its actions, the KMT authorities' attribution of the communist conspiracy often referred to former Taiwanese communists, particularly Xie Xuehong, and seemed ignorant of the activities of the Work Committee and its relation with resistance activities.⁶⁰ Therefore, while Lin's argument questions the

⁵⁹ Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 189-194.

⁶⁰ Lin, "Ereba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'," 194-211.

CCP's leading role in the Incident, it to some extent reflects the KMT's claim about the communists inciting disturbances during the Incident.

Chen Cuilian also revises her views on this particular point, regarding the CCP's armed activities in central Taiwan and its organizational relations there. Chen cites the interrogation records of Zhang Zhizhong, one of the CCP's Taiwan Work Committee members and the director of its military section. Her new publications demonstrate the establishment of the Self-rule Coalition Army (*Zizhi lianjun*) led by Zhang, and examines its armed struggles against the Nationalist military in central and south Taiwan, including the *Huwei* and *Jiayi* battles. In addition, Chen indicates the factual nature of claims about the Taiwan Provincial Work Committee reconnecting with former Taiwanese communists, such as Xie Xuehong. However, Chen's study raises further questions about the communists' relationship with the mobilization of most local militias due to the complexity of the situation with local resistance in these areas.⁶¹

Lin Zhenghui's studies in turn offer new insight into scholarly inquiries about this topic. By utilizing abundant official interrogation records, along with participants' memoirs, testimonies, and interviews regarding the Incident, she reveals the structure of the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee and scrutinizes its activities during the February 28 Incident. Lin argues that the influence of the Work Committee on the Incident was limited, and that the committee was far from being able to claim leadership in the Incident despite the efforts of certain individual members. She holds that the Work Committee had already developed in a preliminary fashion through various channels and had established local work units in various areas, particularly in Taipei, Taizhong, and Jiayi areas, before the outbreak of the Incident. In particular, armed forces distinct from

⁶¹ Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 241-43.

those of the local militia and security groups were organized and established by the Work Committee and had engaged in armed struggles against the KMT military in Yunlin and Jiayi areas. Nonetheless, according to Lin, the influence of the Work Committee was limited due to some subjective and some objective elements, including relation to the following: a Japanese legacy of shared anti-communism as a social environment in Taiwan; insufficiencies in the operations of the Work Committee itself; restrictions caused by the instructions of the CCP central authorities; and the weakness of the leadership of the Work Committee.⁶² Instead of directing the Incident, in other words, the Taiwan Provincial Work Committee at best took advantage of it, and added momentum to public indignation against the KMT regime.⁶³

In short, the consensus of scholarly sources examining this issue, regardless of whether they argued for or against the claim that communists played a leading role in the Incident, all suggest the communist presence in the Incident. The next subsection will reexamine the roles of communists in the February 28 Incident.

A Re-examination of Communist Roles in the February 28 Incident

Although the KMT's and CCP's claims about the roles of communist operatives in the February 28 Incident served their different political ends, the presence of the communists in the Incident is beyond question. In both popular protests and political negotiations, and especially in armed actions against the KMT authorities, communists

⁶² Lin, "Ereba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'," 213-223.

⁶³ Lin, "Ereba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui,'" 149-207; Lin Zhenghui 林正慧, "Yinsheng de zuoyi wuzhuang: Ereba Shijian zhong de zizhi lianjun" 隱身的左翼武裝：二二八事件中的自治聯軍 (The hidden left-wing armed force: The Self-rule Coalition Army in the February 28 Incident), in *Junshi zhanling xia de Taiwan, 1945-1952* 軍事佔領下的台灣 1945-1952 (Taiwan under military occupation, 1945-1952), ed. Xu Wentang 許文堂 (Taipei: Taiwan professor association, 2017), 288-308.

appear to have indeed engaged in the Incident. Chapter Two has revealed the logic behind Chiang Kai-shek's paranoid considerations about the scale of communist threats that might have affected both his perception of the Incident in the Chinese Civil War context and his decision on military suppression. However, the logic of his psychological reaction is one thing, and the truth about a communist plot or communist leadership in the Incident is another. This section will reexamine the forms of communist involvement in the February 28 Incident.

In the same speeches at the event commemorating Dr. Sun Yat-sen on March 10, 1947, in which Chiang Kai-shek highlighted communist and Japanese colonial elements as responsible for the February 28 Incident, he also rationalized the KMT's employment of armed force to quell the Taiwan disturbance with that same argument. Chiang held that the disturbance could have come to an end after the announcements that Taiwan provincial government had been established to replace the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office, and that popular elections of county and municipal councils were to be held. Nevertheless, Chiang went beyond this to claim that the Taipei Resolution Committee was making unreasonable demands in calling for the dissolution of the Taiwan Provincial Garrison, the disarming of the military, and the staffing of the army and navy stationed in Taiwan with local Taiwanese rather than mainlanders. He maintained that these calls stepped beyond the demand for local self-rule and were thus unacceptable, as were illegal attacks on official institutions that had occurred by that day. In fact, following his order, military reinforcements had already been dispatched to and landed in Taiwan for the maintenance of local order.⁶⁴ Thus, in Chiang's words, it was the unreasonable demands of the Taipei Resolution Committee and subsequent

⁶⁴ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947:1; *Zhonghua ribao*, March 11, 1947:1.

Taiwanese attacks on governmental organizations that ultimately led the KMT to decide on armed suppression of the Taiwan disturbance.

Although Chiang himself did not specify which parties he considered responsible for those illegal offensives, the Taiwan Garrison Command clearly pointed to communist attacks. According to local news reports, the Taiwan Garrison Command claimed that on the evening of March 8, 1947, the communists secretly infiltrated Taipei city from Songshan and Beitou in northern Taiwan in an attempt to rob the headquarters of the Bank of Taiwan and other major companies, yet the attempt was thwarted when dozens of them were arrested while the rest scattered and fled in all directions.⁶⁵ Accordingly, communist sabotage was the kind of illegal action Chiang referred to when he spoke of successive attacks in the days before his speech on March 10, 1947.

Nevertheless, Chiang's public statements on March 10 also apparently contradict his actions. Scholars have pointed out the contradiction between Chiang's public claims regarding the KMT's decision to crackdown on March 5 and the demands of the Taipei Resolution Committee, which were only made on March 7.⁶⁶ Likewise, the communist conspiracy claimed by the Taiwan Garrison Command as a cause for the crackdown took place in the evening of March 8, 1947, after KMT military forces had already landed in Taiwan. Therefore, given the discrepancy between Chiang's March 5 decision dispatching military reinforcements to Taiwan for the suppression and the presentation of the Taipei Resolution Committee's Forty-Two Demands to Chen Yi on March 7 1947,⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Zhonghua ribao*, March 10, 1947:1; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 11, 1947: 2.

⁶⁶ For example, Steven Phillips in *Between Assimilation and Independence*, 84; and Chen, "Lun Taiwan Ererba Shijian de yuanyin," 328.

⁶⁷ There were originally thirty-two demands in the draft, but an additional ten were added before it was presented to Chen Yi in the afternoon of March 7, 1947. Nevertheless, the document is still known as the "Thirty-Two Demands."

and the KMT-claimed communist attacks on March 8, the claim about communist subversion seems more an after-the-fact justification for the KMT's suppression than a reflection of reality. Moreover, given the limited number of armed communist activities during this period, the Taiwan Garrison Command's claim about the communist plot on March 8, 1947 being the trigger for the crackdown is also questionable.

As noted in Chapter two, the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee came into being in Taiwan before the outbreak of the February 28 Incident after Cai Xiaoqian arrived on the island from the mainland as its secretary. The leadership circle of the Work Committee also included Zhang Zhizhong, who had arrived in Taiwan some time around the end of March 1946. He would organize armed forces in Jiayi areas before and during the February 28 Incident.⁶⁸ The CCP Work Committee attempted to expand communist networks through various channels, such as reconnecting with local Taiwanese communists and members of Taiwanese former anti-Japanese forces who had been in mainland China during the war. It further established Taipei and Taizhong Work Committees, with other local branches in Tainan, Jiayi and Kaohsiung. In fact, in addition to seeking the support of workers, peasants, and intellectuals, and mobilizing the Indigenous Taiwanese and some people recently from the mainland, the Work Committee's strategies for communist expansion in Taiwan also included united-front work among people from the upper classes, infiltration into the Nationalist government,

⁶⁸ Cai Xiaoqian An 蔡孝乾案 (The case of Cai Xiaoqian), Yang Chunlin gongci 楊春霖供詞 (Confessions of Yang Chunlin), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/2/023, Guofangbu Junshi Qingbaoju Dangan 國防部軍事情報局檔案 (Archives of Military Intelligence Bureau, MND), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju (National Archives Administration, NDC); Cai Xiaoqian An 蔡孝乾案, Zhang Zhizhong xunwen bilu 張志忠訊問筆錄 (Interrogation records of Zhang Zhizhong), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/1/014, Guofangbu Junshi Qingbaoju Dangan 國防部軍事情報局檔案 (Archives of Military Intelligence Bureau, MND), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju (National Archives Administration, NDC).

party and army, and engagement in certain other urban and rural activities.⁶⁹ Thus, despite the secrecy of the organization and the limitations of communist recruitment to a small number by February 1947, the Work Committee did attempt to achieve its mission and was involved in both armed and political struggles in the February 28 Incident.

According to its Taiwanese members, CCP underground members had planned to mobilize students for armed attacks on KMT authorities after the initial chaos in the Taipei area. They mapped out a combat plan on March 4, 1947 and attempted to launch attacks before dawn on the next day. Despite discrepancies in their testimonies regarding the organization of student forces, at least three brigades (*dadui*) were marshaled, with about 100 students mobilized from each of five schools, including colleges and high schools. According to the plan, student brigades would first launch an offensive on the armory in Jingwei (today's Jingmei district of Taipei) in order to seize arms; then they would attack military, police, and gendarme bases, and finally join forces together for attacking the Executive Office. However, the mission was aborted due to heavy rain on the planned evening of March 4 and failure to seize the needed arms and a lack of assistance from the Indigenous peoples.⁷⁰ Despite such testimonies about the action being aborted, Chen Cuilian cites the statement of Ke Yuanfen, chief of staff of the Garrison

⁶⁹ Lin, "Ereba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'," 156-168; Chen Cheng-Mao 陳正茂, "Ji Guangfu Chuqi Zhonggong zai Tai zhi Dixia Zuzhi: Taiwan Sheng Gongzuo Weiyuanhui" 記光復初期中共在台之地下組織：台灣省工作委員會 (The CCP underground organization in Taiwan in the early years of post-war Taiwan: Taiwan Province Work Committee), *Bei Taiwan Tongshi Xuebao* 5 (July 2009): 186-89.

⁷⁰ Ye Jidong 葉紀東., "Ye Jidong xiansheng koushu jilu" 葉紀東先生口述紀錄 (Oral records of Mr. Ye Jidong), in *Ereba Shijian wenxian bulu* (Historiographical records of the February 28 Incident, vol.3), eds. Wei Youzhu and Li Xuanfeng (Nantou, Taiwan: Taiwan sheng wenxianhui, 1994), 60; Chen Bingji 陳炳基, "Chen Bingji xiansheng koushu jilu" 陳炳基先生口述紀錄 (Oral records of Mr. Chen Bingji), in *Ereba Shijian wenxian bulu* vol.3, eds. Wei and Li, 65; Chen Bingji 陳炳基., "Daonian Yi Jidong tongzhi" 悼念葉紀東同志 (Mourning comrade Ye Jidong), *Taisheng* no.4 (2000): 29; Ye Jidong 葉紀東, *Haixia liangan jie wo zuxiang: Yige Taiwan zhishi fengzi de liangan qingjie* 海峽兩岸皆我祖鄉：一個台灣知識份子的兩岸情結 (Both sides of the Strait are all my native place: The cross-strait complex of a Taiwanese intellectual) (Taipei: Renjian chubanshe, 2000), 15.

Command, that the authorities arrested two students, followed leads to find a group of 20 to 30 students gathering in Taiwan University, and dispersed them on the evening of March 4, 1947. Either way, her research thus questions the size of the student brigades and the scale of their armed actions as organized by the CCP underground members.⁷¹

Nevertheless, as Lin Zhenghui indicates, Ke Yuanfen's statements actually reflect to some extent significant facts about students' plans and armed actions. Lin further examines testimonies of communist agents and student participants to highlight aspects of the communist plan to mobilize students for armed attacks against the KMT government. In addition, based on official documents, Lin also points out that on the orders of the CCP's Taipei Provincial Work Committee, at least three of its members joined the Jingwei attack, thus linking the Work Committee to the action of students. However, Lin's studies also show that from March 1 to March 5 except some posts of propaganda and the few people's involvement in the Jingwei attack, the CCP's Taipei Work Committee actually accomplished little during the Incident. Afterward, it was even more difficult to reassemble the students, and no armed combat could possibly be planned or carried out.⁷² Therefore given the accounts of the CCP underground members about their attempts at armed activity in the Taipei area, it is clear that there were not any armed actions undertaken by the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee or its members on the particular day of March 8 that the Taiwan Garrison Command claimed. Indeed, the communists, and the Taiwan Provincial Work Committee, were far from being in a leading position within the Taipei Resolution Committee, since there were no

⁷¹ Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 244-45.

⁷² Lin, "Ererba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'," 189-193.

CCP members or other communists on its Standing Committee.⁷³

In fact, local popular actions against the KMT authorities in many places, including those undertaken by radical students, were rarely subject to communist incitement or mobilization. It was said that on March 1, 1947, some returned soldiers from Hainan Island, along with others, gathered at a local theatre in Danshui, Taipei county, to express their support for the actions occurring in Taipei city. On the same day, railway police in Taoyuan were attacked by a local youth corps, together with about thirty young students from Taipei, who seized arms and intercepted the train to prevent the authorities from shipping military reinforcements to Taipei for the suppression of the people.⁷⁴ In Taipei and Jiayi, people crowded into and took over the radio stations, through which they spread news of the protests and called for people to stand up against corrupt authorities.⁷⁵ According to Zhang Zhizhong, the underground communists had little influence in Taipei, Keelung, Hualian, Taidong, Tainan, Kaohsiung, Pingdong, Xinzhu and Taoyuan areas, unable to control or lead the actions.⁷⁶

Nonetheless, communist armed activities seem to have posed a relatively concrete threat to the KMT regime in the central areas of the island. The most well-known case is that of the 27 Brigade in the Taizhong area, generally regarded as being led by Xie

⁷³ According to Su Xin, there were no CCP agents among members of the Taipei Resolution Committee; that is why they attempted to draw Wang Tiandeng and Lin Rigao to their side. See Su Xin 蘇新, “Guanyu Ererba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui” 關於二二八事件處理委員會 (About the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee), in *Zhengyan Ererba 證言二二八* (Testimonies to the February 28 Incident), ed. Ye Yunyun 葉芸芸 (Taipei: Renjian chubanshe, 1990), 65.

⁷⁴ Lai et al., *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 74, 76.

⁷⁵ Lai et al., *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 54, 106.

⁷⁶ Cai Xiaoqian An, Yang Chunlin gongci (Confessions of Yang Chunlin), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/2/023, Guofangbu Junshi Qingbaoju Dangan (Archives of Military Intelligence Bureau, MND), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju (National Archives Administration, NDC).

Xuehong.⁷⁷ On March 2, 1947, leaders of the Taizhong social elite established a local Resolution Committee, with its own security team, but both were dissolved by the president of the city council on the same day due to the arrival of news that the KMT regime was dispatching troops to the south. Xie then reorganized the just-dissolved security team, expanded it into a “people’s brigade” (renmin dadui, generally called minjun), and directed the minjun’s attacks on government and military installations, eventually taking over most official installations by March 4. On the same day, the Taizhong local elites re-established the Resolution Committee that soon took away Xie’s leadership of the minjun. On March 6, the 27 Brigade was formally established, but on March 12 it retreated to Pulin, where it continued to resist the KMT authorities until its disintegration on March 17, 1947.⁷⁸

The 27 Brigade consisted mainly of returned Taiwanese soldiers and radical students. Accordingly, many directors of its militia divisions had military experience from their service in Japanese armies during the war. These included Zhong Yiren, the captain (duizhang) of the Brigade, Huang Xinqing, director of the Puli team, and Huang Jindao, director of the security-defense team (jingbei dui). In addition to Zhong Yiren’s service in the Japanese army, as mentioned above, Huang Xinqing was a former Second Lieutenant of the Kwantung Army, while Huang Jindao was a former marine with war experience on Hainan Island.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ There is discrepancy between the claim of Zhong Yiren and that of Gu Reiyun, who served as Zhong’s assistant in the 27 Brigade, and who fled to China and joined the CCP after the Incident. Although Zhong was the Captain, it was Gu who actually managed the affairs in the Brigade. As Gu depended on Xie Xuehong, he was more likely to follow her leadership. Zhong claimed that the 27 Brigade was pure minjun while Gu claimed that it was a red army (hongjun). See Lin, “Ereba Shijian zhong de zhonggong ‘Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui,’” 194-202.

⁷⁸ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 86-92.

⁷⁹ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 91; Zhong Yiren 鍾逸人, *Xinsuan liushi nian* 辛酸六十年 (Sixty years of bitterness) (Taipei: Ziyou shidai, 1988), 480, 486-87.

There are still scholarly controversies over whether Xie was a member of the CCP at the time, over her leadership, and over the nature of the 27 Brigade. Even though Xie might not have been the actual organizer or chief commander of the 27 Brigade, however, she was in contact with and compliant with the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee, and she undoubtedly served as the spiritual leader of the 27 Brigade. Moreover, other CCP underground members also joined the Brigade. However, the anti-KMT resistance by the 27 Brigade in Taizhong was only short-lived, and it was quickly eliminated by the Nationalist army. Its high-profile leaders such as Xie Xuehong soon fled to Hong Kong, where they established the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, before eventually going to mainland China.⁸⁰

It must be stressed that although the 27 Brigade was generally regarded as a militant force led by Xie Xuehong and related to the communists, many of its leaders and members such as Zhong Yiren and Huang Jindao were not communists. Although Zhong was associated with some former members of the Taiwan Cultural Association (Taiwan wenhua xiehui),⁸¹ he was not a communist party member but instead an activist in pursuit of Taiwan's self-government.⁸² Another major leader of the 27 Brigade, Huang Xinqing, fled to China, but only later joined the People's Liberation Army.⁸³ As for Huang Jindao,

⁸⁰ Lin, "Ereba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'," 194-202.

⁸¹ The main founder of the Taiwan Cultural Association was Jiang Weishui. Lin Xiantang also participated in it. Although Jiang was radical, he was not a communist; neither was Lin Xiantang. The Association was established in 1921 for promoting Taiwanese culture and enlightening the people in the hope eventually to pursue Taiwan's self-government. Because of disagreements among its members over their political ideologies, the Association split and moved in a more radical direction toward communism.

⁸² Zhang ed., *Ereba Shijian cidian*, 724.

⁸³ Available sources do not indicate whether Huang Xinqing ever joined the CCP. According to Liao Jianchao, Huang joined the PLA in November 1949, left the army in 1953, and died on December 1, 1981 in Xian. Zhang, ed., *Ereba Shijian cidian*, 489; Liao Jianchao 廖建超, "Bei yiwang de Er Qi budui canmouzhang: Huang Xinqing" 被遺忘的二七部隊參謀長：黃信卿 (The chief of staff of the 28 Brigade, who is forgotten: Huang Xinqing), Yu Chuanmei (Taro News), <https://taronews.tw/2018/05/05/33650/> (accessed 19 July 2020).

he was not arrested until 1952. In fact, the KMT regime seemed to have been unable to detect Huang's participation in the 27 Brigade, as he was not even named in the Taiwan Garrison Command's wanted list.⁸⁴ After the failed armed action against the Nationalist army in Wuniulan of Puli city, Huang changed his given name and once joined the Nationalist army to hide from arrest. It was not until June 1952 that he was arrested, charged with "participation in a rebellious organization" and sentenced to jail for life.⁸⁵ The charge of Huang's offense in the February 28 Incident, according to a list of the wanted posted by the KMT regime, made no reference to alleged relations with the CCP or other communists. Rather, he was charged mainly because of his role as the director of the Puli team that led the Indigenou people to Taizhong to carry out attacks on the Nationalist army.⁸⁶ Even Gu Ruiyun⁸⁷ was not a communist at that time. In fact, as Lin Zhenghui indicates, after Xie Xuehong left Puli and the 27 Brigade, those who continued to fight against the KMT authorities in the battles of Sun-Moon Lake and Wuniulan were not the CCP underground members.⁸⁸

Besides the initiatives undertaken by Xie Xuehong in Taizhong, the CCP Taiwan Provincial Work Committee achieved some relative success in armed organization in the Yunlin and Jiayi areas. According to Lin Zhenghui's studies, Zhang Zhizhong, one of the cadres of the Work Committee, acted in Yunlin and Jiayi areas, and led a communist

⁸⁴ Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, *Eerba Shijian ziliao xuanji*, vol. 6, 184-89.

⁸⁵ Zhang ed., *Eerba Shijian cidian*, 487-88.

⁸⁶ Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, *Eerba Shijian ziliao xuanji* (A documentary collection of the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1997), vol. 6, 184.

⁸⁷ Gu Reiyun joined Zhong Yiren and served as his assistant in the 27 Brigade, and fled to China and joined the CCP after the Incident. He changed his name to Zhou Ming.

⁸⁸ Lin, "Eerba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'," 202. Those who fought against the KMT troops in the battles of Riyuetan (Sun-Moon Lake) and Weniulan included Huang Jindao, Gu Ruiyun, Chen Mingzhong, and Cai Tiecheng. Huang was not communist, while Gu, Chen and Cai were not communists at that time. See Huang Jindao 黃金島, *Eerba zhanshi: Huang Jindao de yisheng* 二二八戰士：黃金島的一生 (Fighter in the February 28 Incident: The life of Huang Jindao) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 2004), 112-129.

armed force there that linked up with local militias in their actions after the outbreak of the February 28 Incident.⁸⁹ Indeed, Zhang confessed that he organized a group of local militiamen called the “Self-rule Coalition Army” (Zizhi lianjun) that included five teams and about 200 people in total. Among them, 70 to 80 people were in the Beigang team, approximately 40 people in the Xingang team, 30 people in the Puzi team, 10 in the Jiayi team, and 30 in the Xiaomei team. In addition to capturing arms from police stations and engaging in street fights (shijiezhàn) in Jiayi, the Self-rule Coalition Army also participated in the joint armed attacks on the Shuishang (in Jiayi) and Huwei airfields.⁹⁰ Afterwards, Zhang Zhizhong led those forces to retreat from Jiayi and eventually to Beigang. While his fellows were looting governmental installations for arms supplies and expenses, they encountered and engaged in some small-scale fighting with KMT forces. On March 18, while retreating from Beigang to Xiaomei, the coalition forces were ambushed by the KMT forces, with about 30 killed on the scene. Other members of the force were captured or fled everywhere. After this, the autonomous coalition forces collapsed and dissolved.⁹¹

Lin Zhenghui’s studies also suggest that despite their involvement in local resistance against the KMT authorities, the communist-led autonomous coalition forces

⁸⁹ Lin, “Yinshen de zuoyi wuzhuang: Ererba Shijian zhong de Zizhi Lianjun,” 290-305.

⁹⁰ Cai Xiaoqian An (The case of Cai Xiaoqian), Zhang Zhizhong xunwen bilu (Interrogation records of Zhang Zhizhong), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/1/014; Cai Xiaoqian An, Yang Chunlin gongci (Confessions of Yang Chunlin), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/2/023, both files in Guofangbu Junshi Qingbaoju Dangan (Archives of Military Intelligence Bureau, MND), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju (National Archives Administration, NDC).

⁹¹ Zhang Zhizhong stated that his coalition forces retreated from Jiayi on March 8 or 9, 1947, and were ambushed by the KMT forces on March 15 1947. Nevertheless, according to Lin Zhenghui, based on the KMT official documents and oral interviews with participants and witnesses, the dates should be March 12 and March 18, 1947, respectively. See Cai Xiaoqian An, Yang Chunlin gongci (Confessions of Yang Chunlin), A305050000C/0036/0410.9/44904440/2/023, both files in Guofangbu Junshi Qingbaoju Dangan (Archives of Military Intelligence Bureau, MND), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju (National Archives Administration, NDC); Lin, “Yinshen de zuoyi wuzhuang: Ererba Shijian zhong de Zizhi Lianjun,” 308-310, 314-15.

appear to have been quite distinct from local security teams organized by local elites, such as those in Beigang and Puzi. In fact, rather than openly calling people for a communist revolution, the CCP Taiwan Provincial Work Committee tended to operate behind the scene and took actions by playing on people's resentment against the KMT government. Despite contacts that the Self-rule Coalition Army led by the communist Zhang Zhizhong had with the *minjun* in Jiayi and Douliu, the latter were not under the orders of the Work Committee.⁹²

In addition to attempts at armed struggle, the CCP members also tried – as has been shown – to exercise their influence over the Taipei Resolution Committee through several of its members, in particular Wang Tiandeng. They claimed to have drafted the program for political reforms and the Thirty-Two Demands with the contents approved by the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee.⁹³ According to three communists close to the Resolution Committee, Wu Ketai, Cai Qingrong⁹⁴ and Su Xin, Wang was also a financial sponsor of *Ziyoubao* (The Liberty Newspaper), which had several CCP underground members among its staff, including Wu Ketai himself. Moreover, Wang's inner circle included his friend, the provincial political councilor Lin Rigao, his secretary Pan Qinxin, and Xiao Laifu, a staff member of Wang's teashop and the manager of

⁹² Lin, "Yinshen de zuoyi wuzhuang: Ererba Shijian zhong de Zizhi Lianjun," 293-94, 298-301, 305-6, 325-6, 329-330.

⁹³ In 1977, Su Xin wrote an article about Wang Tiandeng. In the article, Su Xin claims that the Thirty-Two Demands was drafted by CCP underground members and leftists, and that the content of the draft was approved by the CCP. This article was collected in the book *Zhengyan Ererba* (Testimonies of the February 28 Incident) published in 1990. In 1987, Cai Qingrong also made the claim in an article commemorating Wang Tiandeng. See Su Xin 蘇新, "Wang Tiandeng xiansheng shilue" 王添灯先生事略 (A brief account of Mr. Wang Tiandeng), in *Zhengyan Ererba* 證言二二八 (Testimonies of the February 28 Incident), ed. Ye Yunyun (Taipei: Renjian chubanshe, 1990), 52, 59-60; Cai Zimin 蔡子民, "Yi Ererba yu Wang Tiandeng" 憶二二八與王添灯 (Recollecting the February 28 Incident and Wang Tiandeng), in *Lishi de jianzheng*, ed. Taimeng (Beijing: Taimeng, 1987), 68-74.

⁹⁴ Wu Ketai was a CCP member of Taiwanese origin and a journalist working for *Remin daobao* and *Zhongwai ribao* during the February 28 Incident. Cai Qingrong, the chief editor of *Ziyubao*, later escaped to mainland China. He then changed his name to Cai Zimin and was active in the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League.

Ziyoubao, along with Su Xin and Cai Qingrong, journalists of *Ziyoubao*. They were either leftists or former Taiwanese communists. It was they who drafted and prepared Wang's speeches, proposals, or broadcast scripts that he was given on behalf of the Committee.⁹⁵

According to Cai Qingrong, on March 6, 1947, the Resolution Committee elected Wang to draft the program of reforms, which had been passed the previous day, and expand it into a more concrete and precise document for political reforms, but Wang asked Pan Qinxin, Xiao Laifu and Cai himself to consider the proposal, and it was Pan Qinxin who actually drafted it. The draft was agreed to by the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee, and then appeared as the General Outline for Resolution, or the so-called Thirty-Two Demands.⁹⁶ Su Xin even depicted a hierarchal order in the institutional network to illustrate the relation of the CCP's Work Committee with Wang Tiandeng and the Taipei Resolution Committee. It placed the communist agent Cai Xiaoqian at the top, with Xiao Laifu and Pan Qinxin reporting to him, and in turn influencing Wang Tiandeng. In this hierarchal network, Wang was put under Pan and Xiao, and he in turn was to influence the Resolution Committee, which was placed at the bottom of the relational order.⁹⁷ Thus, this account links the CCP's Work Committee to the Taipei Resolution Committee, and projected the CCP's leadership's priorities in directing political demands by the Resolution Committee.

Nonetheless, while these testimonies reflect some facts about individual communists' actions during the Incident, the CCP's leading role in the Incident remains

⁹⁵ Ye, ed., *Zhengyan Ererba*, 62-5, 97-8; Su Xin 蘇新, *Wei gui de taigong douhun: Su Xin zizhuan yu wenji* 未歸的台共鬥魂：蘇新自傳與文集(The fighting soul of an unreturned Taiwanese communist: The autobiography and collected works of Su Xin) (Taipei: Shibao chuban, 1993), 111, 118.

⁹⁶ Cai, "Yi Ererba yu Wang Tiandeng," 68-74.

⁹⁷ Ye, ed., *Zhengyan Ererba*, 63-4.

questionable. As these claims mainly come from the memoirs of former Taiwanese communists or leftists that were written in mainland China during the 1970s, when the Cultural Revolution just came to an end, scholars have questioned their credibility. These scholars argue that the former participants in the 1947 events later exaggerated the CCP's leadership and its agents' roles in the Incident for self-protection or even self-promotion in an uncertain political environment in the PRC.⁹⁸ In particular, according to Chen Cuilian's studies, the testimonies of certain Resolution Committee members and KMT officials point to the fact that the Thirty-two Demands document was actually much more a result of discussion and a synthesization of collective opinions expressed at the committee meetings and in the public sphere.⁹⁹ Actually, the Taiwanese people had already voiced their support for Taiwan's political autonomy before the Incident.¹⁰⁰ During the Incident itself, opinions and suggestions from various local Resolution Committees and similar organizations were collected by the Taipei Resolution Committee.¹⁰¹ In fact, as Lin Zhenghui indicates, when Wang Tiandeng brought forward the Thirty-Two Demands at the meeting on March 7, 1947, the aforementioned underground CCP party members and leftists in attendance failed to prevent an additional ten demands proposed by the KMT collaborators or agents from being passed, thus indicating clearly that the Resolution Committee was actually beyond the control,

⁹⁸ Chen Fangming 陳芳明, *Xie Xuehong ping zhuan* 謝雪紅評傳 (A critical biography of Xie Xuehong) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, (1991) 2009), 307; Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 246-47.

⁹⁹ Chen holds that, based on the posthumous manuscripts of Jiang Weichuan, chairman of the KMT Taiwan provincial branch, and recollection of Chen Yisong's son, the Thirty-Two Demands was largely drafted by Chen Yisong, a lawyer and member of the Standing Committee of the Taipei Resolution Committee. See Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 287-88.

¹⁰⁰ Chen Fangming 陳芳明, "'Sishier tiao zhengzhi yaoqiu' de zai yuedu" 四十二條政治要求的再閱讀 (Re-reading the Forty-Two Demands), in *Jinian Ererba Shijina liushi zhounian xueshu yantaohui lunwenji*, ed. Kaohsiung wenxian weiyuanhui (Kaohsiung: Wenxianhui, 2008), 222-27.

¹⁰¹ For example, in Hualian, local people held a people's conference (shimin dahui) on March 4 1947, and resolved on six proposals to send to the Taipei Resolution Committee. See *Minbao*, March 9, 1947: 2.

direction, and leadership of the CCP Work Committee and underground agents.¹⁰²

The KMT cast its own narrative of the February 28 Incident not as a story of Taiwanese dissatisfactions with its rule, but as the tale of a purported communist-led political and military coup. This approach hid the failure of the KMT regime and used the anti-CCP twist to serve its political ends. In particular, its insistence on a communist conspiracy behind the Incident served as its justification for military suppression and subsequent authoritarian rule over the island. On the other hand, the CCP's narratives took different forms as international relations within and beyond East Asia changed, and especially as shifts took place in the domestic politics and approach to cross-strait relations of both the ROC and the PRC. All the while, however, the CCP's practice of using the historical event to achieve its ultimate goal of claiming sovereignty over Taiwan remained unchanged. Thus, to the CCP, as well as to the KMT, interpreting the Incident provided a platform for expressing their respective policies and launching attacks on one another.

In fact, the aforementioned non-communist leaders in the Incident, such as Wang Tiandeng, had a history of engaging in anti-Japanese activities in their pursuit of Taiwan's autonomy and democracy. Their participation in the February 28 Incident appears to have had more to do with that political pursuit than with any communist manipulation. That pursuit, however, does partly explain the CCP's initial claim about the February 28 Incident as a movement struggling for Taiwanese self-government. In time, the DPP would also insist on such an argument regarding the nature of the February 28 Incident.

¹⁰² The ten additional demands included sensitive military issues that were later utilized as excuses by the KMT regime for armed suppression. Lin, "Ereba Shijian zhong de zhonggong 'Taiwan sheng gongzuo weiyuanhui'," 185.

Rethinking the CCP's and DPP's Propaganda regarding the Taiwanese Struggle for Self-Government in the February 28 Incident

Partisan and Scholarly Views on the Taiwanese Struggle for Self-Government in the February 28 Incident

The claim about the Taiwanese seeking self-government in the February 28 Incident appears as an aim shared by the CCP in the late 1940s and the DPP later on. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, the CCP first expressed such a view right after the outbreak of the Incident, but soon abandoned it following the communist victory in mainland China in 1949 and its subsequent shift to calling for the “liberation” of Taiwan. Later, in response to the DPP’s forming the government on the island in the 2000s, the CCP re-introduced this interpretation, as is detailed below. For its part, after its establishment in the mid-1980s, the DPP insisted on the claim to self-government as a part of its political platform for Taiwan’s independence, and it has remained consistent in this stance since then. This section will reevaluate the viewpoints of these respective political parties on the Incident, along with scholarly discussions of their interpretations.

The CCP’s early definition of the February 28 Incident as a Taiwanese search for self-government was unequivocally conveyed in an editorial titled “The Taiwanese Self-Government Movement” published by *Jiefang ribao* on March 20, 1947 and in the paper’s news reports around that time. By comparing the Chiang regime to Japanese imperialism, the paper accused the KMT regime of undertaking a re-colonization of Taiwan, and thus justified the Taiwanese armed struggle to attain self-government, along with CCP’s own struggle against the KMT government in the Civil War context on the

mainland. In addition, the connection between the Taiwanese resistance experience and that of the CCP in its “liberated areas” in a way implied that Taiwan’s search for autonomy was part of a nationwide anti-Chiang movement under the CCP’s influence, if not under its direct leadership.¹⁰³

Half a century later, from the mid-1990s, in response first to Lee Teng-hui’s Cornell trip and later to the rise of the DPP in Taiwan, the CCP re-emphasized its official 1947 interpretation of the February 28 Incident as an anti-Chiang patriotic self-governance movement in an article entitled “Ji xiwang yu Taiwan renmin” (Place the hope on the people of Taiwan) published by *Renmin ribao* in 1996.¹⁰⁴ This article further reiterated this early interpretation of the Incident in accord with its “one country, two systems” approach in the following years, and it continued propaganda along that line thereafter.¹⁰⁵ In particular, in 2000, the PRC-based Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, in its commemoration of the February 28 Incident in Beijing, linked the Taiwanese demands advanced during the original February 28 Incident to the CCP’s “one China” policy, with the logic that Taiwanese demands for autonomous rule in the Incident highly accorded with the principle of the “one country, two system” formula.¹⁰⁶

The CCP’s early viewpoint on the Taiwanese struggle for autonomy during the February 28 Incident was echoed in the 1980s by mainland China scholar Deng Kongzhao. Basing his argument on KMT official reports, government documents, memoirs and testimonies of witnesses, as well as on secondary sources, Deng argues that

¹⁰³ *Jiefang ribao*, March 20, 1947:1&2; *Renmin ribao*, March 13, 1947:1.

¹⁰⁴ *Renmin ribao*, February 28, 1996:1.

¹⁰⁵ *Renmin ribao*, February 28, 1997:4; February 27, 1998:4; March 1, 1999:4; February 27, 2000:2; February 26, 2002:4; February 27, 2003:4; February 20, 2004:4; February 23, 2004:4; February 26, 2005:4; February 28, 2007:4.

¹⁰⁶ *Renmin ribao*, February 27, 2000:2.

the February 28 Incident was a voluntary and cross-class (*quanminxing*) democratic movement of the Taiwanese people for self-government. According to Deng, it emerged in response to the KMT regime's autocracy and malfeasance as embodied in the Taiwan Executive Office system, with its discriminatory policies, corruption and ill-disciplined military and police forces, as well as its controlled economy policies. As a result of this movement, democracy and self-government became shared and prevalent demands of the Taiwanese people.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, Deng takes a class perspective on the Incident and breaks the participants in the February 28 Incident into different social groups. But, while he argues that the participants included people from all social strata of Taiwanese society, he sees differences in class interests leading to dissonance in the participants' varied political goals and demands. Deng further argues that, given the content and spirit of Dr. Sun Yet-san's Fundamentals of State-building (*Jianguo dagang*), the KMT-CCP Double Tenth Agreement in 1945, and the Constitution of the Republic of China as implemented on January 1, 1947, the Taiwanese struggle for self-rule during the February 28 Incident was not only reasonable but also legitimate.¹⁰⁸

Deng's use of class analysis to interpret the February 28 Incident ignores the complexity of both the participants and their activities during the Incident, and it actually weakens his claim about their cross-class pursuit of Taiwanese political autonomy. In particular, while echoing the CCP's point endorsing the legitimacy of the Taiwanese pursuit of the right to self-government during the Incident, Deng's insertion of the 1945 KMT-CCP Double Tenth Agreement into the discussion justifies the CCP's demand for

¹⁰⁷ See Deng, "Shilun Taiwan Ererba Shijian zhong de minzhu yu difang zizhi yaoqiu," 5-7.

¹⁰⁸ Deng, "Shilun Taiwan Ererba Shijian zhong de minzhu yu difang zizhi yaoqiu," 1-5, 9-11.

provincial autonomy in the areas under the CCP's control in the two parties' negotiations in 1945 and simultaneously incorporates the February 28 Incident into the CCP's revolutionary discourse on its Civil War effort against the KMT regime in 1946-1949.

Chen Fangming, a Taiwanese scholar supporting Taiwanese consciousness and self-identity, instead indicates that the CCP's understanding of a tradition of Taiwanese pursuing self-government during the Incident reflected an ignorance of Taiwan's particular history. From the perspective of Taiwan's historic experience, Chen argues that there was a home-rule movement dating from the Japanese colonial period and that the February 28 Incident grew up in continuity with this tradition. Despite its support and encouragement of Taiwanese demands for self-government in the editorial "Taiwanese Self-Government Movement," the editorial, and the CCP generally, was seriously ignorant of Taiwan's historical tradition in terms of home-rule politics. Rather, the CCP used the editorial as a basis to interpret the February 28 Incident as a mere part of the CCP's so-called New Democratic Revolution.¹⁰⁹

According to Chen Fangming, the native home-rule movement was an important tradition in the political development of Taiwan in the twentieth century. Because Taiwan was a colonial society, when the home-rule movement developed fully, it would eventually take two alternatives forms: either a political reform movement operating within the system and seeking the legal establishment of a Taiwan parliament and Taiwan's self-determination (Taiwan zijue); or a Taiwanese revolution aiming at Taiwan independence. Despite the suppression of the home-rule movement by the Japanese

¹⁰⁹ Chen Fangming 陳芳明, "Zhan hou chuqi Taiwan zizhi yundong yu Eerba Shijian" 戰後初期台灣自治運動與二二八事件 (Early postwar period Taiwan Self Government movement and the February 28 Incident), in *Eerba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* (Proceedings of the symposium on the February 28 Incident), ed. Chen Tanyu and Hu Huiling (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1992), 162.

colonial authorities during the war, the idea of Taiwan self-governance remained at the heart of the political views of those Taiwanese who fled to mainland China, who joined either the CCP or the KMT for the duration of the anti-Japanese war. After the KMT's takeover of Taiwan, however, the pursuit of self-government rose again as a result of an anti-Japanese legacy on the one hand, and of local resentment against the corruption and discriminatory policies of the Chen Yi government on the other hand. For this reason, according to Chen, the February 28 Incident was a politically oriented resistance movement, rather than a set of riots caused by the mobs, and it emerged in line with the tradition of Taiwan's home-rule movement, which the KMT government, like the CCP, totally neglected. The spirit of that home-rule movement then became most evident in the forty-two demands formulated by the Taipei Resolution Committee.¹¹⁰ Despite the KMT's long-term political oppression in Taiwan after the February 28 Incident, the spirit of the native home-rule movement continued as the Taiwan Independence Movement outside of Taiwan, and resulted eventually in the re-emergence of the democratic movement on the island. Therefore, it is necessary to place the February 28 Incident in Taiwan's own historical trajectory in order to understand the relations of Taiwanese political demands during the Incident with the tradition of Taiwan's home rule movement.¹¹¹

Chen Fangming's view on a history, or tradition, of a Taiwanese home-rule movement was actually shared by the DPP, which thus agreed with the CCP's early evaluation of the February 28 Incident as mounting Taiwanese demands for self-

¹¹⁰ There were originally 32 demands for political reform, but later 10 more demands were added in the afternoon of March 7, 1947. However, it has generally continued to be referred to as the Thirty-Two Demands. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 66-71.

¹¹¹ Chen, "Zhan hou chuqi Taiwan zhizi yundong yu Ereba Shijian," 143-163.

government. As discussed in Chapter Three, the DPP's narratives of the February 28 Incident often linked the Incident to its own later struggle against the KMT regime, and also placed the Incident in the trajectory of the Taiwanese pursuit of democracy in which the DPP also had a part. This was most evident in talks given by its leaders, such as Lu Xiulian, You Xikun, and Chen Shuibian. Their remarks connected their own anti-KMT struggles over the Meilidao Incident to the post-WWII Taiwanese struggle for self-government during the February 28 Incident. They also repeatedly stressed that the Incident stemmed from the home-rule movement during the Japanese colonial era and inspired the Taiwanese people in their subsequent movements for democracy.¹¹² In other words, the February 28 Incident in the DPP's narratives was regarded as a part of a history of Taiwan's pursuit of democratic autonomy.

In short, the CCP and the DPP both successively inflected the Incident for their respective political propaganda purposes. On the one hand, the CCP justified its political and armed battles against the KMT in the particular historical context of the 1946-49 Civil War and interpreted the Incident as a part of CCP-led general popular struggles against the KMT. On the other hand, the DPP has instead interpreted the Incident as a precedent for its own pursuit of democracy and independence. It thus legitimates its own political role and activities from the mid-1980s in terms of a history of Taiwanese struggle for self-governance dating back to the Japanese colonial era.

¹¹² “Fu zongtong zhichu Eerba Shijian mai xia Taiwan minzhu renquan zhongzi” (Vice president indicated that the February 28 Incident embedded the seeds of Taiwan's democracy and human rights), *CNA*, December 25, 2000; “You kui qiangdiao huanyuan Eerba zhenxiang; zheng yuan ni ban mingyu zhengshu” (The Premier emphasized restoration of the truth of the February 28 Incident; the Executive Yuan planned to issue rehabilitation certificates), *CNA*, February 28, 2003; *Da jiyuan shibao*, January 18, 2007, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/7/1/18/n1594333.htm> (accessed 3 July 2019).

A Historical Reflection on the Taiwanese Pursuit of Self-Government during the February 28 Incident

Despite both the CCP's and the DPP's political propaganda about the February 28 Incident as a Taiwanese fight for self-government, the disorganized protests of the populace at the beginning of the Incident, the discordant militant actions of local militias during the Incident, and the different aims of the various Resolution Committees did not clearly demonstrate the desire for such a goal. This section will reexamine the partisan claims about the Taiwanese pursuit of self-rule in the Incident by looking at the formative processes, and militant or political aims and activities, of local militias and Resolution Committees during the Incident.

As discussed in Chapter one, the KMT authority's mistreatment of a female tobacco vendor sparked the initial violent civilian riot in Taipei on the evening of February 27, 1947. This soon escalated into more radical actions the next day, and these in turn sparked a series of disturbances in various other locations of Taiwan. The protests were depicted in contemporary newspaper reports as voluntary yet unorganized protests, and the demands of the protesters mainly included punishment of the police perpetrators, compensation payments for the victims, and the release of the arrested, rather than any demands for political autonomy.¹¹³ Thus, rather than an organized and planned mission with defined political goals for Taiwanese political autonomy, the Incident was a diffuse and leaderless social movement in its initial stage. In other words, it was not in any way an attempt to subvert the existing political system or demand political autonomy that local Taiwanese organized, planned and then initiated the Incident. However, as the

¹¹³ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, February 28, 1947: Extra edition.

Incident developed, voices for political reforms and for self-government emerged as a common demand, and the Incident was transformed from a social disturbance into a political mobilization.

After the Incident broke out in the form of popular protests, Taiwanese elite leaders soon came out and started peaceful negotiations with Chen Yi's government and established the Taipei Resolution Committee, with counterparts throughout the island. At first, local elite and public representatives in Taipei sought to settle the chaotic situation in order to restore social order, and moderate tensions between the people and the authorities. In particular, Taipei city councillors first sent representatives to negotiate with officials in the Executive Office on the evening of February 28, 1947 and followed up the next day by establishing the Investigation Committee for the Bloody Case of Checking Smuggled Tobacco, which was subsequently retitled the Resolution Committee of the February 28 Incident, then restructured and expanded on March 2, 1947.¹¹⁴ Following Taipei, social and political elites in other parts of the island, including the former members of the Kominhokokai, set up their own local committees or local branches of Taipei's Resolution Committee. Table 9 lists the available information about these Resolution Committees and the numbers of their committee members in different

¹¹⁴ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 56-8.

Table 9

The Memberships of Resolution Committees and Their Former
Kominhokokai Members in the February 28 Incident

Resolution Committee	Numbers of members of Resolution Committees	Numbers of former Kominhokokai members on the Resolution Committee	Names and positions of Kominhokokai members on Committee
Taipei Resolution Committee	59	17	Standing committee: Zhou Yanshou, Lin Xiantang, Chen Yisong, Huang Chunqing, (Wang Tiandeng) Convener of finance team: Chen Chunjin Convener of provision team: Liu Mingchao Member: Liu Ming, Yan Qinxian, Chen Xiqing, Chen Fengyuan, Wang Mingui, Huang Huoding, Chen Haisha, Du Congming, Lin Zongxian, Zhang Qingchuan,
Local Resolution Committee at the municipal level			
Keelung branch	10	3	Leader of propaganda team: Cai Xingu Committee member: Chen Guiquan; Zeng Liangchen
Xinzhu city branch	200	11	Chairman: Zhang Shigu Standing committee: He Lidong, Cai Fulai Chief of general affairs dept.: Zheng Zuoheng Leader of general affair team: Cai Qinwang Leader of finance team: Li Yannian; Member of finance team: Zheng Hongyuan, Chen Huosheng, Wu Ji Chief of administration dept.: Chen Tiandeng Vice chief of processing dept.: Xu Zhenqian
Taizhong city Resolution Committee	40	8	Chairman: Huang Chaoqing Executive members: Lin Xiantang, Hong Yuanhuang, Huang Chaoqing, Zhang Huangui, Zhuang Chuisheng, Member: Huang Dong, Zhang Fengmo
Zhanghua city Resolution	25	6	Member of general affairs team:

Committee			Wu Hengqiu, Gan Dezhong Member of propaganda team: Su Zhenhui, Lu Shiming Member: Chen Fan, Lin Bao	
Jiayi city Resolution Committee	11	5	Member: Wang Ganshang, Lai Yuanping, Ju Ronggui, Lin Mugen, Shi Tianfu	
Tainan city Resolution Committee	17	3	Chairman: Han Shiquan Leader of general affairs team: Shen Rong Leader of security team: Tang Dezhang	
Kaohsiung city Resolution Committee	23	3	Member: Wang Shiding, Chen Qiqing, Wang Tianshang	
Pingdong branch	91	3	Member: Zheng Qinglian, Chen Kunlun, Jian Jinzhong	
Local Resolution Committee at the county level				
Xinzhu county branch	1	--	--	
Tainan county branch	34	4	Member: Chen Huazong, Lin Lanya, Xie Shuilan, Tian Wanzhi	
Penghu branch	11	2	Chairman: Xu Zhengjing Leader of provision team: Guo Shitou	
Hualian branch	51	3	Chairman: Ma Youyue Member: Lin Guixing, Xu Manhui	
Taidong branch	44	3	Chairman: Nan Zhixin Vice chairman: Wu Jinyu Chief of medical team: Li Quan	
Local Resolution Committee at the district/township/village levels				
Taipei county	Danshui	5	--	
	Banqian	2	--	
	Yilan branch	9	-	
	Loudong	1	--	
Xinzhu county	Zhongli	10	1	Committee member: Lin Tiankui
Taizhong county	Fengyuan	12	--	--
	Daijia	3	--	--
	Beidou	5	--	--
	Yuanlin	3	--	--
Tainan county	Puzi	16	1	Chairman: Huang Madian
	Beimen dist.	24	--	--
	Xinying	26	2	Chairman: Chen Huazong Leader of medical team: Liang Dao
Hualian county	Fenglin dist.	15	--	--
	Yuli district	8	--	--
	Fenglin township	8	--	--
Sum	764	75		

Sources: Hou , "Chong tan 'Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui' de jiaose," 4-31; Chen Xingtang ed., *Taiwan Ereba Shijian dangan shiliao*, (Taipei: Renjian chubanshe, 1992, 1999), vol. 1 & 2, 380-384, 441-442, 465,

485, 605, 614-616, 637-639, 649-654; Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.1, 101-126; Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.16, 94-197; Xu, ed., *Baomiju Taiwan zhan Ereba shiliao huibian*, vol. 3, 154-156.; Huangmin Fenggong (the Kominhokokai), A301010000C/0036/0003/36, in Neizhengbu Jingzhengshu dangan, National Archives of Taiwan (National Archives Administration, National Development Council).

cities and counties, including the numbers and names of former Kominhokokai members.¹¹⁵

As is shown by this table, at least 29 Resolution Committees were established across Taiwan at the municipal, county, town and village levels in early March 1947.¹¹⁶

As well, there were at least 764 participants in the organizations in various locations, among whom 75 were former Kominhokokai members.¹¹⁷ In other words, only 10% of

the participants in these communities were from the Kominhokokai. Therefore, former Kominhokokai members actually account for relatively a small part of most local

Resolution Committees in both totality and proportion. They actually did not form a

significant enough component of the Resolution Committees in terms of their numbers in

¹¹⁵ It should be noted that the table does not reflect the total numbers of people who joined various Resolution Committees due to the limitations of the sources. Both official and nonofficial sources often tend to record those individuals playing more crucial roles or holding relatively important positions on the Resolution Committees, though in some locations, such as Xinzhu city, more detailed information is available. The list of former Kominhokokai members mainly includes those holding relatively important positions. Moreover, as Hou Kunhong indicates, existing and available lists of various Resolution Committees were mainly compiled and reported by KMT secret agents, and the lists do not necessarily reflect fact. For example, a journalist from *Heping ribao* (Peace daily), who was also a witness, but who did not join the Resolution Committees, was listed as a member of the Xinzhu Resolution Committee without his knowledge. Hou Kunhong 侯坤宏, “Chong tan ‘Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui’ de jiaose” 重探二二八事件處理委員會的角色(Reexamining the role of the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* (Taiwan historical research) 21, no.4 (December 2014): 42-3.

¹¹⁶ Hou Kunhong has conducted a study of the establishment of the Resolution Committees and their members. However, Hou does not include local Resolution Committees established in Fenglin district and Yuli district of Hualian county. See Hou, “Chong tan ‘Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui’ de jiaose,” 4-31; Chen, ed., *Taiwan Ereba Shijian dangan shiliao*, vol. 2, 614-616.

¹¹⁷ It should be noted that some people engaged in more than one Resolution Committee and were included in the membership of multiple committees. For example, Lin Xiantang participated in both the Taizhong and the Taipei Resolution Committees.

any single location or across the island as a whole to direct or control the February 28 Incident. Nevertheless, they were active, and they did tend to hold leadership positions in these organizations. For example, of the 29 Resolution Committees with former Kominhokokai members, those members served as the chairman in eight local Resolution Committees, while at least four¹¹⁸ out of the 17 Standing Committee members were from the Kominhokokai in the Taipei Resolution Committee, which was the headquarters that led the negotiations with the KMT authorities during the February 28 Incident. Moreover, they also often served as executive members or team leaders in the organizations in many localities. Therefore, many of them were in charge of, or had the ability to manage, organize, or carry out the activities of the Resolution Committees, especially their political activities.

However, as previously discussed, Japanese connections were not necessarily the cause of their involvement in the Incident or in their subsequent criminal convictions by the KMT authorities. The most typical case was the aforementioned Wang Tiandeng, one of the 24 Resolution Committee members who were executed by the KMT regime during the Incident.¹¹⁹ Although Wang was not named as a Kominhokokai member on the 1946 list of Chen Yi's government or in Yang Lianggong's report, he was included in the expanded list compiled by the director of the Taiwan branch of the KMT Secret Bureau in April 1947, which stated that Wang had been a member in the central headquarters (zhongyang benbu) of the Kominhokokai.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ There were five people in the list, but whether Wang Tiandeng was a former member of the Kominhokokai seems questionable.

¹¹⁹ Hou, "Chong tan 'Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui' de jiaose," 32-34.

¹²⁰ Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol. 1, 102. Both Lee Xiaofeng and Lan Baozhou have studied Wang Tiandeng's case. However, neither of their articles indicates that Wang ever served in the Kominhokokai. Lee's studies of the 31 cases of Taiwanese elite who were either killed or missing during the February 28 Incident identify persons who were former Kominhokokai members, such as Lin

Apparently, the KMT regime deliberately linked Wang to former Japanese colonial authorities, and he was arrested and secretly executed by the KMT regime without a trial. According to Chen Yi's report to Chiang on March 13, 1947, Wang's crimes included: 1) scheming to foment rebellion and organize the February 28 Incident Resolution Committee, and also serving as director of its propaganda team; 2) instigating and organizing former Japanese military-trained soldiers as armed forces for expanding the rebellion; 3) controlling radio stations, giving rebellious speeches, proposing the Thirty-Two Demands, and inciting the people during the Incident; 4) secret establishing of a "pseudo" New Chinese Republic government (*Xinhua minguo zhengfu*).¹²¹ In another report listing major fugitives involved in the rebellion, the KMT regime's charge of Wang's crimes was similar to that of the aforementioned report, though excluding the allegation of trying to set up a new republic, and with the additional accusations of engaging in "surveillance of the Bank of Taiwan in an attempt to control the province's finances" and to exercise "control of transportation facilities."¹²² Moreover, the report that listed individuals participating in the February Incident who were executed or had otherwise died repeated the list of Wang's crimes related to his leading role in the Taipei Resolution Committee and in drawing up and drafting of the Thirty-Two Demands.¹²³

Apparently, Wang was persecuted mainly because of his political involvement in the Incident. In particular, the repeatedly made charges that Wang had participated in the Taipei Resolution Committee, worked for political reforms through drafting the Thirty-

Maosheng and Chen Xin. See Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰, *Ereba xiaoshi de Taiwan jingying* 二二八消失的台灣菁英 (Taiwanese elites who were missing during the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1990), 52-75. Lan Baozhou 藍博洲, *Chenshi, liuwang, Ereba* 沈屍、流亡、二二八 (Sunken corpses, exile, and the February 28 Incident) (Taipei: Shibao chuban, 1992), 165-238.

¹²¹ Hou, ed., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.17, 271.

¹²² Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.16, 291.

¹²³ Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.2, 365.

Two Demands, and broadcasted Taiwanese political demands, all underlined the KMT regime's concerns about political challenges by Taiwanese reformers and proponents of self-government like Wang. The charge of "attempting to establish a so-called New Chinese Republic government" even further indicated the regime's alarm at the prospect of Taiwan independence. Therefore, rather than his alleged connection to Japanese colonialism that brought about Wang's murder, it was his political agenda for Taiwanese political autonomy that led to his execution by the KMT regime.

Ironically, former communist activists in the February 28 Incident, such as Su Xin and Cai Qingrong, have instead claimed that Wang Tiandeng acted under the direction and leadership of the CCP's Taiwan Provincial Work Committee, but they gloss over his personal thoughts and long-term commitment to the pursuit of Taiwan's political autonomy, which is well elaborated by Chen Junkai. According to Chen, Wang's political ideals of Taiwan's democratic politics and self-governance had remained consistent from the time of his involvement in the Taiwan Local Self-Government League under Japanese colonialism to his participation in the election of Taiwan provincial councilors.¹²⁴ Indeed, the fact that, other than Wang Tiandeng, local elites figures engaged in the Resolution Committee, such as Huang Chaosheng, Liao Jinping, and Zhang Qingchuan, had also previously participated in organizations such as the Taiwan Cultural Association or the Popular Party (*minzhong dang*) pursuing Taiwanese political rights during Japanese

¹²⁴ Chen Junkai 陳君愷, "Chuantou lishi de miwu: Wang Tiandeng de sixiang, lichang ji qi pingjia wenti" 穿透歷史的迷霧：王添灯的思想、立場及其評價問題 (Penetrating the mist of history: Wang Tiandeng's thoughts, standpoint, and judgment question), in *Ershi shiji Taiwan lishi renwu: Di liu jie Zhonghua minguo shi zhuanli lunwenji* 20世紀台灣歷史與人物：第六屆中華民國史專題論文集 (Taiwan history and characters in the 20th century: Proceedings of the sixth special topic conference on the history of the Republic of China), ed. Guoshiguan (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2002), 1075-1086, 1091-1092.

colonialization,¹²⁵ suggests a continuity in the Taiwanese pursuit of Taiwan's autonomy.

Another important Taiwanese elite leader during the February 28 Incident was Huang Madian. Huang graduated from the Medical School of the Taiwan Governor-General (Taiwan zhongdufu yixuexiao),¹²⁶ and he later became a successful businessman. Unlike Wang Tiandeng, Huang had closer ties to the Japanese colonial authorities. From 1920 to 1932, he was successively appointed as Puzi township head, Tainan councilor, and councilor of the Governor-General of Taiwan (Zongdufu pingyiyuan) by the Japanese colonial government. After the establishment of the Kominhokokai, Huang was named as a member of its central organ in April 1941.¹²⁷ When the February 28 Incident occurred, Huang was a councilor of Tainan County and was secretly reported by a KMT secret agent for organizing and serving as chairman of the Puzi Resolution Committee. Accordingly, he was executed by the KMT thereafter.¹²⁸ The KMT regime's accusations against Huang included assembling militant groups to seize arms from police stations; occupying governmental institutions; usurping the role of mayor of Tainan county; and organizing the second detachment (dier zhidui) of the Self-rule Coalition Army.¹²⁹ Although it was said that Huang's death was related to his Japanese connections, including his Kominhokokai membership during the colonial era,¹³⁰ the KMT's internal

¹²⁵ Zhongyang yanjiuyuan 中央研究院, ed., "Liao Dexiong xiansheng fangwen jilu" 廖德雄先生訪問紀錄 (Interview with Mr. Liao Dexiong), and "Huang Ruilin, Huang Ruifeng xiongdi fangwen jilu" 黃瑞霖、黃瑞峰兄弟訪問紀錄 (Interview with the Huang brothers), *Koushu lishi* 4 口述歷史 (Oral history) no.4 (February 1, 1993): 58, 139. Huang Chaosheng and Liao Jinping were killed by the KMT government during the Incident.

¹²⁶ The Medical School of Taiwan Government-General was the forerunner of today's Medical School of National Taiwan University.

¹²⁷ Li, *Ereba xiaoshi de Taiwan jingying*, 218-220.

¹²⁸ Xu, ed., *Baomiju Taiwan zhan Ereba shiliao huibian*, vol. 1, 235, 238.

¹²⁹ Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dang'an huibian*, vol.16, 152.

¹³⁰ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 351n254.

reports clearly point to Huang's alleged leadership role in fomenting violence against the KMT that led to his execution by the KMT regime.

In fact, across Taiwan, people in many cities and counties, especially local social leaders, brought forward direct demands or calls for local self-government before or after the establishment of local Resolution Committees. Table 10 shows that from March 1 to March 6, 1947, almost all major cities and counties across the island made demands or issued calls for local self-rule or political reforms that embodied self-governance tendencies. As the table indicates, on March 1, 1947, Keelung city council held an interim meeting at which it raised the issue and appealed for local self-government. On March 2, civilians from Taipei, Xinzhu and Zhonghua cities joined those in Keelung to respond to the call. Nevertheless, it was not until March 5, 1947, that Taipei, Xinzhu and Taizhong Resolution Committees formally presented the political demands for implementing self-government. For some cities and counties, such as Jiayi city, as well as Xinzhu, Taizhong, Kaohsiung, and Penghu counties, available sources do not clearly show that direct calls or demands for local self-government were made by local people. Yet it is known that negotiations also occurred in some of those places between local Resolution Committees or popular representatives and the KMT authorities.¹³¹ Moreover,

¹³¹ For example, Jiayi Resolution Committee negotiated with the authorities as early as on March 3, followed by several rounds of negotiations in the following days. In Kaohsiung, people also negotiated with the authorities while students circulated demands for democracy in leaflets and slogans. But negotiations with the authorities in Jiayi and Kaohsiung cities all failed, and the representatives were arrested and some of them were killed later. In Fengshan of Kaohsiung county, despite negotiations between groups of local youth and local authorities on March 4, available sources do not indicate that a direct call or demand for self-government was articulated, although the requirement of peaceful solution through political means was made. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 106-9, 117-18, 126; Chen, ed., *Taiwan Ereba Shijian dang'an shiliao*, vol. 2, 505-506.

Table 10
Demands for Autonomous Political Rule in Various Places in Taiwan,
March 1-March 6, 1947

Places		Demands of Local Resolution Committees or of the people for political reform related to self-rule*					
		March 1	March 2	March 3	March 4	March 5	March 6
Municipal city							
Taipei	Urban civilians		x				
	Some councilors				x		
	Resolution Committee					x	
Keelung	City councilors, interim meeting	x					
Xinzhu	Unspecified "people"		x				
	Resolution Committee					x	
Taizhong	Resolution Committee					x	
Zhonghua	Unspecified "People"		x				
Jiayi	Jiayi Resolution Committee			x			
Tianan	City council			x			
Kaoshiung	Students called for democracy by leaflets and slogans			x			
Pingdong	Youth corps				x		
	Urban residents assembly						x
County							
Taipei	Baochao resolution committee						x
	Yilan resolution committee						x
Xinzhu	Unspecified "people" in Zhongli			x			
Taizhong	Yuanlin local resolution committee						
Tainan	County council				x		
	Xinying township people assembly			x			
Kaoshiung	Local youth in Fengshan				x		
Hualian	Urban residents assembly				x		
Taidong	Youth assembly			x			
Penghu	Penghu local branch of the Resolution Committee						

Sources: *Minbao*, March 9, 1947:2; *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 4, 1947: Tainan special edition; March 7, 1947:1; March 8, 1947:2; *Xingtai ribao*, March 6, 1947:1&2; *Zhong wai ribao*, March 6, 1947:2; March 7, 1947:1; March 8, 1947:1; Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 64-5, 77-80, 96, 106, 137, 141-3, 148; Chen Xingtang ed., *Taiwan Ereba Shijian dangan shiliao*, vol. 2, 505-506, 520, 553, 558; Xu Xueji, ed., *Baomiju Taiwan zhan Ereba shiliao huibian* vol. 3, 161-63.

Note:

* This table counts negotiations by these Resolution Committees with local authorities, and the demands of local people for political reform that included the election of city and county mayors, as well as direct calls for local self-governance.

in Zhongli of Xinzhu county, the masses took over the local district office and themselves announced the implementation of self-government on March 3, 1947, while Yuanlin of Taizhong county set up its local Resolution Committee on March 3.¹³² In Penghu, a local branch of the Resolution Committee was established on March 6, 1947 in response to developments in Taipei. In addition, local people there also called for and responded to the call for political reform from the Taipei Resolution Committee, but there is no specific date available.¹³³ Thus, by March 6, 1947, nearly all major cities and counties on Taiwan had expressed either support for or a demand for political autonomy.

Nevertheless, ultimately the leading institution for the local people, especially for local elites, in their negotiations with the KMT authorities seems to have been the Taipei Resolution Committee. After its expansion on March 2, 1947 as previously indicated, the Taipei Resolution Committee decided that there was an urgent need on March 3 to circulate its report on the Incident to the world and the Nanjing central government.¹³⁴ Its telegram to Chiang Kai-shek would explain the cause and course of the Incident, and request democratic reforms with the implementation of local self-rule (*difang zizhi*) and the dispatch of a high-ranking official (*dayuan*) to Taiwan for mediation purposes.¹³⁵ Thus, even before the formal political demands raised by the Resolution Committee on March 5, it had openly expressed the desire for local self-governance, a fact that suggests a realization among the Taiwanese people, particularly the elites, that the root of Taiwan's problem lay in this political issue.

¹³² Yuanlin was the place in which Taizhong county jurisdiction resided. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 77, 98.

¹³³ Xu, ed., *Baomiju Taiwan zhan Ereba shiliao huibian* vol. 3, 20, 22, 26.

¹³⁴ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 3, 1947: Extra Edition.

¹³⁵ *Minbao*, March 4, 1947:2.

On March 4, the Resolution Committee passed a resolution on its further expansion into a provincial organization. It decided to notify and urge all county and municipal councils (*xian shi canyihui*) on Taiwan to organize local Resolution Committees for the purpose of dealing with local disturbances and to send their representatives to the meetings then being held in Taipei. Besides that, it resolved on measures to unify public opinions (*tongyi yanlun*).¹³⁶ But as Table 11 reveals, local voices about political reform emerged in some places, such as Xinzhu, before the notice arrived from Taipei. In the meetings held by the Taipei Resolution Committee on March 4, one of its members, Li Wanju, president of the *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, reported that the United Press (*Hezhongshe*) released news in Shanghai that distorted the Incident by calling it riots planned by Taiwanese people seeking international trusteeship and ultimate independence for the island. His speech made clear that the disturbance resulted instead from government malfeasance (*zhengzhi buliang*).¹³⁷

In the meantime, the Taiwan Provincial Political Construction Association was established as an important local political force under the guidance of the KMT regime with the purpose of weakening the power of the Resolution Committee. But even one of its leaders, Jiang Weichuan, and other local public representatives¹³⁸ met Chen Yi and requested a concrete plan for political reform of the kind engineered by the Taipei Resolution Committee.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 4, 1947: Taipei Extra Edition.

¹³⁷ *Minbao*, March 5, 1947:2.

¹³⁸ With the suggestion of the Association, the Taipei Resolution Committee expanded on March 2, 1947. As this allowed various people from different professions and social classes, such as students and common civilians, among whom Chiang Weichuan enjoyed much support, and therefore, this led to its incorporation of too diverse members and their factional disputes. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 58-61.

¹³⁹ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 5, 1947:1.

Following its decision on expanding itself into a provincial organization, the Taipei Resolution Committee on the afternoon of March 5 passed two resolutions, namely, the Memorandum of February 28 Incident Resolution Committee (Ereba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui zuzhidagang) and a protocol with eight articles for political reform, articulating the demand for local self-government in regard to the election of city and county heads. According to the Memorandum, the Resolution Committee was the highest committee, and a Standing Committee was set up under its auspices. The Standing Committee would oversee the Executive Bureau and the Administrative Bureau, under which eight divisions were further established.¹⁴⁰ In principle, the Resolution Committee was structured as a political organization to “unite the people of the province, resolve the February 28 Incident, and reform Taiwan’s politics,”¹⁴¹ as was stated in the Memorandum. As some scholars point out, the initial spontaneous yet unorganized actions were gradually organized and led to the formation of an island-wide organization, which was being transformed from acting as a mediator in relation to a public security incident into being a major institution formulating demands for political reforms aimed at achieving self-government, such as the popular election of city and county mayors.¹⁴²

On the same day of March 5, the conference for the establishment of the Taiwan Province Youth League for Self-rule (Taiwan sheng zizhi qingnian tongmeng) was inaugurated in Taipei. It was led by Chiang Weichuan after he had been elbowed out of the Taipei Resolution Committee by other members of the elite, and who now looked for support from the youth and students. After the Taipei Resolution Committee resolved on the protocol with eight articles for political reform on March 4, 1947, Chiang met Chen

¹⁴⁰ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 6, 1947:1; *Minbao*, March 6, 1947:2.

¹⁴¹ *Zhongwai ribao*, March 6, 1947:2.

¹⁴² For example, see Chen, *Chonggou Ereba*, 222-24,

Yi and instead suggested an outline with nine articles for provincial reform, excluding members of the Resolution Committee from participating in the committee for reform.¹⁴³ In addition to the open political demands in the petition and in the title of the League, its guiding principles included a platform to build a high degree of local autonomy in Taiwan that would enable it serve as a model province for China.¹⁴⁴ This was a more radical platform than the Taipei Resolution Committee's earlier call for political reforms with its relatively subtle implication in favor of Taiwanese self-rule. The new formulation reflected a power struggle within the leadership of the Resolution Committee and a split among these elite leaders in the process of Taiwanese political pursuit.¹⁴⁵

On the other hand, as is discussed elsewhere, after the political move on March 5, the Taipei Resolution Committee made further actions in the next two days. These included the release of "Letter to All Our Compatriots" on the evening of March 6, which stressed the aim of the Committee;¹⁴⁶ and passing the outline of a settlement for the February 28 Incident (Ereba Shijian chuli dagang) along with presentation of the Outline to Chen Yi on March 7. Besides dealing with the current situation, the Outline, fundamentally a set of demands for political autonomy, aimed at implementing fundamental solutions to the problems of governance on the island, focusing on military and political aspects. Nevertheless, the Outline was rejected by Chen Yi.¹⁴⁷ On March 8, the Taipei Resolution Committee retracted the resolution, claiming that it did not fully represent public opinion and interests.¹⁴⁸ Thus, the Resolution Committee was forced not

¹⁴³ Chen, *Chonggou Ereba*, 231-32.

¹⁴⁴ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 6, 1947:1.

¹⁴⁵ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 64.

¹⁴⁶ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 7, 1947:1.

¹⁴⁷ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 67-71.

¹⁴⁸ *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, March 9, 1947: 2.

only to deny its legitimacy as the representative of the Taiwanese people, but also to abort political negotiations with the KMT authorities for self-government. Despite that, the Taiwanese people continued their struggle for political autonomy.

Indeed, apart from the elite-led Resolution Committees, the Taiwanese pursuit of political autonomy was also expressed in the local militias' actions. Previous discussions have demonstrated that local militias participated in both anti-KMT actions and in activities geared to maintain public order, and that their operations were often a voluntary response to calls by local Resolution Committees and other elite-organized groups. Although some groups involved in maintaining public order, including those established by the Resolution Committees, took actions to take possession of arms from official institutions, they did so mainly for the purpose of preventing arms from being taken by radical or hooligan groups, and because they themselves needed weapons for the maintenance of order. In this way, the responsibility for public security shifted to local Resolution Committees and local militias in many places where police forces were paralyzed during the Incident's initial violence and chaos. For example, in Luodong and Suao of Taipei county, local people organized a local Resolution Committee and security team that seized weapons from the police station to maintain order. In the Fenglin and Yuli districts of Hualian County, the arms held in police stations were safeguarded or sealed off by the local branch of the Three People's Principles Youth League respectively.¹⁴⁹ In some cases, such as Beigang District of Tainan County, local governments even requested help from the local militias that consisted mostly of returned

¹⁴⁹ However, the KMT regime regarded such actions as a forceful takeover of the police stations' weapons and punished their leaders later on. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 142, 146.

soldiers who were armed for their order-keeping duties.¹⁵⁰ In such cases, the militias were in essence made responsible for the maintenance of public order. They prevented further chaos and maintained social stability, and their actions were in fact an embodiment of self-governance in conditions of sociopolitical chaos.

On the other hand, radical militias that violently fought the KMT regime suggested another dimension of the pursuit of political autonomy. A well-known case was the Douliu minjun. Chen Cuandi, a doctor and dean of a local hospital, who had served as a military doctor for the Japanese army in Vietnam, together with other members of the local elite, first organized a committee for maintaining public security calling for participation by returned Taiwanese soldiers, students and other youths on March 2, 1947. On the next day, a “self-defense” militia (*ziweidui*) with about 200 members, mostly returned soldiers, was set up, under the command of Huang Qingbiao, a former volunteer soldier who served in the Japanese army in Indonesia.¹⁵¹ Afterward, Chen Cuandi reorganized and expanded the committee for maintaining public security into a security force (*jinbeidui*) subdivided into squads, and engaged this force in battles against the KMT forces in Jiayi and Huwei, but eventually retreated from Douliu to the Zhanghu area,¹⁵² where he organized a minjun base under his command for long-term resistance to the KMT regime. Alerted to Chen’s actions in Douliu minjun, the KMT regime placed Chen on the wanted-list of major rebel fugitives, criminalizing him as a major rebel charged with major offenses. He was charged with leading armed rioters

¹⁵⁰ Xu Xueji 許雪姬, ed., “Gao Zongchen xiansheng fangwen jilu” 高總成先生訪問紀錄 (Interview with Mr. Gao Zongchen), *Koushu lishi* 口述歷史 (Oral history) no.3 (February 1, 1992): 81.

¹⁵¹ Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲, ed., “Huang Qingbiao” 黃清標 (Interview with Mr. Huang Qingbiao), in *Jiayun pingye Ererba* 嘉雲平野二二八 (February 28 Incident in Jiayi and Yunlin areas), ed. Zhang Yangxian (Taipei: Wusanlian jijinhui, 1995), 84-5; Lai et al., *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 102.

¹⁵² Zhanghu is an area subordinated to today’s Gukun village in Yuanlin county.

against the Nationalist army in Douliu, and with attacking a military warehouse and seizing arms in a way that echoed charges against Xie Xuehong.¹⁵³

In fact, Chen Cuandi had once studied in Japan¹⁵⁴ and had been jailed for his participation in a peripheral organization of the Japanese communists. However, although a remnant of the 27 Brigade retreated to Zhanghu area where Chen had formed his base after retreating from Douliu, his prior activities in the Douliu area were not carried out under the banner of the communist-linked Self-Rule Coalition Army.¹⁵⁵ In the letter he wrote to nearby Zhanghu village heads when he retreated to Zhanghu, Chen expressed his devotion to the pursuit of democracy in Taiwan, and he called on Indigenous compatriots to give assistance to this mission.¹⁵⁶ In short, Chen's actions during the Incident clearly demonstrate a militant pursuit of democratic self-rule in Taiwan. Although not all members of his militia participated in armed actions with that prescribed political aim, some of them acted in response to his call to "fight for our Taiwanese," suggesting a Taiwanese consciousness behind their actions.¹⁵⁷

In fact, a kind of awareness of Taiwan's anti-colonial struggle was in circulation prior to the outbreak of the Incident. On January 25, 1946, *Zhengjing bao* published an article by Wang Baiyuan rebutting the KMT regime's accusation that the Taiwanese had

¹⁵³ Hou and Xu, eds., *Ereba Shijian dangan huibian*, vol.16, 292.

¹⁵⁴ It is unclear when Chen began studying in Japan. Nevertheless, according to this source, Chen graduated and returned to Taiwan in 1933. Zhang, ed. *Ereba Shijian cidian*, 453.

¹⁵⁵ Lin, "Yinsheng de zuoyi wuzhuang: Ereba Shijian zhong de zizhi lianjun," 329, 335-36, 342.

¹⁵⁶ Li Madou deng panlian an 李媽兜等叛亂案 (The rebellious case of Li Madou and others), Chen Cuandi zhi Lin Shuiqin han 陳篡地致林水欽函 (The letter from Chen Cuandi to Lin Shuiqin), A305440000C/0042/276.11/116/0001/001/009-0011, Guofangbu Houbei Silingbu Dangan 國防部後備司令部檔案 (Archives of Armed Forces Reserve Command, MND), Guojia Fazhan Weiyuanhui Dangan Guanliju 國家發展委員會檔案管理局 (National Archives Administration, NDC).

¹⁵⁷ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 102-3; Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲, ed., "Zhu Hanzuo" 朱漢作 (Interview with Mr. Zhu Hanzuo), and "Ye Jinsheng" 葉金生 (Interview with Mr. Ye Jinsheng), in *Jia-yun pingye Ereba* 嘉雲平野二二八 (February 28 Incident in Jiayi and Yunlin areas), ed. Zhang Yangxian (Taipei: Wusanlian jijinhui, 1995), 138, 146.

been enslaved by Japanese colonization. In the article, Wang maintained that the basic traits of his Taiwanese fellows were the same as those of the descendants of the early immigrants who went along with Zheng Chenggong to Taiwan about three hundred years ago, and who together with the Zheng regime had fought against the Manchus for more than thirty years after China proper had all already surrendered to the Manchus.¹⁵⁸

Evidently, there existed in 1947 an awareness of Taiwan's past resistance history although Wang still viewed Taiwan's colonial past from a Chinese perspective. Such a "Chinese consciousness" was not uncommon among the local Taiwanese elite, who identified with China as their motherland because of their Chinese ethnic and cultural roots, as was evident in the case of Lin Xiantang. Nevertheless, a sense of "our Taiwanese people" emerged even during the Incident, as mentioned earlier, and soon after the Incident, the awareness of a history of Taiwan's anti-colonial struggle appeared in the minds of Taiwanese exiles disillusioned with the KMT regime, particularly as represented by the aforementioned work of Wang Yude.

Historical Research on the February 28 Incident beyond Partisan Parameters

The Scholarly Search for the Causes of the February 28 Incident

Other than the previously discussed studies supporting or disputing the three political parties' interpretations of the February 28 Incident, one line of scholarship on the subject has also tried to identify other causes of the Incident. It is generally agreed among scholars that a combination of factors, rather than one single element, caused the

¹⁵⁸ Wang Baiyuan 王白淵, "Gao waishengren zhugong" 告外省人諸公 (To all the mainlander gentlemen), <https://www.wufi.org.tw/%E5%91%8A%E5%A4%96%E7%9C%81%E4%BA%BA%E8%AB%B8%E5%85%AC/> (accessed 10 December, 2019). Originally published by *Zhengjing bao* on January 25, 1946.

Incident. Despite that, scholars still tend to explore the issue from one particular angle, for example, exploring a political, economic, social, or cultural aspect, to understand the cause of the Incident.

In particular, many studies of the February 28 Incident argue that economic crisis played a crucial role in the outbreak of the Incident, and that was caused mainly by the KMT regime's exploitative policies and its state-controlled economic system, in which the state-run enterprises, the Monopoly Bureau, and the Trade Bureau were all key components.¹⁵⁹ According to Chen Cuilian, because of the need to supply resources for the KMT's battles against the CCP in the Civil War, the KMT regime turned from the economically-deprived mainland, where commodity prices soared and inflation raged, to seeking resources in Taiwan. The KMT regime tried to draw on such resources by establishing various state-run enterprises, and transforming formerly Japanese properties into state-operated enterprises. Establishing a tight hold on Taiwan's resources, the KMT shipped them out to mainland China at a time when the island itself was in urgent need of aid for post-war reconstruction. Moreover, as the reliance of the Chen Yi administration and state-run enterprises on the financial support of the Bank of Taiwan, which was effectively the provincial treasury, led to an excessive issuance of currency, which in turn caused hyperinflation in the immediate post-war period.¹⁶⁰ In fact, the Chen Yi regime's economic policies in essence amounted to an economic monopoly. With the Monopoly

¹⁵⁹ Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 81-95; Chen, "Shi xi Taiwan Ererba Qiyi qian de si da jingji maodun," 165-180; Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 80-89; Lai et al., *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 23-26; Li, *Daoyu xin taiji: Cong zhongzhan dao Ererba*, 39-45; Wong Jiayi 翁嘉禧, "Lun Ererba Shijian yu jingji zhengce de yinguo guanxi" 論二二八事件與經濟政策的因果關係 (On the causality of the February 28 Incident and the economic policies), in *Taiwan fengwu* 48, no.4 (December 1998): 92-103; Zhang Xucheng 張旭成, "Ererba Shijian de zhengzhi beijing ji qi yingxiang" 二二八事件的政治背景及其影響 (The political background of the February 28 Incident and its impacts), in *Ererba Shijian xueshu lunwenj* (Essays on the February 28 Incident of 1947), ed. Chen Fangming (Irvine, CA: Taiwan Publishing Co., 1988), 97-98; Zhang et al., *Ererba Shijian zhiren guishu yanjiu baogao*, 28-35.

¹⁶⁰ Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 81-86.

Bureau's control of transactions of crucial types of merchandise, and the Trade Bureau's strict control of domestic and foreign trade, the regime monopolized almost all levels of business and industrial production in a way that left little room for private business and caused degradation of the island's economy and day-to-day difficulties for people living in Taiwan.¹⁶¹

Certain scholars also stress political problems as a crucial cause of the 28 February Incident. Zhang Xucheng argues that neither the communists nor the advocates of Taiwanese independence were the cause of the Incident. Rather, it was a result of "guan bi min fan," and what drove the people to rise were the political and economic failures of the Chen Yi government. According to Zhang, besides the monopolistic, state-controlled economic system and the KMT's exploitative policies, as well as the corruption and incompetence of the Chen Yi government, the regime was in essence another dictatorial form of a colonial regime. With the establishment of the Executive Office, Chiang Kai-shek granted Governor Chen authority over all the island's administrative, legislative, juridical, and economic bodies. Under the system, local Taiwanese were at first almost entirely excluded from high posts in the Chen Yi government, while the Provincial Consultative Assembly (Sheng canyihui), made up mainly of local Taiwanese but possessing very limited power, barely functioned as a mechanism to balance the power of this government. Moreover, disregarding the ROC Constitution and the opposition of the local Taiwanese, the Chen Yi regime forcefully pushed back the implementation of local self-government in Taiwan to 1949. As a result, the political status of the Taiwanese people remained as low as, or even worse than, it had

¹⁶¹ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 25-26; Zhang et al., *Ereba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao*, 28-35.

been during the Japanese colonial era.¹⁶² Thus, it was no wonder that the people would express their frustration in a form like the February 28 Incident.

Chen Mingtong's examination of factional politics inside the KMT regime pushes the political line of analysis further to interpret the Incident. He holds that, although various factors including cultural barriers, the economic crisis, severe unemployment, official corruption, political discrimination, and ethnic frustration underlay the February 28 Incident, Chen Yi's management and policies lay at the heart of the problems. Since KMT officials as a rule tended to rely on factions to maintain political control and achieve social mobilization, factional struggle within the KMT was also transplanted to Taiwan as a political characteristic of the party when it took over the island, and Chen Yi's administration on the island was in no way exempt from factionalism. As a result, factional politics corralled the administration into a system of structural corruption, economic extortion, and political antagonism. These factions themselves thus scrambled for official positions in public institutions because officials in high positions often enjoyed power over policy decision-making that allowed the appropriation of public resources for their private interests. In turn, those individuals and groups able to grab crucial positions and resources would enjoy advantages in political struggles within the party. As a result, talented people, including especially those from Taiwan, who lacked party and factional connections, were excluded from offices in the new government. As such, factional politics often not only resulted in dissatisfaction with the results of resource allocation, but also led to political corruption and degeneration. Such factionalism consequently severely weakened the Taiwanese people's expectations for the new government while also hampering the Chen Yi government's own policy-making

¹⁶² Zhang, "Ereba Shijian de zhengzhi beijing ji qi yingxiang," 94-99.

and implementation. In short, factional struggles resulted in Chen Yi's failure to effectively carry out postwar reconstruction in Taiwan, and this according to Chen was the major cause of the February 28 Incident.¹⁶³

Chen Cuilian shares similar views about the effect of KMT's factional struggles on the Incident. She argues that the contested political environment shaped by factional struggles inside the KMT regime was the major negative factor that made it difficult to quickly calm down the situation after the crisis exploded. These KMT factions scrambled for power, seeking their own interests on the one hand, while hooking up with local forces to help them contend with each other on the other hand, impeded the Chen Yi government's effectiveness, and aggravated the tensions and sense of confrontation. After the outbreak of the Incident, factional struggles either fueled the tensions or intensified the conflict in ways that furthered the growth and expansion of disturbances, as the rivals leveled malicious accusations against one another. In short, factional struggles intensified tensions before the crisis, facilitated the spread of the disturbances, and caused numerous people to be falsely killed or persecuted by the KMT regime afterward.¹⁶⁴ Later, in 2017, Chen published *Chongguo Ererba*, which reiterated her earlier views on factional struggles but treats them as a part of a Chinese mode of ruling that was transferred along with other aspects of Chinese political culture from the mainland into Taiwan after the war.¹⁶⁵

In short, although scholarly opinions on the Incident vary in substance and emphasis, their stress on seeking its major cause in a political, cultural, social, or

¹⁶³ Chen Mingtong 陳明通, "Paixi zhengzhi yu Chen Yi zhi tai lun" 派系政治與陳儀治台論 (Factional politics and Chen Yi's administration of Taiwan), in *Taiwan guangfu chuqi lishi* (Taiwan history during the early post-war period), ed. Lai Tse-han (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1993), 223, 252-280.

¹⁶⁴ Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 211-294.

¹⁶⁵ Chen, *Chongguo Ererba*, 134-192.

economic aspects of the event has remained similar in approach to that in such previously discussed studies carried out under the partisan influence of the KMT, CCP, or DPP as *A Tragic Beginning* by Lai Tse-han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou. According to these authors, the Incident was a result of various factors, including a massive dismissal of Taiwanese public employees, questionable dealings in confiscated Japanese property, corruption among officials, the malfeasance of the Chen Yi administration, misconduct by ill-disciplined mainland soldiers, a military void, excessive freedom for the mass media, severe inflation and economic crises, severe unemployment aggravated by the return of numerous Taiwanese former soldiers from overseas, a deterioration of social order, linguistic and cultural alienation between the mainland Chinese and the Taiwanese, and more importantly, a clash of worldviews between the two groups caused by the negative impact of long-term Japanese colonial rule,¹⁶⁶ as the KMT had long claimed. That is to say, the scholarly search for the causes of the February 28 Incident still more or less reflected the influence of partisan views.

Academic Discussion about the Course of the February 28 Incident

Along with reforms in both Taiwan and mainland China from the 1980s and the subsequent relaxation of political restrictions, scholars on both sides of the straits, especially in Taiwan, also tried to break through the long-held partisan interpretations of the February 28 Incident by carrying out more detailed analyses of its course, examining such topics as its length and how to periodize it, the roles of Chinese and foreign participants, and political tendencies at certain critical moments.

¹⁶⁶ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 63-96.

Although many scholars tend to conduct an examination of the Incident in a longer period, some of them emphasize a particular characteristic or drastic transformation of the Incident in a short period. For example, in their collaborative work on the Incident, Lai Tse-han et al., Chen Cuilian, and Chen Yishen agree on periodizing the Incident broadly as extending from February 27 to May 15, 1947.¹⁶⁷ In contrast, by placing emphasis on the riots, Liu Shengji restricts the Incident to the period of twelve days from February 27 to March 10, 1947.¹⁶⁸

For his part, Wu Micha indicates that disagreements about the periodization of the Incident reflect different perspectives on it. He especially highlights the disjunction between official KMT narratives and popular memories of the Incident. By restricting the course of the Incident to the period from February 27, 1947 to March 12, 1947, the KMT narratives stress the violence by the Taiwanese and the violent nature of the Incident. In contrast, popular narratives as expressed in personal memoirs and private publications tend to either stretch the period back to 1945 and forward to May 1947, or even connect it with the White Terror era.¹⁶⁹ Extending the definition in this way highlights the background and longer term of causes of the Incidents, especially the misgovernment of the Chen Yi regime and the building resentment of the Taiwanese people, and brings into focus the subsequent persecution and killings of victims by the KMT regime.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 100-101; Chen, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, 15; Chen, "Lun Taiwan Ererba Shijian de yuanyin," 28-30; Chen, "Zuqun chongtu, guan bi min fa yu baofu tusha," 314-342.

¹⁶⁸ Liu, "Gongdang fenzi zai Ererba Shijian qian hou de huodong," 85.

¹⁶⁹ In a broad sense, the "White Terror" era can refer to the period from the imposition of the martial law on May 20 1949 to its lifting on July 15 1987. Nevertheless, generally speaking, most intense persecution and the most prosecutions over the Incident occurred in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

¹⁷⁰ Wu Micha 吳密察, "Jiang Weichuan yu Ererba Shijian" 蔣渭川與二二八事件 (Jiang Weichuan and the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* (Proceedings of the symposium on the February 28 Incident), ed. Chen Yanyu and Hu Huiling (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1992), 196.

Similarly, Chen Yisheng holds that to better understand the February 28 Incident, the course of the Incident should be examined in three phases. In his view, the first phase started on the evening of February 27, 1947 and lasted until the establishment of the Taipei Resolution Committee on March 2, during which time the violence by the government agents and police in dealing with the illegal sale of tobacco first caused civil protest in Taipei, and then the violent responses of the authority to popular protests further generated riots in Taipei, which ultimately spread beyond the city. Chen sees the days between March 3 and March 8 as constituting the second phase, when the local Taiwanese civilian forces tangled with the KMT authorities. On the side of the civilians, political negotiating ran parallel with attempts to establish militia forces; on the side of the authorities, the Chen Yi regime made a show of compromising while secretly asking the Nanjiang central government for military reinforcements. The last phase started from the landing of the KMT military reinforcements at Keelung on the evening of March 8 and extended until May 16, when Wei Daoming assumed his position as the head of Taiwan province and martial law was lifted. According to Chen, this periodization has the advantage of helping one understand the causes of the Incident and the regime's continued purges and massacres after it brought the unrest under control.¹⁷¹ In 2007, Chen further explored this issue in attempting to clarify the complex nature of the Incident as a combination of ethnic conflicts, “guan bi min fan,” and the massacres perpetrated by the KMT in retaliation.¹⁷²

In recent years, with more official sources available, scholars dissecting the KMT regime's deeds during the course of the Incident have also revealed the machiavellian

¹⁷¹ Chen, “Lun Taiwan Ererba Shijian de yuanyin,” 28-30.

¹⁷² Chen, “Zuqun chongtu, guan bi min fa yu baofu tusha,” 314-342.

side of the regime. A synthesis of the studies by scholars, including Chen Cuilian, Lin Zhenghui, Su Yaochong, and Zen Wenliang, demonstrates how the KMT regime utilized secret agents, constructed and spread rumors to justify its military suppression, and exaggerated spontaneous protests and a political reform movement as an outright island-wide rebellion.¹⁷³

Chen Cuilian and Lin Zhenghui have both looked into the KMT's utilization of secret organizations and secret agents during the Incident. According to these authors, the KMT Secret Bureau (Baomiju) actively moved from infiltrating various Resolution Committees and other organizations and fabricating items of information, to engaging in illegal actions and sowing terror during the Incident. More specifically, the KMT regime utilized secret agents and Taiwanese informants to infiltrate Resolution Committees, youth organizations, and local security teams in various regions. While collecting information and composing lists of suspects for future persecution, as well as providing intelligence information for the authorities, secret agents also forged information, exaggerated and even fueled tensions, and actively employed illegal and lethal methods in their activities. Notably, they also took advantage of chaos during the Incident to eliminate factional rivals.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, "Zuguo de zhengzhi shilian: Chen Yisong, Liu Ming yu juntongju" 祖國的政治試煉：陳逸松、劉明與軍統局 (Political trial from the mother country: Chen Yisong, Liu Ming, and the bureau of Investigation and Statistics), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* (Taiwan Historical Research) 21, no.3 (September 2014): 141-168; Chen, *Chongguo Ererba*, 133-161, 256-278; Lin Zhenghui 林正慧, "Ererba Shijian zhong de baomiju" 二二八事件中的保密局 (The Secret Bureau in the February 28 Incident), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* (Taiwan Historical Research) 21, no.3 (September 2014): 26-42; Su Yaochong 蘇瑤崇, "Huangyan jiangou xia Ererba Shijian zhenya zhi zhengdang xing" 謊言建構下二二八事件鎮壓之正當性 (Lies behind legitimations of suppression in the February 28 Incident), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* (Taiwan Historical Research) 21, no.3 (September 2014): 112-133; Zeng Wenliang 曾文亮, "Ererba Shijian zhong de panluan yu chengfa" 二二八事件中的叛亂與懲罰 (Rebellion and retribution in the February 28 Incident), *Taiwan shi yanjiu* (Taiwan Historical Research) 22, no.4 (December 2015): 86-112.

¹⁷⁴ Chen, "Zuguo de zhengzhi shilian: Chen Yisong, Liu Ming yu juntongju," 141-168; Chen, *Chongguo Ererba*, 133-161, 256-278; Lin, "Ererba Shijian zhong de baomiju," 26-42.

Su Yaochong directly questions the legitimacy of the KMT government's military suppression of the Incident. Presenting a case regarding the rape of a mainlander female teacher as an example, Su argues that the KMT government deliberately fabricated falsehoods in constructing its propaganda about the "brutality" of the Taiwanese "rioters." Similarly, forged stories about the plight of mainlanders, including children, and the severe casualties among them, were constructed and spread as a means of denouncing the protesters. By rhetorically brutalizing and criminalizing the protesters, such propaganda served to justify military suppression of the Taiwanese disturbance.¹⁷⁵

Likewise, Zeng Wenliang argues that the theory that the February 28 Incident was an act of rebellion was actually the result of exaggerations by KMT officials in Taiwan. According to Zeng, the nature of the KMT's form of Chinese nationalism and the regime's concerns about KMT-CCP Civil War led the regime to misinterpret the Incident as it developed from spontaneous protests into a political reform movement as a communist-incited island-wide rebellion. Thus, according to Zeng, the Taiwan military and police forces, the intelligence bureaus, and the Executive Office, all pushed the Nanjing central government to its decision on military suppression and the subsequent persecution of the protesters. Then, despite the KMT authorities coming to understand that the nature of the Taiwan disturbance had been exaggerated, the KMT central government continued military persecution until the reorganization of Taiwan provincial government on May 16, 1947. By that time the prosecution of the protesters was transferred and subject to the civil courts without the injustices committed by the previous military trails being overturned.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Su, "Huangyan jianguo xia Eerba Shijian zhenya zhi zhengdang xing," 112-133.

¹⁷⁶ Zeng, "Eerba Shijian zhong de panluan yu chengfa," 86-112.

On the other hand, other scholars have presented different views on the Taiwanese people and their actions during the Incident. Earlier discussions had examined the Taiwanese pursuit of self-government as embodied in the Taipei Resolution Committee's actions and armed actions that involved mostly the elite, youths and the returned soldiers. Nevertheless, Sun Wanguo's study of the actions of the "Banshan" people, i.e. the KMT-affiliated Taiwanese, reveals a different aspect of the Incident that emerged as the Chen Yi regime negotiated with the Taiwanese resistance forces and then set about suppressing them. According to Sun, in the stage of negotiations, Banshan people participated in the Taipei Resolution Committee, meaning to serve as a bridge between the authorities and the Committee, to keep the negotiations contained within the realm of social order and public security, and to prevent them from becoming politicized. Afterward, however, the KMT regime utilized the rivalry between local Taiwanese factions, which were affiliated to respective KMT factions, to divide the Resolution Committee. Under the circumstances, Banshan people were said to often act as informants for the authorities, and propose irrational political demands, such as that the army should be staffed by local Taiwanese, that would later be regarded as treason and used as excuses for suppression by the KMT regime. Meanwhile, some Banshan individuals served as civil or military officers in the Chen Yi government to ease tensions and curb the disturbances. During the military suppression phase of the Incident, Banshan people even urged members of the Taiwanese elite such as Lin Xiantang to welcome the arrival of the KMT troops, and acted on behalf of the Taipei Resolution Committee to discredit its previous resolutions on March 7 1947, in addition to involving themselves in secret KMT agencies and promoting Sinicization. To sum up, Sun portrays Banshan

people as serving as tools of the Chen Yi regime in the framework of its policy of “using Taiwanese to curb the Taiwanese” (yi Tai zhi Tai).¹⁷⁷ Despite avoiding the term of “accomplice,” Sun’s argument in fact suggests a form of Taiwanese collaboration with the KMT regime similar to that suggested in Dai Guohui’s theory.

In contrast, Hou Kunhong throws light on the Taiwanese consciousness that sprouted and evolved during the February 28 Incident. According to Hou, a sort of distinction between people from the local province, Taiwan, and those from other provinces in mainland China had actually existed before the Incident. However, this difference initially was a rather neutral indicator of a regional distinctiveness. However, as relations between the two groups deteriorated on the island as a result of the misgovernance of the Chen Yi regime, Taiwanese resentment led to their treating mainlanders as “others.” In addition, pursuit of local self-government during the Incident not only illustrated the political ideal for which the Taiwanese were longing, but in fact also implied a political consciousness centering around Taiwan. As to the calls for international trusteeship and even Taiwan independence, they suggest changes in political and even national identity on the island. In short, a Taiwanese consciousness during the Incident manifested itself in the feeling of regional difference, the pursuit of home-rule, and the calls for trusteeship and even independence. In Hou’s view, this consciousness became enhanced in the process of the political self-assertion.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Sun Wanguo 孫萬國, “Banshan yu Ererba chu tan” 半山與二二八初探 (A preliminary inquiry into Banshan and the February 28 Incident), in *Ererba Shijian yanjiu lunwenji* (Proceedings of the international conference on the February 28 Incident), ed. Zhang Yanxian (Taipei: Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation, 1998), 245-249.

¹⁷⁸ Hou Kunhong 侯坤宏, “Ererba Shijian zhong de Taiwan yishi” 二二八事件中的台灣意識 (The Taiwanese consciousness in the February 28 Incident), in *Qishi nian hou de huigu: Jinian Ererba Shijian qishi zhounian xueshu lunwenji* (In retrospect on its 70th anniversary: Essays on the February 28 Incident), ed. Xu Xueji (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2017), 455-479.

The role of foreign agents in the Incident is also a point of contention in recent studies. Earlier discussions in Chapter Three concerning the studies of Zhu Hongyuan and Huang Wenfan, and of Wang Chengxiang have indicated that those authors accused the U.S., and more precisely George Kerr in particular, of engaging in a conspiracy during the Incident. Chen Yingzhen echoed the claim that there was an American attempt to exploit the February 28 Incident for its own national interests. Chen discussed two reports sent from the American Consulate in Taipei to the US Embassy in Nanjing on March 3 and March 7 of 1947 respectively, and holds that the February 28 Incident was devoted to pursuing political reform within the “Chinese political system” (*Zhongguo tizhi*) rather than seeking Taiwan independence. In fact, rather than a major political call during the February 28 Incident, the ideas of Taiwan independence or the establishment of a UN trusteeship over Taiwan were developed after the KMT’s military suppression happened. Unhappy with the Taiwan dissidents’ mild approach, however, the U.S. Consulate in Taipei exaggerated and even forged information about the existence of a pro-American, anti-communist resistance force, creating an impression, according to Chen, that the Taiwanese people were longing for U.S. or UN intervention. Thus, although the KMT regime was responsible for the growth of Taiwanese alienation, the U.S. Consulate in Taipei was in Chen’s opinion clearly encouraging Taiwanese separatism.¹⁷⁹

Similarly, Su Yaochong also examines the impact of the trusteeship issue on the February 28 Incident and argues that the Chen Yi regime utilized it to justify military suppression of the Taiwanese resistance and to purge dissidents on the island. Su points

¹⁷⁹ Chen Yingzhen 陳映真, “Ereba Shijian de zhidao sixiang: Tizhi nei gaige” 二二八事變的指導思想：體制內改革 (The guiding thoughts of the February 28 Incident: Reform within the institution), *Haixia pinglun*, no.3 (1991), <https://www.haixia-info.com/articles/67.html> (accessed 18 June 2018).

out that the theory of trusteeship first emerged as a part of a U.S. wartime strategic plan to occupy Taiwan, but that it was abandoned as a result of changes to its strategy. After the war, because disappointments at the corruption, incompetence, and discriminatory policies of the Chen Yi regime, the idea re-emerged among a few pro-American members of the Taiwanese elite, who were introduced to the idea by Kerr, and who hoped for U.S. intervention. Nevertheless, rather than some form of international trusteeship or independence, the mainstream political requests of the Taiwanese did not extend beyond regional autonomy. The Chen Yi regime was aware of the influence of, and criticism from, the U.S. Consulate, and it was suspicious of the pro-American group within the Taiwanese elite. Moreover, after the outbreak of the Incident, support for trusteeship escalated into a petition drawn up by some members of the Taiwanese elite. Chen Yi used this issue to accuse the Americans of interference, and to call the Taiwanese request for political reform treasonous, thus shifting blame for the Incident away from his misgovernment and justifying his military actions against the Taiwanese civil resistance.¹⁸⁰

The diversity in the just discussed authors' presentations and viewpoints on the trusteeship issue suggests a fundamental difference in their historical perspectives on the Incident. While Su examines the issue from the perspective of the Taiwanese people given his argument that Chen Yi used the appeal for trusteeship as a pretext to justify armed suppression, the accusation of U.S. plotting by Ju Hongyuan, Chen Yingzhen and others suggests a vision from the angle of the ruling regime or at least of Chinese nationalism.

¹⁸⁰ Su Yaochong 蘇瑤崇, "Ge Chaozhi, tuoguanlun yu Ererba Shijian zhi guanxi" 葛超智、託管論與二二八事件之關係 (The relationship between George Kerr, Trusteeship, and the February 28 Incident), in *Guoshiguan xueshu jikan* no.4 (June 2004), 142-183.

Chen Cuilian instead invokes the context of postwar international politics to situate and reinterpret the Incident. She argues that American strategic considerations for the postwar reconstruction of the political order in the Far East led the Truman administration to choose to support the Nationalist government as a strategic partner, and to consent to the KMT's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan. For this reason, Chen argues, the U.S. maintained a policy of non-intervention in the Taiwan Incident. In other words, the U.S. in fact acquiesced in the KMT's corrupt, repressive actions in Taiwan during the Incident. According to this view, the Nationalist government's decision for military suppression largely arose from concerns about possible international intervention as the controversy over Taiwan's legal status remained unresolved at the time despite its control of Taiwan. As for George Kerr, Chen holds that he was a U.S. patriot who prioritized American interests and whose actions in essence always centered on the US interests, despite his sympathy for the Taiwanese people.¹⁸¹

In sum, these scholarly analyses of various questions relating to the motives and actions of the major parties during the course of the Incident reveal the nature of the Incident to have been complex and deeply entangled in the political calculations and factional rivalries of the KMT and Taiwanese participants, as well as in the global politics of the postwar period.

Historical Research on the Consequences of the February 28 Incident

Given that the February 28 Incident has had profound impacts on Taiwan from 1947 to the present, scholarly research on the subject has repeatedly returned to

¹⁸¹ Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 38-126, 402-436.

examining both its short- and long-term consequences. In particular, issues related to the most direct outcome of the Incident and its crucial effects on Taiwanese society have drawn much attention from scholars. In particular, the number of casualties in the Incident and the long-term political impact of the Incident on Taiwan have been two crucial issues for scholarly research in regard to the consequences of the Incident.

In general, estimates of the casualties from the Incident vary tremendously. Table 11 shows official and non-official records about the numbers killed, wounded, and missing, ranging from several hundreds to hundreds of thousands. As the table indicates, official statistics tend to present lower numbers, while non-official figures are higher. In addition, great discrepancies appear between the statistics or estimates by sources close to the KMT government and those related to pro-Taiwan independence groups, as well as those from leftists, or critics of the KMT regime. This seems to be mainly because the former, pro-KMT sources tend to shrink the numbers as a way of illustrating the regime's leniency, while the latter exaggerate the figures of casualties other than by formal or legitimate executions, since such people were excluded from the official statistics.¹⁸² Moreover, as Li Qiao points out, the numbers are often general estimates and lack supporting evidence.¹⁸³ In fact, even the KMT government itself provided a variety of statistics that mutually contradict one another.

¹⁸² Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 263.

¹⁸³ Li Qiao 李喬, "Taiwan Ereba yanjiu zhi pianduan: You 'Maiyuan 1947' ziliao li chu" 台灣二二八研究之片段：由埋冤 1947 資料理出 (Excerpts of research on the February 28 Incident in Taiwan), in *Ereba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* (Proceedings of the symposium on the February 28 Incident), ed. Chen Yanyu and Hu Huiling (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1992), 214.

Table 11

Estimates of Casualties during the February 28 Incident

	Sources	Estimated casualties	Date of source
KMT official versions	Yang Lianggong and He Hanwen, <i>Ererba Shijian diaocha baogao</i>	1. Military/police and public employees: 1,391 dead or wounded, 7 missing. 2. Civilians: 538 dead or wounded Total casualties: Dead or wounded: 1,936 Missing: 7	Apr. 1947
	Bai Chongxi, <i>Xuanwei Taiwan baogaoshu</i>	1. Military officers: 14 dead, 108 wounded, 2 missing. Soldiers: 74 dead, 218 wounded, 24 missing. 2. Public employees and civilians: 304 dead, 1,556 wounded. Total casualties: Dead: 392 Wounded: 1,882 Missing: 26	Apr. 6, 1947
	Taiwan Provincial Garrison Command, <i>Taiwan Ererba Shibian jishi</i>	1. Military/police: 90 dead, 397 wounded, 40 missing. 2. Mainlander public employees: 45 dead, 1,307 wounded, 8 missing. Mainlander civilians: 12 dead, 57 wounded, 2 missing 3. Local Taiwanese: 43 dead, 585 captured, 3,022 zixin (reporting self and then turning over a new leaf) Total casualties: Dead: 190 Wounded: 1,761 Missing: 50	Apr. 25 and 30, 1974
	Taiwan Provincial Garrison Command, Press conference	1. Mainlander military, public employees, teachers: in total 1,958 dead, wounded or missing. 2. Local Taiwanese: 643 dead, wounded, or missing	May 26, 1947
	Baoan Silingbu (Security Command), <i>Taiwan Ererba Shibian jilue</i>	6,317 dead or wounded.	1956
	Su Zeng and Guo Jiancheng, <i>Fuqu lishi mingjing zhong de chenai</i>	In total 2,600 dead, wounded or missing.	1986

Non-official versions	Leftist/CCP	Lin Mushun, <i>Taiwan Eryue Geming</i>	No less than 10,000 killed; no less than several thousands arrested.	1948
		Su Xin, <i>Fennu de Taiwan (Angry Taiwan)</i>	No less than 10,000 killed; no less than 5,000 arrested.	1948
		He Hanwen, “Taiwan Ererba Qiyi jianwen jilue”	1. Dead: 7,000 to 8,000 2. Casualties: about 10,000 in total.	1991
	Pro-Taiwan independence sources	Shi Ming, <i>Taiwan ren sibai nian</i>	More than 100,000 dead or wounded	1980
		Wang Yude, <i>Kumen de Taiwan</i>	Casualties: between 10,000 and tens of thousands	1983
		Lin Qixu, <i>Taiwan Ererba Shijian zonghe yanjiu</i>	No less than 50,000 dead, wounded, or missing	Aug. 1983
		Zhong Yiren, <i>Xinsuan liushi nian</i>	Casualties: more than 20,000	1988
		Peng Mingmin, <i>Ziyou de ziwei</i>	Casualties: more than 20,000	1988
		Wang Jiansheng, Chen Wanzhen, and Chen Yongquan, <i>1947 Taiwan Ererba Geming</i>	Casualties: about 20,000	Feb. 1990
	Other	Taiwan Lu Hu liu tuanti (Six Taiwanese groups sojourning in Shanghai), <i>Guanyu Taiwan Shijian baogaoshu</i>	Killed: more than 10,000 Wounded: more than 30,000	Apr. 12, 1974
		Wang Kang, “Ererba Shibian qinli ji”	Casualties: 2,000 to 3,000	Mar. 1982
		Li Qiao, <i>Taiwan Ererba Shijian yanjiu zhi pianduan</i>	Dead: Maximum: 20,500 Minimum: 15,500 Middle: 18,000	Feb. 1991
		Lai, Myers, and Wei, <i>A Tragic Beginning</i>	Casualties; less than 10,000	1992
	Research report	The Executive Yuan (Lai Tse-han et al.), <i>Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao</i>	Dead: 18,000-28,000	Feb. 1992
Zhang Yanxian et al., <i>Ererba zeren guishu yanjiu baogao</i>		Dead: 18,000-28,000	Feb. 2006	

Sources: Lai, Myers, Wei, *A Tragic beginning*, 155-164; Lai et al., *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 261-262; Chen, *Chonggou Ererba*, 387-388; Wong Jiayi, *Zhanhou chuqi Taiwan jingji yu Ererba Shijian* (Economics in the early period of postwar Taiwan and the February 28 Incident) (Kaohsiung: Zhongshan university press, 2016), 158-159; Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, *Ererba Shijian wenxian xulu*, 411, 436-437; Hou, *Ererba Shijian dangan huibian* v.17, 399-400.

In spite of controversy on this topic, some scholars did use scientific methods to estimate the casualties.¹⁸⁴ The official report released in 1992 adopted the studies of Chen Kuanzheng, who utilized demographic data to make his estimate that the number of deaths in the Incident was in the range of 18,000 to 28,000. However, in its 1994 edition, the report withdraws this estimate and states instead that despite the utilization of demographic data for estimating the casualties, it is impossible to determine whether the casualties were all caused by the Incident, because of questions about the accuracy of the household registration system data in the early postwar period.¹⁸⁵ Other scholars, Lu Xinchang and Hu Chuntian, again utilized population figures to estimate the overall mortality rate in 1947 and on this basis settled on an approximate figure of deaths from unknown causes at 4,670 or 4,756 in 1947.¹⁸⁶ Despite such scholarly efforts, however, a lack of reliable statistics and data has compromised these estimates, and the question how many casualties occurred during the Incident remains open and controversial.

Apart from the casualty question, another crucial consequence of the Incident that scholars have been exploring is its profound influence on various sides of Taiwan's society, ranging from the political and economic, to social, cultural and even ethnic aspects.¹⁸⁷ A synthesis of scholars' opinions shows that the Incident resulted in

¹⁸⁴ Besides Chen Kuanzheng, Lu Xinchang and Hu Chuntian, Li Qiao also utilizes the mortality rate from 1947 to 1953 to extrapolate an estimate of 19,146 deaths in the Incident. Li Qiao is actually a novelist rather than an academic. See Li, "Taiwan Eerba yanjiu zhi pianduan," 225-227.

¹⁸⁵ Lai et al., *Eerba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 263.

¹⁸⁶ Lu Xinchang 盧信昌 and Hu Chuntian 胡春田 "Eerba Shijian linan renshu zhi tuigu" 二二八事件罹難人數之推估 (Estimates of the casualties of the February 28 Incident), *Shehui kexue luncong* (Social Science Journal) no.42 (December 1994): 185-191.

¹⁸⁷ Zhang, "Eerba Shijian de zhengzhi beijing ji qi yingxiang," 106-108; Lai Tse-han 賴澤涵, "Eerba Shijian yu dangdai Taiwan de fazhan" 二二八事件與當代台灣的發展 (The February 28 Incident and the development of contemporary Taiwan), in *Dangdai* 34 (February 1989): 80-93; Dai and Ye, *Ai zeng Eerba*, 309-312; Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 141; Lai et al., *Eerba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 368-369; Wu Naide 吳乃德 and Chen Mingtong 陳明通, "Zhengqun zhuanyi han jingying liudong: Taiwan difang zhengzhi jingying de lishi xingcheng" 政權轉移和菁英流轉：台灣地方政治菁英的歷史形成 (Transition

psychological trauma for many Taiwanese people that caused them to long remain apolitical and indifferent to politics or to shun politics. It also deepened the ethnic rift between the local Taiwanese and the mainlander groups, and hindered the development of local Taiwanese culture.¹⁸⁸ As well, Dai Guohui and Ye Yunyun point to the exacerbation of an identity crisis among the Taiwanese people, a crisis that, according to Dai, already existed due to the assimilation policy under the Japanese rule. After the war, any reconstruction of Chinese identity on Taiwan was frustrated by the February 28 Incident and aggravated by the subsequent White Terror, both of which deepened the existing identity crisis.¹⁸⁹ In regard to economic damage, Wong Jiayi indicates that the Incident caused a total direct financial damage of more than one billion old Taiwan dollars to public and private properties taken together based on official estimates, or a total direct and indirect loss of about 7.5 billion old Taiwan dollars according to unofficial calculations. The final accounts of annual revenue was 2.8 billion in 1946 and 8.3 billion in 1947.¹⁹⁰ However, according to Lai et al., in 1947, one billion old Taiwan dollars accounted for less than one percent of Taiwan's net domestic product, if it was adjusted for inflation.¹⁹¹

In addition, many studies attend to the lingering effects of the February 28 Incident on decades of Taiwan's politics. Scholars such as Li Xiaofeng and Chen Yishen regard the Incident as the beginning of the postwar Taiwan-independence movement and

of political regime and elite mobility: The historical formation of the Taiwan local political elites), in *Taiwan guangfu chuqi lishi* (Taiwan history during the early post-war period), ed. Lai Tse-han (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1993), 323-331; Zhang et al., *Ereba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao*, 77-93.

¹⁸⁸ Zhang, "Ereba Shijian de zhengzhi beijing ji qi yingxiang," 106; Zhang et al., *Ereba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao*, 77-79, 91-93.

¹⁸⁹ Dai and Ye, *Ai zeng Ereba*, 309-312.

¹⁹⁰ Wong Jiayi 翁嘉禧, *Zhanhou chuqi Taiwan jingji yu Ereba Shijian* 戰後初期台灣經濟與二二八事件 (Economics in the early period of postwar Taiwan and the February 28 Incident) (Kaohsiung: Zhongshan university press, 2016), 161-162.

¹⁹¹ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 141.

the construction of a new Taiwanese nationalism, as was discussed earlier. Zhang Yanxian et al. argue that the KMT took advantage of the Incident and its aftermath to try to eradicate factional forces both in the party and among local Taiwanese factional forces, and this move enabled the KMT to maintain effective control over Taiwan's political, economic, and military resources into the 1980s and that thus strengthened its long-term hegemony and one-party dictatorship over the island.¹⁹² This one-party dictatorship, accompanied by the decades-long persistence of martial law in support of KMT political hegemony, according to Zhang Xuchen, aggravated the alienation of the Taiwanese people and heightened their tendency toward separatism, both in ways that inevitably affected the democratic movement that took the lead in posing the claim for the Taiwanese self-determination from the 1970s onwards. In turn, the KMT's ensuing sense of crisis delayed political reforms and democratization.¹⁹³ Moreover, scholars also pinpoint the lack of Taiwanese talent in local politics as being a result of the elimination of local members of the Taiwanese elite in the Incident.¹⁹⁴

In particular, Wu Naide and Chen Mingtong have explored the question of how the February 28 Incident affected the evolution of relations between local Taiwanese political elites and the KMT regime. Wu and Chen argue that the impact of the February 28 Incident on the mobility of the Taiwanese political elites at both higher and local-level of politics was far greater than the political transition from the Japanese colonial era to the era of Nationalist rule. This was partly because of the purges carried out by the Nationalist authorities during and after the disturbances, but mainly because of the

¹⁹² Zhang et al., *Ereba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao*, 86-90.

¹⁹³ Zhang, "Ereba Shijian de zhengzhi beijing ji qi yingxiang," 107-108.

¹⁹⁴ Wu and Chen, "Zhengqun zhuanyi han jingying liudong," 323-325; Zhang et al., *Ereba Shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao*, 81-86.

Taiwanese population's alienation from and indifference to the new regime after the Incident. As a result, the post-war political vacuum in local politics was filled by a group of local political upstarts, mostly new to politics, lacking in political experience and with little or no political status from the Japanese colonial period and even the early postwar period. Such newcomers paradoxically benefited from the KMT regime's violent suppression of Taiwanese political pursuit, as their rise was in fact a result of the withdrawal of the traditional political elite, consisting mostly of Taiwanese who had been prominent in the Japanese era, but who had become disillusioned with the new regime. These political upstarts were thus docile to and even became solid collaborators of the new regime and as such were crucial to the consolidation of the KMT rule.¹⁹⁵

Although more and more scholars have tried to explore the February 28 Incident with academic impartiality and tried to transcend partisan interpretations of the Incident, the number of their publications has been limited. Their mostly factual analyses of its causes, course and consequences also betray certain methodological limitations. Thus, the search for a new historical approach to the study of the February 28 Incident is imperative.

¹⁹⁵ Wu and Chen, "Zhengqun zhuan yi han jingying liudong," 318-331.

Conclusion

Toward a Long-Term Historical Approach to the February 28 Incident

This study has examined the long-term interactions of KMT, CCP, and DPP policies towards the February 28 Incident of 1947. It analyzes their interpretations and reinterpretations of the Incident in connection with dramatic changes in the domestic politics of Taiwan and mainland China as well as cross-strait and international relations up to 2008. This historical examination goes far beyond the temporal and spatial scope of most previous works on the Incident, and it suggests the value of a long-term historical approach for future research on the subject from a Taiwanese perspective, as the aforementioned article of Braudel stresses for social scientific research.

Indeed, even relatively more comprehensive works on the February 28 Incident, such as the collaborative work, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947* by Lai Tse-Han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou, and Li Xiofeng's *Daoyu xin taiji*, simply cover either the Incident in the local context of Taiwan or the national context of the ROC in 1947, and their discussions about its historical background or political impacts tend to concentrate on the years 1945-1947, or trace it back to only the Japanese colonial era.¹ In contrast, this study traces the historical background back to Taiwan's long-term history under Dutch and Spanish colonial rule in the seventeenth century, the successive periods of rule by the Zheng Chenggong family and the Qing dynasty from 1662 up to 1895, and the era of Japanese colonial rule in 1895-1945, as well as the KMT's takeover of the island in 1945-47. Discussion of the historical effects of the Incident is expanded to include the impact on partisan policies of the KMT, CCP, and

¹ Lai, Myers, and Wei, *A Tragic Beginning*, 13-193; Li, *Daoyu xin taiji*, 1-196.

DPP as well as on relevant historiographies during the approximately six decades of changes in domestic and international politics.

KMT and CCP interpretations of the February 28 Incident reflected their partisan interests during China's Civil War between 1946-1949, their respective changes in policies due to the Cold War and cross-strait confrontations thereafter, and the economic reforms on the mainland from 1978 and the political reforms in Taiwan one decade later. The DPP policy toward the February 28 Incident also reflected its political interests from the party's rise in 1986 to its time in government as the ruling party in Taiwan in 2000-2008. The KMT and CCP policies toward the Incident in turn were shaped by the Korean War, the subsequent US-ROC Cold War alliance against the PRC up to 1979, and American policy toward Taiwan thereafter. Such partisan politics and broader political changes around the February 28 Incident had a deep impact on historical research on the Incident in Taiwan, mainland China, and the West. The analysis here has demonstrated how interpretations of the February 28 Incident, including highly partisan and relatively independent readings represented in recent studies, have been intertwined with politics ever since the Incident took place in 1947.

The KMT not only suppressed popular protests during the Incident, but also repressed Taiwanese voices, especially contemporary news reports about the Incident by Taiwan newspapers from the beginning. It first defined the Incident as an anti-KMT rebellion instigated jointly by pro-Japanese forces and communist saboteurs, and it did so to justify its military suppression of Taiwanese protesters, resurrecting political propaganda against its old enemy in the Second World War and its new enemy in the KMT-CCP Civil War. This viewpoint monopolized the February 28 Incident discourse in

Taiwan for about four decades after 1947, partly because the KMT political dictatorship was supported by the US in the Cold War context. After the KMT regime lost American military protection due to US-PRC rapprochement in the 1970s, the KMT also faced increasing social and political challenges from Taiwanese society and thus launched limited reforms. More substantial political reforms were implemented from the late 1980s due to intra-party power competition and the KMT's need for support from Taiwanese society. As a result, in 1992 the KMT regime formally altered its official stance towards the Incident and redefined the Incident as a tragedy caused by multiple factors and started rehabilitation of its victims. Meanwhile, it had to compete with an increasingly popular DPP for political influence and for dominance in the discourse on the February 28 Incident, further interpreting the Incident in the 2000s as a "popular protest against corrupt officials."²

Ironically, the CCP initially shared the KMT's view about communists having a major role in the Incident, and even shared what would eventually become the DPP's position on the Incident representing the Taiwanese pursuit of self-rule. Nevertheless, the CCP's interpretation of the Incident as the Taiwanese pursuit of political autonomy was mainly formulated because of the CCP's own demand for autonomous power in the communist-ruled areas in China during the KMT-CCP postwar negotiations for national unification before and at the beginning of the Civil War. The CCP soon reinterpreted the Incident as an anti-Chiang and anti-US patriotic uprising under its own leadership after its victory over the KMT in 1949, and has since maintained this claim, but with notable shifts in the rhetoric in accordance with subsequent new political contexts.

² *Zhongguo shibao*, March 1, 2003; February 27, 2004.

Although the DPP shared the CCP's initial standpoint about the desire for Taiwanese self-rule during the February 28 Incident, the DPP from the 1980s situated the Incident in terms of its own political pursuit of Taiwan independence and linked the Incident to the historical trajectory of Taiwan's modern democratic movement dating back to the 1920s during Japanese colonial rule. Its efforts to pursue political rehabilitation of the Incident and its victims evidently helped it win mostly Taiwanese support against the KMT during its rise to power as Taiwan's ruling party in 2000-2008.

Re-examination of these partisan interpretations of the February 28 Incident reveals the tangled relations between politics and history. While the three parties' interpretations of the Incident all reflect historical facts to some extent in different historical contexts, they also highlight the discrepancies between political myths and historical facts. While Japanese colonial measures, particularly Japan's wartime mobilization on the island, did adversely affect Taiwanese society, the political agitation of the former *Komihokokai* members and the militant actions of returned Taiwanese soldiers were not major causes of Taiwanese resistance against the authorities during the February 28 Incident, despite KMT claims. Rather than a planned or organized uprising with a prescribed ideology or explicit aim to overthrow the KMT government as was asserted by the KMT, the Incident was animated more by spontaneous actions driven by popular outrage over the corrupt and exploitative regime.

Similarly, the presence of communists in the Incident cannot be denied, especially in the Taizhong, Jiayi and Yulin areas where individual communists to some extent did pose concrete threats to the KMT authorities. However, given the small number of the communist agitators, and the limited scale and scope of their activities, the CCP's Taiwan

Provincial Work Committee was far from the leading power during the Incident. Despite that, the CCP's partisan interpretation of the February 28 Incident inevitably affected scholarly approaches to, and representations of, the Incident in mainland China.

The DPP's interpretation of the February 28 Incident has stressed the persistence of the Taiwanese pursuit of political autonomy from the Japanese colonial period and through the Incident after the KMT took over Taiwan. Nevertheless, although the Incident did escalate into a political movement, it actually started with a social event that lacked a clear political ideology or a unified organizational force. Therefore, the DPP's interpretation of the Incident tended to emphasize only its later phase -- downplaying the Taiwanese violence against the KMT government and mainlanders from the beginning while playing up the Taiwanese struggle for autonomous rule later on.

In Taiwan, political reform from the late 1980s onward had a direct impact on historical studies of the February 28 Incident. On the positive side, democratic reforms that largely resulted from the KMT-DPP rivalry since the late 1980s removed the political taboo that previously restricted both popular and academic inquiry about the Incident. In addition to KMT and DPP calls for rehabilitation of the Incident and related commemorative activities, the release of government documents and the opening of official archives on the Incident further facilitated scholarly research on the Incident. Moreover, the availability of official documents and archives has generally lessened the scholarly drawbacks involved in the over-reliance on oral testimonies and indirect sources used in earlier publications, increasing the creditability of more recent historical studies of the Incident.

In mainland China, commemorations of the Incident had from the beginning served, and continued to function, as political propaganda for the CPP, just as interpretations of the Incident have been subject to the party's evolving Taiwan policies. Nonetheless, emphasis on the Incident as a part of the CCP's Taiwan policies has also provided opportunities for scholars to work on primary sources relevant to such research.

The evidence demonstrates that politics was a crucial element that affected historical interpretations and research on the Incident on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Most notably, the Incident became a tool in electoral politics in Taiwan. In order to maximize their political appeal, both the KMT and the DPP exploited the political value of the Incident, particularly during elections. Concrete examples include the KMT trumpeting its rehabilitation of the Incident to woo Taiwanese support in the 2000 presidential election, and the DPP mobilizing its "hand-in-hand" rally on the anniversary of the Incident in the 2004 election. In terms of academic discourse on the Incident, political confrontations between the KMT and the DPP fed antagonistic views of the Incident between pro-unification and Taiwan-centric scholars and intellectuals, who were more or less affected by their respective political ideologies. More importantly, lack of a consensus about accountability for the Incident reflected political discord between the two parties and essentially reduced rehabilitation for victims of the Incident to little more than economic compensation. Historical studies on the subject have continued to struggle for a more balanced view in terms of academic neutrality. In mainland China, although increasing cross-strait contacts facilitated the CCP's release and publication of official archives relevant to the Incident, academic research on the Incident still could not fully

extend beyond political constraints, although some relatively independent scholarly views on the Incident did appear since the late 1980s.

In recent years, more and more historical studies on the February 28 Incident have sought to broaden and deepen understanding of the Incident with academic neutrality, but the analysis has revealed difficulties in transcending the partisan views of the KMT, CCP, or DPP. Moreover, some of these studies tend to investigate a specific aspect of the Incident, or focus on a single issue, in their re-examination of the Incident, often providing only fragmentary narratives. They also tend to situate their discussions in short-term historical contexts or contemporary political contexts, paying more attention to the problems of the KMT regime or the Chen Yi administration, and providing less discussion of the constraints on, or disadvantages of the Taiwanese in their struggles during the Incident. As such, many studies neglect to establish the historical relationship of the Incident with long-term Taiwanese resistance to the rule of incoming powers in earlier periods and their modern democratic pursuit of self-rule under Japanese colonial rule and in the 1947 Incident.

As a largely immigrant society, Taiwan had a long history of colonial rule and local resistance. While the colonial powers often exerted political control and engaged in economic exploitation, tensions also existed within the local society because of economic conflicts either between Indigenous peoples and the various Chinese immigrant groups that accompanied the new colonial regimes, or even among the immigrant groups. Beginning in the early 1920s, however, with the introduction of modern political concepts, local political autonomy became the goal of political movements by Taiwanese elites and intellectuals. Therefore, from European colonization in the early seventeenth

century to the 1930s, Taiwanese resistance evolved from violent combats in the early periods to the pursuit of political autonomy in the later period of the Japanese colonization.

During early colonial rule by the Dutch and the Spanish, local resistance to intruding powers was often sparked by colonial expansion, which also altered the local balance of power among the Indigenous peoples,³ or caused economic conflict between them and Chinese immigrants.⁴ In addition, colonial exploitation and official corruption or abuse by the colonial authorities were common causes for local resistance from the early colonial period to the periods of successive rule by the Zheng family, the Qing dynasty, and the Japanese.⁵ It is no coincidence that the KMT regime's exploitation of Taiwan's resources for its civil war in mainland China and abusive policies toward Taiwanese people in the postwar period also caused the outbreak of the February 28 Incident in 1947. This anti-KMT incident happened just after this party led China's war against Japan and took over the island from Japanese hands. Thus, the Incident was especially similar to the Taiwanese resistance to the Zheng regime after the latter drove the Dutch colonists out of Taiwan in the late seventeenth centuries.

Local resistance to the abusive powers of foreign and Chinese origins often ended in failure and reflected the limits of the Taiwanese struggle. The disunity of the Taiwanese as a whole made their resistance movements vulnerable to division and

³ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 27-8, 67.

⁴ Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 139; Kerr, *Formosa: Licensed Revolution and the Home Rule Movement 1895-1945*, 102-105.

⁵ Huber, "Chinese Settlers Against the Dutch East India Company," 154-59, 167, 169-72; Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 84-5; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 93-4, 111-12, 117, 128-32; Liu, *Qingdai Taiwan minbian yinjiu*, 130-35, 195-97, 199; Ching, *Becoming "Japanese,"* 137-39, 141-43, 227-28n7.

exploitation by the Dutch and other colonial authorities.⁶ Likewise, the Qing authorities took advantage of the divisions both between Indigenous Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants, and among the Chinese immigrants, and used these to quell Chinese rebellions.⁷ From the 1920s, Taiwanese resistance to Japanese colonial rule also suffered from ideological divisions and the break-up of Taiwanese political organizations, and it was often crushed by the Japanese authorities, with the closure of the last local political organization in August 1937, and with the repression of political activities during wartime.⁸ Despite that, political awareness underwent further development during these decades in the framework of the continuing history of Taiwanese resistance.

The February 28 Incident marked a continuation of the centuries of local Taiwanese resistance not only in terms of its causes and internal factionalism but also in its evolution from spontaneous and unorganized militant reactions to the KMT's corrupt rule into a relatively organized form of political pursuit of Taiwanese autonomy. The Incident occurred only about one and a half years after the KMT government's takeover of Taiwan. Triggered by the government agents' check on the illegal sale of tobacco in Taipei on the evening of February 27 1947, it started from spontaneous yet unorganized social protests against the misconduct of agents from the Monopoly Bureau and policemen in Taipei, escalating into broader violence against the KMT authorities and the mainlanders. Nevertheless, local politicians and the elite soon stepped in, and the elite-led Resolution Committee was soon established in Taipei to take charge and negotiate with the KMT authorities from March 1, 1947. Within days, chaos spread across Taiwan, and

⁶ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 59; Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese*, 27-8, 69-70, 85.

⁷ Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 59; Hsu, "Frontier Social Organization and Social Disorder in Ch'ing Taiwan," 88, 96-98, 105.

⁸ Chen, "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1914-1937," 477-481, 487-493.

in almost all the major cities and townships, local violent disturbance among civilians first occurred, followed by the subsequent establishment of local elite-led resolution committees or similar organizations, soon building into an island-wide phenomenon.⁹

Following restructuring of the Taipei Resolution Committee on March 2, 1947, the Incident gradually evolved as a relatively organized political campaign for local autonomy. Although the Taipei Resolution Committee was initially a loose organization meant to serve as a bridge between civilians and the authorities for the purpose of negotiations, it soon became a quasi-governmental organization with the pronouncement of the Memorandum of the Resolution Committee on March 5. Politically, calls for local self-rule were then raised in many regions across Taiwan and presented as demands to the KMT authorities for political reforms and autonomy.¹⁰

The ultimate failure of the Taiwanese pursuit of self-government during the February 28 Incident demonstrated the disadvantages and constraints of previous movements of resistance in Taiwanese history. Division between the Taiwanese elites at the center of the resistance camp, such as the competition for power between Chiang Weichuan and Chen Yisong within the Taipei Resolution Committee, as well as their respective connections with competing KMT factions, created dissension in the organization and left it vulnerable to infiltration by the authorities. In some resolution committees, such as that in Pingdong, division was also evident between members supporting the KMT authorities and those advocating actions aimed at Taiwanese self-government.¹¹

⁹ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 47-71; Chen, *Chonggou Ereba*, 205-213.

¹⁰ Chen, *Chonggou Ereba*, 214-220.

¹¹ Chen, *Chonggou Ereba*, 231-233; Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 128-29.

Meanwhile, major instances of armed combat against the KMT authorities mainly occurred in central and southern Taiwan, particularly in the Taizhong, Jiayi, Yunlin, and Kaohsiung areas. Most participating groups, mainly consisting of returned soldiers and young students, were spontaneously but temporarily scrambled units rather than formally established military bodies. They were far from competent in terms of weaponry and training compared to a formal army. As a result, the resistance collapsed soon after the KMT's military suppression started even though it persisted for a while in certain places, such as the Er-qi Brigade that retreated to Puli, and among the militias led by Chen Cuandi that retreated to Zhanghu area of Yunlin county.¹²

More importantly, resistance forces as a whole lacked a political consensus on how to proceed despite the general turn from violent actions by the populace to elite-led peaceful political negotiations. This was reminiscent of what had often been seen before in resistance against colonial powers. Indeed, a lack of central leadership and coordination between Taipei and other areas, and between different militant individuals and groups in a single area and across Taiwan, meant the resistance was highly fragmented. Despite mutual support for struggle against the KMT authorities across regions, local militias were not unified as one, but acted on their own. This was evident in the cases of the Taizhong, Jiayi, and Douliu militias.¹³ In fact, although Taipei appeared

¹² Local militias' weapons often came from those captured from governmental institutions, such as in Taizhong. But local militias did not have their own supplies. According to Cai Yaojing, who led some local militias to assist in the Jiayi combat against the KMT authorities, local militias' weapons were far from sufficient, they had no military maps or uniforms to identify friendly forces, and militant forces soon dissolved after the arrival of the KMT re-enforcements from mainland China. "Cai Yaojing" 蔡耀景 (Interview with Mr. Cai Yaojing), in *Jia-yun pingye Ererba* 嘉雲平野二二八 (February 28 Incident in Jiayi and Yunlin areas), ed. Zhang Yangxian (Taipei: Wusanlian jijinhui, 1995), 329-331; Lai et al., *Ererba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 84-88.

¹³ For example, when severe militant actions against the KMT authorities occurred in Jiayi, the Taipei Resolution Committee called for a cease-fire, and did not have the power to command those militias in

as the center of the resistance, and the Taipei Resolution Committee acted as a politically representative force on behalf of the Taiwanese people, local militias across Taiwan did not act under its command.

Moreover, ideological differences and divisions between moderate and radical groups reflected the lack of any unitary direction in the pursuit of Taiwanese self-rule. While the elite-led Taipei Resolution Committee inclined towards political negotiations, many local militias leaned toward radical actions. This was particularly explicit in the division within the Taizhong Resolution Committee, in which the local elites hoped to strive for political autonomy through the parliamentary route and were suspicious of Xie Xuehong's radical group and her communist ideology.¹⁴ In fact, many elite figures, such as Lin Xiantang, identified with China as their motherland, and Lin actually harbored Chen Yi's officials during the Incident. Rather than seeking independence from China, they pursued autonomous rule within the ROC and looked for reform from within the existing institutions rather than attempting to overthrow them. This led to a lack of determination, making it easier to compel them to yield to KMT authority in order to avoid conflicts with officials.¹⁵ Even in Jiayi and Kaohsiung, local resolution committees and militias treated popular forces as bargaining chips in negotiations with the KMT.¹⁶ The analysis undertaken for this study has revealed the complex dilemmas, and fragmentation of Taiwanese resistance during the Incident.

central and southern Taiwan. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 107. Chen, *Chonggou Ereba*, 225-226, 231.

¹⁴ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 86-7.

¹⁵ For example, in Taizhong city, the local resolution organization was first formed on March 2 but dissolved on the same day on receiving the news of the KMT authority dispatching forces to the south. The elite was cautious about operating the Resolution Committee, and was suspicious of Xie Xuehong's activities. Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 86, 92-3; Xu, "Huangmin Fenggonghui de yanjiu," 188-190, 209.

¹⁶ Lai et al., *Ereba Shijian yanjiu baogao*, 105-109, 115-118.

In conclusion, the February 28 Incident was not simply a single historical event in the temporal and spatial context of Taiwan in 1947. In terms of both Taiwanese violent and political forms of struggle, the Incident showed a historical continuity with Taiwanese resistance to colonial and outside rule from the early seventeenth century up to mid-twentieth century. Chapter one showed there was indeed a long-term tradition of resistance to outside rulers in Taiwan history, and my broad examination of the primary and secondary sources has brought to light the evidence that the centuries of long resistance tradition influenced Taiwanese activists during the February 28 Incident of 1947. Such a long-term historical approach in turn sheds light on the importance of the Incident in the historical trajectory of Taiwanese resistance and of struggle for self-governance.

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Glossary

Pinyin	Chinese characters	English translation
Bai Chongxi	白崇禧	
banshan	半山	Half-Mountain
Baodiao yundong	保釣運動	protecting Diaoyutai Island (Senkaku Islands) from Japanese control
Baomiju	保密局	Secret Bureau
baotu	暴徒	mobs
Bashi Niandai	八十年代	The Eighties magazine
beifuchang	被服廠	a (military) clothing factory
benshengren	本省人	local Taiwanese
bentuhua	本土化	indigenization/Taiwanization
Cai Xiaoqian	蔡孝乾	
canmouzhang	參謀長	the chief of staff
Chen Cuandi	陳篡地	
Chen Shuibian	陳水扁	
Chen Yi	陳儀	
Chuli dagang	處理大綱	Outline for Settling the February 28 Incident
dadui	大隊	brigades
dangan fa	檔案法	the Public Records Act
dangwai	黨外	non-KMT
daxi dangan	大溪檔案	the Daxi Archives
dayuan	大員	a high-ranking official
Deng Xiaoping	鄧小平	
difang fayuan	地方法院	District Court
difang zizhi	地方自治	local self-rule; local self-government
dongshi	董事	director
dongyuan kanluan linshi tiaokuan	動員戡亂臨時條款	the Provisional Amendments for the Period of Mobilization of the Suppression of Communist Rebellion
ducai zhengfu	獨裁政府	authoritarian government
duizhang	隊長	captain
Ererba gongyi heping yundong	二二八公義和平運動	February 28 Justice and Peace Movement

Ererba hepingri	二二八和平日	February 28 Peace Day
Ererba hepingri cujinhui	二二八和平日促進會	February 28 Peace Day Association
Ererba hepingri xuanyan	二二八和平日宣言	February 28 Peace Day Declaration
Ererba hepingri yundong	二二八和平日運動	February 28 Peace Day Movement
Ererba jinianri/Heping jinianri	二二八紀念日/和平紀念日	February 28 Memorial Day/the Peace Memorial Day
Ererba pingan libai	二二八平安禮拜	February 28 Christian Mass
Ererba pingfan yundong	二二八平反運動	February 28 Rehabilitation Movement
Ererba Shijian	二二八事件	the February 28 Incident
Ererba Shijian chuli ji buchang tiaoli	二二八事件處理及補償條例	the February 28 Settlement and Compensation Act
Ererba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui zuzhidagnag	二二八事件處理委員會組織大綱	Memorandum of February 28 Incident Resolution Committee
Ererba Shijian jinian jijinhui	二二八事件紀念基金會	the Memorial Foundation of 228
Ererba Shijian chuli weiyuanhui	二二八事件處理委員會	the Resolution Committee of the February 28 Incident
Er qi budui	二七部隊	the 27 Brigade
eren	惡人	villains
fan zhengfu	反政府	anti-government
fandong fenzi	反動份子	reactionary elements
fankang	反抗	resistance
fanpan	反叛	rebellion
fang du, cu tong	防獨，促統	Preventing [Taiwan] independence, promoting unification
gao minzhong shu	告民眾書	Letter to the People
gao quanguo tongbao shu	告全國同胞書	Letter to All Our Compatriots
gaodu zizhi	高度自治	high degree of autonomy
gongfan jiegou	共犯結構	a structure of complicity
gongzuo xiaozu	工作小組	a work team
gongwuyuan	公務員	civil servants/government employees
Goto Shinpei	後藤新平	
Gu Zhenfu	辜振甫	
guan bi min fa	官逼民反	civil revolts driven by the

		officials
guofangbu huiyi	國防部會議	the National Defense Council
guojia anquanju	國家安全局	National Security Agency
guojia dangan guanliju	國家檔案管理局	the National Archives Administration
guojia yishi	國家意識	national consciousness
guomin canzhenghui	國民參政會	the Citizens' Political Council
guomin dahui	國民大會	the National Assembly
guoying qiye	國營企業	state enterprises
Haijun bing xuexiao	海軍兵學校	Imperial Japanese Naval Academy (Kaigun Heigakko)
haijun luzhandui	海軍陸戰隊	Marine Corps
Haixia jiaoliu jijinhui	海峽交流基金會	the Straits Exchange Foundation
Haixia liangan guanxi xiehui	海峽兩岸關係協會	the Association for Relations across the Taiwan Straits
Hezuo jinku	合作金庫	(Taiwan) Cooperative Bank
Hua Bocun	郝伯村	
huaide	懷德	benevolence
Huang Xinjie	黃信介	
Huangmin Fenggonghui	皇民奉公會	Public Service Association of Imperial Subjects
huangmin hua yundong	皇民化運動	the Japanization movements (the kominka movement)
Huanying Guomin zhengfu choubeihui	歡迎國民政府籌備會	Preparatory Committee to Welcome the Nationalist Government
ji xiwang yu Taiwan renmin	寄希望於台灣人民	placing hope on the people of Taiwan
jianchashi	監察使	the ombudsman
jiandang	奸黨	evil parties; traitors
jianfei	奸匪	evil bandits
Jiang Jieshi	蔣介石	Chiang Kai-shek
Jiang Jingguo	蔣經國	Chiang Ching-kuo
Jiang Weichuan	蔣渭川	
jianguo dagang	建國大綱	Fundamentals of State-building
Jianju/migao	檢舉/密告	to report
jianwei fenzi	奸偽份子	the evil elements
jinbeidui	警備隊	security-defense

		team/security force
jinying	近因	the short term cause
kangzheng	抗爭	resistance
kaozheng	考證	textual criticism
Ke Yuanfen	柯遠芬	
Li Denghui	李登輝	Lee Teng-hui
Lian Zhan	連戰	
lianzuo	連坐	collective punishment
Liao Wenyi	廖文毅	
lifayuan	立法院	the Legislative Yuan
Lin Shuangwen	林爽文	
Lin Xiantang	林獻堂	
lin xue	凌削	abuse and exploitation
linshi zizhi zhengfu	臨時自治政府	temporary autonomous regime
liumang	流氓	hooligans
luan dang	亂黨	rebellious parties
Ma Yingjiu	馬英九	
Maoyi ju	貿易局	Trade bureau
Meilidao Shijian (Gaoxiong Shijian)	美麗島事件 (高雄事件)	the Meilidao Incident; or the Kaohsiung Incident
Meilidao zazhi	美麗島雜誌	Formosa magazine
minbian	民變	popular uprising
mingyu zhengshu	名譽證書	a certificate exonerating the victims from blame for the February 28 Incident
minjian guandian	民間觀點	civil-society narratives
minjun	民軍	local militias
minyi jiguan	民意機關	bodies presenting the people at all levels
Minzhong dang	民眾黨	Popular Party
Minzhu tongmeng	民主同盟	the Democratic League
minzhu zizhi	民主自治	democratic autonomy
mishuzhang	秘書長	secretary-general
neiluan zui	內亂罪	Offenses Against the Internal Security of the State
nuhua	奴化	enslavement
paichusuo	派出所	local police station
pantu	叛徒	traitors
pingpufan	平埔番	Plains Indigenous peoples
qingnian dang	青年黨	the Youth Party

qingxiang	清鄉	Cleaning-up (the countryside)
qingzhi jiguan	情治機關	intelligence agencies
Qinmin Dang	親民黨	People First Party
Qiyān xiéān diào chá wéi yuán huì	緝煙血案調查委員會	Investigation Committee for the Bloody Case of Checking Smuggled Tobacco
qiyi	起義	uprising
quánguó suǐ jìng qū zhèng wu wéi yuán huì	全國綏靖區政務委員會	the Political Council for the Regions under Pacification
quanmin zhèng wu	全民政府	government for all people
quanmín xìng	全民性	for all people
remin fān kàng yùn dòng	人民反抗運動	the “people’s” resistance movement
renmin jiě fāng jūn	人民解放軍	the People’s Liberation Army
Sān mǐn zhū yì qīng nián tuó	三民主義青年團	Three People’s Principles Youth League
sān nián yì xiǎo fǎn; wū nián yì dà fǎn	三年一小反，五年一大反	a small revolt every three years and a major one every five years
sān shí èr tiāo yāo qiú	三十二條要求	Thirty-Two Demands
sān tōng	三通	three links
shèng cān yì huì	省參議會	Provincial Consultative Assembly
shèng cān yì yuán	省參議員	provincial councilors
shèng zhèng fǔ	省政府	provincial government
shèng zhǔ xī	省主席	provincial governor
shèng fān	生番	“raw” or “uncivilized” Indigenous peoples
shèng yíng qī yè	省營企業	provincial enterprises
shì jiē zhàn	市街戰	street fights
shì mǐn	市民	urban residents
shòu fān	熟番	“ripened” or “civilized” Indigenous peoples
shòu móu	首謀	a major plotter
sì liú	四流	four exchanges
Sì píng huì zhàn	四平會戰	the Siping Campaign
Sòng Chū yú	宋楚瑜	James Soong
sū jìng	綏靖	pacification
sū jìng gōng shū	綏靖公署	pacification office
Tāi běi shì yì huì	台北市議會	Taipei Municipal Council

Taiwan diaocha weiyuanhui	台灣調查委員會	Taiwan Investigation Committee
Taiwan difang zizhi lianmeng	台灣地方自治聯盟	the Taiwan Local Self-Government League
Taiwan duli jianguo lianmeng	台灣獨立建國聯盟	World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI)
Taiwan duli yundong	台灣獨立運動	Taiwan Independence Movement (TIM)
Taiwan ganbu xunlianban	台灣幹部訓練班	Training Group for Taiwan Administrative Cadres
Taiwan gongheguo linshi zhengfu	台灣共和國臨時政府	Provisional Government of the Taiwan Republic
Taiwan jiaoshou xiehui	台灣教授協會	Taiwan Association of University Professors
Taiwan lishi xuehui	台灣歷史協會	Taiwan Historical Society
Taiwan Minbao	台灣民報	Taiwan People's newspaper
Taiwan minzhu zizhi tongmeng	台灣民主自治同盟	Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League
Taiwan renquan cujinhui	台灣人權促進會	Taiwan Association for Human Rights
Taiwan shengyihui	台灣省議會	Taiwan Provincial Assembly
Taiwan wenhua xiehui	台灣文化協會	Taiwan Cultural Association
Taiwan yihui shezhi qingyuan tuan	台灣議會設置請願團	League for the Establishment of a Taiwan Parliament
Taiwan zijue	台灣自決	Taiwan's self-determination
Taiwan zizhi yundong	台灣自治運動	Taiwanese self-government movement
Taiwansheng baoan silingbu	台灣省保安司令部	Taiwan Provincial Security Command
Taiwansheng gongzuo weiyuanhui	台灣省工作委員會	Taiwan Provincial Work Committee
Taiwansheng jingbei zongsilingbu	台灣省警備總司令部	Taiwan Provincial Garrison Command
Taiwansheng jingwuchu	台灣省警務處	Taiwan Provincial Police Agency
Taiwansheng wenxian weiyuanhui	台灣省文獻委員會	Historical Research Committee of Taiwan Province
Taiwansheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu	台灣省行政長官公署	Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office
Taiwansheng zizhi qingnian tongmeng	台灣省自治青年同盟	Taiwan Youth League for Self-rule
Tiandihui	天地會	Heaven and Earth Society

Tonghua hui	同化會	the Assimilation Society
tongzhi jingji	統制經濟	command economy
waishengren	外省人	mainlanders; or Chinese people from provinces other than Taiwan in or after 1945
Wang Daohan	王道涵	
Wang Tiandeng	王添灯	
Wei Daoming	魏道明	
weiwei	畏威	fearful of military might
wenhua chaju	文化差距	cultural gap
Wu Sanlian Taiwan Siliao Jijinhui	吳三連台灣史料基金會	Wu Sanlian Taiwan Historical Materials Foundation
Wu Zhenwu	吳振武	
Wu Zhuoliu	吳濁流	
wuqi	武器	arms/weapons
xian shi canyiyuan	縣市參議員	county and municipal councilors
xianbingdui	憲兵隊	the gendarmerie
Xie Xuehong	謝雪紅	
Xin Dang	新黨	New Party
xin guixi	新桂系	Guangxi military clique
xin minzhu tongzhihui	新民主同志會	New Democratic Comrade Society
xin shenghuo yundong	新生活運動	New Life Movement
xin Taiwan ren zhuyi	新台灣人主義	New Taiwanese-ism
Xinhuashe	新華社	Xinhua News Agency
Xinmin hui	新民會	New People's Society
xuesheng zizhihui	學生自治會	Student Self-governing Union
Yang Lianggong	楊亮功	
yanjiu xiaozu	研究小組	research team
yanlun yuegui	言論越軌	excessive opinions
yaosai	要塞	fortress
Ye Mingxun	葉明勳	
yi tai zhi tai	以台治台	using Taiwanese to curb the Taiwanese
yi Taiwan wei zhuti	以台灣為主體	placing Taiwan in the center of thoughts
yimin	義民	the righteous volunteers
youxin renshi	有心人士	people with particular purposes

yuanyin	遠因	long term cause
yuyong shenshi	御用紳士	(pro-Japanese) collaborationist gentry
zhanfan	戰犯	war criminal
Zhang Zhizhong	張志忠	
Zheng Chenggong	鄭成功	
Zheng Jing	鄭經	
Zheng Keshuang	鄭克塽	
zhengfu buliang	政府不良	government malfeasance
zhengwu weiyuan	政務委員	minister without portfolio
zhengzhi jianshe xiehui	政治建設協會	Political Construction Association
zhenmin daibiao	鎮民代表	public representative of township
zhengzhi xieshang huiyi	政治協商會議	the Political Consultative Conference
zhengzhi yexinjia	政治野心家	politically ambitious Taiwanese
zhian weichidui	治安維持對	security team
zhifu	知府	magistrate
Zhongguo nongcun fuxing lianhe weiyuanhui	中國農村復興聯合委員會	the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstructon
Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi	中國人民政治協商會議	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
zhongshu jinian zhou	中樞紀念週	commemorative week held by the central government
Zhongtong	中統	Central Bureau of Investigation and Statistics
(KMT's) Zhongyang xuanchuanbu	中央宣傳部	(KMT's) Central Propaganda Department
zhongyi fuwudui	忠義服務隊	Loyalty Service Organization
Zhu Yigui	朱一貴	
zhuanan xiaozu	專案小組	special committee
Zhuanmai ju	專賣局	Monopoly bureau
zhuren	主任	director
ziweidui	自衛隊	"self-defense" militia
zixin	自新	rehabilitation
ziyou zhongguo (banyuekan)	自由中國（半月刊）	Free China (fortnightly) magazine
ziyuan weiyuanhui	資源委員會	National Resources Commission

zizhi lianjun	自治聯軍	Self-rule Coalition Army
zongdufu pingyiyuan	總督府評議員	councilor of the Governor-General of Taiwan
zongsiling	總司令	commander in chief
zunqun da tuanjie	族群大團結	great ethnic unity