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The Labour Movement in Taiwan

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The spectacular industrialisation of Taiwan has created a large working class. Yet, while there have been a number of inspiring struggles and attempts to organise, a powerful labour movement has not emerged there. Many observers of East Asian industrialisation have attributed this failure to the influence of Confucian culture. This article disagrees and suggests that the reasons for the weakness of the Taiwanese labour movement are not to be found in cultural stereotypes of Confucian docility or group loyalty. Rather, an analysis of the Cold War origins of the Taiwanese regime, the preponderance of small-scale, rural industry and the great ethnic divides which have been manipulated by political and business leaders on the island since 1949 provide far more convincing explanations for the weakness of Taiwanese labour.

Taiwan has experienced one of the most spectacular economic 'miracles' of the post-war period.¹ In the course of this massive transformation, the working class has become clearly the largest social force.² The potential for a powerful independent labour movement, as appeared in South Korea, would seem to have been created.³ The fact that such a movement has not appeared appears to support the position of many theorists of East Asian industrialisation who claim that Taiwan's cultural heritage of Confucianism has both encouraged capitalist entrepreneurship and discouraged labour movement activism. For these writers Confucianism has been the crucial ingredient in the various East Asian 'miracles' – the missing *x* of Ronald Dore.⁴

Amongst the major components of this success are what Dore calls 'a generalized syndrome of dutifulness' and 'acceptance of hierarchy'.⁵ He, along with MacFarquhar, Kahn, Pye, O'Malley, Vogel and many others, has suggested that this Confucian subordination to authority that has been crucial for East Asian regimes, including Taiwan, during industrialisation.⁶ Obedience and respect for the benevolent ruler supposedly is translated into obedience to management. Group identity – initially focussed on the family – is said to mean that East Asians are prepared to sacrifice their individual needs for the good of the country or the firm.⁷ A reduced willingness to join labour unions is one consequence.

Undoubtedly cultural backgrounds do influence both the possibilities of industrialisation and the potential strength of labour movements in complex ways. But the argument that Confucian or neo-Confucian values have played a major role in lessening the potential of Taiwanese labour is not tenable.

In the first place, the key elements offered by the neo-Confucianist position as explanatory factors are far from exceptional in pre-industrial societies. Many, perhaps most, pre-capitalist, agrarian societies have a strong ethical/religious, cultural emphasis on the family, a limited degree of individualism and a concentration on the group – whether it be the village or the wider family. Indeed the family – usually the extended one – is the basic unit of production in such societies. Catholicism's obsession with the family is one example; that it has survived best in peasant societies where the extended family remains crucial is no surprise. So what is peculiar about Confucianism in this regard?

Secondly, an emphasis on the maintenance of the (extended) family may well retard rather than advance industrialisation. A labour force has to be drawn away from such families. Usually, this means geographical relocation of younger family members to the cities. The Confucian emphasis on the maintenance of the family structure and on caring for aged parents was, if anything, a barrier which had to be overcome by labour recruiters. In any case, why should Confucian group identity of a pre-capitalist kind so easily be convertible to support for capitalist industrialisation. If one's notion of oneself is submerged or very closely linked with family, village or even pre-capitalist state, why should this identification be so easily transferable to the Far Eastern Textiles Company?

To the extent that a pre-capitalist, Confucian ethical system survives in Taiwan it is one which is suspicious of commercial activity and of individual striving for wealth. It is beyond the scope of this article to deal with the influence of Confucianism on Taiwanese entrepreneurs. But it is clear that the barriers to the formation of a strong labour movement in Taiwan have grown out of the recent history of the island rather than the Analects of Confucius. To understand this, a survey of this recent history is appropriate.

Taiwan under Japan

Taiwan – once better known in the West by the Portuguese name of Formosa – has had a series of foreign masters. Between 1624 and 1661, the Dutch maintained a colonial regime on the island. It was incorporated by the Qing dynasty in 1684 and remained a loose dependency until the Sino-Japanese war saw Taiwan ceded to Japan by the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. The Japanese at first saw Taiwan as a source of cheap agricultural products. But diversification of Taiwanese industry took place in the mid-1930s as Japan began its preparation for a war in the Pacific. These attempts to turn Taiwan into an industrial adjunct of Japan required the development of an efficient infrastructure – including railways, ports and the expansion of irrigation. The overall result was that manufacturing grew by an annual average (in real terms) of more than 6 per cent between 1912 and 1940 and by more than 7 per cent in the 1930s.⁸ By this time, Taiwan was the biggest trader in the region after Japan – although virtually all of its trade was with its coloniser.⁹ Almost all medium and large businesses were owned by the Japanese. Significant economic development took place but no large, Taiwanese capitalist class emerged – a fact which became of great significance after 1945. The Japanese colonisers did not permit the development of an organised labour movement.

Despite the distortions flowing from Taiwan's status as a mere adjunct to the Japanese economy, the colonial period does appear to have given Taiwan an industrial impetus missing from most other colonial experiences. By 1945, it was probably more developed economically than any province on the mainland.¹⁰

Retrocession and Repression

On 25 October 1945, Taiwan was handed over to the nominal government of China, under the Kuomintang (KMT) of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who appointed Chen Yi, a former governor of Fujian Province, as Administrator-General. Chen pursued a policy of harsh repression. On 27 February 1947, an incident began which

illustrated the isolation of the KMT state from the mass of Taiwanese. In a park in central Taipei, government agents, enforcing the government monopoly on tobacco and wine, accosted a woman selling unlicensed cigarettes, confiscating the cigarettes, her cash and knocking her down. When a crowd gathered to protest, police fired into them, killing at least one Taiwanese. On the following day, a demonstration marched in protest to Chen Yi's headquarters. His guards machine-gunned the crowd, killing some and sparking off a general uprising against the mainland officials. The insurgents seized the Taiwan Broadcasting Station and spread news of the rebellion across the island. The rebels quickly found themselves in almost complete control. The American consul in Taiwan said later that:

For about the first week in March, we saw no armed Chinese on the streets of Taipei, and the Formosans seemed to control every city because Chen Yi had too few troops to suppress the massive demonstrations.¹¹

In most cities and towns the demonstrators simply took over. Organised Taiwanese students patrolled the streets to prevent looting and arrested anyone associated with the regime.

As soon as troop reinforcements from the mainland arrived, a reign of terror began. In an attempt to destroy the leadership of any potential future rebellion, they killed much of the Taiwanese intelligentsia and even many who simply looked well-to-do.¹² Many of the most educated were taken away and never seen again. Those among the actual or potential leadership of Taiwanese society who escaped the massacres fled abroad, others simply learned that to challenge the KMT was to risk death.¹³

The death toll of what became known as the 2-28 incident (after the date of the beginning of the uprising) is unclear. Several sources say that around 20,000 people were killed.¹⁴ In 1991-92, a year-long official government investigation was finally held into the episode. Its report – running to 12 volumes – estimated that between 18,000 and 28,000 died. It also admitted that only one victim – a prominent Taiwanese intellectual – was actually tried before being executed.¹⁵ Some private estimates have put the death toll as high as 100,000.¹⁶ The 2-28 incident left the Taiwanese population in a position of total powerlessness in relation to the state which had been imposed on them.¹⁷ For decades, it remained a traumatic memory in relations between the Taiwanese and the Mainlander population. It also developed a strong sense of ethnic solidarity amongst the Taiwanese, which in turn undermined the development of class consciousness: a matter to which this paper will return. Most importantly, the relationship between ethnic Taiwanese and the state imposed on them after retrocession was certainly not the Confucian ideal of a benevolent ruler dealing with respectful and dutiful subjects. Rather, it was invested with a deep mutual antagonism and sustained largely by repression.

The Nature of the KMT State

When their final defeat on the mainland came in 1949, the KMT fled to Taiwan with as much of its army and as many supporters as it could salvage. In 1945, Taiwan had a population of approximately six million. By 1950, more than one and a half million more had arrived from the mainland.¹⁸ Most knew nothing of Taiwan and

had no family or other connections there. Their only social ties and means of material support lay within the KMT.

In May 1948, Chiang laid the legislative basis for dictatorial government, with the passing of the 'Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion'. Suspending even the pretence of democratic government, this became the legal basis of KMT rule on Taiwan.¹⁹ Taiwan was designated a combat zone; martial law remained in force until 1987. Chiang's own powers were constitutionally unlimited.²⁰ Only one political party was to be allowed, although non-party candidates were permitted to stand in local and provincial elections.²¹

The main legislative body – the Legislative Yuan (LY) – was elected in 1947 on the mainland – its members were derived from 30 provinces of China, of which Taiwan was only one. Since, after 1949, elections could no longer be held in the other 29, those elected in 1947 remained members of the LY. Until they were finally retired in 1992, the ageing KMT cadre of the 1940s dominated the main legislative chamber of government.²²

The terrible shock of defeat – and the realisation that Taiwan was indeed the KMT's last refuge – indeed there was nowhere else to retreat – produced a new political will in its leadership. The party was forced to assess the reasons for its loss to the communists; it identified two as central. The first was its failure to undertake a thorough land reform. The second was its inability to control inflation.

Cold War Imperatives

On the mainland, the large landowners had consistently blocked any KMT attempt to carry out a land reform.²³ In its soul-searching after 1949, the KMT leadership admitted that the Communist Party land reform program had been the major part of its appeal to the peasantry. In the early 1950s, the party was by no means sure that Taiwan would be a secure base for it. It faced a hostile population – especially after the massacres of 2-28 – and a menacing mainland government. It was concerned that, without land reform, the loss on the mainland might be repeated.

KMT personnel owned no agricultural land in Taiwan, they had few personal connections with the Taiwanese landlords and cared for their interests even less. Thus the government proceeded with a thorough land reform which it could never have undertaken on the mainland. Some 37 per cent of the total cultivated area of Taiwan was distributed under the program.²⁴ Farm incomes rose; between the conclusion of the land reform and 1968, the income of the average owner-farmer increased 230 per cent.²⁵ With the conclusion of the reform, more than 80 per cent of the farming population worked their own land.²⁶ By redistributing rural wealth in this way, land reform lessened the high levels of inequality that other NICs experienced during the industrialisation process.²⁷ Furthermore, it created the basis for a large number of small entrepreneurs – often part-time farmers – to develop manufacturing businesses. As we shall see, the effects of this on class structure, the development of class consciousness and, consequently, the future weakness of the labour movement were to be profound.

From 1949 onwards, the state in Taiwan used all the means at its disposal to spur industrialisation. It maintained a very large state production sector which controlled the 'commanding heights' of the economy – upstream and strategic industries such as petrochemicals and steel. Most banking and finance capital was

state-owned. Four-year plans, with precise sectoral and economy-wide targets, operated from 1953. The state targeted industries for special assistance and imposed local content requirements on foreign investors. It created the infrastructure deemed necessary for industry. High tariffs and quantitative import controls were established, especially in the early phase of industrialisation.

Alongside large-scale state industry there also developed a vibrant private sector of many thousands of businesses – most of them small. Such a dual structure is not unknown. What is unique to Taiwan, however, is that the division between the two was also heavily marked by the ethnic division of the island.

The Ethnic Basis of the KMT State

The indigenous people of Taiwan are of Malayo-Polynesian background and now make up about 1 per cent of the population. Beginning about one thousand years ago, but particularly from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, people from mainland China – especially from Fujian and Guangdong provinces – began to move there. They forced the indigenes into the interior and into an increasingly marginal existence. The main Taiwanese language is a variant of the dialect spoken south of the Min River in Fujian Province in mainland China. The Taiwanese who originally came from there are called *Minnan jen* (people from south of the Min), possessing the dialect *Minnan hua* (south of the Min speech) – or simply Fujianese. About 12 per cent of the population speak Hakka – a form of Hokkien – as their first language. Around 14 per cent of the population – those who came to Taiwan after 1945 – speak Mandarin as their first language. Mandarin and the local Taiwanese languages are mutually unintelligible.²⁸ The breakdown of the population is usually given as 85 per cent Taiwanese, 14 per cent Mainlander and 1 per cent Aborigine.

Because of the rather loose form of control which the Qing dynasty exercised over Taiwan and because of the half century of Japanese colonialism, few Taiwanese in 1945 had a sense that they were culturally part of China. While there was resentment at Japanese overlordship, it seldom translated into a demand for separation from Japan or unification with China. Besides, by 1945, Taiwan was relatively economically developed compared with mainland China. The former had a high rate of literacy and substantial public infrastructure. The transition from domination by Japan to domination by the mainland government did not seem to many Taiwanese as liberation. The rag-tag – and highly repressive – forces which the KMT moved to take Taiwan back after 1945 had hardly changed their minds.

Although they had no clear sense of nationhood and although they were divided ethnically amongst themselves, the Taiwanese soon united, to the extent that most opposed the mainlanders. This complex sense of a negative unity and identification is captured by the recollection of the Hakka writer, Tai Kuo-hui, when faced with a hostile mob during the 2-28 incident. Unable to prove that he was not a Mainlander because he could not speak Fujianese, he resorted to singing the Japanese national anthem to show that he was not from the Chinese mainland.²⁹

The KMT, for the most part, did not need deep roots in the local population or mass support, since it had brought not only an entire state apparatus with it, but a support base of a million and a half people as well. A degree of political isolation from the Taiwanese also provided the KMT with a means of keeping the supporters and the army it had brought with it in order. The mainlanders were encouraged to

think of themselves as the representatives of the higher culture of China. Although Taiwan, in this mythology, was part of the same culture, it was clearly on the fringes of it; the Mainlanders came from its heartland. Most of the Mainlanders, especially the large numbers of poor soldiers, were neither wealthy nor influential. Now they were encouraged by the KMT to believe not only that they were superior to the majority of the population, but that they could also be thrown out if the Taiwanese attempted to recover the island.³⁰ A siege mentality – based not only on the threat from the Communists, but from the Taiwanese as well – was consciously promoted by the KMT within its own constituency. Furthermore, the Mainlanders had no property in Taiwan and no jobs. They were entirely reliant on the KMT state for their livelihoods. The regime continued to manipulate these ethnic divisions for decades. Until the early 1990s, the ancestral origins of one's father were recorded on identity cards, which had to be carried by all people over 15 years of age.³¹ Even when social contact became more common between Taiwanese and Mainlanders, new acquaintances would still usually be 'placed' as one or the other on the basis of their accent, customs, likes and dislikes.³²

In 1953 the government imposed Mandarin as the language of instruction in all schools; the use of other dialects in the schoolyard was a punishable offence.³³ In 1964, it passed a law outlawing the use of Taiwanese languages in official settings and began a campaign to emphasise the grace of Mandarin and the vulgarity of Taiwanese.³⁴ When television was introduced to Taiwan, programs in Taiwanese proved most popular – a clear threat to the mainlander ascendancy. Accordingly, in 1972, the government imposed restrictions on the broadcasting of programs in Taiwanese, limiting such programs to one hour each day, and this had to be broken into two segments – at lunch and at night. In 1976, all television was required to be in Mandarin within one year.³⁵ Taiwanese languages survived, but the government's language chauvinism meant that, even after decades on the island, many mainlanders could not speak Taiwanese.³⁶

Another element of the KMT's cultural policy was the glorification of all things 'Chinese' and the attempt to instil a Chinese nationalism rather than a Taiwanese one in the population.³⁷ The policy had a number of motives. Firstly, the KMT's insistence that it remained the legitimate government of China – the Republic of China (ROC) – demanded that it preserve Chinese culture against the supposed attempt by the Communists to destroy it.³⁸ The message was that the Chinese Communists were 'unChinese' and that only the KMT preserved intact the precious heritage of a five thousand year civilisation.³⁹ Thus cultural artifacts brought from the mainland and installed in the many museums built in Taiwan – such as the National Palace Museum – have been important ideological weapons of the regime.⁴⁰ A second reason for the official adulation of Chinese culture was that it served to remind the Mainlander population in Taiwan of their supposed cultural superiority and of Taiwanese backwardness. The relegation by neglect of specifically Taiwanese history and culture corresponded to the secondary political status which the Taiwanese were allotted in the regime after 1949.⁴¹

The Taiwanese education system was also enlisted to inculcate a sense of the importance of China rather than Taiwan. For many years after 1949, students were required to memorise mainland railway stations as they existed before 1949. In the schools, the national flag, the KMT party song and its leaders – Chiang Kai-shek

and Sun Yat-sen – were all venerated. The primacy of China over Taiwan was even evoked in the naming of places on the island. City streets in Taipei were named after places on the mainland. Indeed, there was even an attempt to have their relative positions in China reflected in Taipei. Thus names from the southern part of China were used to rename streets in the southern part of the city, the names of peripheral regions such as Tibet, and others in Mongolia and elsewhere assigned to outskirts of the city.⁴² The map of Taipei became a map of China. Another element of this cultural discrimination was the conscious promotion by the government in Taiwan of the importance of Confucianism – a product of the mainland and a central part of elite Chinese culture.

One result of this cultural and ethnic subordination was that, in private industry, where most workers found themselves, both management and labour often identified as the same (oppressed) ethnicity – similarly marginalised by mainlander ascendancy.

Ethnicity and Industry

A tiny Taiwanese bourgeoisie managed to find a favoured place at the table – especially those in industries of direct importance to the military. Lin Tingshen of the Tatung Group and Tang Chuanzong of the Tang Eng Ironworks – both manufacturers of metal products – succeeded in creating quite large firms.⁴³ However, most Taiwanese businesses remained small and the state was content to see them remain so. Meanwhile, Mainlanders controlled the commanding heights of the economy through the state industries.⁴⁴ The industrial division of labour reflected the ethnic one which the KMT had manipulated to its political advantage.

By the early 1990s, there were approximately 700,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Taiwan – an extraordinary number in a population of only around 20 million people. They made up 98 per cent of the total number of businesses and employed 70 per cent of the total workforce.⁴⁵

Part of the reason for the small scale of much private business in Taiwan was the success of the land reform of the early 1950s. Farm incomes rose but plots remained small. Some of this extra income was used to buy labour-saving equipment, freeing farm labour. Many farming families also used it to set up small manufacturing enterprises. In only a short time, farm families were earning more from these ventures than from the land. Non-farm income for rural households was already 79 per cent of their total household income in 1966, rising to 89 per cent a decade later.⁴⁶

But, undoubtedly, the major reason for the small average size of Taiwanese private businesses was the deliberate policy choice of the state which channelled resources – foreign aid until the mid-1960s and bank credit – into the public sector. This did not prevent the proliferation of private businesses. Indeed, the KMT regime had no reason to fear the proliferation of small Taiwanese businesses. But, it did restrict their expansion.⁴⁷

The relatively low level of organised industrial struggle in Taiwan was not only a product of repression. The most important factor limiting the development of working-class militancy was this distinctive feature of Taiwanese industrial expansion – the preponderance of the small firms. By 1971, 68 per cent of firms employed fewer than 20 workers.⁴⁸ By the 1980s, 90 per cent of firms employed fewer than 30 workers. An estimated 80 per cent of the wage workforce were to be found in such small firms.⁴⁹ Moreover, many of these were family-owned and often

employed family members before hiring anyone else. Ties of kinship between employer and worker personalised the relationship in such a way as to slow down the development of class consciousness.

A second important factor, which had the same effect, was the development of substantial, decentralised, rural manufacturing. Unusually for a rapid industrialisation, rural employment grew as rapidly as urban for much of the period of expansion.⁵⁰ As pointed out above, land reform provided the basis for small manufacturing enterprises in the countryside. Therefore, many workers kept a foot in the small-farmer class. Even when former farmers or their children moved to the city, they would often be able to move back, sometimes with industrial skills, to use in local manufacturing enterprises.⁵¹ Many more of those who did not return to their villages could still harbour hopes of doing so. A study of small factories in the village of Liu Ts'o, showed that young villagers trained in urban industry often returned to their village and provided labour and skills.⁵² In these small factories:

the male workers' expectation of becoming capitalists and free workers with higher income and social status was an important stimulus ... The distinction between capitalists and workers in most small-scale in-village factories in Liu Ts'o is not clear cut; ... everyone wants to establish his own business.⁵³

Taiwan's industrial workforce has been depicted accurately as part-time proletarians simultaneously engaged in industrial and agricultural production⁵⁴ and the consequent 'lingering rural experiences of [these] workers has [had] the effect of clouding their working class identity'.⁵⁵ A higher level of 'group loyalty' might well have existed in these enterprises, but an explanation for it based on their small size, rural location and the family links between owners and workers seems more appropriate than the relatively timeless one of 'Confucian culture'.

Moreover, the sense of injustice at increasing levels of inequality that was present in many other rapidly industrialising countries, was much less pronounced in Taiwan. The very fact that so many small businesses were set up and that much manufacturing has been dispersed – both spatially and in terms of ownership – has served to lessen the extent of inequality in the industrial transformation.

Another reason for the limitation of class polarisation in Taiwan was the success – for a long period – of the KMT's attempt to divide the population along ethnic lines. The division tended to keep Taiwanese and Mainlander workers separate and to cause each to identify with capitalists on their own side of the divide. Also, the constant repetition of the message that it is the heir of Chinese culture and a party with a great historic mission had an effect in establishing a degree of KMT ideological hegemony.⁵⁶

Early Class Struggles in Post-War Taiwan: 1949-84

The 2-28 massacre and the atrocities accompanying the subsequent 'clean-up' were the prelude to the KMT's promulgation of martial law on 20 May 1949. Martial law was accompanied by some 160 other repressive laws and regulations. The KMT suspended freedom of assembly and association, and prohibited the formation of alternative political parties, (except for two insignificant and sycophantic, puppet parties which followed the KMT to Taiwan and which depended on it for the morsels

and crumbs to sustain their own existence). An extensive network of secret police, headed by the Generalissimo's son, Chiang Ching-kuo was set up. It directed numerous newspapers and magazines to suspend publication indefinitely, forbade the sale and consumption of 'seditious' literature, tried 'subversive' civilians incommunicado in military courts, and made pre-trial torture and deaths in custody commonplace.⁵⁷ Martial law prescribed capital punishment for the crimes of inciting social disturbances, of questioning and criticising the one-party state's position on the recovery of the mainland, of spreading 'seditious rumours' generally, of either causing or encouraging strikes, and of setting up or attempting to establish independent labour unions. And, among other repressive measures, the KMT established 'guidance counsellors' and security agents in every workplace and educational institution to discourage dissent.⁵⁸

In the 1950s, the KMT used state emergency powers against all working class, peasant, aboriginal, and student organisations, beginning in 1950 with the roundups of members of the underground 'Communist Party of China - Taiwan Province Working Committee': an organisation of some 1,000 young Maoists. Among the Committee's prominent young members was Lin Shu-yang. He was to become the longest-serving political prisoner in Taiwan's history, held in Taiwan's Green Island prison until 1984 after incarceration for 34 years and 7 months.⁵⁹ In 1950, some 200-sugar industry workers in the village of Ma Dou in Tainan province were arrested. Subsequently, dozens of workers and middle-class pro-independence activists were rounded up, imprisoned, and killed in what became known as the Tai Zhong and Tao Yuan incidents.⁶⁰ The arrests of independence and democracy protagonists among Taiwan's bourgeoisie contributed to the intimidation of the Taiwanese masses generally. By 1956, the Communist presence in Taiwan had been completely eradicated as well.⁶¹

The KMT exported to Taiwan the trade union model already firmly established under its rule in mainland China, setting up a peak union body, known as the Chinese Federation of Labour (CFL). For several decades, the Federation controlled virtually all labour unions and all unionised workers in Taiwan. The Party financially supported the CFL at the county, provincial and national levels and paid the rent on all of the Federation's offices.⁶² The KMT also had the power to dissolve unions within the CFL if it considered them subversive. It forbade horizontal links between unions across industries and closely scrutinised union elections. It was almost impossible for a unionist to be elected or appointed to the position of official or of shop steward unless he - Taiwan's union movement has always been dominated by men - was a member of the KMT. This, in turn, constituted a potent weapon for mobilising workers to vote for KMT candidates in local elections. In all, the CFL was simply an instrument of party policy.

Backed by massive state support, the CFL was remarkably successful in recruiting members. As a result, trade union density in Taiwan has always been higher than in most of its Asian neighbours - for instance some three times higher than that of South Korea.⁶³ However this greater rate of unionisation has reflected no more than workers' high level of subjugation to the KMT and, therefore, to management. Strikes tended to be short and few in number. According to Lin Mei-jung, only 22,268 workers were involved in industrial disputes between 1949 and 1965.⁶⁴ Just 909 labour disputes were officially recorded between 1964 and 1974, and not all were strikes.⁶⁵

However there were isolated incidents of riots and demonstrations, even under the so-called White Terror period of the 1950s. One is particularly noteworthy – the mass riot at the United States Embassy in Taipei in May 1957. After the US legal system acquitted an American army sergeant for the fatal shooting in Taipei of a Chinese public sector employee, local residents rioted for fourteen hours. They poured into the Embassy, tore down the US flag, torched American cars and lorries, sacked the offices, and threw steel cabinets out of the windows.⁶⁶

But martial law and the state control of trade unions cannot fully account for the low level of worker militancy during the post-war period. The most important factor has been the somewhat unique geographical and organisational configuration of Taiwan's industry and labour market, resulting from the proliferation of small, labour-intensive firms mentioned above.⁶⁷

Political volatility did begin to emerge in another quarter – among sections of students, some ethnic Taiwanese politicians and supporters of greater democracy. In 1971, a layer of nationalist students was radicalised in opposition to the Japanese annexation of the Diao Yu Tai Islands, formerly territories of the Peoples' Republic of China. In 1972 an alliance began to be formed between native Taiwanese politicians and socialist and other left-wing students. In August 1975, this alliance was consolidated by the magazine *Taiwan Zhenglun* (*Taiwan Politics*), which, among other things, called on the Koumintang to recognise the absurdity of its position in relation to the Communist mainland.⁶⁸

Although the middle-class democracy and nationalist activists were the most prominent section of opposition to the KMT in the 1970s, the decade also saw the beginnings of a genuinely independent union movement after decades of repression. Three significant events occurred in 1977, which gave the new unions a boost. The first was the formation of an independent union at the Far East Textile Company after a two-year effort discredited the former management-controlled union. This was the first union existing independently of the KMT in Taiwan's post-war history – although the KMT retained a minority membership on its Committee. Rather than prevailing upon the state to use martial law to smash the union, the management adopted the more cautious approach of buying workers' votes at election times. However such attempts repeatedly failed and by 1986, all of the elected leaders were genuine unionists.⁶⁹

On the railways, maintenance worker Yang Chin-chang led a similar attempt to establish an independent union, while demanding better wages and conditions. Formerly a KMT member, Yang resigned from the party in order to strengthen his support amongst the rank and file but was fired for his efforts.⁷⁰ After 65 days, Yang was finally re-instated in his previous position. Though Yang's attempts to form an independent union ultimately failed, his Taipei-based group was central to at least two of the three railway strikes of 1988, which eventually forced the management to recognise an independent union in both Taipei and Kaohsiung.

The third event, which was a watershed in post-war class relations in Taiwan, was the November 1977 Chungli riot. Between 1971 and 1977, an opposition group of politicians and candidates for political office began to cohere. At this stage it was not a party – martial law prevented the formation of one.⁷¹ Taiwanese politicians not linked to the KMT had been able to run for office and had done so – especially in local government elections – during the 1950s and 1960s.⁷² Few were elected to

national or provincial posts, largely because of their lack of resources, organisation and the fact that the press always supported the KMT.⁷³ The gradual emergence of a sense of Taiwanese identity and the accumulation of discontent meant that electoral oppositionists – known as the *tang-wai* (people outside the party) – began to attract more support. They were helped by an international factor – the normalisation of relations between Washington and Beijing. Since the KMT's legitimacy was based so much on the idea that it was the real government of China, the obvious fact that most of the world did not believe it to be so, damaged its domestic prestige.⁷⁴ At the local elections in 1977, the KMT lost ground to *tang-wai* candidates.⁷⁵ In the same year, this loose grouping of oppositionists won 34 per cent of the vote in the elections for the Taiwan Provincial Assembly.⁷⁶

The growing opposition began to have an effect inside the KMT. One popular figure, Xu Xin-liang, left the party and ran as a *tang-wai* for a local county magistrate's position in November 1977. Afraid that the KMT would rig the ballot, 10,000 of Xu's supporters gathered in the town of Chung-li to object to the paper ballots being used. A riot – since known as the 'Chung-li incident' – ensued. It was the first political protest on the streets since the 1940s.⁷⁷

Xu Xin-liang was an unpredictable political figure – a 'socialist' who wanted to maintain the Taiwanese economic base while humanising its class structure.⁷⁸ But he vigorously advocated parliamentary democracy and Taiwan's independence, and frequently attacked the KMT's corruption and systematic violation of human rights. More galling still, Xu commonly spoke Hakka at public rallies, in defiance of the KMT's obsession with Mandarin. Realising the election fraud, thousands of workers rioted, burning down the Chungli police station. The KMT called in soldiers to suppress the riot – some 90 per cent of whom were Taiwanese youths – and in response the protestors, *en masse*, cried out that the state was 'beating the fellow Taiwanese'. Since the event, the KMT's policy of riot-control has been to use police and military police for such purposes. As Arrigo points out, the Chungli Incident gave previously atomised dissidents 'a surge of exhilaration and hope'.⁷⁹

Two years later – in December 1979 – the state set out to smash the parliamentary democracy forces – and no doubt to atone for the humiliation it experienced at Chungli – by arresting all of the leaders of the anti-KMT movement who had organised a gathering at Kaohsiung on International Human Rights Day. The purge is known as the Ilha Formosa Meilitao Incident or, more simply, the Kaohsiung Incident. The entire leadership was sentenced to long prison terms, including Chen Chu, later Head of the Council for Labour Affairs in the Chen Shui-bian Democratic Progressive Party government, and Shi Ming-deh, who was handed a life-sentence. The latter's American spouse, Linda Arrigo, was deported. On the twentieth anniversary of the Kaohsiung Incident, Arrigo wrote:

I myself experienced a deep sense of terror and despair as I realised, on the morning of December 13, that not only my husband Shih-Ming-deh, Lu Hsiu-lien and Chen Chu had been dragged away. ... but all the leadership of the democratic movement had been arrested. I finally understood what it meant to break into a cold sweat and tremble uncontrollably, as I had seen terror described in novels.⁸⁰

The KMT subsequently intensified the repression, slaughtering the family of Lin Yishiung, one of the leaders of the Kaohsiung democratic movement. Lin escaped death simply because he was under detention at the time. Given that Lin's home was then under police surveillance, most believe that the Secret Service carried out the murders. In July 1981, the body of Assistant Professor Chen Wen-chen was discovered on the campus of the Taiwan University in the United States. It was commonly believed that this was a warning to Taiwanese oppositionists abroad. Then in October 1984, the Taiwan 'mafia' was blamed for the murder of Liu Yiliang, a US citizen and critic of the KMT. This assassination shocked both the Taiwanese at home and those living abroad. Ultimately President Reagan, under growing Congressional pressure, urged his counterpart, President Chiang Ching-kuo, to respond to demands for multi-party parliamentary democracy in Taiwan.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, union activists campaigned for new industrial legislation, guaranteeing minimum wage rates and working conditions. The government had long resisted such pressure on the grounds that this would dampen local and foreign investment in Taiwan. However, in an environment of strong and sustained economic growth, rising real wages, relatively low unemployment, severe labour shortages, and heightened industrial unrest, the KMT shifted its position. As Ho states, by the mid-1980s, the state authorities:

felt that a labour standards law would ... serve to reassure investors – by clarifying and stabilizing labour costs and terms of unemployment, and laying some framework for the resolution of [the] increasing number of disputes.⁸¹

The result was the promulgation, in 1984, of the *Labour Standards Law*. Even so, the powers to set minimum wages and conditions remained heavily concentrated in the state bureaucracy – specifically the newly-established Basic Wage Commission, which provided minimal representation to organised labour.⁸² In addition, the legislation did not allow for improvements in wages and conditions in several important industries, such as the 2 million-strong service sector, while across most industries the employers continued to evade the payment of overtime rates, year-end bonuses and other employee entitlements.⁸³

The avoidance of penalty rates and bonus payments represented one of the main causes of industrial disputes and sympathy strikes in the second half of the eighties. Several workers' struggles were crucial to the sudden and rapid emergence of independent unionism, most importantly strikes in 1988 by railway workers in Kaohsiung, by bus drivers in Miaoli, and by the employees of the Far Eastern Textiles Company in Shinju.⁸⁴ These, among other major disputes that year, led Ho Yuet-Ying of the Asia Monitor Research Center, to claim that the working class of Taiwan was no longer prepared to remain silent.⁸⁵

Growing labour shortages and the rise of the independent unions caused manufacturing wages to rise by approximately 60 per cent between 1986 and 1989.⁸⁶ However, even at the height of the post-war workers' struggles in 1989 there were only 15,642 days on strike and this fell to a mere 23 days in 1991. Initially, the independent unions had demonstrated real potential for growth, but by the early 1990s their great weakness was clear. Several factors underpinned this frailty.

Many of the militants were sacked by management and blackbanned by industry associations which alerted their employer members to the names and profiles of the 'trouble-makers'. Numerous others were bought-off, accepting promotions and accompanying wage and bonus rises in return for political and industrial quiescence. Anecdotal reports abound of scores of talented and once-committed shop stewards accepting such economic temptations.

Secondly, during the 1990s, there was an acceleration in the off-shore relocation of manufacturing capital to cheap labour regions of Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines) and more recently to the south-east coast of mainland China. This wounded the independent union movement immensely. The 1992 events at the Jia Long Garments Company in Taipei County bear some testimony to this. Jia Long was a factory whose workforce of 100 women had no union representation until the eve of the plant closure in June 1992. The company had a stable workforce with little turnover, employing largely young female operatives from poor rural farm households, and housing these employees in over-crowded dormitories. The employees went on strike on 4 June 1992, in opposition to unpaid overtime, to repeated violations of occupational health and safety laws, and to rumours that the plant was to be relocated to Indonesia. On the first day of strike-action, they celebrated the anniversary of the uprisings on the mainland and condemned the massacres that extinguished them. They also formed a union, with the support of the Taiwan Labour Front, the Keelung Bus Drivers, the Solidarity Front for Women Workers, among other labour groups, and picketed the Buddhist Temple where the owner of the factory regularly prayed. However, although the women succeeded in being back-paid overtime rates over several years, they lost their jobs and their independent union. As the strikers' leader, Wu Li-na states, 'we had achieved so much and changed so much in our outlook but our union was cut down in its infancy'.⁸⁷

Unlike many disputes of the late 1980s, several of the most crucial workers' struggles of the early nineties ended in failure, demoralising those who participated in them as well as those who provided ongoing support. One of the most critical setbacks was the defeat of the Keelung Bus Drivers in the 40-day strike during July and August 1992 over union independence and improved pay and conditions. Prior to the strike, the bus drivers in Keelung were regarded, somewhat, as vanguards of the worker's struggle, typified by their willingness to mobilise in support of strikes well outside their industry and region. They supported, for example, the aforementioned Jia Long strike in Taipei County. The Keelung dispute was one of the longest strikes in Taiwan's post-war history and provided evidence of a high degree of political mobilisation of the male strikers' spouses, who regularly attended and organised picket lines, while challenging traditionally sexist notions of so-called female passivity.⁸⁸ The company aggressively exploited provisions in the *Labour Standards Law*, the *Labour Disputes Law*, and *Trade Union Law*, which between them make it possible to outlaw almost any strike. The strike was defeated and the drivers returned to work, achieving virtually nothing. A deep-seated sense of resignation began to affect many workers active in this unseasoned, new labour movement.

Throughout the nineties, most of the public sector unions remained firmly under the control of the CFL, partly because of the rank and file's fear that the extension of independent unionism to their workplaces could undermine public sector wage

indexation; a privilege denied to private sector employees. One notable exception was the Telecom Workers' Union which claimed in excess of 35,000 members. In 1996, a group led by Kaohsiung-based maintenance worker Chang Shu-chung seized control of the union, proclaiming its independence from all political organisations and lobby groups throughout Taiwan. The significance of its independence became clear in the May Day marches of 1998, at which opposition to the KMT's privatisation legislation was the rallying cry. On a national scale, this was one of the largest May Day rallies in Taiwan's post-war history – some 20,000 marched in Taipei alone; the largest contingent of marchers was made up of public sector unionists. The Telecom Union led them all. Fearing an intensification of struggle against privatisation, the KMT set out to destabilise the independent union's leadership and to reinstate CFL authority. The government dispatched several letters to every member, claiming that the union's current leaders were irresponsible and would generate a massive job drain. The fear campaign was both relentless and effective. In the March 2000 union elections, KMT supporters regained control of every national leadership position within the Telecom Union, relegating Chang's influence to a relatively minor position on the Standing Committee of the union's Kaohsiung branch.⁸⁹ This was an astounding victory, considering that only weeks later, the KMT suffered resounding defeats in both the Presidential election and the CFL's National Executive elections.

The most significant organisation today representing sections of independent unionism in Taiwan is 'Labour Front'. Born on May Day 1984 to provide free legal consultations with unionists, Labour Front began to wage political campaigns in 1992, lobbying to enhance the autonomy of unions, to extend the *Labour Standards Law* to service sector employees and to minimise the off-shore relocation of Taiwan's manufacturing capital. Since the 1990s it has been affiliated with key representatives of 11 large and potentially powerful union organisations, all purporting to be independent, such as the National Postal Union, the Taipei Bus Union, the Fertilizer Union, the Tatung Appliance Union. (Robert) Bo Liu, Labour Front's Chair since 1996, insists that 'Taiwan Labour Front is the best organisation suited to promote workers' rights and traditions [of struggle]'.⁹⁰ Countless others, however, have questioned the so-called independent status of these unions on the basis of Labour Front's close political affiliations with the Democratic Progressive Party, the Party of the current President, Chen Shui-bian. As one activist claimed:

Labour Front tries to make the workers and unions believe that the legislators in the Democratic Progressive Party are useful and on the side of the workers. They have tied their support organisations to the electoral ambitions of the Democratic Progressive Party. The union leaders in turn are very reluctant to do anything that might bring down Chen Shui-bian and his Party. This is not independence.⁹¹

The sole labour organisation which is not affiliated to a political party is the 'Committee for Action for Labour Legislation', formed in November 1992, directly in response to the Keelung bus drivers' strike. The Committee has managed to link with many independent enterprise unions in the manufacturing, transport, and newspaper industries, along with various other action groups, such as 'Solidarity Front for Women Workers'. It is opposed to party-political affiliations and regards

itself and its member-union organisations as 'genuinely independent',⁹² however its enterprise unions are relatively small in size and extremely limited in influence. Like the Beijing-aligned Labour Rights Association, it has no influence whatsoever among the public sector unions.

The independent union movement has become highly fractured by the diverse and antagonistic relations persisting between the political forces that purport to represent them. Two key issues have proved to be perpetually divisive. The first is the question of whether the unions should tie themselves to an electorally-oriented party. The other is the corresponding question of Taiwanese independence or unification with the People's Republic of China. In 1987/88, the 'Workers' Movement Support Association' and its party-affiliate the 'Workers' Party' emerged, but with a highly divided agenda. Their Chair, Lo Mei-wen, ever active in the Far East Textiles Union, was strongly committed to Taiwan's unification with the mainland while the Vice-Chair, Wong Yii-shung, was opposed to unification with China and refused to acknowledge any role for these organisations other than the provision of legal advice to unionists. Lo and his supporters attempted to establish the Taiwan Independent Trade Union Federation to unify the independent unions throughout Taiwan, however the dominant Wong faction refused to accept the legitimacy of the pro-Beijing nominations. Frustrated by their inability to establish the Federation, Lo and his supporters resigned from both the Workers' Movement Support Association and the Workers' Party and formed the Labour Party, together with its affiliate, the Labour Rights Association.⁹³ The latter organisations have been able to sustain the T'ao-Chu-Miao Brotherhood Union, founded in 1988 at the time of the Far Eastern Textiles dispute, and supported by some 150 active shop stewards in 2000. However the Taiwan Independent Trade Union Federation was dissolved shortly after its inception in May 1989 because of its founders' inability to secure the support of unionists outside the pro-Beijing lobby.

Foreign Workers

In the late 1980s, labour intensive industries in Taiwan were battling to survive in an environment of an appreciating currency and of severe labour shortages in the semi-skilled and unskilled echelons of the labour market.⁹⁴ In October 1989, the Taiwan government permitted major construction projects to engage foreign workers. By July 2000, the influx had risen to 311, 849 persons, each engaged under three-year visas. Of these foreign workers, some 58.4 per cent worked in manufacturing, 28.7 per cent in paid domestic work, and 12.6 per cent in building and construction. These workers came from Thailand, the Philippines, and to a lesser extent Indonesia and Vietnam.⁹⁵

According to the Taiwan government, foreign workers earned up to 98 per cent of the average wage in 1999.⁹⁶ This understated the wage differentials between local and foreign workers immensely. Various studies have demonstrated that, around this time, the average monthly regular earning of foreign employees in the non-agricultural workforce was slightly lower than 50 per cent of that of local Taiwan workers in the non-agricultural workforce.⁹⁷ As Lianto has pointed out, capital and the state have built foreign worker guest policy not on the basis of increasing the supply of labour in general but, rather, to expand the supply of cheap labour specifically.⁹⁸

In July 2001, the Chen Shui-bian government established the Economic Development Advisory Conference (EDAC), in which the powerful National Chinese Federation of Industries was a key member, to make policy national economic recommendations, and one of its key proposals was the removal of foreign workers from Taiwan's minimum wage system. The Council of Labour Affairs succeeded in convincing the EDAC and the Executive Yuan of the wisdom of implementing mandatory monthly accommodation charges for foreign workers – excluding paid domestic employees – ranging between NT\$2,500 and NT\$4,000. The accommodation charges generated enormous protests from the Catholic Church action groups, to which many foreign workers look for representation of their interests, partly on the basis that the accommodation provided by Taiwan's employers was frequently sub-standard, over-crowded (16 beds to a 16 square metre room), squalid, and dangerous. It was also opposed on the grounds that the compulsory charges would bring about monthly wage reductions ranging between 16 and 25 per cent. The estimated annual increase in profits, flowing from the accommodation charges, is of the order of NT\$10 billion.⁹⁹

To minimise the protests against the accommodation charges, the Chen Shui-bian government promised to regulate the pernicious labour contract system, by setting in place mechanisms facilitating the government-to-government hiring of foreign labour. However, as at July 2002, no such arrangements had been established and the foreign labour brokerage companies, numbering more than 700 in Taiwan, continue to extract some NT\$120,000 from each foreign worker.¹⁰⁰ These broker agencies are exploited themselves by many manufacturing and building/construction companies, which illegally demand large kick-backs.¹⁰¹

Taiwan's foreign workers often work under the most deplorable conditions. The incidence of industrial accidents and diseases in Taiwan is extremely high compared with advanced industrial countries: for instance in 1999 Taiwan recorded 650 work-related deaths, a rate of 0.076 fatalities per thousand employees, compared with 0.024 in Japan and 0.014 in Great Britain.¹⁰² The concentration of foreign workers in the building and construction industry, which experiences considerably higher rates of industrial accidents than all other sectors, ensures that foreign workers are over-represented in occupational accidents and deaths. According to the Taiwan Association of Victims of Occupational Accidents and Diseases, some 90 per cent of cases involving workplace deaths in Taiwan are not prosecuted by the families of the deceased and most cases of injuries and diseases are not taken to the Courts.¹⁰³ The foreign workers are particularly powerless to pursue compensation justice simply because they can be readily dismissed and there is an abundance of evidence demonstrating that employers fire any foreign worker injured on the job.¹⁰⁴ Within days of dismissal, the foreigner is typically deported.

Foreign workers respond to these degrading working and living conditions in a myriad of ways. One, most unfortunately, is inter-ethnic hostility, as evidenced in the bloody riot between an estimated 200-300 Thai and Filipino male workers at the Formosa Plastics' sixth Naptha Cracker site in Mailiao on 5 and 6 September 1999.¹⁰⁵ Running away from jobs and dormitories is a much more common response: between 1990 and 1999 the annual aggregate of such illegal 'escapes' ranged between 4,000 and 7,000 foreign persons.¹⁰⁶

Foreign workers are eligible to join Taiwan's labour unions, however they are not legally permitted, under Article 16 of the *Trade Union Law 1929*, to seek office within the unions. As a result, there is an absence of guest worker representation in the unions' full-time official and workplace delegate structures. Despite this isolation, the guest workers can represent a potentially insurgent sector of Taiwan's labour movement. However, the Taiwanese labour leadership is less than welcoming to foreign workers. This was in evidence during the Taipei Labour Day rallies in October 2000. At the rear of the Taipei rally, there was a cohort of 40 or more foreign workers, led by migrant rights activist Lorna Kung. At no stage did any of the union leaders approach Kung and her colleagues. Kung was refused permission to speak at the rally on the grounds that she represented those who had 'stolen' jobs from Taiwan's citizens.

Political Opposition and the Labour Movement

The labour movement in Taiwan developed in the midst of a broad gathering of forces of opposition to the KMT in the 1970s and 1980s. In this milieu, democracy activists, Taiwanese 'nativists', environmentalists and labour movement activists mixed. The breadth of opposition posed problems for the KMT – but it also tended to submerge the labour movement within it and to suppress the development of a specifically working-class consciousness.

One important component of this broad opposition has been the environmental movement. Taipei and Kaohsiung are two of the most polluted cities in the world. The KMT, in its rush to industrialise, cared little for the environmental consequences. Moreover, the uncontrolled and unlicensed nature of many manufacturing establishments has meant that environmental safety has been largely forgotten.¹⁰⁷ In the early 1980s, a few environmental protests began; ten were reported in 1981.¹⁰⁸ Then, between 1983 and 1987, 382 environmental protests, many of them violent, took place as people began to question the human cost of economic growth.¹⁰⁹

Within a short time after the lifting of martial law in 1987, a series of movements attempting to protect the environment were formed: the New Environment Foundation, Taiwan Greenpeace, the Taiwan Environmental Protection Union (TEPU) and the Homemakers' Union Environmental Protection Foundation.¹¹⁰ All were dominated by academics.¹¹¹ Then the movement broadened – especially in opposition to the building of further nuclear power plants – and became a significant part of the political opposition to the KMT.¹¹² Labour movement activists – while in no way dominating these campaigns – were often linked to them.

The dominant position of the KMT state required the continued weakness of local Taiwanese society. Mainlander ethnic supremacy was a crucial part of this equation. For the reasons outlined earlier, the working class was unable to challenge the state very effectively. Instead a cultural movement which crossed the class boundaries of ethnic Taiwanese emerged to voice the multiple discontents produced by KMT rule. Anticipating more openly political movements, this cultural opposition to the KMT made its first appearance in literature. A trend, known as *xiang tu* (native literature) appeared in the mid-1970s and focused on the life experiences of the common people of Taiwan. Taiwanese history also began to be written – reflecting the growth in 'Taiwanese consciousness'.¹¹³ Other cultural forms of resistance sprouted. A modern dance company – *Yun-men* (Cloud Gate) performed work based

on Taiwanese legends and history.¹¹⁴ Both historical and more broadly cultural, 'nativist' trends soon began to merge with the rising tide of political dissatisfaction.

New magazines and newspapers began to appear written in Taiwanese and Hakka – that fact alone was enough to establish them as oppositional. A club restricted to authors using Taiwanese languages was established.¹¹⁵ An important breakthrough came with the change in editorial policy of a major publishing house – *tzuli paohsi* (The Independence Newspaper Group) – which now claimed to take a 'Taiwanese perspective'.¹¹⁶

The discussion of Taiwanese identity was given a boost by democratic reforms beginning in 1986. In the 1990s, pirate radio stations – usually broadcasting in Fujianese or Hakka – became extremely important in cohering the opposition around the need for further reform and a sense of Taiwanese ethnicity.¹¹⁷ More than 20 such pirate stations sprang up in 1994 alone. The most radical of them – *The Voice of Taiwan* – regularly had 20,000-30,000 listeners; surveys showed that half a million had tuned in to it.¹¹⁸ Such stations in the Taipei area often served as meeting places for many disparate elements of the opposition – environmentalists, champions of Taiwanese culture, aspiring opposition politicians and some worker activists. Often operating on the basis of receiving calls from listeners – some became daily tribunes of those who saw themselves as oppressed by the regime.¹¹⁹

Eventually, an opposition party – the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) – was set up on 28 September 1986. The authorities decided that the public pressure for democratic reform was such that they could not afford to prosecute it.¹²⁰ With an initial membership of about 70,000, the party was overwhelmingly Taiwanese. The ending of martial law in 1987 gave space to the newly emerging forces in Taiwanese society. Between 1986 and mid-1992, the number of registered political parties rose from 3 to 69, of daily newspapers from 31 to 246 and of magazines from 3,354 to 4,356.¹²¹ Only three of the new parties had any real support: the DPP, the Labour Party (*Kung tang*) which had split from the DPP a year after its formation and the Workers' Party (*Laokung tang*). But membership of both the Workers' Party and the Labour Party was no more than a few thousand each.¹²² The lifting of martial law also increased the number and militancy of demonstrations around many issues; public protests were occurring at the rate of two per day within a year.¹²³

In December 1994, the DPP won the election for mayor of Taipei – an important post in a Mainlander stronghold.¹²⁴ The KMT was becoming weaker – although its vast financial and organisational resources and the popularity of President Lee Teng-hui – slowed the decline. With Lee gone, the DPP's Chen Shui-bian took the presidency from the KMT in the 2000 election. The small independent labour movement had failed to build a political party of any real significance of its own. Instead, most labour activists looked to the DPP to represent their interests.

In the first half of 2000, two events took place which caused some optimism about the renewal of militant unionism, and hope for an end to organisational sectarianism within the labour movement. In April, the KMT was jettisoned from the leadership of the Chinese Federation of Labour (CFL), with the new leadership including prominent militants from the 1988 railway workers' struggles, such as Lin Huei-kwung as President, and long-term Labour Party and Labour Rights Association member Wang Juan-ping, as Assistant General Secretary. However the CFL remains shackled by the fact that so many of its member enterprise organisations

remain closely connected to the KMT. Moreover, its myriad of so-called occupational unions (bosses' unions) continue to be managed by employers who are focused on exploiting their own employees' health insurance fees by expropriating the bank interest they accrue. These unions have 2 million members. Wang Juan-ping herself is deeply pessimistic about the new leadership's ability to transform the CFL and envisages a time in the near future when she will be forced to burn her bridges with the organisation.¹²⁵

Trade union sectarianism continues to be a major problem. The Taiwan Confederation of Trade Unions has proven to be deeply sectarian, as demonstrated by its refusal to take part in the 'official' Labour Day national rally in October 2000. The CFL insisted that the Taiwan Confederation of Trade Unions contribute to a united front in struggle against the Democratic Progressive Party's *volte face* on its election promise to implement a standard 44-hour week. However the latter union body refused, electing to organise its own rallies five days later in each major city. As a result there were two rallies, and the sum of the parts fell dismally short of the whole.

Future prospects for working-class insurgency, organised by the union movement, would seem grim in the short to medium term. The union movement has the task of removing obstacles to effective rank and file organisation within Taiwan's industrial legislation, especially the *Trade Union Law 1929*. The CFL would need to jettison employer management of the occupational unions. Sectarian elements within the movement – and they are not confined to the Taiwan Confederation of Trade Unions – remain a major problem. The shift of much Taiwanese manufacturing to the People's Republic and the relatively decentralised nature of much of what remains create major obstacles to the further development of the labour movement in Taiwan.

Conclusion

In 1982, Hofheinz and Calder wrote in *The Eastasia Edge* that:

The answer to the puzzle of industrial peace [in East Asia] lies once again in social attitudes. Eastasians tend to prefer compromise rather than confrontation, and the workplace is an arena for cooperation in the process of growth, not for conflict over the spoils.¹²⁶

This was, of course, before the great outbreak of labour struggle in South Korea in 1987 showed that ethnocentric generalisations such as these were fraught with danger. In Taiwan there has been no such upsurge to decisively refute the notion that workers there have had compromise, docility and obedience culturally 'fixed' onto their pattern of behaviour. Indeed the weakness of Taiwanese labour appears to support the Confucianist position.

But a closer analysis indicates that the labour movement in Taiwan has faced much greater obstacles than in other newly industrializing countries. These difficulties fall into two categories. One group of obstacles is linked to the pattern of industrial development – small-scale, often based in the countryside and often employing family members of owners or part-time workers. All of these have inhibited the development of class consciousness. A second group of obstacles stems

from the recent political history of the island – in particular, the great ethnic divide created by the migration of the bloated mainland state and its supporters to a small island. The initial organisation of a labour movement in the early stages of industrialisation is always difficult. But the level of repression – including marital law for four decades – which the migrant state employed made such organisation even more difficult. A further result of the migration of the mainlanders was the conscious manipulation of ethnic suspicion. On the one hand, mainlanders were taught to think of themselves as superior and encouraged to keep their distance from the Taiwanese. And with no land and no other livelihood in their exile they had little choice but to look to the KMT state for support. Solidarity between workers across the ethnic divide was therefore extremely difficult to construct. On the other hand, the Taiwanese – alienated from the society created after retrocession and effectively excluded from any share of political influence – tended to band together across class lines. When a powerful opposition movement did eventually appear, it too reflected this unity of much of Taiwanese society across class lines. The labour movement was too weak to determine its direction.

These factors related to the recent economic and political history of Taiwan help to explain that weakness. Stereotypes of the Confucian-influenced, submissive Taiwanese worker do not.

A Note on Interviews

Interview with **Lin Shu Yang**, 5 October 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney; Translators: Tang Shu (General Secretary of Taiwan Labour Party) and (Sam) Wu Yeuh (MA Hons student, Institute of Labour Research, National Chengchi University of Taiwan). Place of interview: Taiwan Labour Party headquarters, Hsinchu county. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Yang Chin-ching**, 21 September 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney; Translator: Tang Shu (General Secretary of Taiwan Labour Party) and (Sam) Wu Yeuh (MA Hons student, Institute of Labour Research, National Chengchi University of Taiwan). Place of interview: Taiwan Labour Party headquarters, Hsinchu county. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Yang Chin-ching**, 21 September 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney; Translator: Tang Shu (General Secretary of Taiwan Labour Party) and (Sam) Wu Yeuh (MA Hons student, Institute of Labour Research, National Chengchi University of Taiwan). Place of interview: Taiwan Labour Party headquarters, Hsinchu county. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Wu Li-na**, 15 December 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney. Translator: Huang Chang-ling (Associate Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University of Taiwan, Mucha. Place of interview: Taiwan Awakening Foundation, Taipei. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Ku Yu-ling** (General Secretary of the Taiwan Association for Victims of Occupational Accidents and Injuries and member of Solidarity Front for Women Workers), 5 December 2000. Yu was a close observer of the strike at the time, especially

of the picket lines organised by the spouses of the bus drivers. No translator required because of interviewee's English language skills. Place of interview: Taiwan Association for Victims of Occupational Accidents and Illnesses office, Chin Shan South Road, Section 2 Taipei. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Chang Shu-chang**, 16 January 2001. Interviewer: Robert Tierney. No translator required because of interviewee's English language skills. Telephone interview – Taipei and Kaohsiung. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **(Robert) Bo Liu**, 23 October 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney. Translator: (August) Ho Hseuh-cheng (MA Hons student, Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University of Taiwan). Place of interview: Taiwan Labour Front headquarters, Taipei. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **anonymous labour activist**. 15 October, 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney. Place of interview: Institute of Labour Research, National Chengchi University of Taiwan, Mucha. No translator needed because of English language skills of the interviewee. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Wuo Yong-yii** (Chair of Committee for Action for Labour Legislation), 16 November 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney. Translator: (August) Ho Hseuh-cheng (MA Hons student, Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University of Taiwan). Place of interview: Committee for Action for Labour Legislation office, Taipei. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Lo Mei-wen**, 13 October 2000. Interviewer: Robert Tierney; Translators: Tang Shu (General Secretary of Taiwan Labour Party) and (Sam) Wu Yeh (MA Hons student, Institute of Labour Research, National Chengchi University of Taiwan, Mucha). Place of interview: Taiwan Labour Party headquarters, Hsinchu county. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Steve Kuan**, Chair, Taipei Association of Manpower Agencies, 8 July 2002. Telephone interview Bathurst and Taipei. No translator required because of English language skills of the interviewee. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with Catholic priest **Father Peter O'Neill**, Catholic Hope Workers' Centre, Chung-li county, northern Taiwan, 3 December 2000. Place of interview: Catholic Hope Workers' Centre, Chung-li. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Interview with **Wang Juan-ping** (Assistant General Secretary, Chinese Federation of Labour), 21 December 2001. Interviewer: Robert Tierney. Translator: Julian Clegg (Policy Adviser to Taiwan Labour Party and to Taiwan Labour Rights Association). Place of interview: Chinese Federation of Labour headquarters, Taipei. Interview transcript held by Robert Tierney.

Endnotes

1. Between 1965 and 1988, real GNP grew at an annual average of 9 per cent. Lawrence Lau, 'The Economy of Taiwan, 1981-1988: a Time of Passages', in Lawrence Lau (ed.), *Models of Development: a Comparative Study of Economic Growth in South Korea and Taiwan*, second edition, ICS Press, San Francisco, 1990, p. 187.
2. Wage and salary workers made up 64.4 per cent of the workforce by 1980. Hagen Koo, 'The State, Industrial Structure, and Labor Politics: Comparison of Taiwan and South Korea', in Hsin-huang Michael Hsiao et al (eds), *Taiwan: a Newly Industrialised State*, Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University, Taipei, 1989, p. 563.
3. Interestingly, Taiwan had an even higher proportion of wage and salary earners than did South Korea, the other East Asian newly industrialising country with which it is most often compared. By 1985, 54.2 per cent of South Korea's workforce was made up of wage and salary earners. *Ibid.*
4. Ronald Dore, 'Confucianism, economic growth and social development', in D. Hugh Whittaker, *Social Evolution, Economic Development and Culture: What it Means to Take Japan Seriously*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham [UK], 2001, p. 203.
5. Dore, 'Confucianism', p. 204.
6. See: Herman Kahn, *World Economic Development, 1979 and Beyond*, Croom Helm, London, 1979; Roderick MacFarquhar, 'The Post-Confucian Challenge', *The Economist*, February 9, 1980; Lucian Pye, 'The New Asian Capitalism: a Political Portrait', in P.L. Berger and H.M. Hsiao (eds), *In Search of an East Asian Development Model*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1988; and William O'Malley, 'Culture and Industrialization', in Helen Hughes (ed.), *Achieving Industrialization in East Asia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988; Geir Helgesen, *Democracy and Authority in Korea: the Cultural Dimension in Korean Politics*, Curzon, Richmond, Surrey [UK], 1998; Tibor Scitovsky, 'Economic Development in Taiwan and South Korea, 1965-1981', in Lau, 'The Economy of Taiwan', pp. 131-132; Ezra Vogel, *The Four Little Dragons: the Spread of Industrialization in East Asia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge [Mass], 1991; Ronald Dore, *Taking Japan Seriously: a Confucian Perspective on Leading Economic Issues*, Athlone Press, London, 1987; Roy Hofheinz and Kent E. Calder, *The Eastasia Edge*, Basic Books, New York, 1982.
7. See, for example, Vogel, *The Four Little Dragons*, p. 99.
8. Robert Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialisation*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990, p. 74.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
13. Christopher Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 24.
14. See Hermann Halbeisen and Peter Ferdinand, 'Domestic Political Change', in Peter Ferdinand (ed.), *Take-off for Taiwan?*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1996, p. 4.
15. Julian Baum, 'Unfinished Business: KMT still Evasive over Role in 1947 Massacre', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 155, no. 11, 19 March 1992, pp. 30-31.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
17. Although the KMT did not apologise for the massacre until the 1990s, Chiang did find it expedient to sacrifice Governor Chen Yi - having him publicly shot at the former Japanese racecourse in Taipei. Edwin A. Winckler, 'Elite Political Struggle, 1945-1985', in Edwin A. Winckler and Susan Greenhalgh (eds), *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, Sharpe, Armonk, New York and London, 1988, p. 154.
18. Some put the number of Mainlanders who fled to Taiwan as high as two million. See Wade, *Governing the Market*, p. 75.
19. Michael Ying-mao Kau, 'The Power Structure in Taiwan's Political Economy', *Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 3, March 1996, p. 288.
20. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 26.
21. Robert Wade, 'Industrial Policy in East Asia: Does it Lead or Follow the Market?', in Gary Gereffi and Donald L. Wyman (eds), *Manufacturing Miracles: Paths of Industrialisation in Latin America and East Asia*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990, p. 37.
22. Halbeisen and Ferdinand, 'Domestic Political Change', p. 5.
23. The Land Law of 1930, which was supposed to come into operation in 1936, provided for rent reduction - stipulating that no farm rent should exceed 37.5 per cent of the harvest. But action to apply this measure was sporadic and half-hearted. Interestingly, the most serious land reform was undertaken in 1940 and 1941 in Hupeh, at a time when Chen Cheng was governor of the province. He later became governor of Taiwan during the land reform and later vice-president and prime minister. Joseph A. Yager, *Transforming Agriculture in Taiwan: the Experience of the Joint Committee on Rural Reconstruction*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1988, p. 100.
24. Wade, *Governing the Market*, p. 76.
25. Hsiao Tseng, *The Theory and Practice of Land Reform in the Republic of China*, 2nd edition, China Research Institute of Land Economics, Taipei, 1968, p. 126.
26. Chen Cheng, *Land Reform in Taiwan*, China Publishing Company, Taipei, 1961, p. 312.

27. Gustav Ranis, 'Equity with Growth in Taiwan: How "Special" is the "Special Case"?', *World Development*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1978, p. 401. However, there is evidence that levels of inequality began to rise steadily in the 1980s and 1990s. See Rudy Hung, 'The Great U-Turn in Taiwan: Economic Restructuring and a Surge in Inequality', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 26, no. 2, May 1996, p. 151.
28. Alan M. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1994, p. 107.
29. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 28.
30. This is a point made by Peng Ming-min after returning to Taiwan in 1992 following two decades in exile. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, p. 60.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
34. Taiwanese who spoke Mandarin generally did so with a Taiwanese accent and were made to feel inferior for this. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-100.
37. Of course, the very concept of a Chinese nationalism – which the KMT claimed to represent as part of a long historical tradition – is also extremely problematic. The Qing rulers were perceived by their subjects, who outnumbered them one hundred to one, to be an ethnically foreign group – from Manchuria. The term 'minzu', now used to mean 'nation', only appeared in the Chinese vocabulary in 1899, when used by the constitutional reformer Liang Qichao. The Chinese term for 'nationalism' – *minzu zhuyi* – was probably also first used by Liang in 1901. Sun Yat-sen did not begin using it in his published work until 1904. See Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 3.
38. Chang Chi-yun, *Chinese Culture as a Bulwark Against Communism*, Institute of Chinese Culture in Cooperation with Free Pacific Association, Taipei, 1959, p. 4.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
40. Allen Chun, 'From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan', in Jonathon Unger (ed.), *Chinese Nationalism*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, [NY], 1996, p. 132.
41. An interesting partial exception is the elevation, by the KMT, of Chen Cheng-kung – Koxinga in most Western accounts – to hero status. Koxinga was a seventeenth century Ming loyalist opposed to the Qing dynasty. He fled to Taiwan to continue the resistance. The KMT claimed that he founded the anti-Manchu societies which lasted for centuries until Sun Yat-sen incorporated them into the KMT. The KMT took over Koxinga as an outstanding historical figure – because he linked Taiwan to China. See Ralph C. Crozier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism: History, Myth and the Hero*, East Asia Research Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, [Mass], 1977.
42. Helga Leitner, and Petei Kang, 'Contested Urban Landscapes of Nationalism: the Case of Taipei', *Ecumene*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1999, p. 221.
43. Stephen Wing-Kai Chiu, *The State and the Financing of Industrialisation in East Asia: Historical Origins of Comparative Divergences*, PhD, Princeton University, 1992, pp. 235-236.
44. Ichiro Numazaki, 'Networks of Taiwanese Big Business: a Preliminary Analysis', *Modern China*, vol. 12, no. 4, October 1986, p. 490.
45. Y. Dolly Hwang, *The Rise of a New World Economic Power: Postwar Taiwan*, Greenwood Press, New York, Westport, [Conn.] and London, 1991, p. 126.
46. Ramon Myers, 'The Economic Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1965-1981', in Lawrence Lau (ed.), *Models of Development: a Comparative Study of Economic Growth in South Korea and Taiwan*, ICS Press, San Francisco, 1990, p. 31.
47. Chiu, *The State and the Financing of Industrialisation in East Asia*, pp. 176-177.
48. Myers, 'The Economic Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1965-1981', p. 31.
49. Walden Bello and Stephanie Rosenfeld, *Dragons in Distress: Asia's Miracle Economies in Crisis*, Institute for Food and Development Policy, San Francisco, 1990, p. 219.
50. Myers, 'The Economic Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1965-1981', p. 31.
51. Koo, 'The State, Industrial Structure, and Labor Politics', p. 572.
52. Hu Tai-li, *My Mother-In-Law's Village. Rural Industrialisation and Change in Taiwan*, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, 1984, p. 94. In Liu Ts'o only factories with five workers or more hired outside the kin network. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
54. Hill Gates, 'Dependency and the part-time proletariat in Taiwan', *Modern China*, vol. 5, no. 3, July 1979, pp. 381-407.
55. Chu Yin Wah, 'Labor and democratisation in South Korea and Taiwan', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1998, p. 190.
56. Koo, 'The State, Industrial Structure, and Labor Politics', p. 574.
57. Linda Gail Arrigo, 'Economic and political control of women workers in multinational electronics factories in Taiwan: Martial law coercion and world market uncertainty', *Contemporary Marxism*, vol. 2, Fall, 1985, pp. 80-81.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

59. Interview with Lin Shu Yang, 5 October 2000.
60. D.W.S. Davison, 'Politics of the left in Taiwan', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1980, April-June, p. 19.
61. Davison, 'Politics of the left in Taiwan', p. 19.
62. Ho Shuet Ying, *Taiwan - After a Long Silence: the emerging new unions of Taiwan*, Asia Monitor Research Center, Hong Kong, 1990, p. 13.
63. Chu Yin Wah, 'Labor and democratisation in South Korea and Taiwan', p. 191.
64. Lin Mei Jung, 'The female workers' movement and labor policy' *Female Workers in Taiwan*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1994, Winter, p. 1.
65. Koo, 'The State, Industrial Structure, and Labor Politics', p. 567.
66. See for instance, Brian Crozier and Eric Chou, *The Man who Lost China*, Angus and Robertson, London, 1977, pp. 367-368. A conspiratorial explanation of the event, offered by a high-ranking employee of the U.S. Embassy, was that the riot was manipulated by Chiang Ching-kuo's secret police. The fact that a police cordon was conspicuously absent during much of the riot does lend some respectability to the claim. See George H. Kerr, *Formosa betrayed*, Second edition, Taiwan Publishing Company, 1992, pp. 412-413. A more plausible argument for the weak police enforcement, however, is that Chiang Ching-kuo feared that, under the hysterical circumstances, anything construed as excessive police force could escalate and extend the mass anger, possibly destabilising Kuomintang rule itself. It had been only 10 years since the 2-28 events and the Kuomintang had not forgotten how a single spark of unrest had spread rapidly into conflagration.
67. Chu Yin Wah, 'Labor and democratisation in South Korea and Taiwan', p. 190.
68. Davison, 'Politics of the left in Taiwan', p. 20.
69. Ho Shuet Ying, *Taiwan - After a Long Silence*, p. 37.
70. Interview with Yang Chin-chang, 21 September 2000.
71. Lo Ming-cheng, 'Crafting the Collective Identity: the Origin and Transformation of Taiwanese Nationalism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 7, no. 2, June 1994, p. 214.
72. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 33.
73. The electoral system - involving multi-member constituencies - also gave the KMT a great advantage. The groups of candidates likely to succeed were those who could divide the vote most evenly between them. The KMT's vast organisational resources were used to do this effectively. As a result, the number of seats which the KMT won was usually much greater than was to be expected given the percentage of the vote it achieved. Halbeisen and Ferdinand, 'Domestic Political Change', pp. 18-19. Between 1951 and 1985, KMT candidates won between 80 per cent and 100 per cent of local government posts. In legislative elections, the KMT won 70-85 per cent of posts in the provincial assembly in 1957-85 and 75 per cent to 95 per cent of seats in the Taipei city council from 1969-85. Qingshan Tan, Peter Kien-hong Yu and Wen-chun Chen, 'Local Politics in Taiwan: Democratic Consolidation', *Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 5, May 1996, p. 486.
74. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, p. 135.
75. Halbeisen and Ferdinand, 'Domestic Political Change', p. 8.
76. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 38.
77. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, p. 139.
78. Interview with Yang Chin-chang, 21 September 2000.
79. Linda Gail Arrigo, 'The social origins of the Taiwan democratic movement 1977-1979: the making of Formosa Magazine', *Formosa Weekly*, nos. 33 and 47, 1980.
80. Linda Gail Arrigo, *Statement on the twentieth anniversary of the Meilitao Incident in Kaohsiung, December 10, 1979*, unpublished manuscript, 1 December 1999.
81. Ho Shuet Ying, *Taiwan - After a Long Silence*, p. 37.
82. Sean Cooney, 'The new Taiwan and its old labour law: authoritarian legislation in a democratised society', *Comparative Labour Law Review*, vol. 18, 1996, p. 27.
83. Ho Shuet Ying, *Taiwan - After a Long Silence*, p. 37.
84. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19, 42-43, 66-70.
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.
86. Bello and Rosenfeld, *Dragons in Distress*, p. 229.
87. Interview with Wu Li-na, 15 December 2000.
88. Interview with Ku Yu-ling (General Secretary of the Taiwan Association for Victims of Occupational Accidents and Injuries and member of Solidarity Front for Women Workers), 5 December 2000. Yu was a close observer of the strike at the time, especially of the picket lines organised by the spouses of the bus drivers.
89. Interview with Chang Shu-chang, 16 January 2001.
90. Interview with (Robert) Bo Liu, 23 October 2000.
91. Interview with anonymous activist, 15 October 2000.
92. Interview with Wuo Yong-yii (Chair of Committee for Action for Labour Legislation), 16 November 2000.
93. Interview with Lo Mei-wen, 13 October 2000.
94. Raymond, K.H. Chan, 'Taiwan's Policy Towards Foreign Workers', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 29, no. 3, 1999, pp. 383-385.
95. Council of Labour Affairs, *August 2000 Monthly Bulletin of Labour Statistics, Taiwan Area Republic of China, Table 9-7: Alien Workers by Industry and Nationality - End of July 2000*, August 2000, p. 186.

96. Government Information Office, Republic of China Taiwan, 1999 *The Republic of China Yearbook*, Government Information Office, Taipei, 1999, p. 351.
97. Robert Tierney, 'Foreign Workers and Capitalist Class Relations in Taiwan: a Study of Economic Exploitation and Political Isolation', *Bulletin of Labour Research*, vol. 12, July, 2002, p. 132; Lan Ke-jeng, 'An Evaluation of Taiwan's Foreign Worker Policy', Paper presented to the Second Annual Conference of Management Essence and Trends in Industrial Relations, Council of Labour Affairs, Chang-hua, 6 December 2000, p. 5.
98. Malia Lianto, *Migrant Workers in Taiwan*, MA thesis, University of Hull, 1995, p. 68.
99. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.
100. Interview with Steve Kuan, Chair Taipei Association of Manpower Agencies, 8 July 2002.
101. *Ibid.*
102. Robert Tierney, 'Foreign Workers and Capitalist Class Relations in Taiwan', p. 138.
103. *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.
104. Interview with Catholic priest Father Peter O'Neill, Catholic Hope Workers' Centre, Chung-li county, northern Taiwan, 3 December 2000.
105. However the incident did not reflect broader tensions between Thais and Filipinos in Taiwan as inter-ethnic relations between them have generally been peaceful and mutually respectful. The riot was largely a consequence of the overcrowded accommodation facilities; the failure of the subcontractors to provide separate accommodation for the different nationalities; the lack of competent translators (1 for every 200 residents); the general contractor's and subcontractors' speed-up pressures, bullying styles of management and occupational health and safety transgressions.
106. Council of Labour Affairs, *August 2000 Monthly Bulletin of Labour Statistics, Taiwan Area Republic of China, Table 9-2: Escapes of Foreign Workers in Taiwan-Fukien Area*.
107. For details of major environmental problems in Taiwan and of some protests – especially against petrochemical and plastics companies – see Jack F. Williams, 'Taiwan: Environmental Degradation', in E.K.Y. Chen, Jack F. Williams and Joseph Wong (eds), *Taiwan: Economy, Society and History*, Center of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1991.
108. Robert P. Weller and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, 'Culture, Gender and Community in Taiwan's Environmental Movement', in Arne Kalland and Gerard Persson (eds), *Environmental Movements in Asia*, Curzon Press, Surrey, [UK], 1998, p. 83.
109. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 42.
110. Weller and Hsiao, 'Culture, Gender and Community in Taiwan's Environmental Movement', p. 88. The formation of protest or special interest groups was outlawed in 1949 by the 'Law Governing the Organization of Civic Bodies during the Extraordinary Period'. This law remained in effect until January 1989, even though martial law ended in 1987. Thus most of the environmental organisations were technically illegal when they were first set up. Bello and Rosenfeld, *Dragons in Distress. Asia's Miracle Economies in Crisis*, p. 211.
111. Weller and Hsiao, 'Culture, Gender and Community in Taiwan's Environmental Movement', p. 89.
112. On the social movements of this period also see: Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, 'Emerging Social Movements and the Rise of a Demanding Civil Society in Taiwan', *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 24, July 1990, pp. 163-80. The importance of the environmental question to its supporters was reflected in the choice of a logo by the main opposition party – the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). It is a green map of Taiwan.
113. Hai Ren, 'Taiwan and the Impossibility of the Chinese', in Melissa J. Brown (ed.), *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, Berkeley, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1996, p. 83.
114. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, p. 138.
115. Halbeisen and Ferdinand, 'Domestic Political Change', p. 16.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
117. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
118. Julian Baum, 'Radical Radio: Pirate Broadcasters Thumb Their Nose at the KMT', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 157, no. 45, 10 November 1994, p. 17. On 30 July 1994, police moved in on 14 stations at once and closed them down, provoking violent demonstrations. *Ibid.*
119. One such station proudly printed postcards of scenes of a police raid which confiscated its transmitter, the fight with the police which ensued and the bloodied head of one of the station's leaders after being batoned by police. On the other side of the postcards are the details of this person's candidacy for the local council.
120. Kau, 'The Power Structure in Taiwan's Political Economy', p. 298.
121. James C.Y. Soong, 'Political Development in the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1985-1992: an Insider's View', in Jason C. Hu (ed.), *Quiet Revolutions on Taiwan, Republic of China*, Kwang Hwa Publishing, Taipei, 1994, p. 76. The author was the KMT provincial governor at the time.
122. Halbeisen and Ferdinand, 'Domestic Political Change', p. 24. In addition, the New Party (NP) – originally a faction called the New KMT – split from the KMT in 1994. But it must be grouped separately from the other opposition parties. While it has been critical of the KMT's 'money politics' and corruption, its defining features have been its insistence on the retention of the one-China policy and the fact that its representatives and much of its membership consists largely of

young people of Mainlander background who feel they have much to lose from the process of democratisation and Taiwanisation.

123. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 41. The Tiananmen Square democracy movement also had an impact on the democracy movement in Taiwan - encouraging it to greater militancy. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism*, p. 42.
124. Tan, Yu and Chen, 'Local Politics in Taiwan: Democratic Consolidation', p. 487.
125. Interview with Wang Juan-ping, 21 December 2000.
126. Hofheinz and Calder, *op. cit.*, p. 112