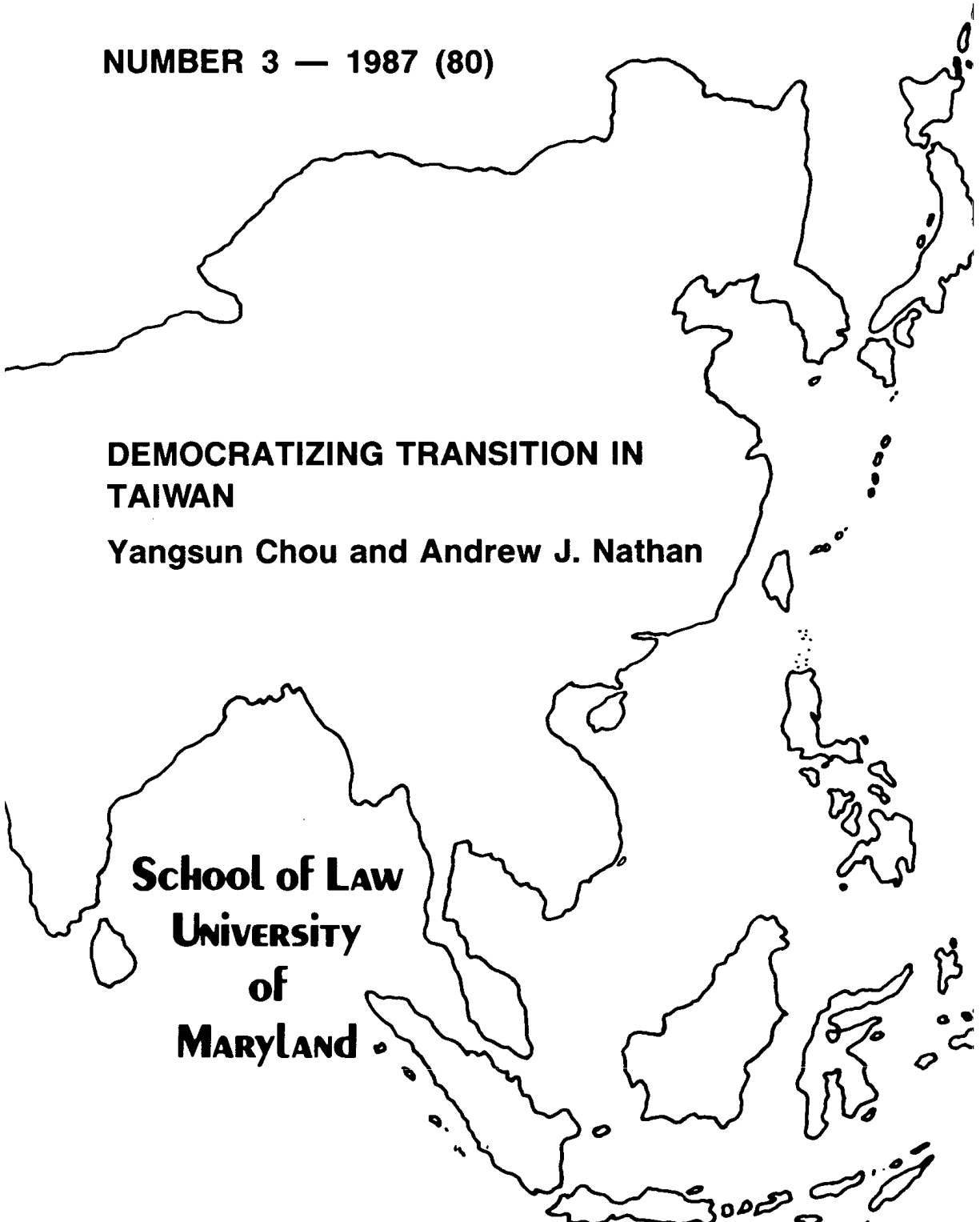


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**DEMOCRATIZING TRANSITION IN
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Yangsun Chou and Andrew J. Nathan

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DEMOCRATIZING TRANSITION IN TAIWAN

Yangsun Chou and Andrew J. Nathan

At 6:05 on the evening of September 28, 1986, Taiwan opposition leader Fei Hsi-p'ing stood up in a meeting room of Taipei's Grand Hotel and announced, "The Democratic Progressive Party is established!"

Capping a series of remarkable moves by both the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) and the non-party opposition (*tang-wai*, hereafter TW), this announcement and its aftermath marked a potentially epochal step in Taiwan's political evolution. It also broke precedent in the worldwide evolution of Leninist-style political systems, none of which has ever before tolerated the formation of a significant opposition party. The bold changes in Taiwan drew attention on the other side of the Taiwan Straits, where political reform was also a focus of attention, and raised questions for U.S. foreign policy. Taiwan's party system reform warrants a careful examination of the participants' motives, the reform process, the potential impact within Taiwan and outside, and the reforms' theoretical significance.

1950–1986: Liberalization of a Leninist Party-State

The Kuomintang was shaped by its founder, Sun Yat-sen, under Comintern tutelage in the 1920s as a Leninist-style party. The basic party structure established then endures today: selective membership recruitment; a revolutionary and nationalist ideology; a centralized decision-making structure under a Central Committee; a policy-making Central Standing Committee and a policy-implementing secretariat with organization, intelligence, and propaganda departments; control of the army through a political cadre system; maintenance of a youth league; leadership over the policies and personnel of the state apparatus; and—until recently—intoler-

ance for the existence of any opposition party. (Like the CCP with the “democratic parties,” the KMT has long co-existed with two other small parties that do not constitute a serious opposition.)

From the beginning, the Leninist structure stood in tension with non-Leninist strains in the party’s tradition—a fact which made the KMT different from other Leninist parties. Under its ideology, Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People, the KMT did not define its role in terms of the struggle between progressive and reactionary classes. Instead, it justified itself as a moral and technocratic vanguard capable of guiding national construction and gradually introducing full constitutional democracy. (In this way, the KMT ideology of “revolutionary democracy” resembled the ideologies of other Leninist party-states in their post-mobilization phases, such as the Soviet “state of the whole people” and “Chinese-style socialism.”) After its break with the CCP in 1927 the KMT adopted an ideology of anticommunism, with procapitalist domestic policies and a pro-West foreign policy, and all of this further opened it to the influence of non-Leninist ideas. Upon establishing its rule on Taiwan the party justified its restriction of political and other rights—including the right to organize new political parties—not as necessities of the revolutionary state but as temporary measures arising from the condition of civil war between the KMT and CCP regimes. These restrictions were thus not embodied in the basic constitutional order but in “Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion” and, under the authority of these provisions, in a limited regime of martial law (*chieh-yen*).¹

Even before 1949, in keeping with Sun’s ideas of tutelary democracy, the KMT tried to make nominal progress away from party dictatorship toward constitutional democracy, for example by promulgating a new constitution in 1947 (the same constitution in effect in Taiwan today, although it is modified by the Temporary Provisions just mentioned.) Starting in 1950 in Taiwan, gradual steps were taken to implement local self-rule at the provincial and lower levels, while maintaining the national government structure brought over from the mainland. In that year the Taiwan Provincial Assembly was established, its members indirectly elected by municipal- and county-level legislators for two-year terms. In 1954 for the first time the provincial assemblymen were directly elected, for three-year terms eventually changed to four. In 1969 elections were held for Taiwan

1. *Shih-pao chou-k’an* (hereafter *SPCK*), No. 86 (October 18–24, 1986), pp. 8–13. This is the New York edition of the popular Taiwan newsweekly, *Shih-pao hsin-wen chou-k’an*. Also see Hungdah Chiu and Jyh-pin Fa, “Law and Justice Since 1966,” in James C. Hsiung et. al., eds., *Contemporary Republic of China: The Taiwan Experience, 1950–1980* (New York: The American Association for Chinese Studies, 1981), pp. 314–330.

delegates to the central government's Legislative Yuan and National Assembly, and indirectly for the Control Yuan. As is well known, however, the majority of seats in these organs continued to be held by mainland delegates who had been elected in 1947 (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 *Membership of Elected Central Government Organs*

	<i>National Assembly</i>	<i>Legislative Yuan</i>	<i>Control Yuan</i>
Number of members under constitution	3,136	882	257
Number elected on the mainland	2,841	760	180
Number who came to Taiwan	1,576	470	104
Of those still serving	899	222	35
Supplementary seats elected in Taiwan	91	74	24
Overseas Chinese members selected by the President	0	27	10
Total number of delegates now serving	990	323	69
Average age of those now serving	74	71	70
Percent aged 69 or below	23.6%	31.4%	38.5%
Percent aged 70-79	47.1%	34.7%	27.1%
Percent aged 80 or above	29%	33.8%	34.2%
Average deaths per year, 1981-86	43.6	14.1	1

SOURCE: *Shih-pao chou-k'an*, No. 85 (October 11-17, 1986), p. 31.

Local elections brought a number of non-KMT politicians into the political arena, but it was not until the rise of the TW in the late 1970s that the KMT faced a strong, quasi-organized opposition. The one possible exception to this statement was the abortive formation of a China Democratic Party (*Chung-kuo min-chu tang*) by Lei Chen and several other politicians in 1960. But the regime's rapid and severe response to this attempt

showed that its Leninist instincts remained strong, and the CDP dissolved with Lei Chen's arrest.

By the 1970s economic growth had brought major changes to Taiwan society. Average annual per capita income had increased from US\$50 in 1941 to US\$3,175 in 1985.² The average annual rate of economic growth was 11% from 1964 to 1973 and 7.7% from 1974 to 1984.³ Despite increasingly severe export competition from mainland China (in terms of labor costs) and South Korea (in terms of high-technology goods), Taiwan's 1985 exports totalled almost \$34 billion, with the United States taking 48% of the total and Japan 11%.⁴ The egalitarian policies pursued under the principle of "People's Livelihood" had prevented extreme polarization of wealth: the total income of the richest fifth of the population was only 4.4 times that of the poorest fifth.⁵ The middle class now constitutes an estimated 30–50% of the total population. Over 46% of the population has attended at least junior middle school.⁶

While economic and social change created a more sophisticated public, the diplomatic and foreign-trade situations provided salient political issues. Taiwan's diplomatic isolation has steadily increased since its expulsion from the United Nations in 1971, de-recognition by Japan in 1972, and the breaking of formal diplomatic relations by the United States in 1979. Except for the city-states of Singapore and Hong Kong, Taiwan's economy is the most trade-dependent in the world. In a recent *China Times* poll of leaders in twelve industries, the respondents said that the weakest points of the Taiwan economy were the overconcentration of export markets, the lack of diplomatic relations with most countries in the world, and excessive import dependency on a few suppliers.⁷ In other opinion polls the public gives the government highest marks for its economic policies and lowest marks for its diplomatic performance, which many view as too inflexible.⁸ These issues have played an increasingly prominent role in electoral campaigns and legislative debates.

The emergence of the TW can be dated from the 1977 election, when non-party politicians won 22 seats in the provincial assembly and four posts as mayor or county magistrate. In the following year the term *tang-wai* itself came into common use when Huang Hsin-chieh, Shih Ming-teh

2. *Taiwan Statistical Data Book* (Taipei: Council for Economic Planning and Development, 1986), p. 33.

3. *Chung-kuo lun-t'an* (Taipei), No. 262 (August 25, 1986), p. 39.

4. *SPCK*, No. 82 (September 20–26, 1986), p. 54.

5. *Taiwan Statistical Data Book*, p. 60.

6. *Chung-hua min-kuo t'ung-chi t'i-yao* (Taipei: Hsing-cheng yuan, 1983), pp. 16–18.

7. *SPCK*, No. 82 (September 20–26, 1986), p. 54.

8. See, e.g., *SPCK*, No. 60 (April 20–26, 1986), pp. 6–7.

and others organized a *Tang-wai* Campaign Assistance Corps (*Tang-wai chu-hsuan t'uan*) to coordinate the campaigns of non-KMT candidates throughout the island. In subsequent elections held in 1980, 1981, 1983, and 1985, the KMT was generally able to get about 70% of the vote and the TW and independent politicians about 30%.

Until 1986, the TW was not a party but a loosely knit movement consisting primarily of small personality-based factions absorbed in large part in local issues. What drew these factions together was dissatisfaction with the ruling party's position on the interlocked issues of Taiwan's future in the international arena and the role of the KMT in the Taiwan political system. Both the candidates and the electoral supporters of the TW consist predominantly (although not exclusively) of Taiwanese, not surprising since 85% of the island's population is conventionally counted as Taiwanese, and since under Taiwan's electoral system by far the majority of the offices open for electoral competition are at the provincial level and below. Although both the KMT and the state apparatus have been heavily Taiwanese, the KMT remains mainlander-dominated at its highest levels, and it defines Taiwan's status as part of China as being settled beyond discussion.

The character of the TW as a predominantly Taiwanese political force in a mainlander-ruled polity has naturally made the issue of Taiwan's relationship to the mainland central to TW politics. On this issue the TW politicians are ranged along a radical-moderate continuum. Few Taiwanese favor reunification with the mainland. But the moderates are willing to forego for the time being any open challenge to the KMT's rule and to its one-China ideology, while the radicals—although they cannot say so openly under censorship—appear to favor some form of Taiwan independence, without KMT rule and, in some cases, under socialism (but not under the PRC). Some among both radical and moderate TW politicians have called for transport, commercial, postal, and other contacts with mainland China. They do so, however, not in order to promote reunification but because they believe that the KMT response to the mainland's diplomacy has been too rigid, and that such contacts are necessary in order to begin the search for a new relationship with the mainland and a less isolated position in the world. Other TW issues include opposition to the exclusive use of Mandarin on Taiwan television and to the promulgation of KMT ideology through the schools.

The radicals emerged as a strong force in the 1977 "Chung-li Incident," a violent demonstration against alleged election tampering in Chung-li city. They showed still greater strength in 1979, when they mobilized a series of demonstrations which culminated on December 10 in a violent

clash between demonstrators and police that became known as the "Kaohsiung Incident." In response, the government arrested and tried Shih Ming-teh, Huang Hsin-chieh, and more than 60 others of whom eight received severe sentences, and closed the offices of *Mei-li-tao* (Formosa) magazine, which was the organization behind the demonstrations.

Beginning in 1984, TW politicians produced a series of magazines which directed strong attacks at government policies and leaders on a wide range of policy and personal issues. The government banned and closed many magazines, but the TW evaded control by reopening the publications under new names and by publishing magazines in the disguised form of monthly or weekly book series. In 1985, two apparently government-backed libel suits were filed against TW magazines. Although the plaintiffs were successful in both cases, from the government's point of view the broader results were less satisfactory. The verdicts were controversial; the defendants argued that their freedom of speech and, in one case, legislative immunity, had been abridged; the defendants' supporters staged demonstrations, including a series of send offs for defendant Lin Cheng-chieh as he prepared to serve his year-and-a-half prison term.⁹ It became apparent that conviction in a libel case could be turned into political capital.

Moderates continue to dominate among opposition politicians on the island (the radicals' main base is overseas), but the exigencies of Taiwanese politics have imparted an increasingly militant flavor to the moderates' tactics. Despite the successes of KMT rule and the amelioration of mainland-Taiwanese social relations, some Taiwanese voters have deep-seated feelings of having been colonized, and they respond emotionally to the martyr symbolism around such jailed leaders as the Kaohsiung Eight. In this political culture mass rallies, emotional rhetoric, and confrontational demonstrations are tools of electoral survival for policy moderates. Even while adopting such tactics to some degree, moderates like K'ang Ning-hsiang suffer constant criticism for being too soft on the KMT. The fractious Taiwanese political style alarms many mainlanders, outside as well as inside the ruling party, who are used to more courtly, controlled maneuvering. It seems especially to alarm those in the security bureaucracy. Ample room existed in the mid-1980s for a tragic misunderstanding between the two political cultures, which might have led to a vicious circle of confrontation and repression.

9. *SPCK*, No. 81 (September 14-20, 1986), pp. 40-41.

From Liberalization to Democratizing Reform

In contrast to South Korea under the generals and Marcos' Philippines, where challenges to the regime were met fairly consistently with repression leading to further polarization, the response of the KMT to the growth and increasing militance of the opposition was, until late 1985, a mix of selective repression with institutional liberalization. The regime tried to repress the radical wing of the TW while stepping up recruitment of Taiwanese into the KMT, army, and government, including some in high posts, and gradually liberalizing electoral institutions and the media—what Edwin A. Winckler calls a movement toward “soft authoritarianism.”¹⁰ Despite opposition from the security bureaucracy and many mainlanders, President Chiang Ching-kuo had been trying to accommodate the TW as it developed. As early as 1978, he directed KMT officials to meet with TW figures under the auspices of a prominent newspaper publisher, Wu San-lien.¹¹ But such contacts stopped after the TW's relatively poor performance in the 1983 elections.

The reform undertaken in 1986 represents a fundamental change of course, moving toward what we would call democratizing reform. The formation of an opposition political party does not by itself make Taiwan a pluralist democracy, but it is the most important single step that could have been taken in that direction. If the reform goes no further than to legalize the new party (and others which may be formed), it will have a large impact on Taiwan politics and, through enhanced electoral competition, will make the ruling party more accountable to the electorate. We discuss other possible future developments in a section below.

The explanation for the change of course lies in large part with President and party Chairman Chiang Ching-kuo, who occupies a position of supreme influence in the Taiwan political system similar to Deng Xiaoping's in the mainland. Both the initiative for the reform and the power to implement it over substantial intraparty opposition lay with him. The inner story of his decision is not known, but the public record provides enough information to reveal the general concerns that motivated him.

The long-term impetus for both liberalization and democratization came from three factors described earlier: the KMT's ideological commitment to constitutional democracy; the economic, social, and political maturation of the population; and the increasing electoral appeal of the TW. But to

10. Edwin A. Winckler, “Institutionalization and Participation on Taiwan: From Hard to Soft Authoritarianism?,” *The China Quarterly* 99 (September 1984), pp. 481–499.

11. Interview, K'ang Ning-hsiang, Taipei, January 2, 1987.

understand Chiang's decision to shift from one type of reform to the other, we need to look at the more immediate problems facing the regime in 1986.

The first of these was the succession problem. Chiang is 76 years old and suffers from diabetes. Although he has a formal successor as president in Vice President Lee Teng-hui, much of his power is personal rather than institutional, and there is no one currently in the senior ranks of government who is likely to be able to replace him as the lynchpin of cooperation between party conservatives and liberals and among party, state, army, and security officials. In December 1985, on the 38th anniversary of the implementation of the ROC constitution, Chiang addressed one element of this problem by stating that he would not allow himself to be succeeded as president by any member of his family nor by a military regime. To show the firmness of his opposition to a dynastic succession, he posted his second son and potential successor, Chiang Hsiao-wu, to Singapore as deputy commercial counselor in the Taiwan mission. In June 1986, he appointed civilian official Wang Tao-yuan as Minister of Defense, signaling his intent to diminish the role of military men in the cabinet. He also assigned his younger brother, Chiang Wei-kuo, to be secretary of the National Security Council, a move seen as providing a further guarantee for a peaceful and legal succession.¹² The President may have felt that difficult and controversial, but necessary, reforms should be undertaken before he passed from the scene rather than be left for his less well-equipped successors to handle. Moreover, reform could contribute to a smoother transition by increasing the legitimacy of the regime, reducing the motivation for the population to become involved in political disorders, and setting in place improved mechanisms for long-term recruitment of new leaders at all levels.

Additional concerns motivating the reform were a series of internal and foreign shocks in 1985 and 1986. The first was the revelation that the 1984 assassination of U.S. businessman and writer Henry Liu (Liu Yi-liang, also known as Chiang Nan) had been carried out at the behest of the head of the Defense Ministry Intelligence Bureau. The second was the bankruptcy of Taipei's Tenth Credit Cooperative due to mismanagement by officials with ties to KMT politicians, an incident which led to the resignations of two cabinet ministers.¹³ A third was a forced modification in the government's policy of resistance to the PRC's "unification diplomacy." In May 1986, officials of the state-owned airline were forced into face-to-face negotiations with PRC airline representatives in order to arrange the return of

12. *Shih-pao hsin-wen chou-k'an*, No. 6 (June 22-28, 1986), pp. 4-7.

13. *Chung-kuo lun-t'an*, No. 228 (March 25, 1985), pp. 8-24, and No. 238 (August 25, 1985), pp. 12-15.

a cargo plane which its pilot had flown to Guangzhou. Although much of the public welcomed the government's flexibility, at the same time, the event was perceived as weakening its "three-no" policy (no negotiations, no compromise, and no contacts).

Such incidents suggested the need to revitalize the ruling party and government. On the international scene, in addition, political reform offered the possibility of enhancing the image of a regime that is especially vulnerable to foreign opinion because of its trade dependence and diplomatic isolation. Especially in the United States, where human rights issues exert a substantial influence on foreign policy, the maintenance of martial law has long been a public-relations embarrassment for Taiwan's supporters—a fact often brought to the President's attention by sympathetic high-level American visitors.

Finally, the initiation of bold reform steps in 1986 offered the possibility of strengthening the KMT's appeal in the elections scheduled for December 6 to fill seats in the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly. Chiang must have known that by initiating reform in the months leading up to a major election he ran the risk of entangling the reform process with the preelection maneuvering of both sides. His decision to do so suggests that he thought the advantages outweighed the dangers.

Managing Political Reform

"The way of the reformer is hard," Samuel P. Huntington has observed.¹⁴ The reformer must maintain a concentrated hold on power in order to be able to disperse it, and must implement reform measures quickly enough to prevent the consolidation of conservative opposition, but not so quickly as to allow the pace of events to get out of control. These problems indeed faced Chiang Ching-kuo in 1986.

The first challenge was to turn a personal decision for reform into a party program. Chiang sought the understanding of the strong group of senior- and middle-level party conservatives, concentrated in the ideological, military, and security sectors, who feared that any relaxation of martial law or the ban on parties would create an opening for communist subversion, Taiwan independence activity, or an alliance of the two. At the Third Plenum of the KMT's 12th Central Committee in March 1986, Chiang reminded the delegates of the party's long-standing goal of implementing constitutional democracy, and said that the time had come to

14. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 344.

make further progress toward this goal.¹⁵ After the session, on April 9, he appointed a twelve-man task force of Standing Committee members to suggest reform measures. This powerful temporary organ became a virtual politbureau above the Standing Committee, entrusted with the power to establish the party's reform strategy in line with Chiang's wishes. It was headed by former President Yen Chia-kan, a technocrat, and former Vice President Hsieh Tung-min, a Taiwanese politician associated with the KMT moderate wing, and composed of the most powerful figures in the party, both liberal and conservative.

In June, the task force reported a bold, but vague, six-point reform proposal:

1. To conduct a large-scale supplementary election to the central representative organs (the Legislative and Control Yuans and the National Assembly) in order to address the problem of superannuation and deaths of members.
2. To put local self-government on a legal basis. (The progress made so far in instituting local self-government in Taiwan has been carried out under an administrative order rather than a law. The pertinent legislation has been tabled in the Legislative Yuan since 1952. The main problem has been that the law would provide for direct popular election of the Taiwan provincial governor and the mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung. These officials are currently appointed by the central government, and the KMT has feared that their direct election would create strong popularly-based rivals to its own politicians.)
3. To simplify the national security laws. (Under martial law, the government has established a complex set of security orders, some overlapping with the provisions of the regular legal system, and many provisions of which have not been used.)
4. To provide a legal basis for formation of new civic associations. (Formation of new civic associations is banned under martial law. The current law on civic associations does not provide for the registration of new parties, and the election and recall law does not provide for their participation in elections.)
5. To strengthen public order.
6. To strengthen party work.¹⁶

After receiving its report, President Chiang ordered the committee to work out more detailed proposals for the third and fourth items first.

15. *SPCK*, No. 86 (October 18–24, 1986), pp. 8–9.

16. *SPCK*, No. 85 (October 11–16, 1986), p. 12.

Meanwhile, Chiang re-opened the "channel" (*kou-t'ung*) to the TW, hoping to co-opt TW leaders into sharing a stake in an orderly reform process. In May, he directed KMT party officials to hold talks with representatives of the TW through the good offices of four mediators. The mediators were senior presidential adviser T'ao Bai-ch'uan, aged 83, a long-time KMT liberal and former member of the Control Yuan, and three National Taiwan University professors, Hu Fo, Yang Kuo-shu, and Li Hung-hsi—men who had already been involved in behind-the-scenes negotiations in 1984 between the government and the TW that averted a confrontation over the illegal formation of the *Tang-wai* Research Association on Public Policy (TRAPP), a quasi-political party.¹⁷ The KMT was represented by the three deputy secretaries-general of the party Central Policy Commission, Liang Su-jung, Hsiao T'ien-tsan, and Huang Kuang-p'ing. Eight delegates were selected to represent the TW, including K'ang Ning-hsiang and You Ch'ing; one of them, the brother of imprisoned TW leader Huang Hsin-chieh, declined to participate.

According to informed observers, the President's intention was to allow TRAPP to register legally and to organize local branches that could nominate candidates, carry out election campaigning, and serve as a political party in all but name. In return, he hoped to delay the formation of a full-scale opposition party until after the election. At the first "channel" meeting, held on May 10 at a Taipei restaurant, the two sides accepted three common principles: respect for the constitution, cooperative efforts to maintain political harmony, and agreement in principle by the KMT to allow the TW to register TRAPP under the provisions of the civic associations law.¹⁸ But this agreement displeased some TW politicians, who argued that it put the TW in an inferior position to the KMT, which was itself unregistered under that law. The second scheduled channel meeting on May 24 broke down over this issue.

The approach of the election had made it difficult for the TW to compromise. The KMT's excellent performance in the 1983 elections convinced many TW leaders that they would need the best possible campaign organization to hold their own in the coming contest, which would be the last electoral opportunity until 1989. In addition, the fall of Marcos in the Philippines and the increasing militance of the opposition party in South Korea encouraged impatience with a slow pace of change. Overseas, exiled politician Hsu Hsin-liang and others had already started to form a "Taiwan Democratic Party." Given the militant style of Taiwanese politics, many TW politicians felt that the voters would not view them as a

17. Interview, Professor Hu Fo, Taipei, January 1, 1987.

18. *SPCK*, No. 64 (May 18–24, 1986), pp. 6–11.

serious opposition if they did not insist on their right to organize within the island.¹⁹

While continuing to insist that TRAPP and its branches were illegal, the government did not move against it. But Minister of Justice Shih Ch'iyang warned in late September, just a few days before the new party was founded, that the premature formation of a full-scale political party would be illegal and would be treated as such.²⁰

Despite this warning, the TW politicians meeting at the Grand Hotel on September 28 decided to take the next step. The meeting had originally been called to finalize the list of TW candidates. (The room had been reserved ostensibly for a meeting of the Rotary Club.) That morning, however, Fei Hsi-p'ing, K'ang Ning-hsiang, and other moderates recommended altering the agenda to consider establishing a preparatory committee for a new party. More militant delegates argued for establishment of the new party on the spot. This might be the last gathering of a large number of TW figures for a long time; moreover, the government was less likely to arrest the participants while they were official election candidates than at any other time. Once a new party was established, they argued, there would be time enough to appoint committees to draft its program and charter. The name of the new party was suggested by senior TW figure and Taipei representative to the Legislative Yuan, Hsieh Chang-t'ing, who argued that it should include neither "Taiwan" nor "China" in order to avoid taking a position on the issue of Taiwan's future relations with the mainland. After discussion, 132 of those present signed their names to the declaration of the founding of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).²¹

Some participants left the Grand Hotel after the historic meeting of September 28 convinced that they would be arrested as soon as they came outside. DPP leaders hastened to assure President Chiang through private channels that the new party respected the ROC constitution and opposed communism and Taiwan independence,²² but its leaders were unwilling to take such a conciliatory stance publicly.

Indeed, there was strong preference among KMT conservatives to respond to the formation of the DPP by arresting the participants. President Chiang, however, chose to declare the new party illegal and refused to recognize it, meanwhile speeding the pace of drafting the new civil organizations law that would legalize the party retroactively. He directed the twelve-man task force to hold urgent meetings to draft specific recommen-

19. *SPCK*, No. 81 (September 14–20, 1986), pp. 38–39.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *SPCK*, No. 84 (October 4–10, 1986), p. 7, and interviews, Taipei, January 2, 1987.

22. Interview, Taipei, January 1, 1987.

dations for reform of the martial law system and political parties ban. He held a series of meetings in late September with top party, military, and intelligence officials to seek support for his views.²³

On October 15, Chiang was able to push resolutions through the KMT Central Standing Committee adopting the two key reform proposals. The first called for the abolition of martial law and its replacement with a national security law. Under this proposal the national security law (expected to be submitted to the Legislative Yuan in early 1987) would generally ban the same crimes as were banned under martial law, but would define them more carefully, decrease the penalties, and put the cases of civilian defendants before civilian courts. The national security law would also replace martial law provisions for entry and exit control, sea-coast and mountain-area defense, and so on. The second resolution called for the revision of the law on civil organizations so as to reverse the ban on formation of new political parties. According to press leaks in late 1986, the revised law, which would be submitted to the Legislative Yuan somewhat later than the new national security law, would allow the registration of new political parties which adopt party constitutions and platforms; compete legally for power through the electoral system; and support anti-communism, the constitution, and national unity (i.e., not Taiwan independence).²⁴ These three conditions are likely to become a focus of contention between the DPP and the government in early 1987. DPP leaders contend that the government has no right to insert KMT party policies (anti-communism and anti-Taiwan independence) into the registration requirements imposed on other parties. Observers generally assume these differences can somehow be resolved, perhaps through further use of the KMT-opposition "channel."

Meanwhile, the KMT demanded that the DPP refrain from moving beyond the preparatory phase of party formation. The KMT also challenged the DPP to make clear its political stand. President Chiang announced that the new party would not be tolerated if it did not accept the three basic principles just described.²⁵ On October 11 the DPP gave its first, somewhat ambiguous public response, stating that it stood for respect for the constitution and that it would not cooperate with any political force advocating violence.²⁶

23. *SPCK*, No. 86 (October 18–24, 1986), p. 6.

24. E.g., *Chung pao* (New York) (October 31, 1986), p. 2; *Pei-Mei jih-pao* (New York) (December 17, 1986), p. 1.

25. *SPCK*, No. 90 (November 15–21, 1986), p. 8.

26. *Chung-kuo shih-pao* (Taipei), November 7, 1986, p. 2.

Reform Tested: November–December 1986

The period immediately preceding the December 6 election posed a major test for the firmness of Chiang Ching-kuo's reform decision and his managerial skill, and a test as well for the statesmanship of the DPP. The key question was how the long-repressed, potentially explosive issue of Taiwan's status would be introduced into the political dialogue. If this question had not been raised, the reform would have been illusory; if it had been pressed too far or too fast, the reform might have been aborted.

The stance of the DPP came into clearer focus on November 10 when—despite the government's warning that such an action would be illegal—it held its first National Representative Congress and adopted a party charter, a 34-article "Basic Program" and a 139-article "Action Program."²⁷ The Congress elected Chiang P'eng-chien (David P. C. Chiang) as chairman. Chiang, a member of the Legislative Yuan, was a defense lawyer at the trial of the Kaohsiung Incident defendants, and is considered a representative of the younger and more radical wing of the DPP. His chief rival for the post was Fei Hsi-p'ing, a mainlander member of the Legislative Yuan supported by DPP moderates. On the key question of Taiwan's future, the basic program advocated "self-determination" by ballot of "all residents of Taiwan." The DPP also called for rejoining the U.N., leaving unstated whether the application should be in the name of China or of Taiwan. As its party flag, the DPP adopted a white cross against a green background, with a silhouette of the island of Taiwan in the middle of the cross, symbols which bear no visible relationship to those of the KMT or the Republic of China. (The green reflects the party's embrace of newly popular ecological issues.) Although the term "independence" was thus avoided, the party's position appeared to contradict the KMT's insistence that the status of Taiwan as a part of China is already settled.

Both the government and the DPP faced their next challenge with the attempted return from abroad of radical TW politician Hsu Hsin-liang. A Taiwanese and former KMT member, Hsu had broken with the party and was elected as a TW candidate to the post of T'ao-yuan county magistrate in 1977, at the time of the Chung-li Incident. In 1979 he was deprived of this position by the Control Yuan for his participation in the demonstrations preceding the Kaohsiung Incident. Hsu went into exile in the United States, where he joined the Taiwan independence movement. In late 1984 he was elected first deputy general secretary of the newly formed Taiwan Revolutionary Party based on the east coast of the United States. In vari-

27. *Chung-kuo lun-t'an*, No. 268 (November 25, 1986), pp. 30–33.

ous of his writings or in declarations he has signed, he has called for "the complete disappearance of [the KMT regime] from the face of the earth" and the waging in Taiwan of an urban guerrilla war of socialist revolution.²⁸ In 1981 the Taiwan government issued a warrant for Hsu's arrest on charges of rebellion.

Like Kim Dae-jung and Benigno Aquino, Hsu was drawn by the prospect of an election to try to reenter the political arena at home. In May 1986, he announced his departure from the Taiwan Revolutionary Party and the establishment in Los Angeles of a preparatory committee for a Taiwan Democratic Party (T'ai-wan min-chu tang). In October, after the formation of the DPP, Hsu transformed his new party into an overseas organization of the DPP. He announced his intention to return to Taiwan to campaign for the DPP, and, following Kim Dae-jung's precedent, invited a number of Taiwanese and Americans—including Ramsey Clark and Linda Gail Arrigo (an American graduate student and the wife of the jailed Shih Ming-teh)—to accompany him on the flight home.

Because of Hsu's popularity with the Taiwanese electorate, his actions created a dilemma for both the KMT and the DPP. Although the government had issued a warrant, it did not wish to arrest him on the eve of the election. Most DPP politicians also preferred not to be encumbered at this sensitive juncture with the problem of his arrest, but neither could they square their party platform with asking him to stay away.

Hsu was eventually kept out of the country, but not without three violent incidents, one of them Taiwan's largest since the Kaohsiung Incident. The first occurred on November 14 when a Hsu ally, Lin Shui-ch'üan, and five colleagues attempted to precede him back to Taiwan. Lin was denied entry at the airport because he did not have a visa. Several hundred TW supporters, who had come to the airport to welcome Lin, clashed with airport police and two persons were injured. The second and major incident occurred on November 30 when, in expectation of Hsu's arrival, an estimated 10,000 supporters gathered at Taiwan's Chiang Kai-shek International Airport. Hsu, meanwhile, was held up at Narita Airport in Japan where the airlines honored a Taiwan government request to deny him permission to embark for Taiwan. During a standoff of nine hours at the Taiwan airport, police used water cannons and tear gas on the crowd. Twenty-six police vehicles as well as vehicles of the China Broadcasting Company and the China Television Service were overturned and damaged, and more than a score of policemen were injured. In the third incident, on

28. See especially his series, "Ke-ming wan-sui," in *Mei-li-tao chou-k'an* (Los Angeles), Nos. 91-95 (May 29-July 3, 1982), and his preface to the series, "Tu-shih you-chi-tui shou-ts'e," in *Mei-li-tao chou-k'an*, Nos. 105-108 (September 18-October 9, 1982).

December 2, Hsu managed to arrive at the Taiwan airport on a Philippine Airlines plane under an assumed name. He was denied entry, but several thousand demonstrators, some reportedly armed with staves, clashed again with police, leading to a number of arrests and injuries.²⁹

For the KMT reformers, the strength of popular support for Hsu after six years' absence came as a shock, especially in view of his advocacy of a violent anti-KMT revolution. The events also surprised some leaders of the DPP. Although the party had never recognized Hsu's overseas branch, it felt obliged to participate in the welcoming activities because of Hsu's popularity and because of the DPP's friendly links with Taiwanese organizations in the United States. The DPP stance was that it welcomed Hsu's return because of humanitarian considerations and out of respect for human rights. But after the second violent incident, while denouncing the use of water cannons and tear gas by police, the DPP also criticized the violence of the demonstrators, called on the government to identify and prosecute the perpetrators, and stated that any DPP member involved would be punished under party discipline. The party further announced that it was canceling a series of planned rallies in order to avoid any possible further outbreak of violence.³⁰

The December 6 elections were held only four days after Hsu Hsin-liang's third attempt to return. The results contained several messages for the leaders of both parties.³¹ First, to the relief of both, they went off peacefully. Second, although the election confirmed the dominance of the KMT, the DPP showing was also strong. The results must be interpreted in light of the structure of the Taiwan political system, which limits the campaign to two weeks and restricts publicity, expenditures, and access to the mass media, and in which there normally is considerable vote buying and other irregularities.³² Despite these disadvantages, the DPP got 18.90% of the vote in the National Assembly election, electing 11 of its 25 candidates, and 22.17% in the Legislative Yuan election, electing 12 of its 19 candidates. Counting independent and minor party votes, the total non-KMT poll was a bit above 30% of the vote.³³

The strength of militant sentiment in the electorate was shown by the overwhelming victories won by some of the more radical DPP candidates. The largest number of votes of any candidate island-wide was won by Hsu

29. See the series of reports in *SPCK*, Nos. 91-93 (November 22-December 12, 1986).

30. *SPCK*, No. 93 (December 6-12, 1986), p. 19.

31. *SPCK*, No. 94 (December 13-19, 1986), pp. 3-25.

32. See an Asia Watch Report, "Elections in Taiwan, December 6, 1986: Rules of the Game for the 'Democratic Holiday'" (Washington, D.C.: Asia Watch, November 1986).

33. *Chung-yang jih-pao* (International Edition), December 8, 1986, p. 1.

Jung-shu, wife of Chang Chün-hung, in prison because of his participation in the Kaohsiung Incident. The second heaviest vote-getter was Hung Ch'i-ch'ang, a former member of the radical Editors' and Writers' Association, and the fourth largest was Hsu Hsin-liang's brother, Hsu Kuo-t'ai. Hsu had been at the head of the airport demonstrators both times that his brother attempted to return.

However, some moderate DPP leaders also fared well. Senior TW politician K'ang Ning-hsiang, who had suffered a surprise defeat in his run for the Legislative Yuan in the 1983 election, was resoundingly reelected from Taipei city. Other important moderate victors were Huang Huang-hsiung, Ch'iu Lien-hui, and You Ch'ing.

A further indication of the strength of the opposition came in the surprising victories of three DPP candidates in occupational constituencies, which the KMT normally closely controls (not all seats in the two directly elected bodies are elected by geographic constituencies; a number are reserved for occupational groups). In the trade union constituency, DPP candidates defeated the heads of both the provincial and the national-level trade union organizations for one seat each in the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly. Another DPP candidate won election to the National Assembly from the commerce sector.

On the other hand, the strength of the KMT showing paid tribute to that party's deep organizational base and to the preference of many among Taiwan's affluent population for continuity and stability. Among KMT candidates, strong showings were made by candidates with fresh images, reform leanings, or athletic, show business, or academic credentials. The outstanding example was the victory of reformist Chao Shao-k'ang, the top vote-getter in Taipei city. On the other hand, in an unprecedented defeat for retired military men, Taipei voters rejected a former air force vice-commander.

Prospects

For the DPP, the biggest question is whether it can stay together, given its essential nature as a coalition of independent factions. The party's factionalism is reflected in the rules it adopted at its November 10 congress. The DPP made itself an elite party, with new members admitted only on the nomination of at least three members (by early November, total membership was reportedly about 1400).³⁴ The purpose of this rule is apparently to prevent both competition among factions for control of the organization through recruitment of new members and infiltration by the KMT. De-

34. *Chung-pao* (New York), November 8, 1986, p. 2.

spite its small size, the party has a 31-person Central Executive Committee, an 11-person Central Standing Executive Committee, an 11-person Central Consultative Committee, and a five-person Central Standing Consultative Committee, thus offering representation in policy-making organs to every faction. In order further to protect each faction's prerogatives, the national congress is to meet yearly (as against every five or six years for the KMT) and the party chairman is limited to one non-renewable one-year term. There is reason to wonder whether a party constructed so carefully to prevent concentration of power can survive as a party.

The question is all the more pressing given the ideological split among moderate and radical members. The DPP will be under intense pressure from the KMT and the electorate to define the meaning it gives to "self-determination" and to define the policy and organizational relationship between itself and the Taiwan independence movement. There is a demand from Taiwanese organizations overseas, such as the influential, tacitly proindependence Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), that the DPP establish overseas branches. This possibility is tempting because of the political support such overseas branches could provide in Washington.³⁵ Yet overseas branches are likely to serve as points of influence for independence forces. The DPP may split over issues like this, or the government may repress the new party if it evolves a clear proindependence position.

This prospect clearly worries the PRC government as well. Given the PRC's announced policy that Taiwan may keep its own political system even after reunification, the PRC is in no position to object to any political reform the Taiwan authorities want to carry out. In keeping with its United Front policy, Beijing has welcomed the formation of the new party.³⁶ According to Hong Kong sources, the Chinese authorities see no likelihood of the DPP taking power in Taiwan in the near future.³⁷ However, a PRC foreign ministry spokesman has reiterated Beijing's opposition to Taiwan independence, pointedly adding "or self-determination."³⁸ The PRC even seems to be using the existence of the new party as the basis for a fresh appeal to the KMT for early reunification. "The future of the Kuomintang," stated Peng Zhen in his speech commemorating the 120th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's birth, "hinges on its cooperation with the

35. *SPCK*, No. 95 (December 20-26, 1986), p. 28.

36. *Chung-pao* (New York), November 1, 1986, p. 1.

37. *Chung-pao*, December 20, 1986, p. 1, reporting material carried in *Kuang-chiao-ching* (Hong Kong), December 16, 1986.

38. *The New York Times*, December 14, 1986, p. 14.

Communist Party.”³⁹ For the United States as well, the prospect of a vocal pro-independence force in the island is also unwelcome, chiefly because of the disturbance it would cause in U.S.-PRC relations.⁴⁰

DPP politicians interviewed early in 1987 in Taipei state that these concerns are misplaced. Self-determination, they say, means simply that the residents of the island should be consulted in any decision concerning its future, rather than having their fate determined by the KMT, PRC, and U.S. without their participation. They argue that it is only common sense to say that the island’s residents face a long-term choice among three alternatives: maintaining the status quo, reuniting with the mainland, or becoming independent. By calling for self-determination the DPP is not advocating any of these, but only the right of the residents to decide. It remains to be seen whether the KMT will accept this position as falling within the bounds of acceptable political discussion, and whether the DPP itself can remain united on the position.

Whether or not the DPP survives in its present form, the lifting of the ban on party organizations may well introduce still other competitors into the political arena. By late 1986, three potential parties were already beginning to take shape under the following tentative names:⁴¹ the Democratic Unity Party (Min-chu t’ung-i tang) under former KMT Legislative Yuan member Lei Yü-ch’i, which would represent predominantly middle class non-Taiwanese and would stand for peaceful reunification with the mainland; the People’s Livelihood Cooperation Party (Min-sheng hsieh-li tang) under Kaohsiung politician Su Yü-chu, a local party which would have a chiefly poor working-class constituency and the support of some retired soldiers; and the China Patriotic Party (Chung-kuo ai-kuo tang) under right-wing KMT journalist Chung Shu-nan, who has spoken of forming this new party to oppose the DPP but is unlikely to do so since he would then have to leave the KMT.

At least five additional political groups or social forces can be identified which are not closely tied to the KMT and have not yet been included in the DPP. These include a group of prounification nationalists around *Hsia-ch’ao* magazine; a group of activists concerned mainly with ecological issues; Christian groups, including the Presbyterians who are politically active, and the fundamentalist New Testament Church; a number of local independent politicians; and liberal academics and professionals. Under the new civil associations law such forces might organize parties or interest groups, or they may align with the DPP, or remain unorganized.

39. *Beijing Review*, No. 46 (1986), p. 23.

40. See editorial in the *Washington Post*, December 4, 1986.

41. *Chung-pao* (New York), October 8 and 9, November 11 and 20, 1986, all on p. 2.

Conspicuous by its absence from these lists is a potential labor or welfare-state party. Taiwan has never had a strong, independent labor movement; instead, the KMT has always been careful to assure its own political dominance of labor. The success of the DPP in this election in winning two seats in the labor constituency will probably motivate the KMT to redouble its organizing efforts in the unions to shore up its control.

The future evolution of Taiwan's political system will, of course, depend even more upon the post-reform adaptation of the KMT than on the opposition. Those who lightly compare Taiwan's situation to that of South Korea or the Philippines forget that the KMT, for all its problems, is a vigorous organization. Its strengths include a nationalistic ideology with considerable appeal; much fresh blood among its members, including many Taiwanese (an estimated 70% of party membership); and a cadre of skilled technocrats, strong local political machines, control over the media and, through the political commissar system, control over the military. The KMT would probably perform well in elections even without the special advantages it enjoys under the current electoral system, and it is unlikely to give up all of these advantages in the course of reform. Hence it is unlikely that the Taiwan political system will quickly evolve into a true two-party system.

Rather, assuming the democratic reforms are carried forward, Taiwan is more likely to remain for the foreseeable future a hegemonic party system like that of Mexico, or possibly to evolve into a Japanese-style dominant-party system in which the KMT controls over half the votes while a variety of smaller parties share the remainder. Also possible, if the DPP stays together, is the development of a "one-and-a-half-party system" with a dominant KMT and a permanent minority opposition party.

To the extent that a hegemonic, dominant-party, or party-and-a-half system allows freedom of political organization and advocacy, it provides mechanisms that strengthen political competition and hence, government accountability to the people. However, KMT rule is so intimately intertwined with all aspects of the Taiwan system that there would have to be other far-reaching reforms before democratization could be said to have gone very far. Among the obstacles to fuller democratization are, first, anti-democratic biases built into the constitutional structure. As long as the majority of seats in the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly are reserved for mainland constituencies, there can be no realistic possibility of shaking KMT control of these organs. This problem has already been targeted for reform; it was the first point of the six presented by the 12-man working group in June. In addition, as long as the President is indirectly elected by the National Assembly, and the Taiwan governor and

Taipei and Kaohsiung mayors appointed by the central government, the Taiwan electorate cannot control the selection of the country's top officials. Other barriers are government and party control of the press, and banning and censorship of the opposition press; advantages to the ruling party, described earlier, provided by the rules of the electoral system; the practice of imprisonment for political crimes (according to Amnesty International, as of August 1986 there were approximately 110 "prisoners of conscience" in Taiwan⁴²); interpenetration of party and government structures along classic Leninist lines, for example, the relationship between the Government Information Office and the party's Cultural Work Commission, or between the government's Overseas Chinese Commission and the party's Overseas Work Commission (similarly, party-controlled military intelligence organs perform functions which in non-Leninist states are the purview of state organs); the political commissar system in the army, which gives the KMT control over the military; and finally, the existence of state and party-managed enterprises.

Although some of these problems are on the current reform agenda, most of them are not; completion of the current reform, however, may create momentum for further democratization. On the other hand, the possibility always exists that a coalition of party conservatives, military and security personnel, and economic technocrats could call a halt to the reform process under various scenarios: if the call for Taiwan independence grew too strong, if there was violence, or if a succession crisis led to instability at the top.

Theoretical Implications

Taiwan's reforms are being closely watched in China, which is also involved in political reform. Although we have no hard evidence of the unofficial reaction, news of Taiwan's progress has probably been among the factors spurring public impatience with the slow pace of political reform on the mainland—impatience expressed in the form of student and worker demonstrations in several cities.

Whether the Taiwan reforms can serve the mainland in any way as a model is a more difficult question. So far, during the current wave of discussions of reform in the PRC, the question of allowing the formation of opposition parties has not been publicly raised (except, reportedly, in wall posters). But some democrats both outside and inside the CCP advocated a multiparty system during the 1978–1981 Democracy Movement, so it is

42. Amnesty International, "Republic of China (Taiwan), Political Imprisonment in Taiwan," Amnesty document ASA 38/11/86, dated August 1986.

likely that such ideas still have supporters today.⁴³ To PRC pluralists, the changes in Taiwan can only encourage the belief that China's cultural background and Leninist patterns of organization do not preclude reform of the party system.

Even so, prospects for multipartyism on the mainland have to be counted as slight. As we noted at the outset, the KMT has been an anomaly among Leninist parties because it lacks a Marxist ideology and has been, through most of its history, pro-Western and procapitalist. The applicability of its experience to other Leninist parties is thus limited. Moreover, the mainland Chinese population is far less prosperous and educated than Taiwan's, and in this sense the social conditions for pluralism are less promising. Also in contrast to Taiwan, the mainland's succession problem seems, at least outwardly, to be well under control, and the PRC's international standing is high. And unlike Taiwan, the PRC is not dependent on the United States economically and militarily, and hence has less concern with American and other foreign public opinion. In short, the PRC leaders lack the various stimuli for party system reform that motivates Chiang Ching-kuo. While reform of the role of the single ruling party is a major part of the mainland reform agenda, there are many signs that the leaders are not considering reform of the party system itself, or even that they intend to allow the question to be publicly discussed.

If the Taiwan case carries no easy lessons for the mainland, it does seem relevant to other cases of democratizing reform and to the growing theoretical study of the democratization of authoritarian regimes. In a 1984 article, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?," Samuel P. Huntington suggested that the particular conjunctions of circumstances that had created the world's democracies were not likely to be repeated.⁴⁴ But the large number of democratic transitions in recent years—Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Peru, and others—have required political scientists to develop new perspectives on the problem.

One line of thought has been that there are circumstances in which relatively democratic institutions are more functional for elites than authoritarian ones.⁴⁵ Given permissive economic, social, and international

43. See Andrew J. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), Chapter 5.

44. *Political Science Quarterly*, 99:2 (September 1984), pp. 193–218.

45. See, for example, Guillermo O'Donnell, "Tensions in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State and the Question of Democracy," in David Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 285–318, and Adam Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy," in Guillermo O'Donnell et al., eds. *Transition From Authoritarianism: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 47–63.

conditions, a turn toward democracy may be an attractive option for an elite facing succession problems, an economic crisis, mass unrest, international pressure, or other problems. In such conditions relatively democratic institutions offer the possibility of improving a regime's abilities to legitimate itself, to regulate social conflict, to recruit successors, to gain access to and make use of information for policy making, and so on.

Our analysis of Chiang Ching-kuo's motives for the reform suggests he is in fact seeking these benefits. Indeed, democratization may be profitable for Taiwan in the even more concrete sense of helping to stimulate the confidence of foreign investors and trade partners. In contrast to the disincentive effects of the instability and apparent lack of political consensus in a society such as South Korea, one of Taiwan's main competitors for investment funds, the perceived progress in Taiwan and the perception that this progress adds to political stability should help to bring in investment.

Since democratization in Taiwan is just beginning and still faces many problems, it is too early to say how fully the Taiwan case will confirm this functional theory of democratic transitions. But the theory seems to provide a useful perspective for understanding the reform decisions made by the end of 1986. So far, the Taiwan experience has confirmed the proposition that democratizing reform can strengthen a regime. In addition, Chiang Ching-kuo's handling of the reform process provides useful lessons for reformers elsewhere in the skills of consensus-building and conflict management.

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