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Abstract

This thesis seeks to examine the factors that led to the February 28th Incident of 1947 in Taiwan in which tens of thousands of Taiwanese were massacred by the Nationalist troops from Mainland China. The Nationalist crackdown was a counter measure against a spontaneous island-wide insurrection that broke out approximately a year and a half after Taiwan was returned to China at the end of the Pacific War. The Incident was a censored issue in Taiwan until recently. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, it has become one of the most intensively researched and vehemently debated subjects in Taiwan. After fifteen years of study, main contributing factors to the Incident such as Nationalist misrule, social and cultural differences between China and Taiwan, and factional struggles in the Nationalist Party were identified. This study aims to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the origins of the Incident by demonstrating that Nationalist propaganda designed to re-Sinicize the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese also contributed to the Taiwanese uprising. Evidence from three major newspapers published in Taiwan between October 1945 and February 1947 will be used to illustrate the author’s contention. Theories of propaganda and communication will also be utilized to support the main argument.
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A Note on Romanization

In this thesis, the system utilized to romanize Chinese names, terms, book titles...etc. is pinyin. However, well-known figures such as Sun Yat-sen (rather than Sun Yixian) and Chiang Kai-shek (rather than Jiang Jieshi) are two exceptions.
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Introduction

This thesis seeks to examine the factors that led to the February 28th Incident of 1947 (also known as the 228 Incident, or 二二八事件) in Taiwan in which tens of thousands of Taiwanese were massacred by the Nationalist troops from Mainland China. The Nationalist military suppression was a swift counter measure against a spontaneous island-wide insurrection that broke out approximately a year and a half after the island was returned to China in late 1945. Before the retrocession, the Taiwanese, who were mostly descendants of migrants from China, had been under Japanese colonial rule for fifty years. This study aims to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the origins of the 228 Incident by demonstrating that Nationalist propaganda was an important factor which provoked the Taiwanese anger and uprising. Scholars in the past have focused on the specific aspects of Nationalist misrule as contributing factors to the Incident. These include bureaucratic corruption, employment discrimination against the Taiwanese, economic mismanagement, and the failure to uphold the law. Most scholars also argued

1 The actual number of deaths is a major point of contention among scholars of the Incident. The Nationalist government did not carry out a complete population census on the island in the first two years of the retrocession. Moreover, since the outbreak of the Incident, it has systematically destroyed evidence to conceal the scale of the massacre and the number of the arrests made. For discussions on the number of deaths and the discrepancies between various reports and studies see Chen Cuilian 陈翠莲, Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi: Er er ba beiju di lingyi mianxiang 派系鬥爭與權謀政治: 二二八悲劇的另一面相 (Factional Struggles and Power Politics: The Other Side of the February 28th Tragedy). (Taipei: Shibao wenhua chubanshe, 1995): 371-376; Li Qiao 李喬, “Taiwan er er ba yanjiu zhi pianduan—you [maiyan 1947] ziliao lichu” 台灣二二八研究之片段—由 [理冤 1947] 資料理出 (Excerpt from Research on Taiwan’s February 28th—Using Injustice 1947 Documents as a Basis for Analysis). In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu 陈永兴, and Hu Huiling hardware eds. Er er ba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji 二二八學術研討會論文集 (Monographs from the Academic Conference on the February 28th Incident). (Taipei: Zili wenbao she, 1992): 214–218, 224–227.

2 A majority of the island’s population at the time of retrocession were descendants of Chinese migrants from Fujian 福建 and Guangdong 廣東 Provinces of China. However, there were also the original inhabitants of Malay-Polynesian stock usually referred to as the ‘aborigines.’

3 Taiwan was ceded to Japan as a result of China’s defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895. There was resistance against the Japanese at first. A ‘Republic’ was established by the Taiwanese leaders. However, it was quickly quashed by the Imperial Army. The colonial government allowed the islanders a two-year grace period to return to the Mainland. After the grace period expired, those who remained would become Japanese subjects. Thousands moved back to China, but most Taiwanese chose to stay on the island. For more see Harry Lamely, “The 1895 Taiwan Republic: A Significant Episode in Modern Chinese History.” Journal of Asian Studies 27, No.4 (August, 1968): 739–762; Patricia Tsurumi, Japanese Colonial Education in Taiwan, 1895–1945. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977; Andrew Morris, “The Taiwan Republic of 1895 and the Failure of the Qing Modernizing Project.” In Stephane Corcuff eds., Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan. (Armonk, New York/London, England: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 3–24.

4 For comprehensive analysis on the different contributing factors to the Incident, see Lai Zehan 賴澤涵, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei E 魏萼, A Tragic Beginning: the Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947.
that social and cultural differences between China and Taiwan—resulting from fifty years of separation between them—were also a main contributing factor to the Taiwanese uprising.\(^5\) There were also historians who suggested that factional struggles in the Nationalist Party contributed to the Taiwanese uprising.\(^6\) While not arguing against these contentions, the author of this thesis hopes to further the research on the origins of the 228 Incident by bringing to scholars’ attention the Nationalist propaganda message for the ‘Japanized’\(^7\) Taiwanese. Evidence from three major newspapers published between October 1945 and February 1947 will be used to illustrate the author’s contention. These include the Nationalist official newspaper *Taiwan New Life* (臺灣新生報) and two most popular civilian newspapers *People’s Daily* (民報) and *People’s Report Daily* (人民導報). Propaganda and communication theories will also be utilized to support the main argument of this thesis.

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\(^7\) I put the word Japanized in quotation marks throughout the thesis. The scholars specializing in colonial Taiwan have demonstrated that the process of Japanization was incomplete. The Japanese had tried to turn the Taiwanese into loyal subjects of the Emperor through compulsory public education and aggressive assimilation programs such as Kominka 皇民化. Under Japanese rule, the islanders did adopt the Japanese language, customs, and style of clothing. Some of them even volunteered for the Imperial Army during the war. However, the discriminatory practices of the colonial government prevented the Taiwanese from becoming fully assimilated. For a study of Taiwanese colonial identity see Leo Ching, *Becoming “Japanese”: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2001. Other related works include Patricia Tsurumi, *Japanese Colonial Education in Taiwan, 1895–1945* and Zhou Wanyao 周婉窈, *Haixingxi de niandai: Riben zhimin tongzhi maoqin Taiwan shilunji*. 海行兮的年代: 日本殖民統治末期臺灣史論集 (Marching Towards the Sea: Essays on Taiwan’s Late Colonial Era). Taibei: Yunchen wenhua, 2002.
The Incident was a censored issue in Taiwan until recently. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the once taboo Incident has become one of the most intensively researched and fiercely debated historical topics in Taiwan because of its relationship to the rising of Taiwan-centered consciousness (台灣主體意識) and Taiwanese nationalism. The growth of scholarship on the 228 Incident went hand in hand with the democratization of Taiwanese politics as the Incident became an important political rallying point for dissenters of the Nationalist government and proponents of Taiwan independence. As the power of the opposition party grew throughout the 90s, the Nationalist government was forced to abandon its censorship and stonewalling policy. It

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8 After the Taiwanese uprising was suppressed, thousands of suspected insurgents were arrested and jailed. The rest of them went into exile. Any voice of opposition on the island was silenced immediately. The purge came to be known as the ‘White Terror’ 白色恐怖 of the 1950s. The Nationalist government had banned any writing and discussion of the Incident in Taiwan from the 1950s to the late 1980s through threats of imprisonment, and continued its tight control of the media and public education. Public discussion and academic research on the Incident began in the late 1980s and coincided with the democratization of the island's politics. For more see Lin Shuyang 林書揚, Cong er r ba dao 50 niandai baiserekongbu 從二二八到 50 年代白色恐怖 (From the February 28th Incident to the White Terror during the 1950s). Taibei: Shibao wenhua chubanshe, 1992.

9 Taiwan-centered consciousness is a rising discourse in the contemporary Taiwanese politics. It emphasizes putting the interests of Taiwan and Taiwanese people before the issue of reunification with China. The origins of Taiwanese nationalism and advocacy for Taiwan independence can be traced back to the colonial period when the Taiwanese Communists first proposed the idea of independence. However, the Communist Party leaders changed their discourse for independence after the retrocession and joined the Chinese Communists. The postwar T.I.M. (Taiwan Independence Movement) were started by Taiwanese elites who were forced into exile in Japan and the United States after the February 28th Incident. Numerically insignificant, financially unstable, and under constant harassment by Nationalist agents, the overseas T.I.M. organizations played an important role in keeping the memory of the February 28th Incident alive by holding commemorative ceremonies and publishing books. Their discourse had a significant effect on young Taiwanese students studying in Japan and the United States. Many of the students became activists for the T.I.M. cause and returned to Taiwan after the island’s political system democratized in late 1980s and early 1990s. The T.I.M. activists now wield considerable power in Taiwan’s contemporary politics. For more, see Chen Mingcheng 陳銘城, Haiwai Taiduyundong si shi nian 海外臺獨運動四十年 (Forty Years of Overseas Taiwan Independence Movement). Taipei: Zili wanbao she, 1992; 陳佳宏, Haiwai Taiduyundong shi: Meiguo Taiduquan zhi fazhan yu tiaozhan 海外臺獨運動史: 美國臺獨團體之發展與挑戰 (The History of the Overseas Taiwan Independence Movement: the Development and Challenges of T.I.M. Organizations in the United States). Taibei Shi: Qianwei chubanshe, 1998; Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲, “Zhanhou chouqui Taidu zhuzhang chansheng de tantao” 戰後初期台獨主張產生的探討 (Research on the Development of Taiwan Independence Discourse during the Early Postwar Period). In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds., Er er ba xueshuyantaohui lunwenji. See Robert Edmondson’s discussion on the symbolic importance of the Incident in contemporary Taiwanese politics. Robert Edmondson, “The February 28th Incident and National Identity.” In Stephane Corcuff, eds. Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan. (Armonk, New York/London, England: M. E. Sharpe, 2002): 25-46.

12 The opposition party mentioned here is the ‘Democratic Progressive Party’ or D.D.P. 民主進步黨. The D.D.P. was formed in 1986 by the dissenters of the Nationalist government and advocates for Taiwan
opened the official archives, and funded study projects on the Incident. However, for many victims and families of the victims, the government’s conciliatory gestures such as funding academic research, erecting commemorative monuments, offering official apologies, and providing monetary compensations have been too little and too late. Moreover, these measures were considered by the oppositional party leaders and the general public as calculated strategies for survival other than genuine expressions for atonement. In addition, some civilian researchers, many with affiliations to the overseas Taiwanese independent movement or (T.I.M.), saw official Taiwan academia (學術界) as an accomplice: first helping the Nationalist government covered up the Incident before the 1980s and then minimizing the Nationalist government’s moral and legal responsibly. Although there has been increased cooperation between some civilian researchers and the academic scholars recently, the lingering feelings of distrust

Independence. It was the most powerful oppositional party in the 1990s. In recent years, it successfully defeated the Nationalist Party in the presidential elections of 2000 and 2004.

13 The most prominent official study project on the Incident is Er er ba shijian yanjiubaogao 二二八事件研究報告 (The Official Research Project on the February 28th Incident) sponsored by the Administrative Yuan 行政院. For more, see Lai, Zehan et al. Er er ba shijian yanjiubaogao.

14 Civilian researchers 民間學者 are scholars of the Incident that have no affiliation with the Nationalist government sponsored research institutions. Due to the Nationalist cover up campaign on the island, the works of overseas civilian researchers had dominated the study of the Incident until the early 1990s. These works are extremely critical of the Nationalist brutality during the Incident as well as the government’s administrative bungles that led to the Taiwanese uprising. They emphasize the injustice that the Taiwanese suffered and often exaggerate the number of civilian deaths. Prominent examples include Lin Mushun 林木順, Taiwan eryue geming 台灣二月革命 (The February Revolution of Taiwan). Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1990. (Originally published in Hong Kong: Xinminzhu chubanshe, 1948) and Zhuang Jianong 莊嘉農, Fenmu di Taiwan 憤怒的台灣 (The Indignant Taiwan). Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1990 (Originally Published in Hong Kong: Zhiyuan shuju, 1949). Lin and Zhuang’s works represent the view of the Taiwanese Communists who escaped to China and joined the Chinese Communist Party after the Incident. The Overseas T.I.M. activists also fall into the category of civilian researchers. The works produced by the overseas T.I.M. activists include Shi Ming 史明, Taiwanren sibainian shi 台灣人四百年史 (Taiwanese People’s Four Hundred Years of History). San Jose, California: Paradise Culture Associates, 1980, Lin Qixu 林啓旭, Er er ba shijian zongheyanjiu 二二八事件綜合研究 (Comprehensive Analysis of the February 28th Incident). Tokyo: Er er ba chubanshe, 1988, and Wang Yude 王育德, Taiwan: kumen di lishi 臺灣:苦悶的歷史 (Taiwan: Tormented History). Taipei: Zili wanbao she, 1993.

15 This sentiment is best illustrated by the participants of the 1987 Conference on the Incident held in San Francisco. For more, see Chen Fangming 陳芳明 eds., Er er ba shijian xueshu lunwenji 二二八事件學術論文集 (Anthology of Monographs on the February 28th Incident). Irvine, California: Taiwan Publishing Co. Inc., 1987.
and animosity compounded by the differences in political view have often led to heated
debates among contemporary scholars.\textsuperscript{16}

The study and commemoration of the 228 Incident is also closely intertwined with
Taiwan’s current social and cultural transformation and the resurgence of provincial
sentiments (省籍情節), which crystallize provincial identities and redraw the diminishing
lines between descendants of native Taiwanese (本省人) and Mainlanders (外省人).\textsuperscript{17}

Although the intention of the government-sponsored study projects and commemoration
ceremonies was peace and reconciliation through the quest for the truth, they opened
well-guarded emotional floodgates and stirred up long suppressed anger and bitterness
among the older generations of Taiwanese who lived through those tumultuous years. It
also caused widespread indignation among the younger generations of Taiwanese, who
were disgusted by the Nationalist Party’s oppressive measures and deceitful education
each of which have concealed the truth. The distaste of the Nationalist regime combining
with the notion of unique Taiwanese victimhood has created new tension among the
island’s inhabitants. As an unfortunate corollary to the study of the incident, the growth
of this divisive provincial sentiment among the island’s residents was manipulated by
shrewd politicians for personal gain, which eventually put the unity of the islanders in
jeopardy.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} Collaboration between civilian researchers and academic scholars is evident during the 1998 Conference.
For more, see Zhang Yanxian 張炎憲, Chen Meirong 陳美蓉, and Yang Yahui 楊雅惠 eds., Er er ba
shijian yanjiu lunwenji 二二八事件研究論文集 (Research Treatises on the February 28\textsuperscript{th} Incident). Taibei:
Wu Sanlian jijinhui, 1998. The essays contained in this volume demonstrate the gradual decline of civilian
researchers’ animosity and distrust towards academia. However, some civilian researchers remain critical
of government-sponsored studies. This is illustrated by their scathing criticisms of the Administrative Yuan
Er er ba shijian yanjubaogao 二二八事件研究報告 (The Official Report on the February 28\textsuperscript{th} Incident).
Chen Fangming, a historian with strong affiliation to the overseas civilian research organizations, argues
that the interpretation presented by the Administrative Yuan report is still ‘far from the truth.’ See Chen
Fangming, Tansuo Taiwan shiguan 探索臺灣史觀 (Explore the Perspectives of Historical Writing on

\textsuperscript{17} Benshengren 本省人 (native Taiwanese) are the descendants of earlier Chinese migrants who came to
the island before 1945. Waishengren 外省人 (Mainlanders) are those who migrated to Taiwan after 1945.
The Nationalist massacre of Taiwanese during the February 28\textsuperscript{th} Incident crystallized these two opposite
identities. Thereafter, the government’s cover-up campaign and successful education programs had
gradually blurred the defining line between Benshengren and Waishengren. However, the study and
commemoration of the Incident in recent years have redrawn the boundary and caused serious rifts among
the island’s population.

\textsuperscript{18} In recent presidential elections of 2000 and 2004, the islanders already voted according to their
provincial identities. Most Benshengren supported the pro-independence D.D.P. while most Waishengren
supported the Nationalist Party.
The growing provincial sentiment among the Taiwanese also aggravated China and Taiwan’s already strained relations. Communist China, which considers Taiwan a renegade province in its unfinished civil war against the Nationalists, has observed the recent surge of Taiwanese separatism and nationalism with much chagrin and anxiety. So far, China’s strategy of intimidation through the display of military power has been a complete failure. It has not only reinforced China’s image as an authoritarian and militaristic regime and heightened international concerns about the peace and stability of Taiwan Strait, but has also directly or indirectly contributed to the electoral victories of pro-independence presidential candidates on the island in 1996, 2000, and 2004.19

Ironically, since 1947 the Chinese Communists have repeatedly used the 228 Incident to humiliate the Nationalists. They have sponsored studies and held annual conferences to commemorate the ‘glorious anti-imperialist and anti-Nationalist struggle of the Taiwanese people.’20 Like the ‘sanitized’ Nationalist official reports on the Incident, the Communist publications have also distorted and manipulated history to suit specific political purposes. China’s official interpretation of the Incident has also changed from time to time reflecting the Communist government’s shifting official perspectives on Taiwan under different political circumstances.21

Given that the 228 Incident and the history of early post-war Taiwan have been so intricately connected to the major political and social developments on the island in the past two decades—which might have significant consequences for the future peace and stability in East Asia—it is surprising that North American historians have shown little interest in the study of Taiwan’s decolonization from Japan and

19 During these three elections, China conducted military exercises in Taiwan Strait and sent threatening messages to the Taiwanese authorities in attempts to alter the election results. China’s intimidation strategy backfired each time as the pro-independence candidates Lee Denghui 李登輝 (1996) and Chen Shuibian 陳水扁 (2000, 2004) were elected.

20 For more on this subject, see Chen Shaoting 陈少廷, “Zhonggong dui er er ba shijian de lishi jieshi”中共对台湾二二八事件的历史解释 (Chinese Communist Historical Interpretations of the February 28th Incident). In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds. Er er ba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji—Chinese Communist Changing Historical Interpretations of the February 28th Incident According to Policy Changes). In Chen Fangming, Tansuo Taiwan shiguan.

21 This view is articulated by both Chen Shaoting and Chen Fangming in their studies.

22 ‘Zhanhou chuqi Taiwan’戦後初期台灣 (early postwar Taiwan) has become a term favoured by contemporary Taiwanese scholars when talking about the retrocession period as opposed to ‘guangfu chuqi’光復初期 (early period of glorious recovery), a term laden with nationalist pride.
reintegration into China. The lifting of official censorship on the island and the feverish
research of Taiwanese historians have produced a large number of primary documents,
memos, volumes of oral history, and sophisticated secondary studies in the past decade.
However, there is still little interest among North American historians in the 228
Incident. Until today, there are still few secondary sources in English. George H. Kerr’s
*Formosa Betrayed* (1965) and Lai Zehan (賴澤涵), Ramon H. Myers, and Wei E (魏
羿)'s *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947* (1991) are the
only two historical monographs on the Incident. Besides Kerr and Lai, Myers, and Wei’s
studies, Steven E. Phillips’ recently published book entitled *Between Assimilation and
Independence: the Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945~1950* (2003) is the
first study written in English which provides a detailed account of the reactions of the
‘Japanized’ Taiwanese elites to Nationalist rule at the time of retrocession. In the
introduction to his book, Phillips incisively sums up the reasons for this historiographical
blind spot on Taiwan in the West. He attributes it to the Cold War in Asia, the unresolved
Chinese Civil War, and the fact that Taiwan defies neat categorization as either a nation
or a province. Phillips suggests that beginning in the 1950s, under the rubric of anti-
communist rhetoric, American political and academic circles simply disregarded the
Taiwanese and ignored their political aspirations and instead focused on the Nationalist
government on the island. The author of this study would like to add that in the late
1970s and 1980s, North American academic discourse on Taiwan shifted towards the
paradigm of ‘economic miracle’ as the island’s export-oriented economy began to

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23 There is, however, a noticeable increase in recent publications on the general history of Taiwan from a
more nuanced perspective. Examples include Murray A. Rubinstein eds., *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the
Goldstein eds., *Taiwan in the Twentieth Century: A Retrospective View*. New York and Cambridge:
University Press, 2003. Furthermore, political scientists such as Allan Wachman and Stephane Corcuff who
did research on Taiwanese national identity have also touched upon the historical significance of the
February 28th Incident. See Alan Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*. Armonk, New
2002.

24 Steven E. Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence: the Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China,

25 Ibid., 15.
develop rapidly. In both cases, the tragic story of the Taiwanese struggle against autocracy and injustice remained untold.

The inadequacy of existing English-language research on the 228 Incident and the history of early postwar Taiwan in North America calls for more studies and scholarly discussions, which this thesis intends to provide and facilitate. The major works produced by Taiwanese historians will be reviewed and analyzed along with the three aforementioned English language studies produced by Kerr, Lai, Myers and Wei, and Phillips in order to outline the main interpretations of the factors leading to the Incident. A review of existing studies will demonstrate that historians have not paid sufficient attention to the important role played by Nationalist propaganda in arousing anti-government feeling among many Taiwanese. This study will show how the reading of important media sources such as the Nationalist official newspaper *Taiwan New Life* and two civilian newspapers *People's Daily*, and *People's Report Daily* can illustrate the effects of the Nationalist propaganda message on multiple Taiwanese audiences. Using the theories proposed by scholars of propaganda and communications studies, the author of this thesis will demonstrate how a message designed to assimilate a target population actually had the completely opposite effect when the content of the message contrasted sharply with what was really happening.

**Organization of the Thesis**

The main body of this thesis consists of four sections. The first section will provide a concise description of the 228 Incident and the Nationalist military suppression that followed the Taiwanese uprising. Section II will review the existing Chinese-and English-language literature on the Incident. Section III will introduce the theories of propaganda and communication utilized in this thesis. It will also provide background information on the three newspapers examined. Section IV will present a detailed reading of the newspapers, including specific examples from the papers' editorial sections. The theories of propaganda and communication introduced in Section III will be employed in the reading of the sources in order to illustrate the main argument of this thesis: that the Nationalist propaganda designed to assimilate and re-Sinicize the 'Japanized' Taiwanese played an important role in provoking Taiwanese anger towards the Nationalist
government. This thesis will end with a short conclusion, which sums up important findings.

Section I: The Taiwanese Uprising and the Nationalist Military Suppression

On the morning of February 28th, 1947—approximately a year and a half after Japan returned Taiwan to China at the end of the Pacific War—a large scale riot broke out in the capital city, Taibei (台北). Angry Taiwanese mobs stormed government offices and police stations. They also attacked Mainlanders on the streets. The riot was triggered by two related events both resulting in the deaths of Taiwanese civilians. The first event occurred on the previous night. It involved a group of policemen from Nationalist government’s Monopoly Bureau and a middle-aged widow selling contraband cigarettes on a busy street corner. When one of the officers struck the widow in the head with his pistol and caused considerable injury, the police group were surrounded and attacked by the indignant crowd. One policeman panicked and opened fire. A hapless bystander was struck by a bullet and fatally wounded.27 Enraged by the death of an innocent civilian, a mob formed outside of the downtown police station demanding the authorities to hand over the culprit. The government promised swift punishment for those who were responsible for the shooting, but refused to release the frightened policeman to the judgment of an angry mob.28 Angry Taiwanese also appeared outside the headquarters of the official newspaper Taiwan New Life and threatened to burn down its buildings if the paper would not report the event the next day.29 By the next morning, the size of the mob on the streets had swelled. They beat gongs and shouted anti-government slogans. A police station and a branch office of the Monopoly Bureau were burned down by the

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26 A joint decision of Allied leaders at the Cairo Conference in 1943 specified that Taiwan would be returned to Nationalist China at the end of the war. Japan surrendered in August 15th 1945, but the formal retrocession of the island did not take place until late October of the same year. The Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 chose Chen Yi 陳儀—the former Governor of Fujian Province—as the first Governor General of Taiwan.

27 For detailed discussion on the conflict between the policemen from the Monopoly Bureau and the Taiwanese crowd on the night of February 27th, see Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E, A Tragic Beginning, 102-103; Lai Zehan et al, Er er ba shijian yanjiubaogao, 48–51; Chen Cuilian, Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi, 137–142.

28 Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E, A Tragic Beginning, 105; Chen Cuilian, Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi, 141–142.

29 The Nationalist government had ordered Taiwan New Life not to report on the Incident. However, under the threat of an angry Taiwanese mob, the president of the paper Li Wanju 李萬居 gave in to the mob demand. See Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E, A Tragic Beginning, 105; Chen Cuilian, Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi, 142.
Around eleven o'clock, the mob flocked to the main office of the Monopoly Bureau, but was denied entry because the guards, anticipating this, sealed all the doors and windows. By one o'clock in the afternoon, thousands had gathered in front of Governor General Chen Yi’s office to protest. Young soldiers guarding the office were swamped by the surging crowd. Beleaguered and confused, they opened fired to scatter the mob. Several people were killed. Infuriated by the death of more civilians, many Taiwanese began to attack Mainlanders and mainland businesses indiscriminately—venting their pent-up frustration over a year and a half of Nationalist misrule. The Nationalist military and police forces in Taiwan were inadequate to put an immediate stop to the insurrection. The city of Taibei slipped into anarchy as the uprising gathered momentum. A portion of the mob took control of the official Taiwan Radio Station and spread the news of the uprising to the tens of thousands of daily listeners in every major city on the island. Within a few days, conflicts between the government forces and armed Taiwanese civilians broke out in these cities. A localized upheaval was transformed into an island-wide rebellion.

A group of Taiwanese elites in Taibei quickly organized what came to be known as the Resolution Committee for the 228 Incident to

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31 There is an ongoing debate among scholars over the circumstances in which the shots were fired. The number of civilian deaths that resulted from the shooting was another point of contention. For detailed discussions of these subjects see Chen Lifu, *Jinji, yuanzui, beiyu: xinshengdai kan er er ba shijian* (Taboo, Original Crime, and Tragedy: The New Generation’s View on the February 28th Incident). (Taipei Xian Banqiao Shi: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1990), 51–60; Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E, *A Tragic Beginning*, 106; Chen Cuilian, *Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzh*, 143–147; Lai Zehan et al, *Er er ba shijian yanjiubaogao*, 52–54.
32 Lai, Myers, and Wei argue that the uprising would not have spread as it did if the Nationalist authorities had not reduced the number of garrison troops on the island from 48,000 to 11,000 prior to the Incident. The troops were sent to reinforce the Nationalist army fighting the Chinese Communists on the Mainland. See Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E, *A Tragic Beginning*, 7. Chen Lifu suggests that it was the actions of the Taiwanese policemen that contributed to the spread of the mob unrest. The Taiwanese actually comprised a bulk of the Nationalist police force on the island. Many of them sympathized with the cause of their compatriots. They either did nothing to stop the rioters or actively participated in the uprising. See Chen Lifu, *Jinji, yuanzui, beiyu*, 15–50.
34 The Resolution Committee and the roles played by its individual members during the Committee’s negotiation with the Nationalist authorities have become an important topic of research in contemporary scholarship on the 228 Incident. For more on this topic, see Li Xiaofeng 李筱峯, “Er er ba shijian chuli weiyuanhui yu Chen Yi de duice” (The Resolution Committee’s Demands and Chen Yi’s Response). In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds., *Er er ba xueshu* (The 228 Incident’s Academic Study)}
negotiate with the government and try to stop the spread of the violence. Similar organizations also sprang up in other major cities. Despite a power struggle within the Resolution Committee—which, as some historians argue, was made worse by several members’ involvement in Nationalist clique politics—35—the Committee played an important role in restoring public order. It also conveyed requests for political reform and local autonomy to Nationalist Governor General Chen Yi in the famous 32 (42) Demands.36 The Governor General’s initial response to the Taiwanese uprising was conciliatory. He demonstrated a willingness to negotiate with the Resolution Committee. However, things took a completely different turn in the early evening of March 7th when Chen changed his attitude and rejected the Resolution Committee’s 32 (42) Demands. The first contingent of Mainland troops arrived the next day and started an island-wide campaign of looting, rampage, and indiscriminate killing. The Resolution Committee was dissolved on March 10th and martial law was proclaimed. Many members of the Committee were either shot or arrested.38 The fighting between armed civilians and

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35 For further reading of the power struggle within the Resolution Committee and the role played by the Nationalist clique politics during the Incident, see Chen Cuilian, Paixi douzhengyu quanmou zhengzhi and Chen Mingtong, “Paixi zhengzhi yu Chen Yi zhi Tai lun.”

36 The 32 (42) Demands demonstrated what the Taiwanese elites in the Resolution Committee thought should be done to address the problems caused by the Nationalist misrule. The original demands contained 32 clauses. However, 10 more were added at the last minute. The right of self-governance was emphasized by the 32 (42) Demands. The demands were submitted to Governor General Chen Yi on March 7th 1947. They were immediately rejected by him. For the content of 32 (42) Demands, see Li Xiaofeng, “Er er ba shijian chuli wei yuanhui yu Chen Yi de duice”, 177–181.

37 Chen Yi’s conciliatory gesture and the restraint shown by his military commanders during the first week of the Incident are well documented. Chen made numerous radio broadcasts to express his plans for reforms. During this time, the Nationalist troops on the island did not attack armed civilian groups. The exception was General Peng Mengqi 彭孟緝 in Gaoxiong 高雄, who was reprimanded Chen for his action. However, the Governor General’s attitude changed on March 7th. This led many historians to believe that Chen did not really want to negotiate with the insurgents. He was simply waiting for the reinforcements from the Mainland to arrive. Lai, Myers, and Wei argue that Chen’s willingness to negotiate was genuine. However, they have been criticized by other historians. For more, see Xiao Xinyi 蕭欣義, “Ping Lai, Ma, Wei xinzuo Beiju de kaiduan” 評賴,馬,魏 新著悲劇的開端 (A Critical Analysis of Lai, Myers, and Wei’s A Tragic Beginning). In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds., Er er ba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji, 348–352 and Chen Cuilian, Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi, 342–353.

38 Lai Zehan et al, Er er ba shijian yanjiubaogao, 206–207.
Nationalist troops was most serious in central Taiwan. However, all insurgencies were quelled within a few weeks. Waves of arrests, interrogations, and executions followed in what is called ‘clearing the country’ (清鄉) campaign. The campaign lasted until May 16th 1947 and ended with the arrival of Chen Yi’s replacement Wei Daoming (魏道明). However, the arrest, detention, and execution of ‘suspected participants’ lasted well into the 1950s during the era of White Terror (白色恐怖). Thousands of Taiwanese went into exile in China, Hong Kong, and Japan to escape the Nationalist persecution. They became the ones who kept the memories of the Incident alive by writing books and articles about it until academic research on the Incident began in Taiwan in the late 1980s, following the lifting of martial law.

Section II: Interpretations of the Factors Leading to the Incident

Historical works on the 228 Incident published before the late 1980s were all written by exiled Taiwanese with the exception of George H. Kerr’s *Formosa Betrayed* (1965). These works were produced by two main groups: the Taiwanese Communists who joined the Chinese Communists after the Incident and Taiwanese intellectuals who escaped to Japan after the failure of the uprising. Despite the differences between the...
studies produced by these two groups, contemporary scholars often lump all of these works under the rubric of ‘civilian works’ (民間著作) to distinguish them from the official reports (官方報告) published by the Nationalist government. Official reports tend to minimize the number of civilian deaths and avoid talking about government’s responsibility for the Taiwanese uprising. They attribute the Incident to the violent and irrational behaviour of the Taiwanese mob and the self-serving ambition of some Taiwanese elites. According to the official interpretation, the participants of the 228 Incident were under the virulent influence of Japanese colonial indoctrination and Chinese Communist ideology.\(^{44}\) On the other hand, the civilian works often exaggerate the Taiwanese death toll, neglect the casualties of the Mainlanders, and portray every Nationalist bureaucrat as lazy, greedy, and deceitful carpetbaggers.\(^{45}\) However, they also outline important factors leading to the Taiwanese uprising, which the official reports do not show. These include the government’s failed economic policy, rampant corruption and nepotism in the Nationalist bureaucracy, employment discrimination against the Taiwanese, Nationalist soldiers’ lack of discipline, and failure of the government to uphold the laws and maintain social order. These factors are illustrated in Zhuang Jianong’s (莊嘉農)\(^{46}\) *Fennu di Taiwan* 懲怒的台灣 (The Indignant Taiwan), Lin Mushun’s (林木順) *Taiwan er Yue geming* 台灣二月革命 (The February Revolution of Taiwan) as well as in George Kerr’s *Formosa Betrayed*. Together, these works would become an important basis for contemporary research on the origins of the Incident.

Taiwanese intellectuals in Japan led by Liao Wenyi 廖文毅 and Huang Jinan 黃紀男 who started the overseas T.I.M. organization after 1950. Available sources show that there was cooperation between the two exiled groups when Xie, Yang, Su, Liao, and Huang were organizing anti-Nationalist protests in Hong Kong from 1947 to 1948. However, Taiwanese Communists’ renouncement of independence broke the alliance. For more, see Chen Fangming, *Xuehong pingzhuan: luo tu diao di yuehuan* 謝雪紅評傳落土不凋的雨夜花 (Biography of Xie Xuehong). (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1991), 365–386; Zhang Yanxian, “Zhanhou chuqui Taidu zhuang zhansheng de tantao,” 298.


\(^{45}\) Civilian writers were active participants of the 228 Incident, or they had friends and relatives who died during the Incident. After the Nationalists quelled the uprising, these civilian writers escaped abroad to avoid being arrested by the authorities. As a result, their works exhibit anti-Nationalist political agendas.

\(^{46}\) Zhuang Jianong was the pseudonym for T.C.P. leader Su Xin. Lin Mushun was the pseudonym for another T.C.P. leader Yang Kehuang. For their works, see Zhuang Jianong, *Fennu di Taiwan* and Lin
Academic research on the 228 Incident began in Taiwan in the late 1980s. It coincided with the democratization of the island's politics. From 1987 to 1998, three major academic conferences on the Incident were held, which produced three collected essays volumes. After almost a decade and a half of intensive research and debate on the origins of the Taiwanese uprising, historians in Taiwan have reached four important conclusions. First of all, contrary to the claims made by the official Nationalist reports, the 228 Incident was not a planned insurrection orchestrated by the Chinese Communists. Second, the Nationalist policemen's beating of the widow cigarette hawker and the shooting of protestors in front of the Governor General's Office were only trigger incidents to the uprising. Taiwanese had been simmering with rage about Nationalist incompetence and corruption since the retrocession. Their anger towards the Nationalists reached a boiling point in early 1947. Third, although Nationalist misrule was an important cause of the Incident, the social and cultural differences between China and Taiwan as a result of fifty years of separation was also important. After all, the people in other provinces of China were subjected to the same or even worse mismanagement after the war. However, they never rose up spontaneously against the Nationalist rule. Fourth, the factional struggle within the Nationalist government was also an important contributing factor to the 228 Incident. It not only contributed to Governor General Chen Yi's inability to carry out his administrative plans, but also led to the spread of the mob unrest.

All contemporary scholars agree on the first two conclusions. The argument that the 228 Incident was instigated by the Chinese Communists is considered false by every contemporary study. However, it is the works of Chen Fangming (陳芳明) and Chen Mushun, *Taiwan er Yue Geming*. The works written by the overseas T.I.M. activists also show similar factors leading to the Incident. For more, see Shi Ming, *Taiwanren Sibainian Shi*; Wang Yude, *Taiwan: Kumen Di Shi*; Lin Qixu, *Er Er Ba Shijian Zonghe Yanjiu*.

47 In 1986, the first opposition party—the Democratic Progressive Party—was established. A year later, the first academic conference on the 228 Incident was held in San Francisco. In the same year, a popular campaign was started by a group of politicians and scholars. The campaign asked the Nationalist government for the commemoration of the Incident as well as reparations for the victims. This came to be known as 'The Campaign for Justice and Peace for the 228 Incident' or (二二八公義和平運動).

48 These three collected essays volumes are: Chen Fangming eds., *Er Er Ba Shijian Xueshu Lunwenji* (1987); Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds., *Er Er Ba Xueshu Yantaohui Lunwenji* (1992); Zhang Yanxian, Chen Meirong, and Yang Yahui eds., *Er Er Ba Shijian Yanjiu Lunwenji* (1998).

49 The Nationalist official reports mentioned here are those that were published before the 1990s. It does not include the Administrative Yuan study (Lai Zehan et al., *Er Er Ba Shijian Yanjiu Baogao*) issued in 1994.

50 For more on this specific argument, see Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E, *A Tragic Beginning*, 173.
Yishen (陳儀深) that really help to clarify this particular issue. They demonstrate that the Taiwanese Communists leaders who were involved in the Incident such as Xie Xuehong (謝雪紅) and Su Xin (蘇新) had little connection with the Chinese Communists before or during the Incident. The argument that Nationalist misrule led to the islanders’ rebellion had already been articulated by the ‘civilian works’ published before the late 1980s. Nationalist economic mismanagement, corruption, failure to uphold the law, and employment discrimination against the Taiwanese were identified as important contributing factors to the Taiwanese uprising. Over the past fifteen years, these contentions have been strengthened and elaborated by the works of contemporary scholars. Li Wenhuan (李文環), Liu Shiyong (劉士永), Pan Zhiqi (潘志奇), and Zhu Gaoying (朱高影) focus on the failed Nationalist economic policy. Governor General Chen Yi’s policy of ‘controlled economy’ (統制經濟) combined with rampant corruption among Nationalist officials was shown to have had a devastating effect on Taiwan’s postwar economy. The confiscation and the management of Japanese properties

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51 For more, see Chen Fangming, *Xie Xuehong pingzhuan*, chapter 1–chapter 11; Chen Yishen, “Lun Taiwan er er ba shijian fasheng de yuanyin,” 30–34.
53 Chen Yi’s policy of ‘controlled economy’ is very similar to the Soviet style planned economy. The state is in charge of the production and distribution of all life necessities. Chen set up official monopolies on important commodities such as salt, sugar, tobacco, alcohol, coal, matches, and lumber. Free enterprises were limited. Under his program, the capital and resources needed for Taiwan’s postwar recovery were sent to China for the war effort against the Chinese Communists. Using their monopolistic power, the Nationalist officials in charge of the official monopolies earned handsome profits by manipulating prices of the commodities and by exacting bribes from the merchants. This led to the problem of food and commodity shortage and contributed to a period of hyperinflation in postwar Taiwan. For more, see Li Wenhuan, Liu Shiyong, Pan Zhiqi, and Zhu Gaoying’s works. For specific discussion on the issue of rice shortage see Yan Qingmei 顏清梅, “Guangfu chuqi Taiwan mihuang wenti chutan” (Preliminary Study of the Issue of Rice Shortage in Early Postwar Taiwan). In Lai Zehan eds., *Taiwan guangfu chuqi li shi.*
was another source of Taiwanese discontent. This latter issue is discussed in the works of Chen Liangzhou (陳亮州).  

The postwar economic downturn led to various social problems. Crime rates and unemployment rates skyrocketed. Public transportation was filled with freeloaders. The once clean city streets were littered with garbage, and a sense of lawlessness was prevalent. Chen Yi’s officials openly defied the law by running all sorts of rackets. The Nationalist soldiers wandered off their barracks and preyed on civilians. These situations are best described by the works of Li Xiaofeng (李筱峰). Chen Lifu (陳俐甫) and Chen Chunying (陳純瑩) argue that the Nationalist police force in Taiwan was poorly trained and understaffed. It was woefully insufficient in maintaining proper social order. The failure of the Nationalist government to enforce the law is also illustrated by Wang Taisheng (王泰升). Another social problem that turned Taiwanese against the Nationalist government was the deterioration of the public health system. In a monograph on the postwar epidemics, Chen Shufen (陳淑芬) shows that the Nationalist government was unable to maintain the standard of public health established by the Japanese. Its lackadaisical attitude towards quarantine and disease prevention resulted in the resurgence of cholera, smallpox, and bubonic plague—diseases that had been eradicated during the colonial period. Chen argues that the outbreak of these life threatening  

55 For more, see Li Xiaofeng, “Er er ba shijian qian de wenhua chongtu” and *Daoyu xin taiji: cong zhongzhan dao er er ba* 島嶼新胎記: 從終戰到二二八 (The Island’s New Birthmark: From the End of the War to the February 28th Incident). Taibei: Zili wanbao she, 1993.  
57 Wang points out that the Nationalists actually had a rather elaborate law code that was very similar to the Japanese. However, the difference in their two’s capacity to actually enforce the law contributed to the prewar and postwar discrepancy. For more, see Wang Taisheng 王泰升, “Taiwan zhanhou chuqi de zhengquan zhuantu yu falu tixi de changjie” 臺灣戰後初期的政權轉型與法律體系的承繼 (Regime Changes and Changes in the System of Law in Early Postwar Taiwan). *Guoli Taiwan Daxue faxue luncong* 國立臺灣大學法學論叢 (National Taiwan University Law Journal) Vol.29:1 (1999): 1–90.
diseases and the Nationalist authorities’ inability to deal with this particular problem alienated the Taiwanese from the new government.  

Another aspect of Nationalist misrule that alienated Taiwanese was the government’s employment discrimination. This is elaborated by the works of Zheng Zi (鄭梓) and Tang Xiyong (湯熙勇). The Nationalist government’s discriminatory hiring practices in the civil service were caused by the nepotism of its officials and Nationalist distrust of the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. During the retrocession, many Taiwanese lost their jobs to the newcomers from the Mainland. Zhen and Tang argue that the Nationalist employment discrimination against the Taiwanese contributed to the animosity between the Taiwanese and the Mainlanders and the anger of Taiwanese towards the new government. Xu Xueji (許雪姬) shows that most Taiwanese thought the Nationalist officials used Taiwanese’s unfamiliarity with Mandarin as an excuse to limit their employment opportunities and political participation. Recently, scholars studying aspects of Nationalist misrule pointed to another contributing factor to Taiwanese discontent with the government: the Nationalists’ indifference towards the plight of the Taiwanese stranded overseas after the war. This issue is examined by the works of He Fengjiao (何鳳嬌), Jian Shenghuang (簡笙簧), and Zhang Jianqiu (張建秋).
Besides Nationalist misrule, social and cultural differences between Taiwan and China at the time of retrocession are also considered by historians to be a significant contributing factor to the Taiwanese uprising. Fifty years of colonialism had ‘Japanized’ Chinese inhabitants on the island to a certain degree. It had also transformed the infrastructural and social landscapes of the island, turning it from a rural backwater to an industrialized society with an efficient administrative apparatus, a modern public school system, and well-educated indigenous elites. During the fifty years of separation, the majority of Taiwanese were insulated from the incessant military conflicts and the drastic sociopolitical transformations that took place on the Mainland. The colonial experience of the Taiwanese and the diverged trajectories of historical development between China and Taiwan led many islanders’ to have excessive expectations of their liberators from what was in truth an economically and technologically backward ancestral nation. This argument is illustrated by Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E’s ‘clash of world view’ theory, Li Xiaofeng’s concept of ‘cultural conflict,’ and Xiao Shengtie’s (蕭聖鐵) idea of ‘frustrated social expectations.’ Meanwhile, Chang Fangming, He Yilin (何義麟), and Steve E. Phillips argue that the Taiwanese demand for self-governance during the 228 Incident was grounded in their previous pursuit of local autonomy under


62 For a discussion on the issue of ‘Japanization’ see note 7.
64 For more on Li’s concept of cultural conflict 文化衝突, see Li Xiaofeng, “Er er ba shijian qian de wenhua chongtu.”
65 See Xiao Shengtie 蕭聖鐵, “Taiwan er er ba shijian de jingji yu wenhua beijing: shehui qiwang liliun zhi yingyong” 台灣二二八事件的經濟與文化背景: 社會期望理論之應用 (The Economic and Cultural Background of Taiwan’s February 28th Incident: The Use of Social Expectations Theory). In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huling eds., *Er er ba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji*. 
Japanese rule. The argument that social and cultural differences between China and Taiwan were a main contributing factor to the 228 Incident has gained wide acceptance among contemporary scholars and is cited frequently in their works.

Contrary to the scholars’ unanimous agreement on the three previous conclusions on the factors leading to the Incident, there is still minor dispute on the fourth conclusion. The argument that factional struggles in the Nationalist Party contributed to the outbreak of the Incident was proposed by Chen Cuilian (陳翠蓮) and Chen Mingtong (陳明通). The Nationalist Party was comprised of different factions. The Governor General Chen Yi, his military commanders, and some of his most powerful ministers all belonged to different factions. The tussle between these factions for resources and financial gain paralyzed the Nationalist administrative apparatus in Taiwan. Factional politics also contributed to the escalation of the Incident. Many of Chen Yi’s general and officials secretly plotted against him by allying themselves with a group of Taiwanese elites, and their actions during the early stage of the Incident may have contributed to the spread of the uprising.

The above review demonstrates that historians have identified various contributing factors to the 228 Incident in the past 15 years. Besides elaborating on the factors recognized by the pre-1987 works, they also proposed new ones such as the cultural differences between China and Taiwan and the factional struggles in the Nationalist government. While not arguing against the interpretations articulated by these

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66 For more, see Chen Fangming, “Zhanhou chuqi Taiwan zizhi yundong yu er er ba shijian” 戰後初期台灣自治運動與二二八事件 (Home Rule Movement in Early Postwar Taiwan and the February 28th Incident). In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds., Er er ba xueshi yantaohui lunwenji; He Yilin, “Taiwansheng zhengzhi jianshe xiehui yu er er ba shijian”台灣省政治建設協會與二二八事件 (Taiwan Political Construction Committee and the February 28th Incident). In In Zhang Yanxian, Chen Meirong, and Yang Yahui eds., Er er ba shijian yanjiu lunwenji; Steven E. Phillips, Between Assimilation and Independence.

67 One only has to read a dozen works on the Incident published after 1990 to realize how often the terms ‘cultural conflict’ and ‘cultural difference’ were cited by contemporary historians.

68 See Chen Cuilian, Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi, chapter 4; Chen Mingtong, “Paixi zhengzhi yu Chen Yi zhi Tai lun,” 257–290.

69 Chen Cuilian and Chen Mingtong’s contention is accepted by most scholars. However, Chen Yishen disagrees with the two’s interpretation. Chen Yishen argues that factional struggle in the Nationalist Party only played a minor role in causing the outbreak and the spread of the Incident. His argument against Chen Cuilian and Chen Mingtong’s was based on an alternative reading of the same evidence. For more, see Chen Yishen, “Zaitan er er ba shijian chuli weiyuanhui—guanyu qi zhengzhi lichang yu jiaose gongneng de pinggu.” In Zhang Yanxian, Chen Meirong, and Yang Yahui eds., Er er ba shijian yanjiu lunwenji, 162–163.
scholars, the author of this thesis would like to bring their attention to another important contributing factor to the Incident: the Nationalist propaganda message for the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. In the two following sections, the role played by Nationalist propaganda in provoking Taiwanese anger and uprising will be illustrated through the reading of three major newspapers published during this period: the official Nationalist newspaper Taiwan New Life, and the non-official People's Daily and People's Report Daily.

Section III: Propaganda Theories and Primary Sources

The study of propaganda is an interdisciplinary undertaking that involves the work of historians, political scientists, social scientists, and psychologists. In the past century, hundreds of books have dealt with various aspects of propaganda. The range of topics under study has varied from the most well-known Nazi and Soviet propaganda to commercial advertising. Before the Second World War, the research focus was on political and war propaganda. After the war, scholars’ attention was drawn towards the effects of radio and television programs on the general public. In the past two decades, there has been a growing concern with the loss of the individual’s ability to think and act critically in democratic societies as a result of powerful interests groups’ monopolistic control over the mass media. This sentiment was perhaps most strongly felt in the United States. Recently, for example, scholars have become more aware of the close relationship

70 In A Tragic Beginning, Lai, Myers, and Wei state that: “[While] some Taiwanese embraced the Western ideal of democracy, feeling it could be applied immediately to China, the KMT (the Nationalists) offered a confusing political message. Although it rejected Communist and Japanese totalitarianism and endorsed democracy, it insisted that democratization had to occur gradually and in combination with Confucian ethics and opposition to Communism.” However, the three authors do not investigate the effects of the Nationalist political message on the Taiwanese. Instead, they attribute the Taiwanese anger to the civilian newspapers’ sensationalized reports on the Nationalist corruption. See Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E, A Tragic Beginning, 169. Also see Xiao Xinyi’s criticism of Lai, Myers, and Wei’s argument in Xiao Xinyi, “Ping Lai, Ma, Wei xinzuo Beiju de kaiduan.” In Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds., Er er ba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji, 340.


72 This shift in prewar and postwar study focuses is clearly demonstrated by Jowett and O’Donnell’s review chapter on 80 years of research on propaganda and persuasion. For more, see Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion, chapter 4.
between propaganda, democracy, and the U.S. foreign policy. This awareness is reflected in the writings of Noam Chomsky, J. Michael Sproule, Caroline Page, Anthony Pratkanis, Elliot Aronson, and Douglas Kellner. In recent years, there have also been several major studies of the role of propaganda and 'propaganda state' in the People’s Republic of China. Interestingly, however, there has been almost nothing written about the role or effects of Nationalist propaganda. This thesis seeks to draw upon selected aspects of propaganda theory in order to illustrate how Nationalist political ideology was received, understood and appropriated by Taiwanese audiences during the early years following retrocession and leading up to the 228 Incident.

Although propaganda and persuasion have been an integral part of human history that can be traced back to ancient Greece and China for its philosophical and theoretical origins, modern research on the use and effects of propaganda began only after the First World War. The Great War was a battle of attrition that required ultimate sacrifice of an entire country's population. Carefully designed propaganda messages were first used by the British to persuade the general public to give up their own pleasure for the war effort. This tactic was quickly imitated by the French, Germans, and the Americans. False information such as reports on enemy soldiers' brutality was disseminated through newspapers, films, books, posters, billboards, and radio broadcasts. Harold D. Lasswell,

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76 Ibid., 162-163.
a leading early scholar of propaganda, argued that the content of a well-constructed propaganda message can have a direct and immediate effect on people. Lasswell’s ‘direct effect/stimulus-response’ model of propaganda and communication came to be known as the ‘magic bullet’ or ‘hypodermic needle theory.’

The rise of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in the interwar period and the two regimes’ use of propaganda to gain support from the German and Russian public seemed to substantiate Lasswell’s contention. However, in the late 1940s, sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld developed the ‘two-step flow’ or ‘multi-step flow’ model of communication. His theory challenged Lasswell’s direct effect model by demonstrating the roles played by ‘opinion leaders’ who mediate the general public’s reception of propaganda. Lazarsfeld showed that personal contacts and face-to-face discussions determined how people actually received political messages. This led to psychologist Kurt Lewin’s notion of a ‘gatekeeper’ as someone who controlled the flow of information through media. The gatekeeping function of the media has since become a significant factor that determines what gets into print or on the air. In Section IV, Lazarsfeld and Lewin’s theories will be used to show how a group of Taiwanese elites—those who established the two civilian newspapers *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* and the journalists who worked for them—

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77 Lasswell was fascinated by propaganda’s ability to change people’s perception and behaviour. He saw the general public as an ‘unthinking herd’ who were susceptible to the manipulations of skilful propagandists. See Harold D. Lasswell, “Propaganda.” In Robert Jackall eds., *Propaganda and Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion*, 164. Also see the work of his contemporary Walter Lippmann, “The Phantom Public” in the Robert Jackall’s volume. Lasswell and Lippmann held the same view on propaganda’s powerful effects on the public opinion.

78 Opinion leaders are individuals who the audiences seek advice for the interpretation of propaganda messages. These individuals could be parents, grandparents, relatives, a trusted friend, or one’s spouse...etc. The opinion leaders may or may not possess the expertise on the subjects discussed by the propaganda messages. Nevertheless, their opinions have great influence on those who seek their advice. Lazarsfeld and his associates discovered the mediating roles played by the opinion leaders in communication process when they conducted interviews to determine the effects of campaign ads on the general public’s political attitudes during the 1940 U.S. presidential election. For more, see Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 172.

79 In a study published in 1948, Lazarsfeld and his associates concluded that: “Exposure is always selective; in other words, a positive relationship exists between people’s opinions and what they choose to listen to or read.” For more, see Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 173. The same opinion was expressed by T. H. Qualter decades later when he argued that: “Propaganda, to be effective, must be seen, remembered, understood, and accepted upon...adapted to particular needs of the situation and the audience to which it is aimed.” For more, see Terence H. Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare*. (New York: Random House, 1962), xii or Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 5.

80 Lewin’s concept of gatekeeper was developed by his research on American food consumption habits during World War II. For more, see Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 173.
acted as opinion leaders and gatekeepers who interpreted the content of the Nationalist propaganda for the Taiwanese public. As we will see, these Taiwanese elites and reporters were quite selective in their reception of the Nationalist propaganda.  

In 1950s and 1960s, the research on propaganda and mass communication diversified into a wide range of theories on media effects on human attitudes, behaviour, and psychological states. In 1974, Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs proposed a theory on the ‘agenda-setting’ function of the media. Their argument was that the news media did not tell the public what to think, but set up a range of issues that they should think about. The author of this thesis finds Shaw and McCombs’ idea useful in demonstrating how the content of the Nationalist propaganda message disseminated through the official newspaper *Taiwan New Life* set the basis for the civilian newspapers *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily’s* attacks on the Nationalist government.

After late 1970s and early 1980s, scholars of communications studies started to realize the limitations of behaviour-effects research based on empirical evidence and turned instead to cultural studies. Cultural studies examine the germination and circulation of meanings in societies. For scholars of cultural studies, cultural and historical contexts need to be taken into consideration when analyzing the effects of media messages. The agency of the audience is emphasized. How viewers use media such as television to make sense of their social experiences is one example of an approach taken by media scholars influenced by cultural studies. Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell argue that the most important conclusion that one can draw from 80 years of research on propaganda and communications is that individual differences

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81 The Nationalist propaganda stressed the importance of the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese’s assimilation to Chinese culture. On the other hand, it also imparted the promises of equality, democracy, and economic development as incentives. The Taiwanese journalists who worked for the two civilian papers ignored the aspect of assimilation and focused on getting the new government to fulfill its promises.

82 Shaw and McCombs’ idea expanded on Kurt Lewin’s concept of gatekeepers. According to them, the news media not only controlled the flow of information, but also set agendas for public discussions. For more, see Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 192.

83 Nationalist propaganda messages propagated through *Taiwan New Life* actually gave the Taiwanese public a list of things that they should expect from the Nationalist government. When the new government did not perform as expected, the journalists who worked for *People's Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* lambasted the Nationalist officials in Taiwan for breaking their promises. The sensationalized style of reporting by these civilian journalists contributed to the growing anti-Nationalist feeling among many Taiwanese.

84 For a discussion on the works of major theorists in cultural studies, see Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 197–199.
determine the nature of effects. They also suggest that it is important to pay attention to
the historical and cultural contexts in which propaganda and persuasion occur since
people construct different meanings according to their social experiences.\textsuperscript{85}

Jowett and O'Donnell's conclusion can be applied to postwar Taiwan. The
socioeconomic circumstances on the island and the cultural background of the Taiwanese
at the time of retrocession affected how the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese received Nationalist
propaganda. The Nationalist propaganda message was designed to gain the support of the
Taiwanese. Though the message stressed the importance of the islanders’ assimilation
into Chinese culture after decades of colonization, it also promised them equality,
democracy, and economic prosperity. As we shall see, however, the message was soon
rendered ineffective and even became politically subversive. The failed Nationalist
economic policy, corruption, and employment discrimination against the Taiwanese
contrasted sharply with the official rhetoric. As the evidence from \textit{People's Daily} and
\textit{People's Report Daily} will show, this contradiction contributed to Taiwanese
disappointment and resentment towards the Nationalist government. The colonial
experience also affected many Taiwanese’s reception of Nationalist propaganda message.
A majority of reporters who wrote for \textit{People’s Daily} and \textit{People’s Report Daily} had
participated in protests against Japanese rule. The two main demands of these anti-
colonial political movements were an end to discrimination against the Taiwanese and
introduction of local autonomy.\textsuperscript{86} Section IV will show that these two demands were also
pressed by journalists in \textit{People’s Daily} and \textit{People’s Report Daily} under Nationalist rule.
Only this time, these journalists found ready justification for their demands in the content

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 200.
\textsuperscript{86} The Taiwanese anti-colonial political movements (1921–1937) corresponded with the period of
liberalization in Japanese politics. Most of the Taiwanese political organizations formed during this time
were not revolutionary. The leaders of these associations were wealthy and educated elites who wanted to
fight the inequalities in the colonial system through the legal framework established by the Japanese.
However, there were also a small number of Taiwanese Communists (T.C.P. was established in 1928 with
the help of Japanese Communists) who wanted independence. For further reading of Taiwanese anti-
colonial political movements, see Edward I-te Chen, “Formosan Political Movement under Japanese
shidai di Taiwan yihui shezhi qingyuan yundong} 日據時代的臺灣議會設置議願運動 \textit{(The Movement for
the Establishment of a Taiwanese Parliament during the Japanese Colonial Period)}. Taipei: Zili baoxi
wenhua chubanbu, 1989; Chen Lifu, \textit{Rizhi shiqi Taiwan zhengzhi yundong zhi yanjiu} 日治時期臺灣政治運
動之研究 \textit{(Research on Taiwan Political Movements during the Colonial Period)}. Taipei Xian, Banqiao Shi:
Daoxiang chubanshe, 1996.
of the Nationalist propaganda message. These writers expressed indignation and disillusionment towards the government as Nationalist officials in Taiwan failed to implement the goals outlined by official propaganda.

Before going into a detailed analysis of Nationalist propaganda and the responses of Taiwanese journalists in the civilian media, it is important to provide some background information on the three newspapers used for this study. Nationalist propaganda was disseminated through *Taiwan New Life*. The paper started printing on the day of formal retrocession on October 25th, 1945. It was the largest and the most influential Nationalist official organ in postwar Taiwan. According to the available sources, the daily circulation of the paper reached 175,000 copies at the beginning of the retrocession. However, the number of daily sales dropped steadily throughout 1946 to 70,000 copies in early 1947. *Taiwan New Life* was under the control of the Governor General Office’s Propaganda Committee and entrusted with the twin tasks of official policy announcement and propagation of the ancestral nation’s culture.*Interestingly, *Taiwan New Life* took over the assets of the

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87 The other Nationalist newspapers published in early postwar Taiwan (October 1945-March 1947) included *Zhonghua ribao* (China Daily), *Guoshi ribao* 国是日報 (National Affairs Daily), *Heping ribao* 和平日報 (Peace Daily), and *Ziqiang ribao* 自強日報 (Self-Strengthening Daily). *Taiwan New Life* was designated as Taiwan Governor General Office’s official organ. Therefore, it received the best apparatus left over by the Japanese. None of the other official papers could match the circulation reached by *Taiwan New Life*. However, due to insufficient evidence, historians are unable to provide accurate information on the circulations of other Nationalist papers published in early postwar Taiwan. A single source indicates that the daily sales of *Heping ribao* were around 10,000 copies. For more, see Wu Chunjia 吳純嘉, “Renmin daobao yanjiu (1946-1947)—jianlun qi fanying chu de zhanhou chuqi Taiwan zhengzhili jingji yu shehui bianqian” 人民導報研究 (1946-1947)—兼論其反映出的戰後初期臺灣政治經濟與社會文化變遷 (A Study of People’s Report Daily (1946-1947)—A Discussion on How It Reflects on the Political, Economic, and Cultural Transformations in Early Postwar Taiwan). (Master thesis, Taoyuan: Zhongyang University, 1999), 52-59. Also see Chen Guohui 陳國輝 and Zhu Ping 祝萍, *Taiwan baoye yanjin sishi nian* 台灣報業演進四十年 (The Evolution of the Taiwanese Press in the Past Forty Years). Taibei: Zili Wanbao she, 1987.

88 The daily issues of *Taiwan New Life* peaked in October 1945 with 175,000 copies printed. The amount declined to 138,000 in June 1946 and 73,000 in January 1947. This steady decline demonstrated the Taiwanese public’s growing discontent of the Nationalist rule. For more, see Yang Jinlin 楊錦麟, *Li Wanju pingzhuan* 李萬居評傳 (Biography of Li Wanju). (Taibei: Renjian chubanshe, 1993), 144–146 and Wu Chunjia, “Renmin daobao yanjiu,” 54. George H. Kerr also mentions that the circulation of *Taiwan New Life* soon dropped from 170,000 to 56,000 after the retrocession. However, Kerr does not provide references to support his claim. See George Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed*, 208-209.

89 See He Yilin, “Zhanhou chuqi Taiwan baozhi zhi baocun xiankuang yu shiliao jiazhi,” 戰後初期台灣報紙之保存現況與史料價值 (A General Assessment of the Preservation and the Historical Value of
Some of the reporters also came from those who had worked in *Taiwan News Daily*. However, due to the need for journalists who could read and write Chinese, *Taiwan New Life* hired many new reporters from China. The paper was under the direction of Li Wanju—a Taiwanese who went to China and worked for the Nationalists during the colonial period. *Taiwan New Life* continued to publish after 228 Incident, but went through a major restructuring process with many members of the editorial board being removed from their posts. From the point of view of the Nationalist government, those who ran the newspaper before the Incident had failed to do their jobs.

There are three reasons why *Taiwan New Life* is a good source for examining the Nationalist propaganda message for the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. First, it was the largest official organ with the highest circulation during the first year of the retrocession. None of the other official papers on the island could match *Taiwan New Life* in daily sales. Second, all of the Nationalist government’s policy announcements as well as the content Taiwanese Newspapers in Early Postwar Taiwan) *Taiwan shiliaoyanjiu* 台灣史料研究 (Taiwan Historical Materials Studies) No.8 (1996): 89.

90 He Yilin, “Zhanhou chuqi Taiwan baozhi zhi baocun xiankuang yu shiliao jiazhi,” 89.
91 See Li Xiaofeng, *Er er ba xiaoshi di Taiwan jingying* 二二八消失的台灣菁英 (The Taiwanese Elites Who Disappeared during the February 28th Incident). (Taipei: Zili wanbao she, 1990), 145. Li does not specify the ratio of Taiwanese and Mainland journalists in *Taiwan New Life*. One would presume that there were more Mainland reporters than Taiwanese reporters in *Taiwan New Life*. However, there is still lack of evidence on this particular issue.
92 A small number of Taiwanese went to China to work, do business, or to escape the Japanese police because of their involvement in anti-colonial activities. Some of them joined the Nationalist Party while in China. These people returned with the Nationalist government after the war and played significant roles in Chen Yi’s governance of Taiwan. Many of them became reporters for *Taiwan New Life* and other official papers. The repatriated Taiwanese were disliked by the indigenous Taiwanese (or ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese) because of their held positions of power in the Nationalist bureaucracy. Indigenous Taiwanese often called those who returned from China after the war: *banshan* 半山 (half mountain)—a derogatory term derived from the islanders’ slanderous appellation of the Mainlanders: *ashan* 阿山 (stupid mountain). Li Wanju was one of the *banshans*. He was not only put in charge of *Taiwan New Life*, but was also elected to the Taiwan Provincial Assembly and the National Assembly in 1946. Although he tried to maintain fairness and objectivity in *Taiwan New Life*’s reportage, Li supported and defended the Governor General’s policy. He dutifully carried out the paper’s assigned tasks: proclamation of government policies and propagation of Chinese culture. Under his leadership, *Taiwan New Life* became a bona fide official organ. For more, see Yang Jinlin, *Li Wanjupingzhua*, 127–169.
93 The President of *Taiwan New Life* Li Wanju became a powerless honorary chairman of after the 228 Incident. The running of the paper was taken over by the new Governor General Wei Daoming’s trusted aide Chang Zhinan 常之南. The general manager Ruan Chaori 阮朝日 and the chief editor of the Japanese section Wu Jinlian 吳金鎔 were executed by the Nationalist authorities during the Incident. For more, see Yang Jinlin, *Li Wanjupingzhua*, 196 and Li Xiaofeng, *Er er ba xiaoshi di Taiwan jingying*, 130–146.
94 Wu Chunjia, “Renmin daobao yanjiu,” 54.
of the official radio broadcasts were printed in this newspaper. Third, and most important of all, in the first twelve months of the retrocession, the paper also contained a Japanese section. Most of Taiwanese could not speak Mandarin or read Chinese at the time. Therefore, the Japanese section of Taiwan New Life became perhaps the single most important source of information for the islanders about the newly arrived Nationalist government. The Japanese section in Taiwan New Life was often shorter than the Chinese section and the content between the two was sometimes different. However, essential parts such as official announcements and daily editorials were translated verbatim from Chinese to Japanese. These are the parts that the analysis in Section IV will focus on. It should be noted that only the first four months of Taiwan New Life (October 25th, 1945~February 25th, 1946) will be utilized in this analysis. This is because of two considerations. First, evidence indicates that the paper’s circulation was highest in the first few months after the retrocession. Second, the Nationalist government presented all of the essential elements of its propaganda message to the Taiwanese in the first four months.

95 Taiwan New Life’s Japanese section was cancelled by Governor General Chen Yi’s decree on October 25th, 1946. Chen’s decision to ban the use of Japanese in all publications in Taiwan after giving the islanders only one year to learn Chinese irritated many Taiwanese. For more, see Xu Xueji, “Taiwan guangfu chuqi de yuwen wenti.” Siyuyan Vol.29:4 (1991):155~184.

96 There were two editorial boards for Taiwan New Life. One was responsible for the Chinese section of the paper; the other one was responsible for the Japanese section. The Chinese board was under the guidance of Li Wanju; the Japanese board was headed by Wu Jinlian. Wu was an indigenous Taiwanese journalist who had worked for Taiwan People’s News (台灣民報) during the colonial period. Taiwan People’s News was established by a group of Taiwanese elites who had participated in the anti-colonial protests during the 1920s and 1930s. The paper was very critical of Japanese colonial rule in Taiwan. After the retrocession, Wu tried to keep this spirit of criticism alive. Under his direction, unfavorable comments of the Nationalist policies would sometimes appear on the Japanese section of Taiwan New Life. Because of this, Wu was executed by the Nationalist authorities during the 228 Incident. For more, see Li Xiaofeng, Er er ba xiaoshi di Taiwan jingying, 144~145.

97 This shows that many Taiwanese were curious about what the new government stood for and what it had to say in the first few months of the Nationalist rule. The significant drop in Taiwan New Life’s daily sales in mid 1946 demonstrates that a lot of Taiwanese had stopped reading the official paper. Please refer back to the discussion on Taiwan New Life’s circulation in note 88.

98 The author has examined the content of Taiwan New Life from October 25th, 1945 to October 25th, 1946 and found that important elements of Nationalist propaganda for the Taiwanese were all presented in the first four months of the paper. The same message was reiterated in the later months.
For the civilian press, two major daily newspapers are chosen. They are *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily*. *People’s Daily* began printing on October 10th, 1945. It was the first newspaper published in postwar Taiwan. *People’s Report Daily* appeared later on January 1st, 1946. Both papers were shut down by the government after the 228 Incident because of their condemnation of Nationalist rule in Taiwan. The owners and the members of the editorial board were either killed or went into exile. Despite the two papers’ sensationalized style of reporting, they provide historians with important insights on various political and social problems in early postwar Taiwan. Section IV’s analysis will use *People’s Daily* to a greater extent (October 1945–February 1947) than *People’s Report Daily* (January 1946–June 1946). This is due to the constraint of available evidence. Historians who have examined *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* have emphasized their popularity among the Taiwanese public. However, due to insufficient evidence, the precise daily circulation for both the papers remains unknown. Two scholars have provided some rough estimation based on limited sources. They put the daily sales of *People’s Daily* in the range of 30,000–70,000 copies and *People’s Report Daily* around 10,000 copies.

The founders and the journalists who worked in *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* were Taiwanese elites. Both papers professed to speak for the interests of...
all Taiwanese people.\textsuperscript{104} However, there were differences between the two in terms of the papers’ origins and the background of their editors and reporters. \textit{People’s Daily} had an anti-colonial root. The paper was established by a group of Taiwanese intellectuals who had worked in \textit{Prosperous South News} (興南新聞) during the colonial period.\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Prosperous South News} and its predecessor \textit{Taiwan People’s News} (台灣民報) were the main instruments of Taiwanese anti-colonial movements in the 1920s and 30s.\textsuperscript{106} These two papers were known for their bold criticisms of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan. \textit{People’s Daily} adopted a similar attitude when it was launched by the same group of elites after retrocession. When the Nationalist government failed to fulfill its initial promises to the Taiwanese people, the paper vehemently criticized the government. Moreover, the two main demands of anti-colonial protests—the end of discrimination against Taiwanese and local autonomy—were articulated again by \textit{People’s Daily} under the Nationalist rule.

\textit{People’s Report Daily} had mixed origins as the paper was jointly established by repatriated and indigenous Taiwanese.\textsuperscript{107} Several members of the editorial board were Taiwanese who had returned from China after the retrocession. They were mostly dissidents against Japanese rule who had gone into exile to escape the persecution of the colonial police. Others were indigenous Taiwanese who remained on the island during the colonial period.\textsuperscript{108} Despite coming from different backgrounds, those who worked in

\textsuperscript{104} Wu Chunjia, “Renmin daobao yanjiu,” 76–77; Huang Shuying, “Minbao yu zhanhou chuqi de Taiwan,” 14, 23.

\textsuperscript{105} The president of \textit{People’s Daily} was Dr. Lin Maosheng 林茂生. However, the actual running of the paper was in the hands of two chief editors Chen Wangcheng 陳旺成 and Xu Naichang 許乃昌. Both of them were important participants of the anti-colonial protests in the 1920s and 30s. For more, see Huang Shuying, “Minbao yu zhanhou chuqi de Taiwan,” 16–22 and Li Xiaofeng, “Cong \textit{Minbao} kan zhanhou chuqi Taiwan de zhengjing yu shehui,” 98–99.

\textsuperscript{106} Taiwanese anti-colonial political movements (1921–1937) consisted of different groups of elites who possessed diverse political orientations and goals. However, ending discrimination against the Taiwanese and local autonomy were the common objectives for these elites. The movements petered out in the late 1930s because of colonial authorities’ crackdown and aggressive assimilation campaign. For discussions on the Taiwanese anti-colonial political movements, refer back to note 86. For an overview of the newspapers published in Taiwan during the colonial period, see Wu Chunjia, “Renmin daobao yanjiu,” 12–26. For more on \textit{Taiwan People’s News}, refer back to note 96.

\textsuperscript{107} For a complete discussion on the difference between the repatriated Taiwanese (banshan) and the indigenous Taiwanese, see note 92.

\textsuperscript{108} The first president of \textit{People’s Report Daily} was Song Feiru 宋斐如, a repatriated Taiwanese. Song had studied and worked in Beijing University during 1920s. He joined the Nationalist Party in 1942 and later became the deputy Minister of Education of Taiwan under Chen Yi. Song was forced to give up his
People's Report Daily had one thing in common: a strong belief in Marxist/socialist ideals. The paper's first president Song Feiru (宋斐如) and two of its editors Chen Wenbin (陈文彬) and Wu Ketai (吴克泰) came under the influence of communist ideology when they studied and worked in China. Another main editor Su Xin (苏新) was a founding member of the Taiwanese Communist Party.\(^{109}\) The leftist view held by the Taiwanese elites in People's Report Daily affected the paper's interpretation of Nationalist propaganda. The ideas of equality, democracy, and local autonomy were repeatedly emphasized by the journalists of People's Report Daily. In both People's Daily and People's Report Daily, the Taiwanese elites' attempts to use Nationalist propaganda to further their own political agendas are quite obvious. This will be further illustrated by the reading of these newspapers in Section IV.

**Section IV: Taiwan New Life, People's Daily, and People’s Report Daily**

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the subversive and agitative effects of Nationalist propaganda and the role it played in provoking the Taiwanese uprising in the 228 Incident. The reading of the three newspapers will show how a message designed with the intent to re-Sinicize\(^{110}\) and assimilate the 'Japanized' Taiwanese actually alienated many of them when official rhetoric contrasted sharply with what was happening in reality. The Nationalist propaganda message had two main components. One emphasized the various methods of de-Japanization and re-Sinicization. The other focused on the actual political and economic benefits—equality, democracy, and economic progress—that the islanders were to enjoy under Nationalist rule. It was the second component of the message that became problematic for the Nationalists. Given

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\(^{109}\) Su Xin was arrested by the Japanese colonial authorities because of his communist belief. He was incarcerated for 12 years from 1931 to 1943. The paper's second president Wang Tiandeng was not a leftist like many of his colleagues. He came from a wealthy merchant family. According to existing sources, Wang's political stance was unclear. However, during his tenure as the president of People's Report Daily, Wang did not try to alter the paper's socialist orientation. Ibid., 93–102.

\(^{110}\) 'Re-Sinicize' means: bring the 'Japanized' Taiwanese back into the social and cultural orbit of China. This included getting the Taiwanese to stop speaking Japanese and learn Chinese, making them abandon Japanese customs, and forcing the Taiwanese to give up their Japanese style of clothing. The object of the Nationalist re-Sinicization campaign was to make Taiwanese feel that they were Chinese and to foster their affection and loyalty for China.
their life-and-death struggle against the Chinese Communists on the Mainland throughout 1946 and 1947, the Nationalists could not fulfill their political and economic promises to the Taiwanese. Moreover, the demands of the ongoing civil war in China put severe strain on the island’s resources. Food and life necessities produced in Taiwan were shipped to the Mainland in large quantities causing severe shortages and hyperinflation on the island.\(^1\) The dire economic situation combined with the corruption and nepotism of Nationalist bureaucracy made the retrocession an extremely unpleasant experience for Taiwanese. The glaring contrast between official rhetoric and reality quickly destroyed the credibility and the respectability of the Nationalist government in the eyes of many Taiwanese.

It should be noted that the author of this thesis recognizes the diversity of Taiwanese audiences and the importance of individual agency in determining the effects of media messages. This is why Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell’s argument—persuasion is contingent upon the social experiences of individuals and the historical and cultural contexts they live in—is employed in this study.\(^2\) First, the Taiwanese audiences discussed in this thesis do not include the aborigines of Taiwan. Throughout the periods of Japanese and Nationalist rule, the aborigines remained at the margin of the Taiwanese society. A few of them did join armed Taiwanese civilian groups during the 228 Incident. However, there is no evidence to suggest the aboriginal community as a whole participated in the uprising. Second, the Taiwanese audiences for Nationalist propaganda were also differentiated by their social class, gender, and political orientation. They did not all react to the Nationalist propaganda message or the civilian journalists’ interpretations of the Nationalist message in the same way. For example, young students, intellectuals, and members of the educated middle class in the cities might have been influenced by Nationalist propaganda or the civilian journalists’ interpretations of the Nationalist propaganda more than tenant farmers and miners who lived in the countryside. The latter two might have lacked the access to the official and civilian newspapers as well as the ability to make sense of the arguments put forward by them. Moreover, given the fact that the circulation of *Taiwan New Life, People’s Daily,* and *People’s Report*

\(^1\) For detailed discussions on Nationalist Governor General Chen Yi’s economic mismanagement in Taiwan and the other economic factors leading to the 228 Incident, please refer back to note 52 and 53.

Daily seems small compares to the total population of Taiwan at the time of retrocession, many Taiwanese might not have even known about the exchanges between the government and the civilian newspapers at all.\(^{113}\)

That being said, a strong argument can still be made about the significant role played by Nationalist propaganda in provoking Taiwanese anger and uprising in the 228 Incident. The main reason is that the Incident was an urban phenomenon and the messages carried by modern media such as newspapers had a greater effect on city dwellers than rural inhabitants. The main audiences of *Taiwan New Life*, *People's Daily*, and *People's Report Daily* were from the major cities in Taiwan.\(^{114}\) In *A Tragic Beginning*, Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E conclude that only the residents of cities and larger towns in Taiwan were involved in the uprising against the government. These were approximately 20% of the island’s population. The vast majority of the Taiwanese (the rest of 80%) were rural inhabitants who played little if any role.\(^{115}\) Since every Taiwanese suffered hardship under Nationalist rule, the influence of major news media such as *Taiwan New Life*, *People's Daily*, and *People's Report Daily* becomes a critical factor, which can explain why the insurgents in the 228 Incident hailed disproportionately from the major cities in Taiwan. The following analysis will not only demonstrate that Nationalist propaganda disseminated through *Taiwan New Life* had subversive and agitative effects because of the contrast between official rhetoric and reality. It will also show that the Taiwanese elites who worked for *People's Daily* and *People's Report Daily*...
exacerbated these adverse effects by adopting elements of Nationalist propaganda message and using these to further political agendas developed first during the colonial period. The journalists in the two civilian newspapers seized upon every inconsistency between the official propaganda and actions to write scintillating exposés which undermined the credibility of the Nationalists. Given the popularity of *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* among the residents of major cities in Taiwan, it is plausible to argue that these scathing exposés contributed to many Taiwanese’s growing anger and contempt for the Nationalist authorities.\(^{116}\)

The following reading will begin with an analysis of Nationalist propaganda messages in *Taiwan New Life* then move on to the responses of Taiwanese journalists in *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily*. Paul Lazarsfeld and Kurt Lewin’s concepts of ‘opinion leaders’ and ‘gatekeepers’\(^ {117}\) will be employed to demonstrate how the Taiwanese elites who worked for *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* interpreted Nationalist propaganda for the Taiwanese public. As stated above, these interpretations were often based upon the opinion leaders’ own political agendas. Donald Shaw and Maxwell McComb’s contention regarding the ‘agenda setting’\(^ {118}\) function of the media will be used to show how the second component of Nationalist propaganda message—equality, democracy, and economic progress—became the basis for *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily’s* criticisms of Nationalist misrule. Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell’s argument on propaganda and persuasion\(^ {119}\) will be applied to sum up the effects of Nationalist propaganda on the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. In sum, the historical

\(^{116}\) It should be noted here that it was not the author’s intention to criticize the civilian newspapers for their sensationalized reports on the Nationalist misrule and corruption. The focus of this study is on demonstrating the subversive effects of Nationalist propaganda through the reading of civilian news media. Most of the stories written by the Taiwanese journalists in *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* were true. They vividly portrayed the discrimination and hardship that the Taiwanese suffered under Nationalist rule. In addition, these Taiwanese journalists/elites’ political aspiration—democracy and local autonomy—was also a just cause. That being said, civilian media such as *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* did play an important role in turning many Taiwanese city dwellers—young students, small businessmen, and civil servants—against the government. The reason why this issue has been so hard for the historians to talk about might be the fact that many who worked in *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* were executed by the Nationalist authorities during the 228 Incident. Their martyrdom makes any allegations about the civilian media’s responsibility for the Taiwanese uprising seem insensitive and politically incorrect.


\(^{118}\) Ibid., 192.

\(^{119}\) Ibid., 200.
and cultural contexts in which propaganda and persuasion took place determined the nature of the effects.

**Official Media: Taiwan New Life**

*Taiwan New Life* started printing on October 25th, 1945—the day after the Nationalist Governor General Chen Yi and his ministers arrived from China. In its first issue, *Taiwan New Life* did a special segment on the islanders’ enthusiastic reception of the Mainland officials. Chen made his first island-wide radio broadcast to the Taiwanese. The content of this speech was printed on the October 25th issue of *Taiwan New Life*.

Basking in the glory of victory over the Japanese, Chen Yi gleefully stated that:

> I am pleased and honored to be greeted by such an enthusiastic welcome. I am not here just to be a government official. I am here to serve the people of Taiwan. [Taiwanese] People’s welfare and the island’s reconstruction are my main tasks. I have six mottoes: (1) No lies (2) No laziness (3) No embezzlement (4) Honor (5) Patriotism (6) Sense of Responsibility. I will perform my tasks dutifully according to these mottoes and strive for the construction of a new Taiwan. I hope my Taiwanese compatriots will assist me. The above six mottoes are my personal gifts to [the Taiwanese people] from Chongqing.\(^{120}\)

Here, Chen delivered a pleasant and conciliatory speech to the Taiwanese. It was apparently designed to ease the minds of Taiwanese audiences. The Governor General asserted that it was the intention of the Nationalist government to help the Taiwanese, not to punish them for assisting the Japanese during the war.\(^{121}\) Chen Yi also made a promise that he would set up a hard-working and responsible government in Taiwan.

A couple days later on October 30th, the Governor General discussed his overall administrative plan in an article in *Taiwan New Life*. Chen declared that: First, all special war taxes under the Japanese would be abolished. Second, discriminatory laws against the Taiwanese would also be rescinded. Third, laws that guarantee basic human rights would be established. Fourth, corrupt officials were to be punished severely. In the same article, Chen also made three further promises. First, he intended to improve public education and increase the Taiwanese chances for employment in the civil service.

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\(^{120}\) "Chen zhangguan yanjiang ci" 陈长官演讲话 (The Speech of Governor General Chen). *Taiwan New Life*, October 25th, 1945.

\(^{121}\) Although the Taiwanese were happy to be liberated from the shackles of Japanese colonialism, there is evidence to suggest that many of them felt anxious about the retrocession. After fifty years of separation, most Taiwanese did not know how the Mainland government would treat them. The Taiwanese had been important contributors to Japan’s wars against China and other Allied countries. They produced food and various war materials for the Japanese military. Some of them even volunteered to fight in the Imperial Army. For more, see Chen Lifu, Jinji, yuanzu, beiwu: xinshengdai kan er er ba shijian, 6; Chen Cuilian, *Paixi douzheng yu quannou zhengzhi*, 59–60; Zhou Wanyao, *Haixingxi de niandai*, 127–183.
Second, democratic elections would be set up. Third, he would propose progressive economic measures that would raise the living standards of the people. Chen lamented the discrimination and the economic hardship that the Taiwanese had suffered under the Japanese and vowed to labour for the islanders’ welfare. In this statement, Chen Yi outlined some main ingredients of the Nationalist propaganda for the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. They were: the end of discrimination against the Taiwanese, the primacy of basic human rights and democracy, and the prospect of economic prosperity. Chen’s blueprint for the reconstruction of Taiwan was based on the Nationalist political ideology—Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s (孫逸仙) Three Principles of the People or Sanminzhuyi (三民主義). Three Principles of the People contained three elements: ethnic nationalism (民族), democracy (民權), and people’s livelihood (民生). Nationalist ideologues continued to reiterate these basic messages in Taiwan New Life throughout late 1945 and early 1946.

During its first few months of publication, Taiwan New Life reported that the study of Sanminzhuyi aided by Nationalist political officers had reached a feverish high among many Taiwanese. In an editorial that appeared on November 4th entitled “Ting Chen zhangguan de hua” (Listen to Govern General Chen), the author argued that it is the responsibility of every Taiwanese to learn Sanminzhuyi and actively participate in the reconstruction of new Taiwan. There were also constant reports on the meetings and seminars that were set up specifically for the propagation of Sanminzhuyi. For example, on November 12th, Chen Yi spoke to a large audience in Taipei City Auditorium about Sanminzhuyi. The speech was broadcast on the official radio station and the script was printed in the next day’s Taiwan New Life. In his speech, Chen exclaimed that: “We must have unwavering faith in Dr. Sun’s teachings. We should wholeheartedly devote ourselves to the realization of these ideals and charge forward”

122 “Chen zhangguan jiang zhi Tai fangzhen” 陳長官講治臺方針 (Governor General Chen Explains His Administrative Policies). Taiwan New Life, October 30th, 1945.
123 For more information on the life of Dr. Sun and his Three Principles of the People, see Marie-Claire Bergere, Sun Yat-sen. Translated from the French by Janet Lloyd. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998.
124 “Ting Chen zhangguan de hua” 聽陳長官的話 (Listen to Govern General Chen). Taiwan New Life, November 4th, 1945.
without any hesitation...” On December 7th, there was a public seminar for the study of Three Principles of the People in Jilong (基隆). Four thousand Taiwanese students and community leaders attended the meeting. Similar meetings were also held in Xinzhu (新竹), Taizhong (台中), Yilan (宜蘭), and Miaoli (苗栗). There was also an effort to promote the personal cult of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the reigning Nationalist leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石). On November 27, Taiwan New Life reported that the Propaganda Committee of Governor General’s Office had hung huge portraits of Dr. Sun and Generalissimo Chiang at train stations and major traffic intersections in Taipei.

Although Chen Yi and his ministers emphasized all three elements of Sanminzhuyi, they seemed to focus more on ethnic nationalism rather than the other two elements: democracy and economic development. This is a clear indication of the primacy of the first component of Nationalist propaganda message, which insisted on the de-Japanization and re-Sinicization of the islanders. The Nationalist officials thought it was absolutely imperative for the Taiwanese to stop speaking Japanese, abandon Japanese customs, and shed their Japanese-style clothing. The Taiwanese also needed to learn Mandarin and re-acquaint themselves with Chinese culture and history. This sentiment was best expressed by the words of Lu Guanqun (盧冠群), an official from the Nationalist Central Government’s Propaganda Ministry. In an editorial in Taiwan New Life, Lu stated that:

The important task for the reconstruction of Taiwan includes political, economic, social, and cultural aspects. However, cultural reconstruction is bound to be the most urgent, the most critical, and the most fundamental. Because Taiwan had been under the rule of the Japanese Empire for half a century, [the Japanese] pernicious influence was deep. If we cannot purge these residual poisons [of Japanese colonialism] and instill a new culture, the glorious recovery of Taiwan is nothing more than empty words.

125 “Chen zhangguan mian dajia xinyang Sanminzhuyi” 陳長官勉大家信仰三民主義 (Governor General Chen Encourages Everyone to Have Faith in the Three Principles of the People). Taiwan New Life, November 13th, 1945.
126 Taiwan New Life, December 8th, 1945.
127 Ibid., December, 8th, 12th, 17th, 1945.
128 Ibid., November 13th, 1945.
129 Lu Guanqun 廖冠群, “Taiwan wenhua chongjian zhi lu” 臺灣文化重建之路 (The Road of Taiwan’s Cultural Reconstruction). Taiwan New Life, November 23rd, 1945.
There are many examples in *Taiwan New Life* that show the various methods used by the Nationalists to assimilate the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. Two editorials—one appeared on November 20th entitled “Xiwang taibao gaiji jijian shi” 希望臺胞改革幾件事 ([We] Hope Taiwanese Compatriots Can Make Some Changes) and the other on December 12th 1945 called “Jiuzheng rihua de xiguan yongyu” 矯正日化的習慣用語 (Rectifying the Habitual Use of Japanese Words)—both tried to persuade the Taiwanese to convert the Japanese words they used in daily conversations, roads titles, park names, and shop advertisements into Chinese words. A similar editorial was published on December 26th entitled “Gaizheng rihua mingci” 改正日化名詞 (Changing the Japanized Terms). The author of this editorial urged Taiwanese make the changes without further delays. In these editorials, the term nuhua jiaoyu or educational enslavement (奴化教育) was often used to denigrate Japanese colonial education.

Nationalist officials also attempted to draw a close relationship between Taiwanese and Chinese at the same time as they sought to distinguish the difference between good Chinese and evil Japanese. When officials addressed the islanders in *Taiwan New Life*, they used the terms *Taiwan tongbao* (臺灣同胞) or *Taibao* (臺胞) which mean ‘[My] Taiwanese compatriots.’ The word *tong* (同) means ‘identical’ and *bao* (胞) means ‘born of the same parents.’ Through the use of such vocabulary, the inseparable blood relations between Chinese and Taiwanese were emphasized. When describing the Japanese, derogatory words such as dwarfs (倭) and slaves (奴) were used. Negative adjectives such as despicable (卑鄙), shameless (無恥), violent (橫暴), and megalomaniac-like (狂妄自大) were usually associated with the Japanese. On the other hand, when the Nationalists were mentioned, positive terms such as valiant (英勇), sacrifice (犧牲), and determination (奮鬥) were used. There were also editorials in *Taiwan New Life* which intended to provide the Taiwanese with ‘correct knowledge’ of their ancestral nation. For example, in early November, an editorial provided a one-sided

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131 “Gaizheng rihua mingci” 改正日化名詞 (Changing the Japanized Terms). *Taiwan New Life*, December 26th, 1945.
analysis of the difference between China and Japan entitled “Zhong Ri liangguo minzuxing zhi toushi” (A Transparent Analysis of the Different Ethnic Characters of Chinese and Japanese). On December 13th, an editorial stressed the importance of mutual learning and understanding between Taiwanese and Chinese in "Renshi benguo yu renshi Taiwan" (Knowing the Home Country and Knowing Taiwan).

Besides emphasizing the intimate bond between Taiwanese and Chinese, the Nationalists also attempted to denigrate and humiliate the Japanese in the eyes of the Taiwanese. On November 20th 1945, Taiwan New Life published an article about Japanese police brutality against Taiwanese dissidents during the colonial period. On November 27th, the paper reported on a Japanese policeman’s beating of a Taiwanese lawyer. The above two pieces were obviously designed to demonstrate the barbaric nature of the Japanese and to remind the Taiwanese of their past sufferings under Japanese rule. On November 30th, there was news about Japan’s wretched social and economic conditions after the war. On the same page, there was also a report on the decadent lifestyle of demoralized Japanese nationals in Shanghai. These two items were set up to show how the once powerful and confident Japanese had been totally defeated and demoralized. Around the same time, there was also a story in Taiwan New Life about the six hundred Taiwanese returning from the Philippines, who accused the Japanese of mistreating them during the war. The purpose of this story was to stir up Taiwanese antipathy towards the Japanese. In reality, most of the Taiwanese went to the Philippines during the Pacific War as soldiers, nurses, or workers in the Imperial Army. There is no evidence to suggest that they were abused in the Japanese army. The returnees’ feeble physical condition was a result of the Allies’ strategy of blockade and

133 "Renshi benguo yu renshi Taiwan" (Knowing the Home Country and Knowing Taiwan). *Taiwan New Life*, December 13th, 1945.
134 *Taiwan New Life*, November 20th, 1945.
135 Ibid., November 27th, 1945.
136 Ibid. The Japanese in Shanghai were waiting to be transported back to Japan. However, the Nationalists did not have enough ships to take them all at once. Many consequently had to wait months for their repatriation. According to the Nationalist sources, they became depressed and demoralized. Some of them engaged in illegal activities.
137 *Taiwan New Life*, November 25th, 1945.
‘island-hopping’ which aimed at starving most of the Japanese troops instead of fighting them.\footnote{After the Americans landed on Luzon Island in early 1945, Japanese troops in the Philippines retreated deep into the mountains and kept on resisting for eight months till the end of the war. During this period, the Japanese were completely cut off from food and supplies. Tens of thousand of them starved to death or succumbed to diseases in the jungle. After the war, many of the Japanese soldiers in the Philippines were in extreme emaciated conditions. For more, see Zhou Wanyao, \textit{Haixingxi de niandai}, 170–173.}

Although Chen Yi and his ministers put strong emphasis on assimilating or re-Sinicizing the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese, the ideas for equality, democracy, and economic progress also appeared constantly in \textit{Taiwan New Life}. The Nationalist quest for legitimacy depended upon the government’s continued commitment to the principles originally put forward by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in his famous Three Principles of the People. Thus, slogans such as freedom and equality (自由平等), democracy (民主政治), local autonomy (地方自治), and economic development based on the principle of people’s livelihood (民生主義經濟建設) were ubiquitous in the content of \textit{Taiwan New Life}. Again, these were the second component of the Nationalist propaganda message which had agitative and subversive effects because of the sharp contrast between official rhetoric and reality. This argument will be further elaborated in the reading of the civilian newspapers.

As reflected in \textit{Taiwan New Life}, Nationalist officials’ commitment to the principles of equality and democracy were reiterated throughout the first four months of the retrocession. In an editorial published on December 7\textsuperscript{th} 1945, the director of Governor General Office’s Personnel and Employment Department Zhang Guojian (張國鍵) announced that he would do every thing in his power to increase the educational and employment opportunities for Taiwanese. Zhang reiterated his superior Chen Yi’s pledge to end discrimination against the Taiwanese and stressed equal opportunities between Taiwanese and the Mainlanders. He extolled the spirit of public service and urged young Taiwanese to actively participate in the registration for government jobs.\footnote{Zhang Guojian 張國鍵, “Taiwan rencai zhi dengyong” 臺灣人材之登用 (The Employment of Taiwanese). \textit{Taiwan New Life}, December 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1945.} At the same time, there were many editorials that discussed elections and democratic institutions. These were designed to prepare the Taiwanese for the upcoming local and national
elections in 1946. On December 27th 1945, an editorial entitled “Minyi jiguan de mianmianquan” 民意機關的面面觀 (Comprehensive Perspectives on Representative Institutions) appeared. The author argued that democratic institutions should be set up in Taiwan as soon as possible. The author also thought that the government should pay attention to the requests of the people and said it was the people’s duty to assist the government in policy making. In an editorial published a few weeks later, the Minister of Domestic Affairs Zhou Yi’e 周一鶚 criticized the ‘phony’ election that the Taiwanese had experienced under Japanese rule. Zhou argued that the people would truly have the right to oversee the affairs of the state with the ‘real’ elections under the Nationalist administration. Other editorials that discussed democratic elections and local autonomy published in Taiwan New Life during the same period included “Xianzheng yu fazhi” 宪政與法治 (Constitution Politics and Law), “Minzhu yu zizhi” 民主與自治 (Democracy and Local Autonomy), “Minzhu xianzheng de jichu” 宪政的基礎 (The Foundation of Constitutional Democracy), “Buyao fangqi zuo zhuren de jihui” 不要放棄做主人的機會 (Don’t Give up the Chance to be Masters), and “Jinnian shi xuanju nian” 今年是選舉年 (This Year is the Election Year).

140 There were three main elections held in Taiwan in 1946: the election for city and county aldermen during February and March; the election for provincial assemblymen in April; the election for National assemblymen in late October. In reality, the Taiwanese people could only participate in the first election for city and county aldermen. The representatives in two other more important elections were chosen indirectly through the nominations and voting among the elected aldermen themselves. Moreover, these representative bodies only played advisory roles to the Governor General. They did not have real legislative power. Also, during this time, the mayors of cities and towns in Taiwan were still hand-picked by the Governor General. Many were dissatisfied with this version of ‘democracy’ under Nationalist rule. For more, see Lai Zehan et al, Er er ba shijian yanjiubaogao, and Wu Chunjia, “Renmin daobao yanjiu,” 135–136.

141 “Minyi jiguan de mianmianquan” 民意機關的面面觀 (Comprehensive Perspectives on Representative Institutions). Taiwan New Life, December 27th, 1945.

142 After a decade and a half of protest by the Taiwanese (1921–1934), the Japanese colonial authorities finally gave the islanders’ their first ‘election’ in 1935. The 1935 election was for the provincial and municipal councils, which only acted as an advisory body to the Japanese Governor General. Moreover, the Japanese put up a strict property qualification to minimize the number of voters. They also limited the members of the elected representatives to only half of the councils. The other half were appointed by the Governor General. For more, see Edward I-te Chen, “Formosan Political Movement under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1914–1937,” 493–495 and Chen Lifu, Xi jing qu Taiwan zheng zhi yun dong zhi yan ji, 134–137.

143 Zhou Yi’e 周一鶚, “Taiwan sheng defang zhengzhi zhidu de xinsheng shidai” 臺灣省地方政治制度的新生時代 (A New Era for Taiwan’s Political Institution). Taiwan New Life, January 6th, 1946.

144 “Xianzheng yu fazhi” 宪政與法治 (Constitution Politics and Law). Taiwan New Life, January 5th, 1946; “Minzhu yu zizhi” 民主與自治 (Democracy and Local Autonomy), Ibid., January 13th, 1946; “Minzhu
Besides the ideas of equality and democracy, the prospect of economic progress was also repeatedly suggested in the first four months of *Taiwan New Life*. Chen Yi and his officials were confident that the socialist-style planned economy would improve the welfare of the Taiwanese people. In an article published on November 21st, 1945, Chen paid tribute to the Soviet system of centralized organization and production. He drew a rosy picture of Taiwan’s future prospect under this model. However, he also added that: “For our reconstruction of Taiwan, the knowledge of capitalism is also needed. However, we must first consider the welfare of the majority and be aware not to follow the [wrongful] steps taken by the Japanese.”  

Chen’s Minister of Domestic Affair Zhou Yi’e reiterated his superior’s message while paying homage to Dr. Sun’s principles. Zhou stated that: “the goal of capitalism is to make money, but the goal of the principle of people’s livelihood is to improve the lives of the common people.” In an editorial published on December 16th, 1945 entitled “Jianshe xin Taiwan de xin jingji zhengce” 建設新臺灣的新經濟政策 (The New Economic Policy for Construction of New Taiwan), Nationalist official You Mijian (遊彌堅) reaffirmed Chen and Zhou’s arguments. He suggested that with the centralized planning of the state, powerful landlords would be eliminated, farmland would be equally distributed among the people, selfish capitalists would be curbed, and modern industry would be developed. You claimed that under Nationalist rule, the problem of unemployment would soon disappear and the overall living standards of the people would be greatly improved. In another article published on January 1st, 1946, Xia Taosheng (夏濤聲)—who was the head of Governor General Office’s Propaganda Committee—proclaimed that Nationalist policies of democratization would soon be implemented.
and industrialization would quickly make China and Taiwan into advanced societies. Xia asserted that: “under the leadership of the newly formed Supreme Economic Planning Committee, the rapid growth of postwar economy can soon be expected.”

The examples provided in the above analysis demonstrate that Taiwanese audiences were bombarded with a propaganda message that was intended to purge Japanese influence and reintegrate the islanders into the social and cultural orbit of China. The message also offered political and economic incentives: the promises of equality, democracy, and economic progress. These incentives were provided because they were essential elements of Nationalist political ideals based on Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People. Though the effectiveness of the Nationalist propaganda would rest upon the ability of the government to fulfill its promises, the continued civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists on the Mainland had made the realization of these ideals impossible. Moreover, Nationalist administrative incompetence, corruption, and nepotism had created a world of misery and suffering for the islanders that contrasted sharply with the rosy prospect painted by the official propaganda. The reading of *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* in the next segment will demonstrate that this great contradiction was a main contributing factor to Taiwanese disappoint and anger which led to their uprising against the Nationalist government in early 1947.

**Civilian Media: People’s Daily and People’s Report Daily**

*People’s Daily* started printing on October 10th, 1945 before the official paper *Taiwan New Life*. It was the first newspaper to appear in postwar Taiwan and quickly became popular. As mentioned, *People’s Daily* was established by a group of Taiwanese elites who had participated in the anti-colonial political movements on the island during the 1920s and 30s. The two main demands of these political movements were ending discrimination against Taiwanese and local autonomy. Not surprisingly, therefore, *People’s Daily* quickly adopted Dr. Sun’s Three Principles of the People and

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150 For the discussions on Nationalist misrule, corruption, and nepotism, refer back to notes 52–61.

151 For a discussion on the daily circulation of *People’s Daily* and its popularity, refer back to pages 28 and 29.

152 For more details, refer back to the discussion on pages 29 and 30.
became a staunch advocate of it. The ideals of equality and democracy articulated by Sanminzhuyi were in accordance with the political aspirations of the Taiwanese who founded and worked in People's Daily. This is clearly illustrated by the editorial of the founding issue. It states that the goals of People's Daily are:

"[to help] revive five thousand years of [Chinese] ethnic nationalist spirit, [to help] set up local autonomy, and to push for industrialization that benefits people's livelihood. For these are the objectives of founding father [of the Republic] Prime Minister Sun’s Three Principles of the People and the bases for the reconstruction of Taiwan."\(^{153}\)

On the same day, People's Daily also reported on the celebration for the Double Ten national holiday.\(^{154}\) However, because Chen Yi did not make his inauguration speech until October 24\(^{th}\) and the Nationalist official newspaper Taiwan New Life did not start publishing until October 25\(^{th}\), it raises the question as to where the writers in People's Daily got the Nationalist political message. According to existing sources, there were two possibilities. First, Nationalist radio stations on the Mainland had been broadcasting to the Taiwanese since Japan’s surrender on August 15\(^{th}\), 1945.\(^{155}\) Second, On October 5\(^{th}\), a small group of Nationalist officials led by Chen Yi’s second-in-command Ge Jingen (葛敬恩) arrived in Taipei to set up a forward commanding post (前進指揮所). These officials gained the cooperation of some Taiwanese elites who helped to organize the Double Ten festivities.\(^{156}\) They also might have been the sources for People's Daily. People's Daily’s journalists’ enthusiastic support for the Nationalist political message is further illustrated by the October 29\(^{th}\) editorial, which declared that: “Three Principles of the People are our only guidance for reconstruction and thoughts”.\(^{157}\) All in all, since its

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\(^{154}\) The Double Ten (雙十) is the most important national holiday for the Nationalists. It commemorates the 1911 Revolution which occurred on October 10\(^{th}\). The Revolution ended the reign of the Qing Empire and established the Chinese Republic.

\(^{155}\) See Zheng Zi 鄭梓, “Guangfu yuannian Taiwan zhengzhii tuxiang zhiyi—yi zhanhou [Taiwan guangbo diantai] wei zhongxin de tantao” (Political Images of Taiwan during the First Year of Retrocession—Using [Taiwan Broadcasting Station] as the Focus of Study). In Hu Huichun 胡惠春, Li Gucheng 李谷城, and Ren Shaoling 任少玲 eds. Jinian kangri zhamheng shengli wushi zhounian xueshu taolunhui lunwenji (Anthology from the Academic Conference Commemorating the 50\(^{th}\) Anniversary of Victory against Japan). (Hong Kong: Centre for Asian Studies, Zhuhai College, 1996), 319–320.

\(^{156}\) See Chen Cuilian, Paixi douzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi, 63–64.

\(^{157}\) “Jianshe yu sixiang wenti zhuyou Sanminzhuyi kefeng” (Three Principles of the People Are the Only Guidance for Reconstruction and Thoughts). People's Daily, October 29\(^{th}\), 1945

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inception, *People’s Daily* acted as a conduit of information between the Nationalist government and the islanders. It introduced and interpreted the Nationalist message for Taiwanese audiences. This reflects Paul Lazarsfeld’s idea of ‘opinion leaders’ and Kurt Lewin’s concept of ‘gatekeepers.’

The subsequent issues of *People’s Daily* demonstrate that it was more than just a channel for the dissemination of official rhetoric, however. The paper also acted a critic of government policy. *People’s Daily*’s spirit of criticism can be attributed to its anti-colonial origins. The same group of journalists had been attacking Japanese colonial administration during the 1920s and 30s. After the retrocession, the reporters in *People’s Daily* felt that they should carry on with this honorable tradition. For example, after Chen Yi made his famous ‘six mottoes’ speech, *People’s Daily* praised the Governor General in an editorial entitled “Huanying Chen zhangguan tongshi shuxie xiwang” (Welcoming Governor General Chen and Conveying Some of Our Wishes at the Same Time). However, the author of this editorial also reminded the Governor General that there were urgent matters that needed to be dealt with immediately: the reemployment and education programs for Taiwanese, the alarming crime rate, and the rising commodities prices. Here, *People’s Daily*’s critical attitude and its mediating role—as an opinion leader or gatekeeper of the Nationalist message for the Taiwanese audiences—are clearly illustrated. One could argue that the paper’s response to Chen Yi’s speech was a carefully crafted political strategy: announcing support for the new government but at the same time putting the new government on notice that its actions were being scrutinized. *People’s Daily*’s determination to speak only for the interests of the common people and its adherence to Dr. Sun’s Sanminzhuyi is further illustrated by the paper’s proclamation on June 6, 1946. It stated that: “[We] will stand on the side of the people and will not be influenced by

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159 For more on this subject, refer back to the discussion in notes 105–107.
160 For the content of the ‘six mottoes’ speech, refer back to page 35.
161 “Huanying Chen zhangguan tongshi shuxie xiwang” 歡迎陳長官同時述些希望 (Welcoming Governor General Chen and Conveying Some of Our Wishes at the Same Time). *People’s Daily*, October 25th, 1945.
powerful political parties or interest groups; [we will] work solely for the construction of a new Taiwan based upon the Three Principles of the People.”

A cursory review of the editorials in People’s Daily demonstrates that most of the paper’s criticisms against the Nationalist government were based upon the ideals expressed by Sanminzhuyi and Chen Yi’s pledges of equality, democracy, and economic development. The responses of People’s Daily to the official message show that Chen and his ministers did not fulfill their promises to the Taiwanese. The journalists in People’s Daily were quick to point out the contradictions between official rhetoric and reality. This reflects Donald Shaw and Maxwell McComb’s idea on the ‘agenda setting’ function of the mass media. The reading of both Taiwan New Life and People’s Daily illustrates that the Nationalist propaganda disseminated through the official media actually established the premise for the civilian press’s attacks against the government. Numerous editorials in People’s Daily attest to this argument. This is especially illustrated by the paper’s unrelenting demands for democracy and local autonomy. For example, the author of an editorial entitled “Yao huoyong canyihui” (Utilize the Provincial Assembly) argues that the provincial assembly should be given the power to pass laws and decide on the annual budgets instead of being just an advisory council to the Governor General. In a similar editorial entitled “Zunzhong minyi jiguan jueyi” (Respect the Decisions of Representative Bodies), the principle of democracy in Sanminzhuyi is used to justify the author’s contention. The author states that: “[Since] the political organization and material construction of our

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164 The Nationalist government did set up three elections in Taiwan in 1946: one for city and county assemblies, one for the Taiwan Provincial Assembly, and one for the National Assembly. However, most of the representatives were not directly elected by the people. Moreover, the mayors of towns and cities were still appointed by the Governor General. Many Taiwanese thought that the ‘democracy’ under the Nationalist rule was not much different from the ‘phony’ elections under the Japanese rule. For more, refer back to note 140.
165 “Yao huoyong canyihui” 要活用參議會 (Utilize the Provincial Assembly). People’s Daily, April 18th, 1946.
country are based on Sanminzhuyi, [our goal] in politics is to build the most advanced democratic system.”

The same argument is put forward by “Panwang xiashezhang minxuan” 瞭望縣市長民選 (Anticipating for the Popular Election of County Governors and City Mayors). The author of this editorial argues that: “People should actively promote real equality and real democracy. Only when democratic institutions are in place, can Sanminzhuyi be truly realized.”

In “Yanban tanguan yu shishi zizhi” 嚴辦貪官與實施自治 (Severe Punishment for Corrupt Officials and Implementing Local Autonomy), the author argues that official corruption had made the government’s promises to the Taiwanese people sound like empty slogans. The author also suggests that those who obstruct the implementation of local autonomy are ‘anti-Sanminzhuyi’ (反三民主義).

In early December of 1946, a fiery editorial intended to expose the truth about the ‘democracy’ under the Nationalist rule appeared. The editorial was called “Wushi renmin chansheng mihuo” 勿使人民產生迷惑 (Do Not Confuse the People). The author states that:

Since Sanminzhuyi is the founding principle of our country, people are the masters of the nation. The affairs of the state should really be decided by representative bodies, which can convey the wishes of the people. The officials are servants of the people. Although they have [political] power, they should not oppress the people and neglect what the people really want. If [the officials] use their power to oppress the people, this should not be called a democracy, but [should be considered] the most sinister and corrupt [type of] feudalism. The most abominable is [the officials] using democracy as cover to implement autocratic measures. If they openly adhered to the autocratic ideology, though it is backward, the people would not be so confused and there would at least be some degree of social order.

This passage vividly captured the feelings of indignation and betrayal felt by the journalists in People’s Daily in late 1946. After attempts to get the government to fulfill its promises had fallen on dead ears, the paper’s suggestive comments in mid 1946 gave way to cynicism by the end of 1946. Given People’s Daily’s popularity in Taiwan’s

168 “Yanban tanguan yu shishi zizhi” 嚴辦貪官與實施自治 (Severe Punishment for Corrupt Officials and Implementing Local Autonomy). People’s Daily, September 16th, 1946.
169 “Wushi renmin chansheng mihuo” 勿使人民產生迷惑 (Do Not Confuse the People). People’s Daily, December 4th, 1946.
major cities, its attacks on the government policies arguably contributed to the islanders’ growing anger towards the Nationalist authorities. This once again demonstrates the role of *People’s Daily* as an opinion leader and gatekeeper for Taiwanese media audiences.

The lack of democracy was not the only thing that aroused anti-Nationalist feeling among many Taiwanese. The government’s failed economic policy and nepotistic employment practices also led to the islanders’ discontent with the Nationalist rule. These situations contrasted sharply with the promises made by Chen Yi and his ministers. *People’s Daily* focused on these contradictions. In “Youmeiyou shizheng fangzhen?” (Is There Any Administrative Policy?), the author criticizes the government’s inability to regulate the skyrocketing commodity prices, which threatened the livelihood of millions of Taiwanese. The author suggests that Nationalist officials do not have solutions for the economic problems. The only thing they know how to do is harp on empty slogans. 170 An angry journalist argues in “Chifan yu shiye wenti” (The Problems of Eating and Unemployment): “A society with hungry people and satiated officials is against the principle of people’s livelihood. It not only betrays the people, but also betrays the memory of Dr. Sun.” 171 In another editorial entitled “Guanliao de gongying shiye” (Bureaucratic Monopolies), the author argues that the principle of people’s livelihood is abused by the crooked officials who are put in charge of the government monopolies. 172

*People’s Daily* also denounced Nationalist employment discrimination against the Taiwanese. This is illustrated by two editorials: “Guanyu dengyong rencai” (About Employing Qualified Workers) and “Jianshe yu rencai” (Construction and Qualified Workers). Both expose the nepotism of Nationalist officials and argue that the Taiwanese are qualified workers who should be employed in large

172 “Guanliao de gongying shiye” (Bureaucratic Monopolies). *People’s Daily*, August 8th, 1946.
numbers. However, when the government ignored the request made by People’s Daily, the tone of the paper turned sour. After all, it was the Governor General who told the Taiwanese that they would be treated fairly in the first place. On November 15th, 1946, an editorial entitled “Rencai de dengyong liangzhi yao bingzhong” appeared in People’s Daily. The author expresses his anger by stating that:

The officials from the Mainland have been talking about Sanminzhuyi all the time. Is this what Sanminzhuyi is really about? In terms of employment practices, we feel that nothing has really changed compared to the colonial rules under the Japanese and the Dutch. What we despise the most is [the government] using Sanminzhuyi as a pretext for implementing imperialistic measures. The above reading of People’s Daily has clearly demonstrated the subversive effects of Nationalist propaganda. Many of the paper’s attacks against the government were based on the earlier promises made by the Nationalist officials: equality, democracy, and economic progress. Moreover, People’s Daily served as an opinion leader or gatekeeper, analyzing the content of Nationalist propaganda and evaluating government’s performance for the Taiwanese audiences. Due to their experiences during the colonial period, the journalists who worked for People’s Daily were often critical of government policy. These journalists demanded equal employment opportunities between the Taiwanese and the Mainlanders. They campaigned for democratic elections and local autonomy. They felt angry and disillusioned because of the glaring contrast between official rhetoric and reality. Given People’s Daily’s sizable readership in Taiwan’s major cities, the opinions expressed by these journalists arguably led to the rise of anti-Nationalist feeling among many Taiwanese.

The writers in People’s Daily were selective in their reception of Nationalist propaganda message. As shown in the reading of Taiwan New Life, Chen Yi and his

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174 “Rencai de dengyong liangzhi yao bingzhong” 人才的登用要衡量 (Both Quality and Quantity Are Important for Employing Workers). People’s Daily, November 15th, 1946.

175 According to historians’ estimation, People’s Daily’s daily circulation was 30,000–70,000 copies. This volume was second only to the Nationalist official newspaper Taiwan New Life, which was the largest media establishment on the island during the retrocession period. For more, please refer back to the discussion on pages 26–29.
ministers put great emphasis on the aspects of de-Japanization and re-Sinicization. However, examples from People’s Daily indicate that this part of the message was poorly received by the Taiwanese elites who worked for the paper. This is demonstrated by editorials like: “Taiwan weichang nuhua” 臺灣未嘗奴化 (Taiwan Was Never Enslaved) and “Women de guojia guannian” 我們的國家觀念 (Our Concept of the Nation). Both of them argue that the Taiwanese had remained Chinese even under Japan’s rigorous colonial indoctrination programs. Hence the government’s de-Japanization programs were unnecessary. The author of another editorial entitled “Zhongguohua de zhenjingshen” 中國化的真精神 (The Real Spirit of Sinicization) even suggests that Sinicization should not be just a wholesale adaptation of Mainland culture by the Taiwanese. The Nationalist should also learn from the Taiwanese and try to put an end to some of their bad habits such as corruption and nepotism. These examples illustrate the agency possessed by Taiwanese intellectuals who worked for People’s Daily. When processing the Nationalist propaganda message, the editors and reporters chose what they wanted to hear and discarded the parts that were irrelevant to their political agendas. Their apathy towards the Nationalist government’s de-Japanization program is perhaps best illustrated by a controversy over the official ban on wearing Japanese-style wooden sandals in Xinju (新竹) in late December of 1946. The Nationalists did not want to see the islanders in these sandals. Most officials saw it a sign of Taiwanese trying to cling to their Japanese past. The reporters of People’s Daily thought the ban as a frivolous act. They argued that it would close down factories and take away people’s jobs.

The arguments made about People’s Daily could also be applied to another popular newspaper operated by Taiwanese elites during the retrocession: People’s Report Daily. People’s Report Daily started selling on January 1st of 1946. Like People’s Daily, it played the role of opinion leader and gatekeeper for the Taiwanese audiences.

Notes:
179 The daily circulation for People’s Report’s Daily in Taiwan during the retrocession period was about 10,000 copies. For a complete discussion, refer back to page 29.
Similar to *People’s Daily*, *People’s Report Daily* also criticized Nationalist misrule based on the promises made by the official propaganda. As mentioned, *People’s Report Daily* was founded by Taiwanese who had been influenced by Marxist/socialist ideology. The paper had no precedent during the colonial period. However, many of the journalists who worked for the paper were also involved in the anti-colonial political movements during the 1920s and 30s. The socialist view held by these journalists and their anti-colonial past affected the paper’s interpretation of the Nationalist propaganda message. This is clearly illustrated by *People’s Report Daily’s* first editorial entitled “Sanminzhuyi shang zhi renmin de yiyi”三民主義上之人民的意義 (The Meaning of the People in the Three Principles of the People). It offers a different interpretation of *Sanminzhuyi* from the one articulated by the Nationalist ideologues. The importance of ethnic nationalism is downplayed while the right of the people to govern is emphasized:

[The] meaning of ethnic nationalism (民族) in *Sanminzhuyi* should not be narrowly defined as ‘citizen’ or ‘[ethnic] nation’, but should be defined more broadly as ‘the people’.....As for the political organization of *Sanminzhuyi*, five different branches will be set up. Besides the Legislative Yuan, there will also be Administrative Yuan, Examination Yuan, Judicial Yuan, and Censorial Yuan....There are also four basic political rights: the right to vote, the right to propose laws, the right to impeach [elected officials], and the right to hold referendums. These four rights will be firmly in hands of the people.  

This editorial seems to set the tone for the subsequent issues *People’s Report Daily*. In the first six months of the newspaper examined by this thesis, the issues of individual rights and democracy were often stressed. The journalists who worked for *People’s Report Daily* often used the Nationalist political ideology as justification for their demands. The emphasis on democracy and people’s right to rule is demonstrated by an editorial entitled “Rang renmin shuohua”讓人民說話 (Let the People Speak). The author of this editorial argues the importance of having free speech in a democratic

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180 The founders of *People’s Report Daily* included repatriated Taiwanese who returned from China after the retrocession and indigenous Taiwanese who remained on the island throughout the colonial period. For more, refer back to pages 30–31.
182 Though most of the writers who worked for *People’s Report Daily* were socialists or communists, they did not try to promote Soviet-style economic programs in *People’s Report Daily*. This is an interesting finding that requires further research. The author of this thesis speculates the reasons to be: First, Soviet-style programs were already implemented by Chen Yi in Taiwan; second, the quest for local autonomy and democracy had been the main goal of Taiwanese leftists during the colonial period.
society. In “Lun Taiwan jiben renquan” (Discussion on the Basic Human Rights in Taiwan), the first president of People’s Report Daily Song Feiru contends that basic human rights are essential ingredients to democracy. Song also suggests that the ultimate goal of Sanminzhuyi is the realization of basic human rights. In “Yulun zhengzhi wansui” (Long Live the Politics of Public Opinion), the author states that: “There is no democratic society without the free expression of public opinion.” In “Saochu minzhu zhengzhi de zhangai” (Clear Away the Obstacles for Democracy), the second president of the paper Wang Tiandeng (王添燈) points out the contradictions between the Governor General’s administrative plans and what was really happening. Wang believes that the reason for these contradictions was not because the Governor General’s policies were flawed, but because of bureaucratic corruption and nepotism.

The example of People’s Report Daily acting as an opinion leader or gatekeeper—who intervened in the communication between Nationalist officials and Taiwanese audiences—is best shown by the paper’s response to Chen Yi’s comments about the merits and shortcomings of Taiwanese. On January 15th 1946, in an official speech, the Governor General argued that the Taiwanese had some merits and shortcomings. The merits were autonomous spirit (自治精神) and hard-working attitude (做事認真). The shortcomings—impatience (性急) and intolerance (器小)—were caused by Japan’s educational enslavement (奴化教育).

On January 16th, People’s Report Daily countered the Governor General’s argument with an editorial entitled “Zhuzhong

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186 Wang Tiandeng was elected to the Taiwan Provincial Assembly in mid April of 1946. During the months of April and May, People’s Report Daily provided extensive coverage on the election and the proceedings of the Assembly. In this particular editorial, Wang claims that his opinion about how to clear away the obstacles for democracy in Taiwan represents the collective opinion of the Taiwanese elites elected to the Assembly.
188 “Chen zhangguan jiang taibao youdian” 陳長官講台胞優點 (Governor General Chen Talks about the Merits of Taiwanese). People’s Report Daily, January 15th, 1946.
The author of the editorial admitted that many Taiwanese did have the shortcomings described by the Governor General. However, the author insisted that most Taiwanese had never forgotten their Chinese roots under the Japanese rule. Therefore, the Taiwanese should not be treated with suspicion and discrimination. The merits of Taiwanese that the Governor General observed were a result of islanders’ strong sense of Chinese cultural tradition. Furthermore, the author also suggested that the Nationalist authorities should take advantage of the islanders’ autonomous spirit and quickly implement local autonomy. By proposing these arguments, the author of this editorial skillfully turned Taiwanese audiences’ attention towards Chen Yi’s promises for equality and local autonomy while dismissing his argument that the Taiwanese were enslaved by the Japanese.

On February 8th, 1946, *People’s Report Daily* discussed Nationalist employment discrimination against Taiwanese in a short editorial in entitled “Jinliang dengyong shengmin” تأمين מקורות עבודה (Employ as Many Taiwanese as Possible). The author of this editorial argues that since Governor General Chen promised on increasing the employment opportunities of Taiwanese, the government should come up with practical measures to assist the Taiwanese in finding suitable jobs in the civil service. Like *People’s Daily, People’s Report Daily* also used the Nationalist propaganda message as a justification for its demand.

Other than democracy and employment discrimination, the economic well-being of the Taiwanese people was another main concern of *People’s Report Daily*. This is best illustrated by three editorials, which are typical of the paper’s criticism of government’s failed economic policy. In “Jiuji xiaohaizi men” 救濟小孩子們 (Help the Children), the author brings attention to the growing numbers of children selling cigarettes on the streets because their parents were unemployed. The author urges the government to come up

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190 “Jinliang dengyong shengmin” 雇佣登用省民 (Employ as Many Taiwanese as Possible). *People’s Report Daily*, February 8th, 1946.
with a relief plan to help those in need. In “Sheishi jingji de zuiren?” 誰是經濟的罪人? (Who is to Blame for the Economy?), the author criticizes Nationalist government’s economic policy in Taiwan and its inability to enforce most of the laws due to official corruption. The author states that “This is not an economic problem, but a political problem. The Chinese political culture is to blame for the economy.” In “Duozuo dian shiji de jianshe” 多做點實際的建社 (Do Some Practical Construction), the author berates government officials for harping on empty slogans and not doing enough to improve the dreadful economic condition in Taiwan. Moreover, the author suggests that too much tax was spent on building official mansions and supporting an excess number of government staff. The tax dollars should be spent on the much needed infrastructure such as roads, bridges, hospitals, and schools. In a critical tone that is analogous to the journalists in People’s Daily, the author states that:

‘Building a New Taiwan!’ ‘Building a New Taiwan!’ This has become a catchphrase for every official. [The officials] cited it when they lectured; [they] discussed it in the meetings; [they] talked about it in conversations; [they] promoted it in propaganda; [they] wrote about it in articles. ‘Building a New Taiwan’ is a popular and fashionable slogan. However, how many of them [the officials] really have worked for the building of a new Taiwan?*

The reading of Taiwan New Life, People Daily, and People’s Report Daily has demonstrated the important role played by the Nationalist propaganda in inciting anti-Nationalist feeling among Taiwanese audiences. The Nationalist officials put a great emphasis on the assimilation or re-Sinicization of ‘Japanized’ the Taiwanese. However, this part of the message was poorly received by civilian media such as People’s Daily and People’s Report Daily. The two papers acted as opinion leaders or gatekeepers that intervened in the communication between the Nationalist government and the Taiwanese audiences. They shifted the Taiwanese audiences’ attention to the other component of the Nationalist message: the promises of equality, local autonomy, and economic development. As illustrated above, these issues were repeatedly discussed in People’s

192 “Sheishi jingji de zuiren?” 誰是經濟的罪人? (Who is to Blame for the Economy?). People’s Report Daily, April 9th, 1946.
Daily and People’s Report Daily. However, obvious contrasts between official rhetoric and reality made the Nationalist government susceptible to attacks from the civilian media. Given the popularity of People’s Daily and People’s Report Daily among the residents of major cities in Taiwan, the two papers’ criticisms of government policy had contributed to Taiwanese audiences’ discontent with the Nationalist rule.

Towards the late 1946 and early 1947, civilian media’s criticisms of the government became vehement and the tone of their dissent often turned cynical. This is best illustrated by two passages from People’s Daily. The first one was in an editorial entitled “Zuguo de huaibao” 祖國的懷抱 (The Embrace of the Ancestral Nation) published on October 26th, 1946. The author states that:

At the time of retrocession, the Taiwanese were excited and enthusiastic. This was because they had expected the warm embrace of their ancestral nation and could not hide their emotion. Frankly speaking, the ancestral nation we encountered has greatly disappointed us. The backwardness of our ancestral nation did not upset us. [However], what infuriated us the most is the [official] corruption. [The officials] are completely shameless.194

The second one was in “Kepade xinli pohuai” 可怕的心理破壞 (Terrible Psychological Destruction) issued on February 19th 1947, a week before the outbreak of the 228 Incident. The author states that:

The officials from the Mainland often said that we have been enslaved [by the Japanese]. At first, we were indignant because we did not really know what the officials meant. Now we finally understand better. Obeying the law means being enslaved. Only when one disregards courtesy, righteousness, and sense of honor can he/she live in this ‘Sinicized’ society.195

The vitriolic comments of People Daily’s journalists revealed their disappointment and anger towards the broken promises made by the Nationalist officials.

Conclusion:

The author of this thesis has argued that the Nationalist propaganda directed at Taiwanese during the early years following the Nationalist take-over of Taiwan played an important role in provoking the Taiwanese anger towards the Nationalist government.

194 “Zuguo de huaibao” 祖國的懷抱 (The Embrace of the Ancestral Nation). People’s Daily, October 26th, 1946.
leading up to the 228 Incident. Previous scholars of the 228 Incident have attributed the origins of the Taiwanese uprising to various aspects of Nationalist misrule. They also argued that the cultural differences between China and Taiwan at the time of retrocession led to the Incident. There were also those who suggested that factional struggles in the Nationalist Party contributed to the outbreak and spread of the Taiwanese insurrection.

The analysis provided by this thesis has revealed another source of Taiwanese discontent with the Nationalist government: The Nationalist propaganda message designed to re-Sinicize the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. The 228 Incident was an urban phenomenon. Most of the participants were residents of major cities in Taiwan. The involvement of rural inhabitants in the uprising was minimal. Therefore, major newspapers published on the island during the first year and a half of the Nationalist rule— *Taiwan New Life*, *People’s Daily*, and *People’s Report Daily*—become important sources for deciphering the rise of anti-Nationalist feeling among the city dwellers in Taiwan.

The foregoing analyses of the Nationalist official newspaper *Taiwan New Life* and two most popular civilian newspapers *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily* have clearly illustrated that the Nationalist propaganda was an important source of Taiwanese discontent towards the Nationalist government. The two civilian newspapers were instrumental in leading the public discussion on specific elements of the official propaganda. As shown in Section IV, the Nationalist propaganda disseminated through the official newspaper *Taiwan New Life* was intended to assimilate the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese. The message emphasized methods of de-Japanization and re-Sinicization while offering real political and economic benefits—equality, democracy, and economic progress—as incentives. *People’s Daily* and *People’s Report Daily’s* turned the attention of Taiwanese audiences towards the political and economic benefits offered by the Nationalists and aggressively demanded the realization of these promises. Furthermore, the glaring contrast between official rhetoric and reality made the Nationalist government susceptible to attacks from the civilian papers. *People’s Daily* and *People’ Report Daily’s* criticisms of Nationalist misrule were often based on the very ideals (Dr. Sun’s Three Principles of the People) articulated by the government officials at the time of retrocession. These arguments have been illustrated using Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs’ idea about the ‘agenda setting’ function of the mass media as well as Paul
Lazarsfeld’s concept of the ‘opinion leaders’ and Kurt Lewin’s notion of the ‘gatekeepers.’ In sum, the analysis provided by this thesis shows that a propaganda message designed to assimilate a target population actually had an opposite effect when official rhetoric contrasted sharply with what was happening in reality, and when opinion leaders in the target population effectively mediated the reception of the message. The findings of this study reflect Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell’s contention on propaganda and persuasion: historical and cultural contexts in which propaganda and persuasion occur determine the nature of effects; it is also important to recognize that people construct different meanings according to their social experiences.\textsuperscript{196}

The origins of the 228 Incident will remain controversial because of its great political significance in contemporary Taiwan. In Taiwan, historians often feel the need to honor the memory of the victims by emphasizing the injustice that Taiwanese suffered under the repressive Nationalist regime. Deviation from this dominant discourse often incurs the criticisms of one’s peers. Thus, for example, Lai Zehan, Ramon Myers, and Wei E’s notion of ‘clash of world views’ is similar to the interpretations proposed by other historians. However, the authors of \textit{A Tragic Beginning} are criticized for their ‘neutral stance,’ portraying the 228 Incident as an inevitable tragedy caused by cultural differences.\textsuperscript{197} The critics argue that Lai, Myers, and Wei have not done enough to condemn Nationalist misrule. The author of this thesis understands that every interpretation of a historical event—especially one like the 228 Incident which can arouse intense emotional feelings and evoke hidden psychological trauma among many people—entails moral implications. By demonstrating that the Nationalist propaganda for the ‘Japanized’ Taiwanese was an important contributing factor to the Taiwanese uprising, this thesis seems to present an argument that incriminates the Nationalist government. However, by showing that civilian newspapers operated by Taiwanese elites effectively mediated Taiwanese audiences’ reception of the Nationalist message, this study also alludes to the responsibility of these elites. It was not the author’s intention to incriminate or absolve either the actions of the state or the people who rose up against it. The focus

\textsuperscript{197} For a discussion on Lai, Myers, and Wei’s ‘clash of world view’ argument and similar interpretations proposed by other historians, see pages 18–19. The participants of the second academic conference (1991) on the Incident have been the most outspoken critics of Lai, Myers, and Wei’s contention. For more, see Chen Yongxing, Chen Yanyu, and Hu Huiling eds., \textit{Er er ba xueshu yantaohui lunwenji}.\textsuperscript{56}
was solely upon producing a legitimate historical argument based on the reading of important primary sources in order to further the research on the 228 Incident.
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