ERCCT Online Paper Series:

Rethinking the Idea of Reconciliation – Taiwan’s competing Transitional Justice Discourses in the post-Cold War era
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Juli 2017
- Young Scholar Workshop 2017 selected collections –

The CCKF-ERCCT wishes to express its gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Taiwan, R.O.C.) for generously supporting the Europe-Taiwan Young Scholars Workshop.

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Rethinking the identity of political victim –
Taiwan’s competing transitional justice discourses in the post-Cold War era

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November 2017
The concept of reconciliation suggests that the enemies of yesterday will
give up and let go of their hatred, animosity or wish for revenge, as well
as their identity that had been constructed around the conflict. One
expects that a new identity construction will develop together with a
new relationship between former enemies that will address the roots of
the conflict, not only its unfortunate outcomes. But how can we create
such a deep process of change in people who have been committed to
the conflict, in some places for generations, in others for a substantial
part of their lives? Are these expectations realistic or is it wishful
thinking and talking that has little substance in intractable conflicts?

— Dan Bar-On, *Darkness at Noon*

*War Crimes, Genocide and Memories, 2007*

**Introduction**

The politics of memory is usually not about fact—that is, what actually happened in
the past. It is about how truth is conveyed in the present. As Hodgkin and Radstone
suggest (2003), contesting the past involves, of course, posing questions about the
present, and what the past means in the present, which means that truth is not
objective, but perspectival. Present conflicts over representation become central to
analysing the meaning of the past. And different viewpoints of the past serve to
unravel the contestation.

Probing the contestation of the past is central to this research. Having enjoyed
strong support from the U.S. during the Cold War, Taiwanese governments represent
the White Terror as a time the country was under threat from communism, mainly the
PRC.¹ Taiwan’s citizens find it difficult to censure the atrocities under the KMT regime,
for they were committed in the name of wiping out that threat. But to the survivors of

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¹ For instance, the USAID’s Taiwan programme focused in the 1950s on defining a political enemy, i.e.,
communism, for the Taiwanese to repudiate. As for the programme, the installation of the MAAG to enhance
the KMT regime’s military capabilities entrenched the US-ROC alliance in Taiwanese society. The United States
Information Service (USIS) centre in Taipei promoted the so-called American identity, which stood for democracy,
freedom and plural culturalism, as well as the highly negative image of communism, which stood for autocracy
and posed a lethal political threat. Both were ingrained in Taiwanese society from the 1950s onward.
the White Terror (1949-1991), they hold another perspective of their past. These men spend more time on recounting their past from the perspective of political conflict. That is, they tend to view their past as a time of unrest. They are former political criminals, or the so-called victims. Yet they are political insurgents as well. While Taiwan’s official transitional justice discourse implies that the White Terror was justified, its survivors claim that it was without a doubt a period of unjustifiable political repression because, from a human rights perspective, no one deserves to be persecuted for her political beliefs. Accordingly, we find a discrepancy between the survivors’ perspective on the White Terror and that of the authorities. Survivors’ views are still rarely shared, and remain highly controversial. Given the Compensation Act of 1998 (in Chinese, 戒嚴時期不當叛亂暨匪諜審判案件補償條例), only those who are officially recognised as innocence shall earn the recognition of ‘political victim’. The recognised ones could receive financial compensation and voice their persecution in the official transitional justice scheme. Accordingly, the government authorises them to share only their memories of innocence and mistaken persecution in the official discourse, whereas their memories of political opposition are silenced. The identity of survivors remains singular: the political victim with innocence. Here, one point remains unclear: how do these men perceive their involvement in the transitional justice system? Is it possible for them to develop their competing discourses either within or outside the scheme of transitional justice? If so, how? Last but not least, how could reconciliation be possible under these circumstances? The questions form the central issue in this paper.

Non-official discourses—competing discourses—are referenced in plural because not every survivor perceives his past in the same way. While this paper seeks to develop a model for the construction of non-official discourses by my informants, the content of these discourses and the degree of their variation from the official discourse is bound to vary.

At present, those once labelled as political criminals are recognised in the official discourse as ‘innocent’ victims whose past has no connection to conspiracy

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2 Ongoing debate over the timeframe of the White Terror continues in Taiwan to this day. As some would have it, the White Terror began when the ROC government officially relocated to Taiwan in 1949 and ended with the annulment of martial law in 1987. I have chosen in my research to define the duration of the White Terror as the statutory period during which the Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of National Mobilisation for the Suppression of the Communist Rebellion, were in force: for 43 years, from 1948 to 1991.
against the KMT regime. Because White Terror survivors are the best source of non-official discourses, the way they represent themselves to citizens in Taiwan forms the approach for the study. By observing and analysing how they organise non-official commemorations and continue to advocate their respective political causes—ranging from anarchism to left wing pro-unification to the pro-independence cause—I found that the survivors fought for their convictions in the past and continue to advocate them in present. Notwithstanding their de-politicisation in the scheme of transitional justice, they still view themselves as genuine political actors. By interpreting the details of the tension between the authorities and survivors, we discover the politicised nature of my subjects’ perspective on both their past and present lives, however they may dissemble before the government. Thus, the term ‘competing discourse’ not only refers to a tension between divergent viewpoints of the past, but denotes a power struggle between successive Taiwanese governments and the White Terror survivors as each seeks to control the definition of the meaning of the past. This contestation of the past comes to exist as a conflict in Taiwan’s approach to transitional justice and reconciliation.

The term ‘conflict’ refers to two aspects. First, the memory of the White Terror is inherently contentious with regard to the present politics that shape the construction of the past. How we define the past reveals how we act and expect to be recognised in the present, and this is reflected in the discrepancy between the official and non-official discourses relating to the White Terror. While reconciliation is usually deemed to be the primary goal and value of transitional justice in transitional countries, the goal may be out of reach for the people of Taiwan. The KMT regime has not only failed to vindicate former political criminals but also maintains its hostility towards its longstanding political enemies—mainly socialists and advocates of independence. Such reconciliation as has taken place has been only between the KMT regime and those citizens not deemed to have committed treason. All of society has been invited to forgive the past atrocities committed by the state, but not to forgive those who challenged the oppressive state. Thus, it is hard to envisage a reconciliation between the authorities and the survivors of the White Terror until the former fully vindicate the latter, as well as those executed, of the crime of treason and erase the stigma associated with their past criminal status. In this context, the politics of constructing the past is certainly a battleground between the governments and survivors.

Second, the term ‘conflict’ references the ongoing political struggle in relation to various political causes. White Terror survivors whose ‘treason’ stemmed from
advocacy of Taiwanese independence were recognised and rehabilitated in the official discourse once the DPP, which has not ruled out that option, came to power in 2000. However, survivors who had been convicted of espousing left-wing causes—especially those who supported unification with the communist mainland, still have not been embraced by the official discourse. Survivors from different political factions experience official recognition at varying levels, and some have had to compromise their ideology at the direction of the government in order to receive a measure of relief. Meanwhile, the non-official transitional justice discourses of my research subjects may be categorised as follows: seeking recognition of their persecution, affirming their dissident past, and embracing their immutable political identities. For them, the process of reconciliation implicates the present as well as the past. For many of these White Terror survivors, what matters most is the ability to assert the rightness of their unwavering political convictions. Without a full vindication of their ‘treasonous’ past, the causes they champion continue to be viewed as ‘unacceptable’ in the minds of the public. Notwithstanding the legal guarantees of freedom of political opinion and speech that have come with democracy, the spectre of the socialist threat continues to haunt citizens’ minds in Taiwan.

Certainly some spectres from the Cold War are deemed more threatening than others today in Taiwan. During democratisation, supporting independence was fully recognised and welcomed by citizens as a legitimate political alternative. However, the de-politicisation to which White Terror survivors have acquiesced as they compromise with the official discourse has pervaded all aspects of their lives, including their current political identity. For instance, in May 2016 I encountered the survivor of 1960s, HC in Taipei at an academic conference on transitional justice in Taiwan, hosted by the Taiwan Historical Association (in Chinese, 台灣歷史學會) and a well-known pro-independence organisation, Wu Sian-Lien Foundation (in Chinese, 吳三連史料基金會). Although HC remained silent during the discussions sessions, he told me privately that he was coming to learn and to support Taiwan independence.\(^3\) His attendance was a way of asserting his political ideal of reforming Taiwan’s transitional justice system and supporting the cause of independence. For HC and

\(^3\) Field research note of HC 2016, 5. We encountered each other by chance; after our brief conversation, I immediately jotted down notes. HC was born in 1930 in Changhua, Taiwan. He was convicted of treason in 1958 for advocating Taiwan independence.
others like him, contesting the government’s version of the past is a struggle not only for the power to define the past, but for the present right to advocate freely their formerly suppressed political causes, a goal that has become vital in their current lives.

On this premise, we may now turn to survivors’ current public engagement, especially with regard to the officially-sponsored memory project. By studying their political life in detail, this paper aims to reveal how, in the democratic era, these men continue to fight for their lost dignity and seek to advance their long-standing political causes. Accordingly, the competing transitional justice discourses come to reveal how their articulations of the past remain limited in the era of liberalism and democracy.

Reconciliation with past atrocities but not with past political enemies

In post-conflict’ situations, reconciliation has been identified as an indispensable process for healing societies torn apart by civil war or brutal regimes. Peace activists in particular see reconciliation—referring to a process by which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future—as a requisite condition for lasting peace (Fischer 2011: 415). Kriesberg defines reconciliation specifically as comprising four dimensions: shared truth, justice, regard, and security (2004: 83–86; 2007: 252–256).

Truth, according to Kriesberg, consists in the reconciliation context of the recognition by members of the group that inflicted injury of those whom their actions hurt (Kriesberg 2007). Truth must be shareable, as formerly opposing sides reach understandings about who has suffered, or continues to suffer, by whose acts (ibid.). Truths may vary in how widely they are shared within and between adversarial parties. Only certain groups within the opposing sides may know certain truths (2004: 83). In the case of Taiwan, only the survivors know the truth of the political clashes between them and the KMT regime. Taiwan’s official transitional justice discourse defines the identity of political victims as individuals who did not revolt against the government, the truth that many of these victims, at least among my informants, had failed in their attempts at revolution, becomes a secret. By concealing the past, the truth of the White Terror becomes distorted in the official discourse as it contains incomplete ‘truths’ that are at odds with the content of White Terror survivors’ non-official narratives, while those who were formerly identified as criminals deserving of punishment are still stigmatised.
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (hereafter, TRC) in South Africa reveals another issue of contested truth. According to Feher (1999), South Africa’s TRC did not aim to achieve the ideal of reconciliation by seeking accountability from the apartheid regime itself. Nonetheless, the reconciliation process in South Africa has recognised the apartheid system as repugnant. While relying to some extent on individual punishment and to a much greater one on collective forgiveness, the South African government proposed reconciliation and democracy that were based on the stigmatisation of the former regime (ibid.: 332).

Arguably, reconciliation does not necessarily bring about forgiveness (Fischer 2011). Although the ‘truth’ that emerged from the TRC in South Africa has been hailed as a role model for transitional countries, all we really know is that it was ‘good enough’ to be accepted by the majority of people during the post-apartheid period (Scheper-Hughes 1998). The possibility remains that a number of people in South Africa were not embraced or recognised by that truth.

**Justice** refers to legal processes, including both retributive and restorative justice. Retributive justice refers to the traditional model whereby those who have committed crimes or perpetrated acts of injustice are punished (Kriesberg 2007). To Kriesberg, punishing individuals for past violations of human rights is a way of identifying individual responsibility and avoiding the attribution of collective guilt (ibid.). However, no amount of punishment can restore past losses. Restorative justice, on the other hand, attempts to restore what was lost due to the bad acts that were committed and, in some situations, seeks to rehabilitate offenders. In the case of Taiwan, the emphasis has been on redress, including financial compensation to victims—that is, the victims of wrongful convictions.

**Regard** refers to the consideration accorded by members of each community towards each other. This entails recognising their shared humanity and the human rights of former opponents (Fischer 2011; Kriesberg 2004; 2007).

**Security** means ensuring that former adversaries feel a minimum of trust and are given ‘reason to believe they can look forward to living together without one side threatening the other’ (Kriesberg 2007: 253). Hence, the four dimensions are interrelated, although truth and justice seem to play more important roles in reconciliation. To what extent a shared truth can be achieved among different
individuals and groups in a society may depend on the degree to which expressions of regard and security are consolidated. And certainly, the constitutive framework of a post-conflict society must be rooted in justice. Reconciliation—understood as a process in which various groups of people engage in dialogue and compete for the power of utterance in order to reach a widely accepted consensus on the past, present, and future of a post-conflict society—is thus desirable.

Transitional justice having been initiated in Taiwan by the KMT regime, the perpetrator of the White Terror, the reconciliation process has bypassed the full disclosure of the extent of atrocities committed and identification of the perpetrators. Moreover, the end of the Cold War did not bring an end to anti-communist sentiment in Taiwan; it continues to exist, focused especially on mainland China. In the wake of the KMT’s return to power in 2008, an elite group of pro-independence scholars and politicians, including Taiwan’s current president, Dr Tsai Ing-Wen (who was elected in January 2016), founded the Taiwan Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps (in Chinese, 台灣反共青年救國團). The impetus for this group came from President Ma’s diplomatic overtures to China, so the group found itself in the ironic position of charging the KMT with not being sufficiently tough on communism.

In any case, citizens in Taiwan are disinclined to censure the excesses committed by the government in the name of anti-communism. Without political alternation or fundamental reform of the KMT regime, democratisation in Taiwan has not encouraged, much less compelled, the KMT government to come to terms with its past human rights abuses. Without a proper truth-telling mechanism, neither the persecutors nor the persecuted have a proper space in which to narrate the truths that should be shared by the various groups, including former adversaries, in Taiwan. Neither side trusts in its ability to challenge the already established viewpoint of the past. The whole of Taiwanese society has been invited to pardon both the past atrocities and their anonymous perpetrators without being allowed full knowledge of the White Terror.

Suffice to say, the Taiwanese authorities have established a political sphere in which reconciliation is a ‘romance with remorse and with reparation, memory and healing’ (Schep-er-Hughes 1998: 26). Without probing the facts of past repression by, and resistance to, the ROC government, the official discourse is not concerned with reconciling with former ‘political enemies’, but only with receiving absolution for its untold abuses and their nameless perpetrators. As a result, my informants’ status as
convicted criminals has not been fully de-stigmatised. Taiwan’s official discourse merely apologises in general terms for the occurrence of the White Terror, and this apology, in a sense, preserves the moral order that existed when the White Terror began: those who favour socialism or communism continue to be regarded in Taiwan as a threat to society.

If we value reconciliation as a process rather than as a way to achieve a particular outcome, as Dan Bar-On suggests, storytelling is, in a sense, central to that process. It provides the basis for developing a shareable truth as well as expressions of regard and security. In the dominant culture of contrition in Taiwan, the justice dimension is circumscribed by the notion of what truths are permissible. A review of my subjects’ contributions to the official and non-official discourses offers insight into the emergence of reconciliation as a watchword for both the government and survivors of the White Terror as they compete over how to represent the past, and shows how reconciliation is central to my informants’ current political life.

De-politicisation as a perspectival and strategic truth
In reconciliation processes, truth refers to the recognition of past injuries and violations of human rights. To bring formerly divided and often opposing groups of people to unite and develop an understanding of the past that they all find shareable and acceptable, truth may have more to do with harmony and reconciliation than with actual fact. Accordingly, truth can be perspectival and strategic in reconciliatory processes, as my field research demonstrates.

The first time I encountered JC was during a summer course on the White Terror in 2010, where he was billed as a survivor, lecturing on his incarceration by the KMT party-state during the 1950s. Throughout the programme, JC recounted his life in prison in terms of his suffering. He described how the political prisoners were forced to build the prison in which they were incarcerated on Green Island, and the abuses that he and his fellow inmates endured during their captivity. Without any reference to his conviction as a traitor for his adherence to socialism, the storyline that JC

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4 The summer course was sponsored and supervised by the Taiwanese government, and organised by a private organisation. I was employed to assist with its administration.
narrated is totally consistent with the official transitional justice discourse. In this regard, JC is both a survivor of persecution and a witness to human rights violations.

Apart from the course in which we met, JC has also worked as a docent for the National Jingmei Human Rights Park since 2010. For most of the time in Jingmei, JC conducts tours of government-sponsored exhibitions and gives talks to local and foreign visitors concerning his past suffering at the hands of the KMT regime. Most of the time, JC conforms to the storyline set up by the official discourse. He delivers a truth that conveys a sense of how an individual could be brutally persecuted by a dictatorship without having committed subversion. From a human rights perspective, JC’s narrative is reasonable and sustainable; no one should be persecuted for his political beliefs. However, after closely observing JC for six months, I concluded that he adopts this posture not only to further his vindication and reconciliation but, more important, to maintain a space in the official discourse to give voice to his still indistinct past and still unpopular political cause:

I am continuing to fight. As long as the KMT has not been toppled, I will stay and fight (Transcript of JC 2014, 7).

Speaking in an uncompromising tone, JC views his participation in the official discourse as a means of ongoing subversion against the KMT regime. In fact, the KMT party was no longer in power, although it continued to compete for influence with other factions—primarily the DPP—through democratic processes. Nonetheless, JC and my other informants—such as CH and WR, whom the KMT convicted of treason in the 1960s for supporting independence—will remain politically engaged unless and until the KMT disbands and disappears from the political landscape.

You never know whether you would be oppressed again if the KMT were to seize power in the future (Transcript of JC 2014, 7).

Hsiao, I will fight to the very end unless the KMT collapses. But for now, I am a political victim; this is the easiest way to get people to accept me (Transcript of CH 2013,4).

Even now, I cannot find any reason to compromise myself before the KMT. [...] But what can I say? We survivors must accept the reality. We
need a platform. And this [the officially-sponsored project] is our only chance to be heard (Transcript of WR 2013, 12).

By CH’s own account, he did not despise the KMT to such an extreme degree before he was convicted of treason for advocating independence. As he explains, he only meant to pursue a future in which the Taiwanese people could have their own nation. However, after being brutalised by the KMT in the 1960s, his antipathy for the KMT grew dramatically. CH reiterates emphatically his reluctance to cooperate with the government but, as he says, he is keenly aware that this is his only opportunity for recognition.

WR shares the mindset of CH. As a pro-independence activist, WR was more aggressive in his youth, and more determined to subvert the KMT, which led to him being sentenced to death, although this sentence was subsequently commuted. To increase his political engagement, WR has joined the DPP party and become a local politician, serving since 2000 as mayor of a rural area. He sees this a way to have a voice in the political realm, even though it is hard for a rural mayor to influence national policy or have an impact on the transitional justice scheme; WR thus continues to confront the reality of his de-politicisation. Both CH and WR choose to align themselves with the official discourse but also develop other strategies to deal with that reality.

Unlike WR, who chooses to be a local politician in Taiwan, JC seeks a broader audience, he even writes a column about his imprisonment in the Japanese periodical, MOKU. Furthermore, he assertively interacts with the foreign visitors whom he personally escorts on tours of Jingmei Human Rights Park. JC is fully aware of the importance of framing himself as a political victim before advocating his politics to the public. It is unequivocally true that he suffered from persecution under Chiang’s government. But there is another truth concerning JC’s opposition to the government

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5 Transcript of CH 2013, 4.

6 The articles published by JC are mainly derived from his autobiography 《耕甘薯園的人》, published in Chinese in Taiwan. MOKU is a monthly Japanese magazine that focuses on socio-political and literary issues in Japan and East Asia. The magazine’s official web site (in Japanese) may be found at: http://www.moku-pub.com/saishin.html.
that endures, albeit in a different way. To JC, subverting the KMT and pursuing vindication are equally important.

In this democratic era, it is irreproachable for JC or anyone to voice a personal political opinion, even if this includes hatred of a particular political group or party. However, JC has more at stake than freedom of expression. Rather, he views himself as an adversary of the state with a specific political agenda. His will to subvert the KMT has never diminished, notwithstanding the fact that the KMT party no longer constitutes an authoritarian regime. Truth in this context is manipulated by JC when he poses as an aged White Terror survivor who is no longer capable of fomenting rebellion. It must be recalled that JC became a socialist in the 1940s due to his anger over the 228 Incident, which happened in 1947. The brutal political repression in the wake of the 228 Incident led him to the CCP, which clandestinely recruited him. However, JC is no longer so idealistic:

Sakana, who could have known that the Chinese communists were also brutal by that time? After all, I had dreamed of a just nation without repression or lies. I thought that Chinese communism could fulfil my dream. But now, I am sure that communist China is not an option for me anymore. (Transcript of JC 2012,12).

It is reasonable for JC to continue concealing his insurgent past. Secrecy remains important to him due to his experience of the collective antipathy of Taiwanese society for his left-wing socialist orientation.

For White Terror survivors such as JC, the assertion of personal truth is not only about defining the past but also about their current political lives. KY’s story offers another telling instance and illustrates the variety of subversive intentions entertained by this group.

KY is a survivor from the 1960s who also participates actively in the transitional justice programme. When I interviewed him at the end of 2012, he had been serving for several years on the Taiwanese Victims of the Martial Law Care Association (in Chinese, 台灣戒嚴時期政治受難者關懷協會; hereafter, TVCA) committee, which is one of the three major political victim associations in Taiwan. As a TVCA

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7 See further discussion below.
representative, KY had co-operated with the Taiwanese authorities in different respects, including publishing the survivors’ autobiography corpus and oral history, and expediting the building of the Taiyuan Incident monument.

The Taiyuan Incident (in Chinese, 泰源事件), which occurred on 8 February 1970, was a prison mutiny organised by a group of pro-independence prisoners, five of whom ended up being executed as a result. The incident was later identified as a landmark event of the independence movement. When the monument was proposed, Ma Ying-Jeou’s government was hesitant because the themes of subversion and resistance were all too evident, and not in keeping with the official discourse which held that only those who had not intentionally subverted the regime deserved to be memorialised.

As a result, KY and his fellows did not succeed in erecting the monument at any of the National Human Rights Museums. Eventually, in the summer of 2014, they were able to place one in the Taiwan Sacred Ecological Education Park (in Chinese, 台灣聖山生態教育園區), which is operated by the pro-independence Taiwan Ta-Ti Foundation (in Chinese, 台灣大地基金會). This illustrates the unresolved tension between the authorities and the survivors of the White Terror:

I have to complete this mission; otherwise, I am afraid that people will forget this unrealised ambition and the five sacrificed heroes (Transcript

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8 From 2012 to 2014, the TVCA published 《秋蟬的悲鳴》 and 《看到陽光的時候》, the two autobiographical corpuses in 2012 and 2014 respectively, both with government sponsorship.

9 To date, the TVCA still cooperates actively with the government on an oral history project on behalf of its members. For further discussion of the cooperation between the government and the various victim associations, see below.

10 Taiyuan Prison was founded in Tai-Tung, on the east coast of Taiwan, in the late 1960s, and was initially designed to house political prisoners. At the time, there was an influx of prisoners who were pro-independence and tension arose between these Taiwan separatists and pro-China left-wingers. The Taiyuan Incident was a mutiny that involved solely pro-Taiwan prisoners. It ultimately failed, and the Chiang Kai-Shek administration executed five prisoners who had escaped. For further details, see the oral history: 中央研究院近代史研究所《口述歷史》編輯委員會 (2002) 《泰源事件專輯》。台北：中研院近代史研究所. Although portions of the cited narratives are open to challenge due to their tone of deference to the authorities, this remains a valuable reference.
KY never expresses any further intention of subverting the KMT during our conversations. To him, a primary mission is to remind people that the White Terror was a time of political conflict, and persuade them that these men who sacrificed for the cause of independence were heroes rather than criminals. Thus, we see JC and KY equally committed to advocating their respective causes in present day Taiwan. To both of them, transitional justice is not only about shedding light on past violations of human rights but is a process that affords them the opportunity to advocate their political convictions.

Thus, my subjects’ status as surviving political victims provides them a platform to gain wider recognition for their beliefs than has been available hitherto in Taiwan. Certainly, their suffering attests to the past atrocities, and their interest in redefining the past as a period of political conflict is not at odds with the reality of their victimisation. The focal point is their dissident political opinions were the basis for their unjust persecution under the KMT regime. They desire a recognition that their devotion to their political causes did not merit such harsh repression. Hence, to my informants, contesting the past not only means exposing the extent to which they were brutally repressed by the dictatorship. It also means that the persecuted ones, including those who had explicit subversive intentions, deserve vindication and recognition. Thus, the tension between the official and non-official discourses rests on how the truth of the past is produced and developed in present-day Taiwan.

In the context of transitional justice, Wendy Lambourne (2009) argues that the use of the word ‘truth’ can be misleading, as it tends to be interpreted as the finding of a single truth about what happened, who was responsible and why. She argues that truth in this context is based on some kind of agreed-upon record that can be used for redressing past crimes and identifying suffering. This can be termed ‘knowledge’, as it might include various truths or interpretations held by various participants in a conflict (ibid.: 39). Hence, our focus here is not so much on an objective truth of the White Terror as on the process by which a shareable truth is developed and accepted by multiple groups, some of which are former adversaries.

My informants are dissatisfied with the official discourse of Taiwan’s transitional justice system, for their assigned role in that discourse as innocent victims leaves them de-politicised. Although the account of their persecution is true, all of them opposed the KMT government and thus were not ‘innocent’ of the political crime of KY 2013, 1).
charged. There is a spectrum of involvement: While some committed subversive actions, others were still in the planning or discussion stages when arrested, and some merely criticised the government without hatching a plan to undermine it. However, whatever the variations in their politics and the extent to which their opposition was actualised, the Compensation Act clearly specifies that former political criminals are not eligible to receive compensation if their conviction of sedition or treason survives reviews according to current laws or rules of evidence.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, only those who cooperate in this exercise can engage in reconciliation; the truth asserted by the official discourse is strategic and perspectival.

As asserted in the introduction to this paper, transitional justice in Taiwan is itself in conflict regarding two aspects—the characterisation of the past, and the continuing power struggle among factions. Foucault considers whether conflict offers an effective analyser of power relations (2000a: 59–61). In *Society Must Be Defended* (2000a), he examines power relations from the standpoint of a historico-political discourse that points to conflict as the permanent basis for all institutions of power. While the philosophico-juridical discourse identifies conflict as the professional and technical prerogative of a carefully-defined and controlled military apparatus (ibid: 60), Foucault rejects this analysis; he suggests that conflict does not operate exclusively in the military context but, rather, exists in all sectors of society. Conflict, according to Foucault, is the driving force of every social order, inducing us to believe in a natural order, or a functionally required order. In this regard, we are bound to re-encounter conflict, for it is the cipher of peace (ibid: 61). Politics itself is thus for the individual an extension of war, as Foucault explains below:

In that general struggle of which he speaks, [the individual] is necessarily on one side or on the other; he is in the battle, he has adversaries, he fights for a victory. […] And if he also speaks of truth, it is that perspectival and strategic truth that enables him to win the victory. So, in this case, we have a political and historical discourse that lays claim to truth and right, while explicitly excluding itself from juridico-philosophical universality (Foucault 2000a: 61).\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} See detailed discussion in my doctoral thesis.

\textsuperscript{12} Foucault maintains that one must abandon the legal notion of sovereignty while studying the notion of power. As this model aims to account for the ideal genesis of the state, it makes law the fundamental manifestation of
Truth is not prevalent and universal but, rather, an instrument for achieving partisan victory. Foucault is adamant that the subject of truth is inextricably intertwined with power relations: The politics of truth is not about forms of power practice, such as domination or obedience. Rather, it is about how the power relations of one society formulate a series of rules, which individuals sometimes obey but sometimes manage to manipulate to serve their own ends. In the case of Taiwan, Foucault would explore how survivors of the White Terror develop their truth while confronting unfriendly legal and political arrangements. Truth, in this case, does not exist objectively, but spells out how individuals cope with specific power relations.

Here, the centrality of truth production is ‘confession’. When exploring how truth is developed and emerged in one society, Foucault claims that an obligation to confess has been transformed from a moral requirement in Ancient Greece, which had no legal force, into a general social requirement during the Christian period, due to the prevailing asceticism of the latter (2000b: 225–234). In the modern era, although modern societies have discounted the force of the church, the heritage of obligation of self-knowledge and truth-telling has given rise to a scientific process of objectifying the subject that is engaged in self-examination.

In Taiwan my informants who join the official discourse cooperate with the government in various settings where they are requested to reveal their past persecution. Without their involvement—namely, their testimony, the official transitional justice programme could not be established and consolidated. They are aware of the de-politicisation imposed on them by the limits of their narrative in the scheme of transitional justice but they are also developing strategies to address this perspectival truth. To them, their testimony does not constitute surrender but, rather, claims a space for their utterance in the official discourse.

Thus, the situation is more complicated than it may appear on the surface. For example, since the pro-independence cause has gained more space for advocacy since the DPP came to power in 2000, White Terror survivors who espoused that cause have power (2000). However, Foucault suggests that the study of power should focus on the power relation itself; also, he rejects the study of power merely at the level of the state. His recommended approach, i.e., historico-political discourse, seeks to unravel the fundamental logic of power relations that exist in all sorts of societies, in which the state is merely one of the aspects of socio-political practices.
gained more space in the official discourse in which to give voice to their dissident past than have others whose causes were different.

Although JC is now pro-independence, he was accused of treason because he joined the Chinese communists in the early 1950s. Nowadays, he speaks openly of his current political ideals and pro-independence principles, which developed during his captivity, but rarely mentions having been a communist. I asked JC once, in private, why he did not discuss his communist phase with people in Taiwan. He paused for a few seconds, then said:

Sakana, that was the past. I am fighting for my current political cause. 
[...] Maybe, one day, they will understand and fully accept my past but not now (Transcript of JC 2013, 12).

JC is fully aware that revealing his communist roots would jeopardise his current position in the official discourse. For him, the system of transitional justice does not represent an opportunity for ‘reconciliation’ between persecutors and their victims so much as the chance for him to reconcile with society, the people of Taiwan. Although disclosure of his communist past remains all but impossible, JC still clings to the prospect of a full acknowledgment of his past struggles and persecution.

Another example is the story of VT. VT joined the communists in the late 1940s and was convicted of treason in 1950 and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Although his only crime was reading socialist publications, his past political convictions are not referenced in the official discourse, in which he is recognised as a pro-independence survivor. He makes public appearances on pro-independence occasions, but never at pro-unification events. VT does not talk about how he came to espouse new political convictions after being released in 1960. He maintains that he thinks pro-independence is indeed the best solution for Taiwan and requests that I not mention his more radical past in public. It is not only the restrictions placed on the official discourse, but the ongoing stigmatisation of socialism in Taiwan, that makes him feel uneasy about revealing the whole truth of his political past in his narrative.

It was not safe. You never know when the KMT regime will return to power again (Transcript of VT 2013, 10).
While power relations often restrict the discourses that actors develop, they do not prevent the development of discourses. Even within the confines of the official discourse, JC has availed himself surreptitiously of opportunities to advocate Taiwanese independence—currently a more acceptable cause than the one that made him a target of the White Terror. One day when I visited JC at Jingmei Human Rights Park, he was showing two college students the exhibition of executed political prisoners’ manuscripts and testaments. In our subsequent conversation in the café, JC began discussing who was responsible for the White Terror in Taiwan and stated that, while the KMT regime had managed to wipe out the communists, it had also repressed the pro-Taiwan movement:

Do you think that was fair to people who support Taiwan independence?
(Field note of JC 2013, 12)

It seems that JC never misses an opportunity to promote his political cause or advance his perspective on the White Terror, seeking to present the truth of his choosing and the political cause to which he still adheres. The de-politicised identity of political victims may be constructed and restricted in the official discourse but has nevertheless become one of the weapons in the arsenal he uses to contest the past. The White Terror survivors may engage in various challenges and to a varying extent but, as a group, they seem to share a common recognition that acquiescing to the role of de-politicised victim gives them an opening to claim the power of utterance in Taiwan’s transitional justice system.

**Memory is itself a struggle**
As we have seen, the de-politicisation of Taiwan’s political victims attests to the perspectival and strategic nature of the account of the White Terror that is offered in the official discourse. Based on a legal arrangement—namely, the promulgation of the Compensation Act and the establishment of the Compensation Foundation—the official discourse creates an identity for political victims that is de-politicised. Accordingly, the legal arrangement underpins the cultural and truth aspects of transitional justice and the picture of de-politicised political victims comprises the dominant understanding of the White Terror in Taiwan.
Nonetheless, this mandated de-politicisation merely impedes survivors from developing their own non-official discourses in the context of transitional justice, but it does not stop them altogether. As a contestation of truth arises between the survivors and the government, the memory of the White Terror becomes a zone of conflict.

It is a conflict about what account of the past is acknowledged by the official discourse, which always reflects the government’s current needs. Survivors of political persecution may feel compelled to develop tactics for dealing with the dominant discourse if it conflicts with their own accounts. JC finds in transitional justice an opportunity to advocate his political goals, which include eliminating the KMT party that was in power during the White Terror. KY sees his own role more as an advocate for the vindication of his associates who were executed by the KMT regime. Apart from these two survivors, there are others who have elected to cooperate with the official discourse and who share their attitudes or approaches to some extent. Under the umbrella of their de-politicisation, one may observe a range of attitudes as well as varying degrees of activism.

For instance, AN was born in 1947 in Nantou, Taiwan and, at the age of 20, was accused of treason for advocating Taiwanese independence. For the time being, AN is plainly cooperating with the official discourse, as he willingly participates in state-sponsored interviews as well as those with independent researchers. He readily accepted my invitation to be interviewed and I soon learned that AN has no intention of concealing his commitment to the pro-independence cause. While he does not articulate his political convictions while being interviewed for state-sponsored projects, he was very open with me:

Because I read some pro-independence articles, I was convicted of treason for promoting independence. [...] However, it was when I encountered Chan Yi-Jen in prison that my political commitment to Taiwan independence developed through our discussions. [...] Yi-Jen is a very clever person. He usually explains things simply and clearly. [...] Had I not met people like Yi-Jen, my politics would have been less enlightened, and I would not have thought as deeply as I do now
AN recounts his past in an excited tone. He does not consider advocating independence to be more important than recounting his past persecution in the official discourse; nonetheless, he is not satisfied with his current de-politicised status and feels resentment. AN showed me a video he had filmed in December 2012 during the official annual commemoration of the White Terror, at which he had appeared as a guest of the government. It showed a small group of pro-independence survivors throwing shoes at the podium, shouting ‘Step down! Ma Ying-Jeou,’ (in Chinese, 馬英九下台) and ‘Taiwanese Independence!’ (in Chinese, 台灣獨立) while President Ma was delivering a speech. As we watched the film, AN told me that his political views were similar to those of the protestors but that he would never act in such a manner. To AN, the smooth conclusion of the ceremony was also important:

The ceremony was at least a commemoration of the past suffering (Transcript of AN 2013, 12).

Apparently, AN is willing to accept the status quo of de-politicisation because he considers recognition by the official discourse to be equally important as his commitment to the independence cause. AN sees himself having two roles at present. On the one hand, he performs as de-politicised survivor in accordance with the official discourse; on the other, departing from that discourse, he plays independence advocate. Thus, his competing transitional justice discourse gradually emerges:

I suffered, and I continue to support Taiwan independence. […] The point is I am genuinely a political victim, but I am also a pro-independence advocate. I talked about my past suffering when people view me as a victim, but I also would like to share my political cause with

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13 Chan Yi-Jen was born in 1925, in Yunlin, Taiwan. He was accused of treason in 1961 due to supporting Taiwan independence, a charge known as 蘇東啟叛亂案. This became known as the most famous political trial relating to Taiwan independence, and led to other interviewees such as SC and RJ being accused of treason.
them. Because this is what I also care about (Transcript of AN 2013, 12).

TJ’s story offers a starker illustration of the contestation of memory. As a pro-independence survivor who was accused of treason during the 1970s, TJ never conceals his political convictions in public. Like AN, he is a fervent proponent of the pro-independence campaign. Recently TJ has started to reveal the extent of his past involvement in anti-KMT conspiracy, although he never goes beyond what was stated in his conviction. That is, as a political victim, TJ deliberately echoes the requirement of official discourse:

It was when I joined the Lee Tang-Hua Orchestra as a saxophonist and toured the U.S. that I encountered the Chen brothers and subsequently joined World United Formosans for Independence (hereafter WUFI).14 While Chen Rong-Chi and Chen Rong-Fong promoted their ideal of Taiwanese independence in our conversations, they also gave me a WUFI stamp, encouraging me to advocate independence as well.15

The interview was conducted in 2012 by a state-sponsored oral history project. It may seem that the proscriptions against referring to the revolutionary past are loosening in the official discourse but, as a matter of fact, they remain as firm as before. As TJ expressed, he always feels insecure in recounting past subversive past in state-sponsored oral history projects. ‘I do not trust the government, I know what I can do is to share my past suffering as much as possible,’ says TJ.16

Once Taiwan independence become more accepted by Taiwanese society, White Terror survivors who espoused that cause were welcomed by the pro-independence DPP government to join the transitional justice projects that it

14 World United Formosans for Independence was a pro-Taiwanese independence organisation, secretly organised by a group of Taiwanese migrants and students in Japan and America. The WUFI had hubs in both countries. The organisation still exists although it no longer actively opposes the government; it works mainly overseas to promote the ideal of Taiwanese independence.

15 Chen Ron-Chi and Chen Rong-Fong are siblings who lived in the U.S. during the 1970s as a foreign student and migrant worker, respectively.

sponsored from 2000 to 2008. More and more pro-independence survivors have come forward to have their stories of past persecution included in the official discourse. Although that discourse continues to gloss over their past ‘subversive intentions’, still, a grey area may exist for political victims to mention their ‘subversive’ intentions in the official discourse, but it does not extend to allowing them to go into further detail. Thus, throughout our lengthy interview, this brief reference is the only instance in which TJ touches on his revolutionary past. The remainder of the narrative focuses on how he survived ‘seemingly unbearable repression’ and continues to live as a de-politicised survivor. Restricted by the official discourse, TJ says little about his revolutionary past, and spends most of our interview describing his persecution under the KMT regime.

But my later interview with TJ shows that he is willing to give details of his past activism:

During my time in America, Chen Rong-Chi gave me books and magazines, and asked me about my thoughts. I said, as I told you before, I support Taiwanese independence. He replied, ‘I cannot return to Taiwan at the moment. Think about to what extent you can contribute to Taiwan, but keep safe’. He expected me to recruit several people who were trustworthy and create a secret organisation. At that time, we performed a secret ritual in which I vowed my loyalty to the organisation. Both the Chen brothers and someone whose surname was Liu—I cannot recall his full name now—and Chang Tsan-Hung. Tsan-Hung reminded me that the principle of the secret organisation was unilinear leadership. I needed only to obey my leader, and did not even know the identity of the other members who were at the same level as myself. It would be risky if you knew more members or were known to too many of them. Chen Rong-Fong directed me. I did not need to contact the others (Transcript of TJ 2013, 12).

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17 The publications that TJ mentions were Taiwanese Youth (in Chinese, 台灣青年), published by the Tokyo office of WUFI in 1960, which inspired Taiwanese students, scholars, and immigrants to rally in Japan around the cause of Taiwan independence.
This is the very first time that TJ has talked about his subversive activities—offering a new perspective on his past. We spend more than six hours talking about the conspiracy in which he was engaged and the process by which he had become an adversary of the KMT during the White Terror. However, he asks me not to reveal the details of his past to my readers; his facts and quotations are included here only with his express permission. Like other survivors, he is uncertain about politics in Taiwan and worries that the KMT could return to power. In the eyes of the government, TJ is one of the most co-operative survivors; he never brings up politics on official occasions such as the exhibition on Green Island where I first encountered him in 2010. Speaking to visitors, TJ describes the harsh conditions to which political prisoners were subjected, but keeps silent about how he came to be imprisoned. He engages judiciously in the official discourse, keeping his oppositional past and ongoing political commitment separate from that discourse. Suffice to say, for each of my informants, memory is contentious.

In the various cases described above, my interviewees all find it impossible to discuss their past activism freely. Some dissemble about it as they engage in the official discourse, while others choose to raise it delicately and to a very limited extent. The extent to which White Terror survivors feel able to reveal their subversive past in the official discourse is a function of the contestation of memory. Or, more precisely, the extent to which some may be more outspoken than others is a function not of individual temperament but of the offence for which they were convicted. For instance, PH is a survivor who was convicted of the crime of treason in the 1960s for advocating socialism and received a 10-year sentence. However, PH refuses to speak of his insurgent past to interviewers, including me.

It is meaningless to speak of my past, for no one is truly listening. People only care about how I was beaten and terrorised by the regime. [...] Unless the government acknowledges my past, I shall not talk about it (Transcript of PH 2013, 12).

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18 A major reason for his discretion is that his story involves others whose identities were not discovered by the KMT regime during the White Terror. To this day, TJ still wants to protect these individuals.

19 Transcript of TJ 2014,1.
Thus far, PH has not said a word about his insurgent past to any researcher in Taiwan. Nonetheless he is cooperative in presenting himself as a ‘political survivor’ who has undergone atrocities. Accordingly, survivors of different convictions may compromise, circumvent, or struggle with the authorities. Accepting the identity of de-politicised victims enables them to undermine the official discourse.

Certainly, some survivors were falsely accused of treason, as they did not plot against the KMT regime at all. While it is true that there are those who are innocent as defined by the Compensation Act, the fact remains that the White Terror was perpetrated at a time of great political conflict in Taiwan. The memory of the White Terror remains controversial to this day, and the official de-politicisation of its survivors attests to the contested nature of memory and the endurance of political beliefs.

Thus, survivors’ approach to the memory of the White Terror is conditioned by the official discourse, as their de-politicisation reflects the politics of truth. Underpinning the seemingly cooperative relationship between the survivors and the authorities is a conflict in which truth, political causes, and memory itself are at stake. Consequently, their de-politicisation reflects the extent to which the essential identity of these victims is political. However, not all of the dissidents of the White Terror were pro-independence like AN and TJ. What about the communists, whose cause has not been rendered more palatable with the passage of time? With no leeway even to hint at their political demands in the official transitional justice discourse, how do they react to this discourse in the process of revisiting the past? The phenomenon of de-politicisation reveals competing discourses across the spectrum of survivors who engage in the official discourse. Based on this analysis, the following section examines how survivors act and develop their own transitional justice discourses to compete the official discourse.

The enduring resistance of political activists
Since the late 1980s, the White Terror’s survivors have often acted collectively in public in the name of their victims’ associations, which were founded during democratisation. Of the multiple associations, there are three that appear to be the most representative in terms of the number of their members and the degree to which they engage in the public sphere: the Taiwanese Victims of the Martial Law Care Association (in Chinese, 台灣戒嚴時期政治受難者關懷協會; hereafter, TVCA), the 1950s White Terror
Vindicated Association (in Chinese, 五零年代白色恐怖案件平反促進會; hereafter, WTVA) and Huzhuhui (in Chinese, 互助會). The first two are made up of pro-independence survivors, whereas the latter’s members are left wing pro-unification. The cause of Huzhuhui is closer to pro-PRC than anything else. There are other associations, such as the Elderly Political Victims’ Association. But these associations are subgroups of the TVCA and WTVA, and their membership overlaps with those of the larger groups, inasmuch as they share a common political cause.

With the democratisation in Taiwan since the late 1980s, survivors of the White Terror began to consider the possibility of organising associations for themselves and the bereaved to engage in political networking and rehabilitation activities. From this initiative, the three associations above were founded, corresponding to respective political causes and periods of imprisonment. Huzhuhui, most of whose members are survivors and bereaved relatives representing the left wing pro-unification movement of the 1950s—that is, those accused of communism—is the major association of left-wing political victims. Meanwhile, WTVA and TVCA members, even those who may have been communists under the KMT, are now grouped under the banner of independence. Political affiliation is a primary indicator of the origin and differentiation of these associations and survivors often act collectively under their aegis in the official discourse and outside it.

For instance, JC, and the survivors of the 1960s mentioned above, including KY, AN, SC, WR, and CH are members of TVCA. Despite their varying degrees of engagement with the official discourse, all of them attend the official annual commemoration, and participate in state-sponsored exhibitions and other official events as representatives of TVCA, which is the association that is most engaged with the official discourse. This is in part a function of how much the survivors desire such engagement, but has even more to do with how the authorities define a ‘qualified’ political victim. Once the political cause of pro-independence was no longer taboo after the DPP came to power in 2000, TVCA members qualified as political victims, as long as they continued to claim their past innocence in the official discourse. JC, for example, was a former communist, yet opted to remain silent about this aspect of his past. Owing to this gesture of ‘cooperation’ with the authorities, JC is eligible to speak out about his past persecution and discreetly advocate his current political cause, Taiwan independence, in the scheme of transitional justice. Thus, not only one’s past political activism matter but one’s current political affiliations are at stake when one is
a victim striving for the power of utterance within the official discourse. Different political causes are silenced to varying degrees.

To the authorities, not only survivors’ past subversion but also their continuing political activism can exclude them from the official discourse, especially when survivors are vocal in support of their political causes. To Huzhuhui, the task of advancing their cause is equally important as the goal of being fully acknowledged by Taiwanese society. A left-wing agenda that includes unification with the mainland has been their enduring political ideal since the 1950s. Because their cause remains anathema to the Taiwanese government, and because they decline to compromise, Huzhuhui has adopted a completely different approach to that of the TVCA. Remaining outside of the official discourse, Huzhuhui has developed its own transitional justice discourse.

The nonofficial annual commemoration of the martyrs
To develop an alternative discourse of the memory of the White Terror, Huzhuhui has hosted an annual commemoration since 1991, known as the Autumn Worship (in Chinese, 秋祭 Chiu Chi). Huzhuhui members recount and honour the deceased Chinese communists of the 1950s every autumn at the Ba-ba Cho Memorial Park (in Chinese, 馬場町紀念公園).20 Before it was officially designated as a memorial park, Ba-ba Cho was a place where political prisoners were executed during the 1950s.

In the official discourse, only the innocent victims deserve commemoration. But the Autumn Worship organised by Huzhuhui describes those who died under the KMT regime as ‘martyrs’ (In Chinese, 烈士); these deaths attest to the intensity of the political struggle between their comrades and the government. Reviewing the content of speeches made at Huzhuhui commemorations, one discerns that they not only pay tribute to the fallen but also promote the political ideal of unification. For Huzhuhui, the Autumn Worship not only recalls former political clashes but also serves to strengthen survivors’ commitment to the present cause:

This year is the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the New China, but also the sixtieth year of the Cross-Strait confrontation,

20 The name of the place was initially translated from the Japanese, which appears the same as the Chinese name but is pronounced differently.
recalling the historic scene of 60 years ago, at the historic turning point, which was interwoven with war, revolution, darkness and light. You carried on the glorious patriotic tradition of the martyrs who pursued anti-imperialism and national liberation under Japanese rule. You wholeheartedly accepted the mission of national liberation of the Chinese people. As a result, you gave your precious life to the historic wave of new democracy without hesitation, solely to achieve the goal of ending the civil war and unifying the nation [Autumn Worship address 2009].

Today, we stand here solemnly; yet we no longer feel sorrow and even embrace some joy. Nevertheless, we would not be here without our martyrs’ devotion and sacrifice. Your solid skeletons and impassioned blood crushed the old world as you ignited the fire of youth with your bodies. A single spark is sufficient to start a prairie fire. We will continue to struggle, to go forward, so that your ideals may come to fruition. Rest in peace, dear martyrs! Do not worry, people’s comrades! We will walk on the road you guide us along, to continue the unaccomplished path of peaceful unification with our tears, our songs, and our steps! May your souls always stay with us! [Autumn Worship address 2012]

Suffice to say, Huzhuhui’s commemoration publicly defines the past as a time of political struggle. They celebrate the deceased as individuals who ‘sacrificed themselves’ for their political cause. They make it clear that the persecution was unjust, for no one, even if they opposed the authorities, should be treated thus. While acknowledging the persecution, the speeches focus on carrying on the political struggle. For Huzhuhui, the conflict between socialism and capitalism remained unreconciled when the Cold War ended. The rise of the PRC in East Asia and the tension between the PRC and ROC in Taiwan have encouraged these survivors to continue advocating their cause, as some of them still look forward to the day when the PRC and the ROC will unify under a socialist regime. As claimed in a documentary

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21 See complete text in Chinese in appendix 1.

22 See complete text in Chinese in appendix 2.
their past persecution has paved the way for the coming revolution. As the founding member, Lin Shu-Yan (1926–2012), states in the documentary:

What kind of death will not be perceived as wasting one's life? There is a viewpoint, perhaps I speak presumptuously, that has led us to pay the price for the development of our society. We had no alternative but to sacrifice ourselves…

Lin’s tone in the film is very confident. As a former political prisoner who was imprisoned for 34 years and seven months, he is authoritative, for he has been the mentor for the Taiwanese socialists. Huzhuhui has developed a discourse that encourages White Terror survivors to view their present-day life as a continuation of the past struggle.

The competing discourse developed by left-wing pro-unification survivors is complicated. For them, the past was a time of political struggle and persecution, which leads them to define themselves as surviving political dissidents and witnesses to past atrocities. Both perspectives are irreducible. Meanwhile, through their commemorations and cultural products, they situate their present-day lives as a continuation of their struggle under the KMT regime.

While Huzhuhui publicly characterises the past as a time of political struggle, the TVCA and WTVA also host a non-official annual memorial service to commemorate the Taiyuan Incident discussed in the previous section, although they focus specifically on this incident rather than honouring all pro-independence victims of the White Terror. The latter two associations also refer to those they are commemorating as ‘martyrs’, evoking a revolutionary spirit. As survivors of the Taiyuan Incident recall:

Of course, they sacrificed themselves in the name of independence.
(Transcript of JL 2013, 12).

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23 The documentary is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEOHBrq5gUg

24 JL was convicted of treason in 1963 for pro-independence activities. He claims to have participated in the Taiyuan rebellion, and witnessed all the proceedings that followed. For further details see 高金郎（1991）泰
I do not want to talk about this, for too many people have reviewed the incident. [...] It was a revolution, yet it failed. Those who sacrificed themselves were martyrs for Taiwanese independence. Apart from this, I do not want to say anything further (Transcript of JC 2012, 12).

In fact, at the moment, I thought the chance of success was uncertain. It was too difficult to plot a revolution during our imprisonment. You see, it was not enough merely to rely on us political prisoners. We did not have a reliable backup force outside the prison. We had nothing. As we conspired and rehearsed our rebellion, the KMT troops and government gathered all of a sudden, so how could we fight against that? We did think we had to do it even if we had no chance. No one feared death. We all prepared our wills (Transcript of MO 2013, 11).

Hitherto, the Taiyuan Incident has been perceived as a failed conspiracy since it was first publicly mentioned in the late 1990s, but the authorities have never recognised the five executed individuals, and rarely mention the incident within the official discourse. The five who were executed did not fit the definition of ‘political victim’ according to that discourse. Rather, they were classified as enemies of the state, for they conspired and carried out a rebellion. On the one hand, we see the authorities continuing to apologise to, and commemorate, generic ‘victims’ of the White Terror. On the other, we see Huzhuhui, TVCA, and WTVA commemorating their fallen comrades in ways that acknowledge the political struggle of the time and recognise them as martyrs for their resistance to the government.

To sustain the dominance of the official transitional justice discourse, the Taiwanese authorities continue to ignore the significant number of socialists who died in the White Terror, as well as those who survived. This political condition consolidates the collective hatred of socialists in present-day Taiwan, and underpins the official discourse’s avoidance of legal responsibility for the past atrocities against

MO was born in 1940 and was a co-defendant with JL in 1963. Unlike JL, who has been aggressive in advocating independence after their release in the 1980s, MO has kept a low profile. He is strongly committed to the independence cause. Only after the DPP came to power in 2000 did MO begin to appear in public and advocate independence public.
them, in terms of the Compensation Act and Foundation. The non-official events organised by the survivors show that Taiwan’s transitional justice discourse does not tally with the survivors’ perspective on their past: a past defined by resistance to the KMT regime.

‘Certainly, I am a political dissident still’

As noted above, the three associations were founded on the basis of explicit political causes and continue to influence survivors’ current political activities. Transitional justice has become one of the primary fields in which survivors from different associations compete for the power to define the past and advocate their enduring political causes. White Terror survivors are the strongest representatives of the pro-unification and pro-independence causes in post-Cold War Taiwan.

For instance, in 1989, Huzhuhui worked with other pro-unification forces in Taiwan, such as the China Tide Association (in Chinese, 夏潮聯合會), to establish the Labour Party (in Chinese, 勞動黨), which is now the primary leftist pro-unification party in Taiwan. Meanwhile, pro-independence survivors pursue their political aims by supporting pro-independence candidates in parliamentary and presidential elections. In the democratic era, these actors retain their identity as members of the political opposition by actively engaging in political affairs. As JL describes it, ‘I am still an adversary as I am fighting for Taiwanese independence’.

In any society emerging from a transformation of power relations, discrepancies among viewpoints of the past are typically encountered. In this regard, the official discourse concerning a nation’s past tends to be privileged but also controversial. As Huyssen states (2011: 615), ‘just as the nation once was, and still provides, the framework for rights, it also served as the privileged space for collective memory’. National or regional institutions retain their ability to articulate human rights standards and the content of the collective memory. The case of Taiwan corresponds to Huyssen’s observation. At the domestic level, it is the former perpetrators who initiated the scheme of transitional justice, which constrains the official discourse and precludes the KMT from being held legally responsible for its past atrocities. At the global level, the continued hegemony of the Western powers in the post-Cold War era makes it difficult for their client nations to come to terms with government atrocities.

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26 Transcript of JL 2013, 12.
that took place with U.S. support. Accordingly, survivors of the White Terror in Taiwan are struggling for their own reconciliation with society, as transitional justice is not only about reconciliation between government and survivors of injustice. For survivors, the latter task may be the fundamental premise of the scheme in Taiwan, but earning recognition from present-day Taiwanese society is more crucial. And advocating their enduring political causes is a way of claiming for survivors an identity as political actors, or even as a political opposition.

While the post-Cold War era has not been able to guarantee the universality of human rights, it has also seen the perpetuation of the Cold War’s ideological clashes. To my interviewees, the discourse on the past matters because it affects the extent to which a society will admit to past atrocities. They are concerned with what W. James Booth describes as ‘the intimacy of memory’s bond with justice, not as obsessional or as a syndrome, but as a face of justice itself’ (Booth, 2001). Thus, as socialists continue to be viewed as a political threat in Taiwan, these persecuted elder socialists struggle over the debate around the past, and their determined political involvement reveals their current lives as a perpetuation of the past political conflict.

Discussion: competing transitional justice discourses
The identity of victim is developed within a specific social context. As Richard Quinney argues (1972: 314–23), a victim represents a conception of reality as well as an object of events, which means that the concept of a victim is a matter of social construction. During the White Terror, the government aimed to incite a pervasive antipathy towards the Chinese communists, insomuch as the latter posed the primary threat to the KMT regime in that era:

We who are conscientious patriots should firm up our will and thoughts and be vigilant in combatting the traitors of Chinese communism. Everyone should be aware of the outcome of being beguiled by these traitors, as they not only jeopardise individuals but also endanger the country. Hence, people who are unaware of the existence of traitors can be said to commit suicide. In addition, we should notice that: the measures of anti-communism are not exclusive to Taiwan, but exist as emergency tools for all democracies. Our people should fearlessly report any potential traitors to protect our own interests and happiness, and the
The statement above is the text of a bulletin issued in 1951 by the Taiwan Garrison Command, the primary institution in charge of the practice of the White Terror in Taiwan. The political threat of socialism was artificially manipulated by the KMT regime. As time passes, people may perceive that we are living in an era of emancipation, which, in Joan Scott’s words, denotes ‘the lifting of restraints imposed by superior physical force or legal obligation’. As Scott puts it, ‘to be emancipated is to get out from under, to be able to press ahead with no obstacles in one’s path, to enjoy some measure of unencumbered thought or movement, from a situation of constraint to one of some kind of freedom’ (2012: 148–149). Yet this does not imply that a restriction no longer exists, as survivors, still in confrontation with the government, must recount their persecuted past within the framework of current power relations.

Thus far, the Taiwanese government has claimed that the system of transitional justice is being conducted in accordance with the UDHR of 1948, as successive administrations have apologised for acts perpetrated in the past and recognised those who were persecuted. However, a claim of conformity to the global human rights discourse does not make survivors whole again, because socialism continues to be stigmatised in Taiwan. Whatever degree of democracy prevails in present-day Taiwan, the government nonetheless has its own political agenda. This means that the era of democratisation does not accord everyone an equal right to give voice to the past within the scheme of transitional justice. JC, for example, may be able to speak of his current pro-independence agenda, but often feels reluctant to recount his socialist past. The liberalism on which Taiwan’s democracy is founded is still limited when it comes to reflections on the past. Any political cause or narrative that potentially runs counter to the interests of the current government faces being silenced in the official discourse because, to the Taiwanese authorities, whether KMT or DPP, socialism poses the primary political threat. Accordingly, the competing transitional justice discourses point to lacunae in the scheme of transitional justice in Taiwan.

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27 台灣省保安司令部公告：1951.9.30. For Chinese version, see appendix 3.

Hence, the varying degrees to which my interviewees de-politicise themselves in the official discourse, and the way in which they narrate their past outside it, indicate the irreducibility of the two perspectives of survivors and the authorities. Ever since the concept of political victims was introduced in Taiwan after the Formosa Incident of 1979, survivors have seized the opportunity to voice their past persecution in public. Claiming persecution became the first step in attracting public attention. At that time, no one could have predicted that Taiwan’s system of transitional justice would be so limited in scope. Confronting the limited official transitional justice discourse, survivors’ competing discourses focus on the present as a continuation of the past conflict. Given the field research discussed in this paper, survivors, both socialists and non-socialists, still identify as political actors. They argue over the recognition of their past persecution and fight for their unfulfilled political ideals.

Furthermore, some of my socialist interviewees have recalibrated their political orientation due to socialists having been the primary target of the KMT regime in Taiwan. For example, since the 1950s, JC has maintained his socialist beliefs but supports the cause of independence. As he explains, ‘my political goal is not to become Chinese but to make Taiwan a just nation’. Likewise, VT, the other former socialist of the 1950s, is advocating independence, rarely mentioning his left-wing stance. It is the official discourse that has silenced VT and JC’s insurgent leftist past. Nonetheless, JC’s politics evolved in response to his life experience, especially his witnessing of the horrifying 228 Incident. Meanwhile, VT was intellectually inspired by books on Marxism that he read in Japanese when he was in his senior year of high school in the late 1940s. Thus, they followed different paths to socialism but now, Taiwan’s scheme of transitional justice coincidentally forces both of them to silence their insurgent past in Taiwan society.

Based on my field research, it is clear that not every pro-independence activist of the 1960s was profoundly inspired by socialism. The left wing in Taiwan suffered the most severe political repression during the 1950s; more than 80 percent of the political convictions were against socialists. As AN, my pro-independence informant of the 1960s, explains, ‘of course we hated the KMT regime, but we also

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30 Transcript of VT 2011, 5.
lived under omnipresent anti-socialism’.\textsuperscript{32} AN says it was not until his captivity under the KMT regime that he learned ‘socialism’ from fellow prisoners who were ‘political criminals of the 1950s’. The KMT marshalled all of Taiwanese society into a collective atmosphere of anti-socialism. However, the insurgency never disappeared, for the KMT’s harsh response continually inspired more ‘political enemies’ among the citizens of Taiwan.\textsuperscript{33}

Meanwhile, one should not underestimate the importance of the identity of victims in the scheme of transitional justice. It is the de-politicisation of that identity that points up the flaws in Taiwan’s transitional justice programme, which lacks the nuanced understanding of White Terror survivors that is needed. Reconsideration of their identity assists us in examining how the current power relations define the past. It shows how the identity of victims not only revisits the past repression, but evokes persistent mental suffering that colours the survivors’ present. Also, there are competing discourses, which present in various forms. Some seek from transitional justice an opportunity to pursue their still unrealised political ideals, some merely appeal for recognition of their past suffering, and others seek to set the record straight with regard to the nature of the political conflicts of the past.

When it comes to the operation of transitional justice in new democracies, one of the basic requirements is that past abuses be recognised and steps be taken to address the harms that were suffered. Although, as the ICTJ suggests, systemic human rights violations affect not just the direct victims, but society as a whole, this paper has focused only on the relationship and interactions between successive ROC governments and the survivors of the White Terror. As discussed, transitional justice is an umbrella term referring to various arrangements aimed at addressing systematic human rights violations; different nations have incorporated either retributive or restorative justice, or both, in their transitional justice projects. In terms of healing the victims’ psychological injuries and preventing recurrence of systematic human rights violations, the ICTJ points to the validity of both approaches. Taiwan, however, has engaged in only a limited form of restorative justice.

Although White Terror victims are finding some measure of solace in the continued pursuit of their political causes, and notwithstanding the restorative justice.

\textsuperscript{32} Transcript of AN 2013,12.

\textsuperscript{33} I was told by every one of my informants that it was the KMT’s brutal tactics that fuelled their resistance and made it their life’s work.
some have obtained in the form of financial compensation and rehabilitation of individual reputations, it is clear that those interviewed for this research still suffer from anxiety and mental torment:

I know it is all finished. Yet, I do sometimes feel as if I will be oppressed again when I see the government act like this (Transcript of SC 2013, 10).

Only when the government starts to confess, will I start to believe that I will no longer be arrested or imprisoned (Transcript of TZ 2013, 11).\(^{34}\)

The KMT was evil then, and it is still evil now! They oppressed us, and even now I cannot accuse the KMT of their atrocities. How can that be? (Transcript of RJ 2013, 4).\(^{35}\)

Although a full recognition of my informants’ past persecution implies an alleviation of survivors’ emotion life, the official discourse as currently constituted increases their mental burden. As a result, they may struggle for recognition of their past and present experiences, while also haunted by the potential recurrence of repression and the fear of further persecution.

Survivors’ discourses not only concern how past conflicts are continued in the present; more profoundly, they concern the meaning of survivorhood. My interviewees are individuals who were persecuted and struggled in the past. Now, they negotiate, cooperate, and even compromise with the authorities, but also advocate and fight for their political ideals in the non-official domain. Hence, the uniqueness of the identity of victims in Taiwan has less to do with the evocation of their past repression by the government repression than with the challenge of reconciling Taiwanese society with their revolutionary past. White Terror survivors are not merely a living reminder of the past; they show that a newly democratic society may still silence some voices—in this case, the voices of socialists.

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\(^{34}\) TZ was convicted of treason for pro-independence activities in 1969.

\(^{35}\) RJ was born in 1938 and was convicted of treason for pro-independence activities in 1962. He was also the co-defendant of SC.
Conclusion

Democratisation never guarantees reconciliation, either within a nation or among nations. Conflict may persist in the form of discursive or ideological struggles, if not armed confrontation. Throughout the analysis herein, I have argued that the present is not a time of global reconciliation. As borne out by my field research and the work of other scholars, we are living instead in an era of continuing ideological conflict. Democracy and liberalism are ideologies, which, by virtue of the hegemony of the Western powers, are secured and realising an expansion. Ironically, against this background, the group of socialist survivors of the White Terror remains suppressed and their power to voice their past within the scheme of transitional justice remains limited. Thus, the memory of the past remains contentious.

The fact that the memory of the White Terror is contested both by its survivors and by the authorities suggests that the essential conflict to which the White Terror responded has found a way to persist into the present. This paper has shown that there are two conflicts from the viewpoint of survivors—one over the acknowledgment of their persecution and the other over the reality of their ongoing political agitation. Survivors object to their de-politicisation within the official discourse because their identity is, itself, political, and they are struggling for the power to define the past. It is true that democratisation in Taiwan has served to provide survivors with more leeway for public expression. However, an incomplete recognition of survivors’ past persecution cannot compel the KMT authorities to take legal responsibility for the past atrocities, and constraints on their power to voice the past impedes survivors from being rehabilitated from their status as second-class citizens, especially if they espouse socialism, which is still regarded as a political threat in Taiwan. Accordingly, my interviewees’ competing discourses show that transitional justice projects do not necessarily reverse the injustices of the past, especially when persistent power relations remain in play.
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（53）法瀋字第〇〇四六號
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(57) 五十七年度初特字第 5、15、24、35 號
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Appendix I

The complete text of the Autumn Worship 2009
View online: http://chinatide.net/?p=180

2009 年 10 月中秋，台灣地區政治受難人互助會、台灣地區戒嚴時期政治事件處理協會的同志們、烈士遺族以及各界代表 謹備鮮花素果祭獻五〇年代白色恐怖犧牲者的英靈。我們懷著無比崇敬的心情，從全島各地齊聚在馬場町，來緬懷先烈們英雄的事蹟，是你們用生命見證了民族分離對峙的痛苦，是你們的意志凝聚了中華兒女的愛國心，是你們的社會主義理想開啟了我們前進的道路，是你們的偉大抱負構建了一個民主統一、繁榮昌盛的民族願景。

今年是新中國建政六十週年，也是兩岸隔海對峙的六十週年。回想六十年前的歷史場景，在那個交織著戰爭與革命、黑暗與光明的歷史轉折點，你們繼承了日據時期在台灣從事反帝民族解放運動的先輩們光榮的愛國主義傳統，自願自覺的承擔了中國人民解放運動的時代使命，為了終結國家內戰，完成民族統一，義無反顧的投入新民主主義革命的歷史洪流，最終獻出了自己寶貴的生命。你們的苦難集中表現了海峽兩岸中國人民的苦難，是百年來民族解放運動中無數的民族苦難的組成部份。你們的人生是如此的短暫，而它的價值卻是那麼的光明燦爛；你們燃盡自己的身軀，為我們照亮前進的方向；你們用鮮血灌溉土壤，讓草兒長得更綠，讓花兒開得更紅，讓海峽兩岸的年輕一代更加成長、茁壯。同志們，安息吧！通過你們的犧牲、通過你們的鮮血、通過你們的抱負和理想，喚起了一代又一代知識青年的覺悟，也鍛鍊出一個日漸茁壯的隊伍。你們尚未完成的一切事業 就由我們年輕的一代來承擔。

今天，我們在這裡要告慰我們的先烈們：偉大的中國人民解放運動，雖然走過了許多迂迴曲折的道路，但在祖國人民的共同努力下，正一年又一年的朝向繁榮富強的道路前進。如今，一個面向現代化、面向世界、面向未來的社會主義新中國，已經取得了百年未有的國際地位，相信再經過一代人，至多是兩代人的努力，一個富強、民主、文明、和諧的社會主義現代化中國，將巍然屹立在世界東方。另一方面，冷戰結束，特別是晚近的伊拉克侵略戰爭和金融風暴，在在暴露了美國霸權主義已經是強弩之末，過去因為帝國主義的操弄而長期分離對峙的兩岸歷史，也終將走完它的最後一頁。如今，兩岸關係已從「分離對峙」轉移到「和平發展」，為最終實現祖國的和平統一奠定基礎的階段；台灣人民也在歷經了數十年的痛苦磨難，自覺的走向與「台獨」狂想相互對立的方向。當然，歷史的經驗告訴我們，黎明來臨前總還有黑暗，我們面前的道路還很漫長，也不平坦。我們會繼承前輩們的遺志和教訓，保持謙虛、謹慎、不驕、不躁的作風，加強團結，艱苦奮鬥，在你們用鮮血照亮的道路上繼續前進，為建設一個真正的獨立、自由、民主、統一與富強的新中國做出應有貢獻。
安息吧！死難的同志，別再為祖國擔憂！
你流著血照亮著路，我們繼續往前走。

台灣地區政治受難人互助會全體同志暨家屬
2009/10/18
Appendix II

The complete text of the Autumn Worship 2012

《犇報》第 45 期 (ChiaWan Ben Post Issue/ number: 45)

2012 年 10 月 27 日，秋風颯颯的時節，台灣地區政治受難人互助會、台灣地區戒嚴時期政治事件處理協會的會員同志、烈士遺族以及兩岸和平發展論壇相關團體的各界代表，齊聚馬場町，以最沉痛肅穆的心情，致祭無數在白色恐怖所犧牲的人民英雄。

從日據時代開始，台灣就有無數的先烈前輩投入反帝、反殖民、反壓迫的民族解放鬥爭，與大陸人民共同譜寫了近代中國最為堅苦，卻無比豪壯的英雄贊歌。1940 年代，當中國人民迎來了反法西斯戰爭的偉大勝利，內戰與冷戰的陰霾卻隨之籠罩在海峽兩岸的上空。1950 年代初，美國第七艦隊強行駛入台灣海峽，在違反中國人民的意志之下，公然介入中國內戰。帝國主義的幽靈披了一件邪惡的新衣，徘徊在美麗的寶島，陰魂不散。面對接踵而來的獨裁與壓迫，英勇的台灣人民繼承了日據時代以來愛國主義的光榮傳統，懷抱著社會主義與民族統一的崇高理想，前仆後繼，將一生只許綻放一次的青春，澆灌給他們摯愛的、包含台灣在內廣袤的中國土地。

魯迅先生說：「什麼是路？就是從沒路的地方踐踏出來的，從只有荊棘的地方開闢出來的。」我們的先烈前輩與人民英雄用他們的雙手，披荊斬棘，為我們開闢出了一條康莊大道。「中國的春天生長在戰鬥裡，在戰鬥裡鼓舞著全人類」，先烈前輩英勇的戰鬥，鼓舞著我們，讓我們充滿無比的勇氣與信心迎接海峽兩岸遲來的春天。

一百餘年來，中國人民遭受著恥辱、血淚和酸辛，多少英雄烈士為之流血獻身。終於，革命激流沖垮了重重障礙，改換了天地，兩岸中國人民頭上升起了一輪紅日！中華民族任人欺凌的時代已經一去不復返了！2012 年我們在台灣歡欣鼓舞地見證了中國人「上九天攬月，下五洋捉鱉」，「神舟九號」與「天宮一號」成功進行了手控對接，中國的女性也航向了浩瀚的太空；我國深海載人潛艇「蛟龍號」，成功下潛海底超過七千米，突破了世界紀錄。我國獨立發展、自主運行的「北斗衛星導航系統」，已經在今年覆蓋了亞太地區，即將在 2020 年覆蓋全球。雖然先烈前輩無法親歷祖國的壯盛與強大，但是你們的理想與精神還活著——追求民族的獨立與尊嚴，不願再受人挨打，為著亞洲與世界的和平充實著自己。
兩岸雖然被迫隔絕超過了六十年，但形勢變動快速，尤其是 2008 年之後，兩岸終於露現了久違的黎明與曙光。先烈前輩們是國共內戰的見證人，而今天我們代替先烈前輩們見證兩岸的和平發展。兩岸民間的交流逐漸步入常軌，民衆穿梭於兩岸求學就業。在和平的局勢之下，兩岸攜手合作，共同實現中華民族偉大的復興！

雖然外在形勢仍然陰惡，帝國主義勢力仍虎視眈眈地掣肘中國。但是從近來南海與釣魚島的局勢來看，中國人民展現出了勇氣與信心——中國的事情，必須由中國人自己解決。先烈前輩們，請不要再為祖國擔憂，我們謹記著你們的遺志，我們堅信民族的和解與團結將會有更進步的發展，繼續為《兩岸和平協議》的落實而努力。民族的和平統一、兩岸中國人民的親切聚首，也指日可待。

今天我們嚴肅的站在這裡，心情已不再悲傷，甚至懷抱著些許破曉之際的喜悅。但是，沒有先烈前輩們的犧牲與奉獻，不會有現在。舊世界的金城，是你們沉重的屍骨壓垮的，是你們洶湧的血衝倒的。你們用自己的身軀，點燃了青春的火燄，“星星之火，可以燎原”。我們還要鬥爭，還要前進，讓你們的理想，開更多鮮豔的花，結更多的果。

安息吧，尊敬的烈士！別擔憂，人民的同志！我們將踏著你們指引的路，用我們的眼淚，用我們的歌，用我們的腳印，持續著未完的兩岸和平發展與和平統一之路！願你們的英靈永遠和我們同在！

「為了反對內外敵人、爭取民族獨立和人民自由幸福，在歷次鬥爭中犧牲的人民英雄們永垂不朽！」
Appendix III

The complete version of the Taiwan Garrison Command announcement on 3rd September 1951

台灣省政府與台灣省保安司令部，昨（廿九）日書告我愛國同胞，促請大家檢舉匪諜，延錄原文如下：

親愛的同胞們：

政府當局為了鼓勵檢舉匪諜，特地在報上公佈了一項獎賞辦法，並規定自九月廿一日起至十二月卅一日止為告發匪諜及嫌疑份子的期限。我們凡是有良心血性的愛國者，每個人都應提高警覺，澄清思想，堅定意志，勿受匪諜的欺騙利用，大家應知道受匪諜欺騙利用的後果，不但危害了個人也同時危害了國家，因此凡是不注意防諜的人，就等於甘心自殺，其次，我們應當注意的是：檢肅匪諜不僅是今日台灣的措施，也是所有自由民主國家當前特別注重的一個緊急措施，所以同胞們為了自身的利益，大家的幸福，國家世界的安危，都應該趕快勇敢地檢舉匪諜。

後面就是「檢舉匪諜獎勵辦法」的摘要，請嚴密注意這個關係大家禍福的事情，大家通力合作，排除這些壞人。

台灣省政府　台灣省保安司令部同啟　民國四十年九月
Appendix IV

List of the research participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Conviction</th>
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