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Censorship and Publication Control in Early Post-War Taiwan: Procedures and Practices

Táňa DLUHOŠOVÁ

Abstract: This article explores how state institutions and party organs of the Kuomintang used various means of exercising power and projecting authority in order to shape the literary scene and literary production in Taiwan during the early post-war period (1945–1949). Censorship is examined from two complementary perspectives. First, integrating the Taiwanese case into a broader political and social context, the presentation focuses on the legal framework of the publishing law of Republican China and on regulations propagated in local official bulletins. Second, the article analyses censorship as a practice and set of procedures. This second part is based on the archival files of Taiwan Historica, which holds official documents from both early post-war governments. The archival material unveils some of the motivations behind censorship practices, and helps us to understand chosen strategies to legitimise sociocultural norms.

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Keywords: Taiwan, censorship, Publication Law, control of press, sociology of literature, Kuomintang

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Introduction

Although censorship has been a much-discussed topic in Chinese Studies, significant recent scholarship focuses on contemporary China. Discussions mainly revolve around such issues as freedom of speech, control of the Internet, the power of new media, commercialisation, and media consumption, but also around propaganda, misinformation, and fake news. These topics are viewed through the lenses of Political Science, Media Studies, and the Social Sciences (e.g. Stockman 2012; Roberts 2018). Scholarship on earlier periods is, however, rather scarce (Führer 2003). The post-war period on both sides of the Taiwan Strait was infamous for the authoritarianism of the regimes in power, and archives containing relevant historical materials are still not completely accessible to scholars. Histories of the Chinese press summarise the main points formulated in laws and regulations (Wu 2011; Wang and Wu 2008), but there is, to my knowledge, no existing scholarship – either in English or Chinese – that analyses in detail the mechanisms of censorship in the late Republican and late post-war periods both in Taiwan and China. As for the war and early post-war periods, censorship is usually discussed alongside propaganda activities of the party state. The scholarship thus rarely touches upon specifics, and is, furthermore, geographically focused predominantly on mainland China (e.g. MacKinnon 1997; Gao 2005; Wu 2011).

This article,¹ based on an exploratory investigation of archival materials, takes a historical approach, and aims to fill some of the blank spots in the history of literary censorship in the late Republican period. It will investigate censorship and the control of periodicals in early post-war Taiwan (1945–1949), a unique period in the island's history. Taiwan – in 1945 still a newly acquired territory – was unlike any other Chinese province. In terms of certain administrative regulations it was treated like the formerly Japanese-occupied regions of the north-east; at the same time, it exhibited historical specificities that

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had to be addressed when the new political order in Taiwan was introduced. Taiwan can thus be regarded as an example of how censorship was introduced after the war in China and, simultaneously, as a subject in its own right.

The study will discuss political censorship from two different perspectives. First, integrating the Taiwanese case into a broader political and social context, it will focus on the legal regulations under which censorship operated. Second, it will analyse censorship and the control of publications from the perspective of their practice and functions. It will outline the changing dynamics between state and Party organs, the main actors in the process of censorship, as represented by members of different interest groups. These actors assumed their activities in Taiwanese publishing and politics under conditions of an increasingly authoritarian Kuomintang (KMT, Guomindang) party state, mingling, interacting, and communicating with each other – and reshaping both the literary field and the field of power in the process. The case studies presented here are drawn from 43 archival files of Taiwan Historica (台灣文獻館, *Taiwan wenxian-guan*), which holds official documents from both early post-war governments. The archival material offers glimpses of the various motivations underlying censorship, and exemplifies the norm-legitimation strategies of that time.

Study of Censorship and the Taiwanese Case

Literary scholars discuss censorship within the framework of the sociology of literature, which studies the social conditions of literary production and the social implications of literature. Bourdieu's contribution (1993, 1996) drew particular attention to the relationship between the field of power and the literary field, which is relevant for the study of censorship. The understanding of censorship and control of publication varies depending on how they are contextualised. While some scholars may understand censorship in a dialectical relationship with canon formation, and thus as a crucial means of safeguarding the permanence of a body of authoritative writings (Assmann and Assmann 1987), followers of the “new censorship” theory see it as a set of immanent rules that structure the literary field at a particular historical moment (e.g. Bourdieu 1982). Others see writers as oppressed by the powerful outside the literary field, who use censor-

ship as a tool to reinforce favoured social norms and world views. There are various degrees of control of expression exercised by those in power: be it the state, the church, the army, or a particular interest group. In terms of concrete implementation, censorship is divided into two categories: pre-publication and post-publication. With regards to its target, there is direct censorship – targeting a specific work or author – and indirect censorship – targeting all works contravening a given norm. As Aulich (1988: 180) noticed, in addition to censorship these outside powers can also use propaganda, patronage, and the deliberate fostering of elite groups who will implement ideological norms; they can prioritise certain types of material or ideology and suppress others, as well as control the distribution of social prestige. Aulich sees

literature (as a social practice) and censorship (as a control of this practice) essentially connected to the meaning of literary communication in a collective order and for this order. (Aulich 1988: 181)

Censorship, as a process and practice, is thus embedded in a certain sociocultural function that can – and should be, in Aulich's view – analysed either from a diachronic or synchronic perspective so as to elucidate the collective order of which it forms a part. Even changes in legislative frameworks can shed light on the communicative structures within which the agents acted.

Censorship and control of the press can be viewed as separate procedures, but structurally they both represent external interventions in literary production. Moreover, these processes are intertwined and should be viewed as complex phenomena. Aulich (1988: 215–217) proposes the following analytical model of censorship: as control of the literary production process and targeting authors; as control of literary distribution and targeting the multipliers of literary production (publishers, editors, printers, and the like) who are obliged to follow laws and regulations; and, finally, as the control of literary diffusion, marginalising heterogeneous world views in existing discourses (for example by ridiculing them).

The Taiwanese case embodies specifically the second type of censorship, in which the state imposes its control over the publishing industry to establish new ground rules – ones with which authors must conform in order to get their work published. In light of this argumentation, and like Bourdieu (1993, 1996), I thus treat the literary field as a dynamic structure created by relationships between the

various members of it. But, for the purposes of this article, I enlarge this group of agents to include all those who were involved in publishing.

In addition to the above-mentioned typology, Aulich (1988: 218–220) also recognises three categories of sociocultural norm that underpin any censorship: constitutive norms prohibit any divergence from the prevailing ideological orthodoxy; regulative norms allow some variation yet demand general adherence to the prevailing ideology; and, finally, functional norms are subject to contingent situational requirements. Interestingly, the Taiwanese practice was not officially tied to any ideology and represented rather the functional category of legitimisation of sociocultural norms.

The early post-war period in Taiwan is delimited by the victory of Allied forces over Japan, which led to the retrocession of Taiwan to the Republic of China, and by the retreat of the Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) to Taiwan. These years can be divided into two sub-periods. The first is defined by the rule of Governor Chen Yi (陳儀, 1883–1950), whose Taiwan Provincial Executive Administrative Office (台灣省行政長官公署, *Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu*; hereafter, TPEAO) resembled the Japanese colonial government in terms of its structure and activities. Rising dissatisfaction among the Taiwanese about how the island nation was governed by mainlanders, who allowed locals only limited control over their own affairs, triggered a mass revolt – known as the “Incident of February 28” (hereafter, 2.28 Incident) – in 1947. Chen Yi and the leading representatives of the TPEAO established a new social and cultural framework, an extension of norms current on the mainland. As will be explained later, this framework was based on Republican legislation – but did exhibit some local particularities as well. Derived from the existing Publication Law (出版法, *chuban fa*) of the Republic of China, it defined the main state and Party organs participating in the control of publications and censorship, whose jurisdictions overlapped in these two years.

After the 2.28 Incident, existing social and administrative structures in Taiwan were reshaped in various ways. Taiwanese hopes of attaining some degree of self-governance were suppressed together with the actual uprising following the 2.28 Incident, and many local Taiwanese political and cultural elites were silenced (Lai, Myers, and Wei 1991; Phillips 2003). Because alleged Communist involvement

was presented to Chiang Kai-shek as the cause of the 2.28 Incident (Chen 1995), both the revolt itself and subsequent events also have to be viewed from the perspective of the ongoing power struggle over China between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While the year 1946 was dominated by a series of peace talks to which neither side was genuinely committed, 1947 witnessed the start of the civil war in China.

Chen Yi's government was replaced by the Taiwan Provincial Government (台灣省政府, *Taiwan sheng zhengfu*) in the spring of 1947. This marks the beginning of the second sub-period of the early post-war era. In the early months of 1947, when the new constitution was reinforced, the central government was reorganised. Through the establishment of the Information Office (新聞局, *Xinwen ju*), state organs were entrusted with the implementation of censorship regulations. It was the 6 April 1949 that would see the arrest of many young Taiwanese writers and intellectuals (Lan 2000, 2001). Later in the same year, most central governmental institutions were moved to Taiwan to evade Communist troops. Furthermore, the declaration of martial law – which would remain in force until July 1987 – marked the beginning of the “White Terror.”

Early post-war censorship followed Republican laws and practices. Hockx's monograph on the Republican-era literary field provides a summary introduction to the problem (Hockx 2003: 222–251). Other studies mention censorship as a complex practice in which various state and Party organs participated, with the result that their jurisdictions frequently overlapped. Probably the first author to point out the system's complexity was Lin Yutang (1936). He discussed how control varied across time, depending on individual actors and institutions indicating overlapping – at times conflicting – interests and responsibilities (169–170, 174–175). MacKinnon (1997: 15–17) provides examples of state interference with press freedom. Yin (2014) briefly introduces institutions dealing with propaganda and censorship in the late 1920s and the 1930s, both in civil and military departments of government (196–198, 207–208).

So far, not much has been written on censorship implemented in the post-war period while the civil war was ongoing on the mainland – perhaps due to political sensitivities. Censorship and a general hardening of state control are more commonly associated with the 1950s, when the state asserted its grip on literary and cultural production by

formulating new cultural policies (e.g. Cai 2010). In their discussions of the early post-war period, scholars tend to focus on the first two years of Chen Yi's government. Huang (2007: 65–79) dedicates one chapter to the regulations and organisation of the Propaganda Committee of the Taiwan Provincial Executive Administrative Office (臺灣省行政長官公署宣傳委員會, *Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhanguan gongshu*, *Xuanchuan weiyuanhui*; hereafter, Propaganda Committee). He (1996, 1997) mentions a regulation that forced all periodicals to register with the Propaganda Committee in 1946, which I will discuss in more detail below. Cai (2005) is interested in state control of publications through enforced registration, and investigates the economic and political effects of state supervision over publishing. To complement these studies, I will now describe censorship procedures and outline the relationships between Party and state organisations – two aspects which, so far, have been neglected in the scholarship.

Censorship from the Perspective of Law and Regulations

The Publication Law, which underwent a number of changes over the years, provided regulations for all printed materials. The first Publication Law was introduced in December 1914 by the Beiyang government. It was preceded by the more narrowly focused Regulations for Newspapers (報紙條例, *Baozhi tiaoli*) in April 1914, and followed by the Regulation for the Administration of the Printing Industry (管理印刷業條例, *Guanli yinshuaye tiaoli*) in 1919. In 1930, the Republican government issued a new Publication Law that defined terms such as “printed material,” “author,” and “publisher” (Shao 1930: 3). All periodicals had to be officially registered before going to press, and two copies of each publication had to be sent to the Ministry of the Interior (內政部, *Neizheng bu*). Applications were processed by the local administrative units (地方長官公署, *difang zhanguan gongshu*), a practice followed later as well.

The 1930 Publication Law indicated what sort of content was not permitted: namely, anything diverging from the KMT party line and the Three People's Principles (三民主義, *sanmin zhuyi*). Lin Yutang (1936: 175), referring to the Nanjing Censorship Bureau, points out that censors were also supposed to suppress news items that were unfavourable to China's interests, that could incite riots, or that

touched upon military affairs. On 8 July 1937 the Republican government issued a new version of the Publication Law, including the Implementation Regulations (施行細則, *shixing xize*) (Reprint PC-TPEAO 1947). According to the first and second articles herein, the law applied to all printed material produced by mechanical printing plates or chemical printing. Printed material was divided into three subcategories: i) newspapers; ii) journals; and, iii) books and other printed materials. Article 18 of the Publication Law specified that books had to include certain information, such as the author, publisher, printing company, and date and place of publication. But it was more particular about periodicals (Articles 9–17). Obligatory registration applied to all printed material, and Art. 8 stipulated the institutions to which a copy of each publication should be sent: beside the Ministry of the Interior, these included the Department of Propaganda of the KMT's Central Executive Committee (中國國民黨中央執行委員會宣傳部, *Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang chixing weiyuanhui Xuanchuan bu*; hereafter, KMT's Propaganda Department), the local government, the National Library, and the Library of the Executive Yuan. The last two institutions were probably intended to function as repositories for all printed material published in China. The first two institutions, by contrast, were responsible for reviewing content. Neither the Publication Law nor the Implementation Regulations, however, stipulated which institution was responsible for what kind of review process. The 1937 mainland Chinese version of the Publication Law was introduced to Taiwan after retrocession in 1945.

On 24 October 1947, after a year of discussions, a new Publication Law including Implementation Regulations was passed at an interim meeting of the Executive Yuan (行政院臨時會, *Xingzheng yuan Linshibui*). The new law reflected public discourse demanding the separation of Party and state, the application of constitutional law, and democratisation. As a result, the new law excluded KMT organs from the process of publication control (Wu 2011: 419).

Although the Publication Law applied to all printed material, the following passages will focus mainly on periodicals. Due to the economic crisis resulting, inter alia, in a lack of paper and the chaotic nationalisation of Japanese printing companies, book production was almost completely monopolised by the Establishment. Periodicals, on the other hand, became the main print medium for both state and private organisations (Cai 2005: 223–228, 230–239). According to

PC-TPEAO (1946b) and He Yilin (1996, 1997), there were altogether more than 100 registered periodicals (78 journals and 26 newspapers) before the 2.28 Incident, suggesting that the publishing scene was rather active in this period. Not only for legal reasons, the authorities thus experienced a need to exercise control over the industry and so introduced new related measures.

Publication and Its Control in Taiwan, 1945–1947

The process of publication control was organised on the provincial level. In the two years after the war, the Propaganda Committee was responsible for the control of published material. Its agenda was to guarantee “reporting of the truth” (報導真相, *baodao zhenxiang*) and the “harmonisation of public sentiment” (調洽輿情, *diao qia yuqing*) (Xia 1945a). In practice, it was responsible for the control of the media – both print and broadcast – to ensure that they conveyed suitable information and implemented cultural policies aiming at the sinicisation of the local population (Huang 1997; Chen 2002; PC-TPEAO 1946a: 29; Huang 2007: 69). Within the ecology of public communication in Taiwan, censorship and propaganda were thus two sides of the same coin.

On 18 December 1945 Xia Taosheng (夏濤聲, 1889–1968), the head of the Propaganda Committee, published a proclamation in the *Bulletin of the Taiwan Provincial Executive Administrative Office* (台灣省行政長官公署報告, *Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu baogao*; hereafter, *Bulletin 1*). He ordered all periodicals active before 25 November 1945 to register with the city and county governments within 20 days of the announcement. The announcement also listed the kind of information to be provided in the application, as stipulated in Article 9 of the Publication Law. The required items included:

- the title of the periodical;
- the organisation of the publishing house;
- basic economic data about the publishing house, such as starting capital;
- publication frequency;
- the address of both the publishing house and the printing company; and,
- the name, age, professional experience, and address of both the publisher and the editor.

It also reprinted Art. 36, threatening publishers contravening the registration order with a fine of up to CNY 100 (Xia 1945b).

This was the first step in the application of the Publication Law, which marked the beginning of the control of printed material in post-war Taiwan – and was, as such, consistent with the typology of censorship as the control of literary distribution, as described by Aulich (1988). In terms of its function, the procedure was meant to help survey the publication landscape in order to prepare future steps towards stricter control. Nonetheless, it also aimed at excluding certain people from the field (among others, those active within the Japanese regime) and, eventually, at preventing certain content from entering the public sphere.

Far from being restricted to Taiwan, the registration of periodicals was a nationwide practice. Evidence of this can be found in communications by central institutions. For instance, a telegram sent by the Ministry of the Interior published in *Bulletin 1* on 30 August 1946 alerted all provincial governments to unregistered publishers, a pervasive phenomenon after the war, spreading misinformation and called for such periodicals to be immediately closed down (Announcement No. 3). In this respect, it seems, Taiwan was not subject to stricter control than other regions. At the same time, there were local specificities. The most influential regulation with a wide impact on the readership was related to the permission to use Japanese, and its renunciation after one year (25 October 1946; Announcements Nos. 2, 4).

In addition to Xia Taosheng's appeal to register, *Bulletin 1* also carried a notice from the Propaganda Committee, of 18 December 1945, reminding publishers of periodicals to submit the content of news items and advertisements in advance. Additionally, the notice addressed practical matters, demanding that publishers make four copies of news announcements and two copies of advertisements available to the Propaganda Committee before 4 p.m. one day before publication (Xia 1945c: 7). This announcement thus confirms a practice of pre-publication censorship.

Up to March 1946 (Announcement No. 1), there was no clear definition of what constituted prohibited content. Banned topics fell into two groups, intended mainly for books published before the end of the war. The first covered positive attitudes towards the erstwhile Japanese regime, such as praise for the Japanese Imperial Army, en-

couragement of participation in a Pan-Asian War, reports about the Japanese-occupied regions, and support for the Kōminka movement. The second group covered contents harming the contemporary regime under the KMT's leadership. These included defamations of the president and of the Party director-general, misrepresentations of the Three People's Principles, contents detrimental to national interests, and the propagation of methods for committing crimes or any act that obstructed public order. This second group of banned topics confirms the blurred boundaries between the state and the KMT party in this period.

In Taiwan, books with suspicious content left by the Japanese (日人遺毒書籍, *Riren yi du shuji*) had to be withdrawn by booksellers (Announcement No. 1; PC-TPEAO 1946a: 123–124). Members of the Propaganda Committee, accompanied by policemen or military police, were supposed to collect confiscated materials from booksellers before 10 March 1946, to be burned later. Huang (2007: 78) mentions that, by the end of 1946, 1,451 titles had been banned, amounting to some 475,111 copies thereof destroyed. The official report issued by the Propaganda Committee, however, stated that more than 7,300 copies of 836 Japanese books were destroyed in Taibei alone, and slightly more than 100,000 copies thereof in other regions (PC-TPEAO 1946b: 24). The main criteria for these confiscations were ideological concerns about the impact of Japanese war propaganda.

Publication and Its Control, 1947–1949

The situation in Taiwan changed dramatically after the 2.28 Incident. One of the consequences was that Chen Yi was recalled, and his government was replaced by a new provincial one headed by Wei Dao-ming (魏道明, 1899–1978). In April 1947, the Executive Yuan created the Information Office, which took over responsibility for registration from the KMT's Propaganda Department even before the new law was introduced in October 1947. Across on the mainland, the responsibility for censorship was (at least formally) removed from the jurisdiction of the Party and returned to the state. This reorganisation also affected Taiwan, and the Propaganda Committee was renamed, first, as the Information Desk (新聞室, *Xinwen shi*), which was still part of the TPEAO. Afterwards, in August 1947, it became the Information Directorate (新聞處, *Xinwen chu*) under the Taiwan Provin-

cial Government (Announcement No. 8). In March 1948, Wei Dao-ming ordered that within each Secretariat (秘書室, *Mishu shi*) of local government, one official should deal – among other things – with content review. These officials were, however, part of the civil government and not the Party's own chain of command (Announcement No. 13).

With the new administrative arrangement a system of tighter control emerged, which focused on editorial staff. In May 1947, the Ministry of the Interior issued a new form for periodical registrations that required more information on the personal background of the publisher, the editor-in-chief, and, for the first time, the main editor. The Ministry of the Interior expressed a wish to learn more about local conditions, and requested more detailed information on:

- the political ties of the journal;
- the social background of the publishers and main editors;
- the character of the publisher and the editors;
- their predilections (嗜好, *shihao*); and,
- their prior convictions (Announcement No. 7).

Such gathering of personal information resembled secret police practices and pushed what was originally a routine administrative procedure to new levels of invasiveness.

It has to be noted, however, that this change also affected the mainland too. At the same time, the regime was concerned about all regions that had been under Japanese control during the war and asked for background information on journalists active in these regions, especially about their wartime activities and if they had been convicted for treason (Announcement No. 10). These regulations have to be viewed through the prism of the worsening relationship between the KMT and CCP, and the inability of the former to smoothly take over the north-eastern region of China – which came gradually under the sway of the CCP. The Publication Law, however, required only basic information about the publishers and editors-in-chief, so at this point journalists emerged as a new group of interest to the state. Points of particular concern comprised their education, professional experience, prior arrests, and legal violations. Art. 13 stipulated the conditions under which editorial staff could not continue in their position:

- [The person] does not live in the country;
- [they are] a prohibited producer;
- [they have previously been] imprisoned or held in custody for over a month;
- [they are] an offender against public laws.

Art. 14 further added: “(1) a person punished for violating Article 21” [i.e. someone promoting views against KMT ideology or punished for corruption] (Announcement No. 10).

Judging from the stipulations about the workings of the Information Directorate in the official *Bulletin of Taiwanese Provincial Government* (臺灣省政府公報, *Taiwan sheng zhengfu gongbao*; hereafter, *Bulletin 2*), the Information Directorate was less concerned with the registration of periodicals; rather, it seemed more oriented towards information gathering and information dissemination. The information gathered focused on facts about the realities of Taiwan, to enable their better understanding by the Nationalist Government (Announcement No. 11; for dissemination work, see an instructive order by Wei Daoming in Announcement No. 13). One of the reasons for this might have been that both local government and publishers had turned registration into a routine procedure within the two years since its inauguration. Another reason is that there was a change in the reviewing procedure, and the number of institutions involved decreased. The third – eminently likely – possibility is that there were few new periodicals to register, for anyone who wished to establish one would do so by stealth – simply adding a new supplement to an existing newspaper so as to avoid bureaucratic complications. This was an increasingly common practice after the summer of 1947.

After martial law was announced in Taiwan, on 20 March 1949, the Rules for Administering Newspapers, Periodicals, and Books under Martial Law (台灣省戒嚴期間新聞雜誌圖書管理辦法, *Taiwan sheng jieyan qiqian xinwen zazhi tushu guanli banfa*) were issued on 28 May 1949. They had a lasting impact on publishing for decades to come. As Cai (2010: 82) points out, the regulations targeted harbours and incoming visitors, to stop them from importing “revolutionary” books and periodicals to Taiwan.

I failed to locate any official announcement regarding changes to the Publication Law in the year 1949, but two files in the Archive of Taiwan Provincial Governmental Institutions suggest that in September 1949 institutions were still not sure about the proper implementa-

tion of the new law. The first file contains a draft of a memorandum making inquiries with the Ministry of the Interior about changes from September 1949. The Information Directorate asked for clarification as to whether the provincial government could approve the application for registration of a periodical (which was previously the prerogative of the Ministry of the Interior). The Directorate also inquired how long periods of inactivity had to last for periodicals to be considered inactive, and thus obliged to announce their change of status to local authorities (ATPG, file no. 40710006786010).

The second file includes the reply (ATPG, file no. 40710006786006), stating that the Publication Law in the version of August 1937 [sic] still applied in Taiwan, albeit with two changes. First, the “Department for Propaganda of the Kuomintang’s Central Executive Committee” was replaced by the “Information Office of the Executive Yuan.” The change thus reflected the institutional reorganisation from April 1947, which excluded the KMT’s Propaganda Department from the review process.

The second alteration concerned the removal of two phrases: (1) the stipulation regarding content that would “sabotage the Kuomintang” (破壞中國國民黨, *pobuai Zhongguo Guomindang*) and (2) the abolition of all regulations regarding approval by all levels of the KMT apparatus (有關各級黨部會核之規定, *youguan geji dangbu huihe zhi guiding*). Both changes to the Publication Law refer to the new version of it from January 1947, which is not mentioned in the memo at all. They reflect profound transformations in censorship practice. The revised law not only eliminated the KMT organs from the process, but also separated “Party” issues from “state” issues in response to concerns already raised in public discussions about the Publication Law in 1946 (Wu 2011: 419).

The provincial government, however, had further means to control the press. *Bulletin 2* mentioned continuing paper shortages, and the consequent reduction of page limits for each type of periodical (Announcement Nos. 9 and 12). Furthermore, the Chinese central government started to closely monitor the financial capital of each publishing house. The minimum amount required to establish a periodical was raised. Publishing houses were forced to register as legal entities with the Construction Department (建設廳, *Jianshe ting*) of the provincial government (e.g., ATPG, file nos. 0044820008564018, 0000039988, and 0000402399). All these additional regulations must have placed a heavy burden on the Taiwanese publishing industry.

With respect to cultural production and the publishing industry more specifically, the first two years of Chen Yi's government can be characterised as a period of "mapping" and "controlling." In comparison to Czechoslovakia – as an example of another authoritarian regime, and where with the agreement of all democratically elected parties and cultural elites all private periodicals in Bohemia were abolished as they were believed to be sources of social disorder (Wögerbauer et al. 2015: 963) – there was no such blanket ban attached to the registration process in Taiwan. The rather successful implementation of the Publication Law in Taiwan shows that Chen Yi's government was well prepared and essentially followed The Outline of the Plan for the Take-Over of Taiwan (臺灣接管計劃綱要, *Taiwan jieguan jihua gangyao*), which he and his colleagues had already drafted in 1944 (reprint in Zheng 1994: 265–274). There were, of course, procedural problems (Announcement No. 5), but it seems that there were also ones with the implementation of the Publication Law on the mainland as well.

In contrast to the previous era, during which the boundaries between state and Party institutions were blurred, the period from 1947 up to the end of 1949 was characterised by a clearer division between the two. This division expressed itself, at the central level, in the establishment of the Information Office. At the local level, it manifested in the exclusion of the KMT bodies from the review process.

In general, the registration process grew more complex, as publishers, editors-in-chief, and even journalists had to submit an increasing amount of personal information along with supporting documentation. The literary field reacted by establishing various cultural supplements that did not require separate registration, those with province-wide newspapers. Supplements, some of which hosted heated debates about Taiwanese identity, thus represented a structural niche for the literary field to sidestep the legal framework stipulated by the field of power, and illuminate the revitalising power of the literary one (for more on these literary debates, see Dluhošová 2010).

From the Back of the Archive: Censorship Practice, 1945–1947

As pointed out above, the registration of publications was the state's first attempt to exercise control over the publishing industry. The

Publication Law stipulated requirements for both the form and content of all publications. The following part of the paper has two objectives. First, it will reconstruct the review process with special attention to the respective tasks of each institution. Second, it will offer case studies to discuss the functions of censorship and its underlying motivations.

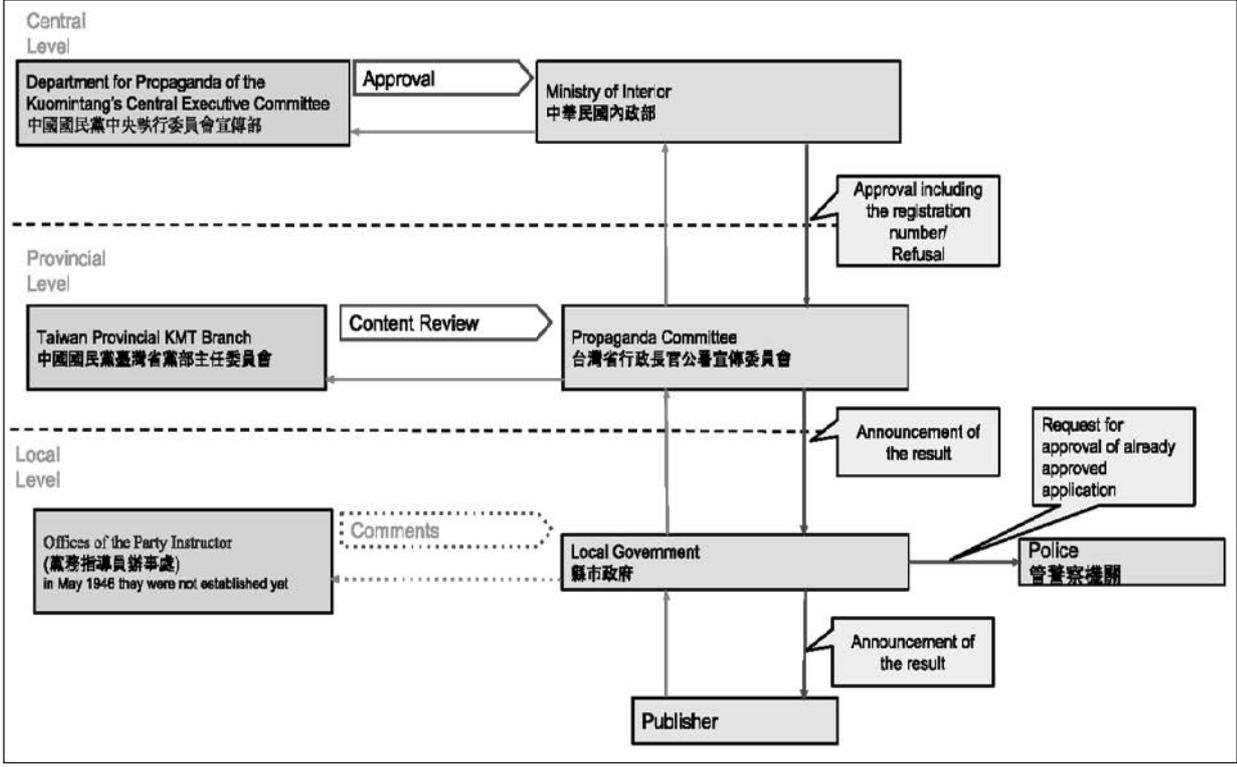
Censorship as a Process

According to the rules, an application for registration was to be reviewed at three levels: the local, provincial, and central. At each of these levels, the respective KMT institutions had to be consulted. Figure 1 below shows how an application was forwarded from the local to the central level (red arrows), and when and how KMT institutions participated in the process.

A publisher submitted the application to local government, which then checked for formal correctness. As shown in Figure 2 below, local government then added comments or suggestions in the fields on the application form entitled “Comments after Review” (考察意見, *kaocha yijian*) and “Comments after the Second Review” (復核意見, *fube yijian*). The column for “Comments after Review” usually contained a formulaic statement to the effect that all fields were filled in and there were no objections to the registration, as well as a stamp from the reviewing department. The field “Comments after the Second Review” summarised the status of the periodical and stated that the application complied with the requirements of the Publication Law; the next steps in the registration process were then recommended.

The organogram representing the registration procedure shows that local government was supposed to consult with the local KMT institution. But the actual situation in the first year after the war was different. A file, dated 5 June 1946, includes the draft of a memorandum to the Provincial KMT Branch (中國國民黨臺灣省黨部主任委員會, *Zhongguo Guomindang shengdangbu zhuren weiyuanhui*; often abbreviated as 省黨部, *shengdangbu*; hereafter, KMT Provincial Branch) in response to a complaint from the KMT’s Propaganda Department (ATEAO, file no. 00313710015016). The Propaganda Department pointed out that the applications of several periodicals that they had reviewed were not sent to the local KMT offices. The Propaganda

Figure 1. Organogram Showing the Registration Process



Committee, which was responsible for coordinating the entire registration process, replied that there were no Party instructors at the local level (縣市黨務指導員, *xian shi dang wu zhidao-yuan*), so they could not fulfil the procedural steps stipulated in Arts. 9–11 of the Implementation Regulations. Responsibility for the content review was thus assumed instead by the KMT Provincial Branch.

Not long after this complaint, between June and August 1946, the Offices of Party Instructors (黨務指導員辦事處, *dang wu zhidao-yuan banshichu*) were established within the county and city governments in Taiwan (ATEAO, file nos. 00318200012254 and 00301710200001). From August 1946 onwards, the archival records demonstrate that local governments were already in contact with the local KMT offices, and forwarded them applications for approval.

The boundaries between Party representatives and state organs were blurred, and it seems that Party instructors might have been regarded as ranking higher than state representatives. The case of the periodical of the local KMT Youth League (中國國民黨青年黨, *Zhongguo guomindang qingniandang*) from Hualian County can serve as an example here. The local KMT party instructor would try to keep the journal in print even after the publisher who originally applied for the registration became a public servant. The name of the county magistrate (縣長, *xianzhang*) is mentioned on the cover letter in second – and thus the less prominent – position, after the name of the KMT party instructor (ATEAO, file no. 00313710015049).

When reviewing files connected to publishing in post-war Taiwan, one gets the impression that the Propaganda Committee – which is often considered the main body exercising state control over the publishing industry – was not actually the key actor in this process. Its importance lay rather mainly in its unique position among other actors, as well as in the fact that it coordinated all communications between the central and local levels – including communications with the KMT Provincial Branch located within the administrative hierarchy. Drafts of the documents sent to the Ministry of the Interior from the Propaganda Committee together with the application usually reproduce the original wording of comments made by the KMT Provincial Branch on a given application. From that we may conclude that KMT institutions had the main say in the formal content review, whereas the civil government just executed the necessary

any other significant changes that might require amendments to their registration.

Reasons for Bans

Having addressed mainly formal issues so far, we now move on to content. What topics alerted the attention of the KMT Provincial Branch? Before answering this, I have to point out that among the 43 registrations that I reviewed there were only four cases in which the KMT Provincial Branch or the Propaganda Committee actually commented on content. Disregarding Japanese publications, which were subject to a blanket ban, the proportion of declined (as compared to approved) publications is low. This may suggest that the government did not have publishing under tight control during the first two years after the war. At the current stage of research, we can only speculate as to why censorship appeared fairly non-invasive in individual cases. There were also tensions between governmental and Party institutions about their respective responsibilities. Ideological concerns were not so pressing immediately after the war. However, a more comprehensive survey of source materials might result in a different assessment eventually being made.

Imposing Academic Authority and the Maintenance of Meaning and Form

The first case that I want to discuss is the response of the Taiwan Provincial Mandarin Promotion Council (臺灣省國語推行委員會, *Taiwan sheng Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui*; hereafter, the State Language Council) to the Propaganda Committee regarding an application to publish a book by a native scholar, Yang Ding (楊鼎), from Taizhong. He applied to the Taizhong City Government for permission to publish his three-volume work *Learning the Script Through the Four Books* (四書識字, *Sishu shizì*) (ATEAO, file no. 00313710015068). The rationale behind the book was to utilise knowledge of Chinese characters from the classics and Hokkien pronunciation to teach the new state language (國語, *guoyu*). This intention overlapped with the State Language Council's own aims, not only to implement Chinese instruction in newly reformed schools but also to propagate the Chinese language more broadly across all spheres of society.

The State Language Council, represented both by Wei Jiagong (魏建功, the head of the Council) and He Rong (何容, Wei's deputy), refused to issue an approval for this work. They attached an anonymous report of five pages length, in which the reviewer voiced appreciation for the author's efforts but, immediately afterwards, concluded that these had not been successful. The reasons for rejection argued along academic lines, and do not betray any obvious political or ideological undertones. It seems that the State Language Council, like an institution overseeing a modern academic peer-review process, acted foremost as an arbiter of good scholarship.

In my opinion, however, even the Propaganda Committee's request for such a review in the first place had ideological undertones. One of the most urgent matters for the TPEAO was the cultural reintegration of Taiwan with the mainland, and promoting the state language was one of their priorities. Articles in the supplement *Guoyu* (國語) of the official newspaper *Taiwan Xinsheng Bao* (台灣新生報), the main platform to promote Mandarin Chinese in the early post-war period, suggest that linguists of that time were not sure how – in terms of its historical derivation – the Taiwanese language related to the state one, or how to promote the use of Mandarin in Taiwan during the first years after the war (e.g. by using the Taiwanese language, classical Chinese, or the *zhuyin* system). The language issue was a very sensitive one, and governmental institutions reserved the right to arbitrate on linguistic standards. Under these circumstances, if a non-state agent interfered with official language policy then state organs might have become suspicious, perhaps even considering this a danger to their cultural policies.

Such a position recalls the argumentation of Aleida and Jan Assmann (1987: 11), who scrutinised the institutions of censorship vis-à-vis the formation and maintenance of canon or tradition. Censorship thereby guarantees permanence of the form and meaning of the canon against “heretic” tendencies. Following the same logic, the State Language Council retained the right to decide about the state language and its “correct” interpretation and means of propagation.

Technicalities and Their True Meaning

On 5 October 1946 the KMT Provincial Branch raised concerns regarding the publisher of *Taiwan Review* (台灣評論, *Taiwan Pinglun*), Li Chunqing (李純青, 1908–1990), a prominent Chinese communist

activist, who did not reside in Taiwan (ATEAO, file no. 00313710024012). The KMT Provincial Branch requested clarification as to whether an absentee publisher was in accordance with the regulations, and expressed its reservations as to whether Li could fulfil his responsibilities at the editorial office. The report on *Taiwan Review* rather focused on technicalities regarding the regulations about the residence status of a publisher. But the KMT censor also inserted a comment that does not fit the previous style and content of the report, designating Li's thought as "impure thinking" (思想不純正, *sixiang bu chunzheng*) without any further elaboration.

He (2013) points out that the journal was banned after four issues by an order from the KMT's Propaganda Department, and the stated reason was, indeed, that the publisher was not physically present at the editorial office. Based on the memoirs of Su Xin (蘇新, 1907–1981), the editor of *Taiwan Culture* (台灣文化, *Taiwan Wenbua*), and Li Yizhong (李翼中, 1896–1969), the director of the KMT Provincial Branch, He confirmed that the main reason for the ban was the journal's strong left-wing orientation due to Li Chunqing's direct influence. This reveals a more general phenomenon: the authorities did not disclose the true reasons for banning the publication but, instead, relied on a legal pretext. We can only hypothesise about the rationale behind such tactics. First, it could be that the authorities feared a backlash if they were too open about their ideological interference – especially because Taiwan had only briefly been under their control. Second, they were perhaps aware that banning opinions was inherently problematic – even for those who did the banning. Or, third, the authorities could not openly state a left-leaning orientation as being the reason for a ban, because the KMT was still officially engaged in peace negotiations with the CCP in China. These talks took place from January 1946 to January 1947 (when General George Marshall's mission in China was terminated), and may have compelled KMT censors to express their objections more cautiously.

The following case study demonstrates similar features. It concerns *Taiwan Culture*, a journal published by the Association for Taiwanese Culture (台灣文化協進會, *Taiwan wenbua xiejinhui*) with You Mijian (游彌堅, 1897–1971), the mayor of Taipei, as the publisher and president of the association. While reviewing the registration, the KMT Provincial Branch found out that You was acting as publisher while employed as a public servant, which it considered problematic.

The internal debate regarding *Taiwan Culture* is documented in several files (ATEAO, file nos. 00312310002001, 00313710003020, and 00313710024003). The first one is the draft of a memo from the Propaganda Committee with the original application bearing You's mayoral seal, a feature which aptly symbolised the conflict of interest (ATEAO, file no. 00313710024003). The Taipei City Government was the very authority that should have reviewed the application and continued to examine the journal's contents after it commenced publication. The files that I was able to review do not include the reply from the KMT's Propaganda Department, but it is still possible to discover elsewhere how the problem was eventually resolved. On 28 February 1947 the Propaganda Committee published an order on behalf of the KMT Provincial Branch. They informed all local governments about a recent legal clarification prohibiting all civil servants from acting as publishers (發行人, *faxingren*) or directors of editorial offices (社長, *shezhang*). Based on the explanation of the Judicial Yuan from 30 December 1932, exceptions were granted only to Party personnel. But according to the legally binding interpretation of the Judicial Yuan from 24 May 1934, exceptions could only be granted in the case of academic journals (Announcement No. 7). So You did not break any rule when he applied for the approval of *Taiwan Culture*, because it was registered as an academic periodical.

This legal clarification prompted a reaction from the KMT Provincial Branch, which asked the Propaganda Committee to find out whether the journal was indeed academic in nature. The file, opened on 8 February 1947, included a cover letter from the Propaganda Committee to the Taipei City Government requesting that the journal be suspended, because according to Fan Shaoxiang (樊紹頊), member of the Propaganda Committee and head of the Section for News and Broadcasting, *Taiwan Culture* was a "journal about the arts." Furthermore the editorial office applied for registration only after the publication of the first issue, which was against the law (ATEAO, file no. 00313710001045). There was evidently a double standard at work here. While other periodicals, for example *Current Events* (時事報, *Shishi Bao*), were suspended for publishing without registration, this was not the case for *Taiwan Culture* (ATEAO, file no. 00313710001061). You's influential position presumably helped him to successfully navigate the administrative complications encountered. As a result of these pressures, You stepped down as the pub-

lisher and the journal was re-registered as one about the arts. It was, however, not suspended during the interim evaluation procedure.

A further observation concerns the active role of the Propaganda Committee. In all the other cases for which I have seen archival records, it was the Provincial KMT Branch Committee that conducted the review; the Propaganda Committee only played a secondary role herein. The action taken by the Propaganda Committee against You in an otherwise unattested manner was, indeed, triggered by the KMT Provincial Branch. The file includes a memo signed by Li Yizhong, the head of the KMT Provincial Branch, asking the TPEAO to investigate whether the journal was academic in character. This unusual procedure suggests, first, that the review demanding suspension of the journal may have been political intrigue or reflected someone's personal agenda. Second, it shows that the implementation of censorship followed double standards according to the status of the applicant.

Sensitive Content

The *Taiwan Culture* case is also special for another reason. Unlike other files that I have seen, it includes the censored material – marked up by the censors themselves. Having such documentation at our disposal in the present case gives us a unique opportunity to observe what sort of content raised red flags – allowing us to look over the censors' shoulders, as it were. The file includes both issues of the second volume of *Taiwan Culture* in their entirety.

Fan Shaoxiang mentioned in his report that some of the published content in *Taiwan Culture* “lacked appropriateness” (言詞欠妥, *yanci qian tuo*). What does that refer to? A “Note by the Editors” (編輯後記, *Bianji hou ji*) played on a popular, though offensive, saying: “The [Japanese] dogs left, the [Chinese] pigs came” (狗走了, 豬來了, *gou zou le, zhu lai le*) – thus proclaiming the essential equivalence of two types of abusive alien rule. The critical tone towards the new rulers persists throughout the two issues. For example, Su Xin (writing under his pseudonym Su Sheng) smuggled veiled criticism of the current social situation into an article about the Taiwanese art scene (Su 1947; ATEAO, file no. 00313710001045). In another passage, he criticised censorship for interfering with dramatic performances (Su 1947; Anonymous 1947a, 1947b; ATEAO, file no. 00313710001045).

The censor flagged Yang Yunping's (楊雲萍, 1906–2000) critical review of a play called *Zheng Chenggong* (鄭成功), which was performed by the Chinese Dramatic Society (中國劇社, *Zhongguo ju she*) on the invitation of the provincial government. Yang expressed dissatisfaction with the poor artistic performance and overpriced tickets. The censor also inspected literary writings. He specifically pointed out a short story by Lü Heruo (呂赫若) called “Winter Night” (冬夜, *Dong ye*), showing particular interest in the unfavourable depiction of the protagonist from the mainland (Lü 1947; ATEAO, file no. 00313710001045). Furthermore, the censor underlined two other parables implying inappropriate behaviour by mainlanders in Taiwan, and marked several passages from a short story called “Village Self-Defence Unit” (農村自衛隊, *Nongcun ziwuidui*) (B.C. 1947; Ling 1947: 29; ATEAO, file no. 00313710001045; Qiu 1947; ATEAO, file no. 00313710001045). This short story touched upon many urgent problems besetting people's lives both in the countryside and in cities. In addition to its critical remarks on the post-war situation, the KMT, and the new rulers, the story indirectly encouraged people to mobilise and protect themselves because the state had failed to do so.

The offensive language and critical content must have alerted the censors. It should be noted that the attitude expressed in the underlined content did not display any particular left-wing or pro-communist leanings, but was openly critical towards the new regime in Taiwan. Such content, published under the editorial oversight and responsibility of the mayor of Taibei, was probably very displeasing to the state authorities. The censors might have felt the need to interfere with a public servant running such a subversive publication.

In sum, the controlling institutions were particularly sensitive to issues that they considered dangerous to their cultural policies – which shows how vital these policies were for the new regime. They were also sensitive to any potential harm to their image, which could have undermined the regime's legitimacy. Communist thought – the most dangerous rival to Nationalist ideology – might have been their most obvious target at the time, but seemingly leftist leanings were not officially named as reason to ban a journal.

Another aspect should also be noted here. Even though the authors of many articles and literary works published in *Taiwan Culture* were known to the censors, censorship was not directed against the authors but rather the journal and its publisher. The function of this process was

to control or influence the orientation of the journal as a whole, not merely to interfere with individual items published in its pages.

Conclusion

This article is the result of a preliminary study of censorship and the control of publishing in early post-war Taiwan. One of the objectives was to situate the control of publishing within a broader context of censorship practices in Republican China and to link it to contemporaneous socio-economic conditions. This paper has outlined the legal framework in force throughout all regions under KMT control. At the same time, it has drawn attention to regional specificities arising from the local implementation of this national framework, paying particular attention to how publication regulations were announced and implemented by state and Party institutions in the newly acquired province of Taiwan.

Close inspection of the rules and announcements has revealed a tendency towards gathering increasing amounts of personal information about those involved in publishing. There was, furthermore, a proclivity towards urging local governments to take a more active role in monitoring the publishing industry. In addition to mandatory registration, the state also used other means to exert control – such as economic regulations raising the minimum amount of financial capital required, making it compulsory to register publishing houses as legal bodies, and crafting stipulations about paper distribution.

In addition to the normative framework set down in laws and regulations, this paper has reconstructed the procedure of publication registration. The vital role played by KMT organs at all levels in the content review process has been revealed, which is not so obvious from the regulations themselves. Archival materials register traces of the dynamics and the symbiotic relationship between civil and Party institutions, indicating that, in the period under discussion, civil institutions were reliant on and subordinate to Party organs. This constellation points to an earlier concept, namely “to rule the country through the Party” (以黨治國, *yi dang zhi guo*) – which was first proposed by Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) in the early 1920s. This idea, influenced by the Soviet model of a party state, assumed that Chinese citizens were not fit for democratic rule and thus a party-state model should be introduced. The concept was appropriated by both the KMT and CCP, and

different actors implemented the concept in their own respective ways (Wang 2005). This study reveals the concrete example of this concept in praxis at a particular time and place. In future I plan to enlarge the scope of my research to obtain a broader picture of the symbiosis between Party and state organisations in post-war Taiwan.

Judging by the materials that I inspected, censorship – or control over published material in the most general sense – was mainly carried out within the formal framework stipulated by the Publication Law and its Implementation Rules. The case of *Taiwan Culture*, however, points to double standards, as well as to the possibility that censorship may have been misused for political or personal reasons. Substantive issues of content review are not extensively documented in the archival records that I have been able to consult. To the extent that we consider the documents discussed here representative of broader historical trends, we might speculate that, since the law was new in Taiwan, the controlling organs were initially preoccupied with formal issues and turned their attention only later to matters of ideology. Alternatively, the practice of banning publications for ideological reasons might not have been fully established, so state and Party organs exploited any formal mistakes to the same end. The regulations reveal that there was pre-publication and post-publication censorship, yet few of the materials that I have reviewed suggest the existence of comprehensive attempts to monitor existing publications (except for *Taiwan Culture*). Announcements published in the official *Bulletins* did not specifically emphasise prohibited themes, suggesting that prescriptive censorship had not reached an advanced stage in these years. At this point, it is impossible to determine whether this is evidence of the absence of systematic censorship or rather a distorted impression due to the absence of concrete evidence. Other institutions outside the provincial government – most likely KMT organs – may have been actively involved in more extensive attempts at censorship. Only sustained efforts to locate more archival sources can help determine whether this was indeed the case.

The archival material on *Taiwan Culture* revealed sensitive content that alerted the controlling bodies. Surprisingly, the problematic content was not labelled “leftist” or “communist.” Generally speaking, state and Party in post-war Taiwan were anxious to keep symbolic representations of the party state compliant with state interests – and, thus, its legitimacy intact. Any attack on this symbolic image elicited

reactions from the authorities. These were not, however, direct responses to the offending content, but rather took the form of tortuous bureaucratic arm-twisting, sometimes aiming at the replacement of the publisher for formal reasons. Such a course of action may have had an educational function from the point of view of censoring institutions. Whenever officials were equipped with bureaucratic means to grind down publishers' resistance to their interference, this would send out a warning to other publishers not to risk their livelihood by attacking state or Party symbols.

The ultimate goal of censorship would have been to set up a new sociocultural framework of obedience, compelling every actor to express him or herself only within the boundaries of what is permitted – the sign of a culture of censorship deeply rooted in the literary field. At present this conclusion is tempting, if ultimately only speculative. It is certainly a hypothesis meriting further investigation.

This study has illuminated the sociocultural norms and power structures in the period preceding the martial law era, contributing to an understanding of how authoritarianism gradually took shape in Taiwan. The type of censorship it reveals is typical of non-democratic, authoritarian regimes. This makes it possible to discuss post-war Taiwan within a more capacious comparative framework, together with other one-party regimes of the post-war period – such as Czechoslovakia (Dvořák 2016; Janoušek and Čornej 2008; Wögerbauer et al. 2015), Eastern Germany (Darnton 2014), and the Soviet Union (Dewhirst and Farrell 1973), which can be another way to expand this topic going forwards.

The unique archival materials this article has used do, however, have their limitations, and these need to be acknowledged. For some reason, only the Archive of the Taiwan Provincial Executive Administrative Office includes files on registrations and censored content (and, notably, only in the case of *Taiwan Culture*). But the Archive of Provincial Institutions hardly holds any files on these matters. It seems that there must have been other institutions involved in the review process after 1947, in which case further documentary evidence about censorship practices may well be kept in other archives. From this perspective, this paper can only provide representative insights on the first two years after the war. Further archival studies will undoubtedly turn up new material and provide valuable novel insights, however.

References

Abbreviations

ATEAO = Academia Historica Taiwan Historica, Archive of the Taiwan Provincial Executive Administrative Office (台灣國史館文獻館臺灣省行政長官公署檔案, *Taiwan Guoshiguan Wenxianguan, Taiwan sheng Xingzheng zhangguan gongshu dang'an*)

ATPG = Academia Historica Taiwan Historica, Archive of the Taiwan Provincial Government (台灣國史館文獻館臺灣省級機關檔案, *Taiwan Guoshiguan Wenxianguan, Taiwan shengji jiguan dang'an*)

Bulletin 1 = 台灣省行政長官公署報告, *Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu baogao*

Bulletin 2 = 臺灣省政府公報, *Taiwan sheng zhengfu gongbao*

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Xuanchuan weiyuanhui: Taiwan sheng Xingzheng zhangguan gongshu daidian: Zhi wei yan Shu Xuan zi di 19910 hao [Zhonghua minguo 35 nian 8 yue 29 ri] [Bu ling xing wen]: Zhun han yi wei jing dengji shanzi faxing zhi xinwen zazhi ying yu qudi dian xi zunzhao banli, Main Political Decrees: Propaganda Committee: Telegram of the TPAEO: Reply to Announcement of Propaganda Committee, No. 19910 [29 August 1946] [No Further Texts]: Not-registered Periodicals Should be Banned, Follow this Order), in: *Bulletin 1*, Autumn No. 52 (30 August), 825–826.

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