

Operation of Colonial Modern Press under Movement Split: “United Strike” and “Cold Talker Incident” within Taiwan Shin Minpao Publishing House

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ABSTRACT

Using “United Strike” and “Cold Talker Incident” within the Taiwan Shin Minpao Publishing House as concrete examples, this article illustrates the process, impact, and significance of capitalization operations of the colonial modern press, which developed along with the anti-colonial movement, in the context of the split between the Taiwan People’s Party (TPP) and the Taiwan Local Self-Government League (TLSL).

With approval from the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan, *The Taiwan Minpao* was the only legitimate space for public opinion of the anti-colonial movement with a decent readership. In order to preserve this fledgling channel of free speech, the publishing house adopted a capitalized business model of equity financing to maintain a regular publishing schedule. At the same time, the collaboration between the local gentry and young intellectuals was institutionalized. The local gentry who contributed capital became the management leading the development of the colonial press, while the young intellectuals who provided anti-colonial discourses served as the journalists.

In February 1930, the merger of the Taiwan Minpao Publishing House and the Taiwan Shin Minpao Publishing House coincided with the separation of national movement activists from the TPP as they sought to organize the TLSL. Seeing that most managers and shareholders of the Taiwan Shin Minpao Publishing House were major figures in the TLSL whereas the majority of journalists in the publishing house were in favor of the TPP, Lin Cheng-lu, Chiang Wei-shui and Xie Chun-mu joined hands inciting the journalists to start the “United Strike” to fight for control over personnel matters of the publishing house on the grounds of improper dismissal and unfair salary adjustments.

The discord between the TPP and the TLSL persisted even after the publication of

the daily newspaper, *The Taiwan Shin Minpao*. In July 1932, journalist Ng Ong-seng, through his column “Cold Talks,” ridiculed Yang Zhao-jia, a board member of *The Taiwan Shin Minpao* for treating the newspaper as an organ of the TLSSL. This eventually led to the “Cold Talker Incident” in which these two men engaged in written polemics. To the management, Ng’s criticism was based on partisan views, and his comments not only revealed the inconsistent stance of the publishing house, but also affected newspaper sales. On the other hand, Ng did not want *The Taiwan Shin Minpao* to be dominated by the TLSSL and tried to accuse that the capitalization operations of the publishing house had turned it into an organization where capital could be used to compete for the right to speak. This fight eventually led the management to take it for granted that *The Taiwan Shin Minpao* was the propaganda organ of the TLSSL, ignoring journalistic professionalism and reporting autonomy.

Keywords: Capitalization Operation, Taiwan People’s Party, Taiwan Local Self-Government League, Taiwan Shin Minpao Publishing House, United Strike, Cold Talker Incident