

## **The 'Red Tide' Anti-Corruption Protest: What Does it Mean for Democracy in Taiwan?**

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Politics in Taiwan during the last two decades has polarised into two camps, associated with particular colours: the former ruling KMT (Kuomintang) Blue camp and the current ruling DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) Green camp. Between September and November 2006, Shih Ming-teh (施明德), the former chairman of the DPP, led a campaign against Taiwan's DPP President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), with the name 'A Million Voices against Corruption – President Chen Must Go' ('百萬人民反貪腐倒扁運動'), which involved a protest in front of the Presidential Building on Ketagalan Boulevard (凱達格蘭大道). This protest against alleged presidential corruption was a spontaneous civil movement, but its goal was to initiate a change of power at the highest level of government. Significantly, most of the protesters wore red in the demonstrations. It has since been called 'the Red Tide' ('紅潮'), 'the Red-Shirt Army' ('紅衫軍'), or 'the Red Phenomenon' ('紅色現象'). People in Taiwan had never before experienced or seen a political rally in which the marchers and banners were all in red and on such a large scale. The colour red is full of ambiguity, evoking various references within different contexts.

Being trained in anthropological approaches to the study of culture and society, I will attempt to give an anthropological interpretation of the so-called 'Red Tide' anti-corruption protest. I will begin by introducing the two main figures, Chen Shui-bian and Shih Ming-teh, with an emphasis on their respective political careers. I will then discuss how different political parties have interpreted the Red Protest (specifically the Green DPP and the Blue KMT, and also the 'Red' CCP), and how it was covered in both national and international media, organised chronologically. Following this, I will focus my analysis on the socio-cultural significance of the colour red for ordinary people in Taiwan, in particular its association with Communist China and the fear of Communism propagated by the KMT (particularly during the martial law period), but also the importance that the colour red has in festivals and rituals, where it is normally associated with auspiciousness and efficacy. Finally, I will analyse the impact of this Red Protest Phenomenon on Taiwan's current political culture in terms of Blue and Green colours and identities. I will try to give a meaning to this Red Phenomenon in terms of Taiwan's democratic history and the development of civil society.

### About Chen and Shih

Chen Shui-bian, a so-called native-born Taiwanese, was elected as the first president representing the legalised opposition DPP in 2000, and re-elected in the disputed election of 2004 with a margin of 0.2 percent after being shot, albeit in rather mysterious circumstances. Chen's appeal to voters is said to lie mainly in his rural background and local charisma (*tu* [土]) – many refer to him by his Taiwanese nickname, A-bian (*BBC News* 2006b). He was born to an uneducated tenant-farmer family in Hsi-chuang village, Kuan-tien district, Tainan County, in 1951. He studied hard and gained a place at the prestigious National Taiwan University, where he was awarded a law degree. According to Kegan, 'Chen's rural background was a deficit that he had to overcome by being superior in all intellectual areas and by choosing to be on the cutting edge. Chen always took a unique approach' (Kegan 1998: 81).

Chen Shui-bian fell into politics after he had defended a group of political activists who battled for freedom of speech and association in 1979, in what has become known as the 'Formosa Incident' ('美麗島事件'). This was a milestone in Taiwan's democratisation process and perhaps the most important political case in Taiwan's legal history. The defendants and their lawyers later became the founding leaders of the DPP, and in 1994, Chen was elected as the first Taipei city mayor representing the party, which was then in opposition. In 2000 he was defeated, but he turned this into an opportunity to run for the presidency. However, his intention of building a lasting presidential legacy in his second term has been undermined by waning popularity and a series of corruption scandals. His problems began in May 2006 when his son-in-law, Chao Chien-ming (趙建銘), was detained on suspicion of insider trading on the stock market, and culminated in November 2006 when his wife, Wu Shu-chen (吳淑珍), and his three former aides Ma Yong-cheng (馬永成), Lin De-hsun (林德訓), and Chen Chen-hui (陳鎮慧) were charged with corruption over the alleged misuse of presidential funds. The allegations include evidence of corruption against President Chen himself, although he is currently protected by presidential immunity (*BBC News* 2006c, Yang 2006c).

Shih Ming-teh, formerly President Chen's ally before he became a campaigner against him, was born into a well-known medical family in Kaohsiung in 1941. When he was just six years old, Shih witnessed the shooting of three students by KMT troops in what is now called 'the 2-28 Incident'. He questioned authority and was suspended from school, but he managed to enter a military academy. In 1962, Shih was charged with sedition for running the 'Taiwan Independence League' (a discussion group), and he was sentenced to life in prison. He was released in 1977, as part of an amnesty following Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) death in 1975, (a gesture typically performed at the end of a Chinese emperor's reign). Once out of prison, Shih promptly joined the '*Dangwai*' (['黨外'], 'outside the only legal party') movement calling for an end to the political monopoly of the KMT. After playing a major role in a pro-democracy rally (the Formosa Incident), Shih was charged with treason and sentenced to life imprisonment for a second time. While in prison between 1985 and 1989, Shih went on hunger strikes, and was allegedly force-fed numerous times through a nasogastric tube. With the end of martial law in 1987, President Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) announced

nationwide sentence reductions and conditional releases for prisoners. Shih chose not to have his sentence commuted, maintaining his innocence and retaining his dignity.

In 1990, Lee Teng-hui, became the first native-born Taiwanese to assume the presidency. He ordered a special amnesty for all Formosa Incident prisoners and further announced the invalidation of the Formosa Trials. Shih finally accepted being released as an innocent person. Shih Ming-teh spent the longest time (25 and a half years in total) in jail under KMT martial law. According to Kegan, Shih Ming-teh always 'possessed the ardour and obsession of a political martyr', and is 'one of the most dramatic and irascible characters in Taiwan's modern [political] history' (Kegan 1998: 77; 69).

Upon recovering his freedom, Shih joined the now-legal opposition DPP. He gained the highest number of votes and was elected legislator for Tainan County in 1992, but his second term in 1996 was won only after a bitter campaign. Shih was also elected and acted as chairman of the DPP between 1994 and 1996. However, in 1996 Shih was defeated by the KMT member Liu Song-fan (劉松藩) in the campaign for Minister of the Legislative Yuan. Moreover, in the same year, Shih resigned his position as DPP chairman after the DPP was defeated by the KMT in the first direct presidential election. Shih was re-elected legislator in 1998 representing Taipei City. After Chen Shui-bian was elected Taiwan President in 2000, Shih walked away from the DPP, and he later attended several private meetings with high-ranking KMT members. Shih ran as an independent twice, for Kaohsiung City mayor in 2002 and for Taipei City legislator in 2004, but failed in both elections. An intellectual from Tainan County explained to me during an interview, 'Shih Ming-teh was an excellent political activist who knew how to fight the KMT's authoritarian rule and re-gain justice and freedom. But, he was an incapable legislator who had no idea and vision for governing a county. Our Tainan people were grateful to him for his sacrifice to Taiwan's democracy and so we tried hard to secure his seat for two terms.'

### **The Conflict of Interpretations**

On 7 August 2006, Shih Ming-teh wrote a letter to Chen Shui-bian which was published in *China Times*. Shih began this letter by saying, 'The situation requires me to write this letter and this has been extremely painful for me.' In the letter, he urged his old friend Chen to step down from presidential office since Chen had lost the people's trust and confidence following a series of alleged corruption scandals. In the end, Shih encouraged Chen by stating, 'Only a truly brave warrior admits his wrongdoings and gives up what he has held' (quoted in *Boxun News* 2006a).

On 12 August 2006 Shih Ming-teh launched a fundraising campaign in the 2-28 Incident Memorial Park to finance a series of demonstrations against corruption and to unseat President Chen. He called on each person who supported this movement to donate NT \$100 (GBP £2) as a symbol of commitment and a display of determination to oust Chen from office. Within seven working days, a sum equivalent to that raised from over one million people had been received. The designated account was soon closed and preparations for the marathon protest began (Gluck 2006). However, the actual number of donors was never revealed. As there was no restriction on the maximum amount of donation, it was possible

that the account had also received some huge amounts from a few wealthy supporters.

On 7 September 2006, Shih held a press conference announcing the launch of the campaign 'A Million Voices against Corruption – President Chen Must Go'. According to the *Taipei Times*, Shih stated that 'The DPP has lost sight of its founding ideals' and that 'Once the sit-in starts on September 9, there will be no going back' (Huang 2006). According to Gluck, writing for the BBC, Shih said that, 'I think I am following the people's will. [...] The anger towards President Chen is so widespread. It doesn't differ with regard to region, or ethnic groups, or even partisan positions. This whole island is angry'. Moreover, he affirmed his commitment to the protest, adding, 'The people believe in my willpower. They believe I will continue to sit with them. [...] I will not run away, surrender or give up until we can see the people's will prevail' (Gluck 2006).

At the press launch, Jerry Fan (范可欽), the campaign's designer, promised a 'creative' anti-Chen protest. He urged people to wear red to participate in the demonstration if they were angry at corruption and at President Chen (*BBC Chinese News* 2006). He also explained that a round-the-clock sit-in area would form the centre, with 2,300 seats to represent the 23 million people of Taiwan. The sit-in demonstration would be a silent protest (Mo 2006).

According to Taiwan's Central News Agency, the day before the campaign, Linda Arrigo, Shih Ming-teh's ex-wife, urged him to stop the demonstration, saying that 'September 9 is the thirtieth anniversary of Mao Tse-tung's death. On that day Chinese people will gather in Tiananmen Square to commemorate Mao by raising Red flags and by distributing Mao's Little Red Book. [...] If Taiwanese people also use the colour red to protest against their elected President, this will lead people to associate Taiwan's Ketagalan Boulevard with Red Square.' She further warned that 'China is likely to use this as an opportunity to say that the moment of cross-straits unification is around the corner' (quoted in *Boxun News* 2006b).

Ironically, China was observing a low-key remembrance of the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Mao Tse-tung. In Beijing, the central government did not organise any commemorations for Mao. State-run TV made no mention of Mao, while the *People's Daily* published only two short news briefs on Internet remembrances (Gong 2006) and the construction of a new museum at his birthplace (Li 2006). Analysts said the government feared that high-profile public ceremonies honouring Mao could stir up bitter memories of tragic moments in Chinese history, such as the 30 million who starved to death during Great Leap Forward or the mass persecution of intellectuals and landlords during the Cultural Revolution (VOA 2006). Moreover, the opening line of an article in the English-language *China Daily* claimed that 'Time passes. The relevance of contemporary life pushes the events of the past out of the spotlight and into the shadows' (Montero 2006). The end of the article quoted a professor of political science at the University of California, Richard Baum, who said that: 'Most expats in Beijing these days are young professionals and entrepreneurs who came of age long after Mao Tse-tung's death [...]. For these latecomers, Mao's memory and mystique are not very potent – no more than a vague historical curiosity while the post-Mao reforms are a "given", which they take for granted.' Baum concluded, 'The new culture of entrepreneurship and self-enrichment has crowded Mao and Maoism out of the marketplace of relevant ideas' (Montero 2006).

Shih's campaign against corruption and President Chen kicked off on Saturday 9 September in front of the Presidential Building on Ketagalan Boulevard. It was reported by almost all the media in Taiwan over that weekend, and some pro-Blue media even covered it for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. There were about 200,000 people, mostly women, demonstrating and most of them were dressed in red, expressing their political passion for anti-corruption and the resignation of A-bian. This Red Protest was also widely reported by the international media. For instance, the AFP described it as a 'red storm created by Taiwanese people against Chen Shui-bian' (quoted in Wang Xian-tang 2006). The BBC reported that, 'Tens of thousands of people have been demonstrating in Taiwan to demand the resignation of President Chen Shui-bian over corruption allegations. [...] The protesters, many dressed in red to highlight their anger, gathered in the capital.' The BBC's Caroline Gluck, at the scene, was quoted as saying that it was a 'sea of red'. She also noted that 'There are four big balloons, representing righteousness, integrity, prosperity and honour' (*BBC News* 2006a).

The majority of deep-Green supporters were upset and did not know how to react to Shih's protest against President Chen. Indeed, the campaign came under fire from the DPP, and hardly any DPP legislators supported it. Several DDP members made personal attacks on their ex-chairman Shih (Yang 2006a), and even some of Shih's old friends questioned his intentions (Huang 2006). Furthermore, there was a rumoured conspiracy in Green circles, which claimed that the pro-unification camp (such as the Chinese Unity Promotion Party [中華統一促進黨] and Chinese Wave [夏潮], see in Lin Nan-sen 2006a) would gradually take over the leadership of the campaign and eventually hijack it in order to promote unification with China. According to the BBC, Yu Shyi-kun (游錫堃), the DDP chairman, described this demonstration as a 'Red Terror', and interpreted it as 'a sign of mainland Chinese bullying the Taiwanese' ('中國人欺負台灣人') (Yang 2006b)!

On September 16, Ketagalan Boulevard was handed over to a pro-Green Taiwan Group (台灣社). It organised a pro-Chen campaign in which were prominently displayed banners with slogans saying 'Go away, Red China!' ('紅色中國滾蛋!'), 'Come Forward, Green Taiwan!' ('綠色台灣起來!') and 'Resist the Red Guard!' ('拒絕紅衛兵!'). Remarkably, the political battlefield in Taiwan shifted, at least for a few days, from 'a battle between Blue and Green; to 'a battle between Red and Green' (Lin, Bao-hua 2006; Zhao 2006).

Coincidentally, a similar conspiracy could also be found in some Chinese-exile and anti-CPP media such as, the *Epoch Times*. The *Epoch Times* is mainly run by Falun Gong (法輪功) practitioners and human right activists. Falun Gong was declared an 'evil cult' by the CPP authority and totally banned in 1999 (Madsen 2007: 189). According to the *Epoch Times*, Communist terms, such as 'siege' ('圍城'), 'revolution' ('革命'), 'bloody' ('流血'), and 'strike' ('罷工') were highlighted in Shih's Red movement, suggesting that this campaign was controlled and manipulated by the CPP government. The CPP government intended to use the division within the DPP and the division between DPP-Green and KMT-Blue to create further social unrest in Taiwan (Wang, Zhen 2006).

Ironically again, China's state-run media kept silent as this hot news from Taiwan developed. Only some Internet sites were allowed to dispatch tailored stories selected from the Taiwanese and Hong Kong media. The Taiwan Affairs

Office under the State Council of the Chinese government declined to comment on Chen's case, repeatedly saying that it was a domestic affair (台灣內部事務) (Hu 2006).

Augustine Tan in the *Asia Times* commented that, 'It is apparent that Beijing is afraid that reporting Chen's predicament in the mass media could backfire. The public might raise questions along the lines of "What can we do with official corruption?" And if Taiwan's President could be caught, "What about our own corrupt "big fishes"?' (Tan 2006). In terms of the amount of money allegedly involved, Chen is, indeed, a tiny fish compared with corrupt officials of lesser rank in China. Also, the broadcasting of such news might have led people in China to wonder whether China will ever have the same freedom to report and to demonstrate publicly without fear of intimidation or arrest against the corruption of party and government officials (Lin, Bao-hua 2006).

In contrast to China's CCP, Taiwan's pro-KMT media (e.g. TVBS) played a key role in exposing Chen's scandals, and in supporting Shih's Red Protest against Chen. During the first few days of the protest, we constantly saw from TVBS a succession of Blue big hitters, such as the KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), and People First Party Chairman James Soong (宋楚瑜), who visited or even joined the sit-in. TVBS claimed that the protesters were not mobilized by any group or party, but were part of a broad-based civic movement that transcended party political interests. However, it is obvious that the red campaign was seen by certain elements within the KMT as a possible vehicle for them to make political capital. For instance, a veteran actor, Chin Ti (金帝), impersonated the ex-KMT chairman Chiang Ching-kuo to boost the protesters' morale. He ended his performance by shouting 'Long Live the Chinese Nationalist Party [KMT]'. In contrast, when the red campaign spokeswoman Wang Lie-ping (王麗萍) called out 'Republic of Taiwan' during a speech, she was booed by the crowd and had to issue a public apology, which showed the anti-independence sentiment of those participating in the sit-in. The protesters were later described as having 'Red Skins with Blue Bones'.

Gluck's report (2006) includes the perspectives of a number of Taiwanese. She quotes a retiree, who said, 'it is going to be a turning point in Taiwan's history. People power. [...] I am confident Taiwan will have a new direction. I believe we will have a new president very soon' She also gives the opinion of Emile Sheng, a politics professor: 'I think by putting people's attention on anti-corruption, it is going to send a message directly not only to the president, but also to every politician in the future in Taiwan. To let them know that we as a people really care about moral standards and want politics to be conducted in a civil way.'

In late November 2006, a charge of corruption was also made against KMT Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou, over his alleged misuse of a special mayoral allowance. Shih Ming-teh indicated he was not contemplating anti-corruption protests against Ma, but insisted there should be no double standards regarding corruption allegations (Lin, Nan-sen 2007; *Boxun News* 2007).

Shih's campaign retreated from the streets on 29 November 2006 when media attention turned to the mayoral elections and when the allegations against President Chen, his family and aides came under judicial investigation (Lin, Nan-sen 2006b). In early December, Shih Ming-teh began his self-imprisonment in the

campaign headquarters near the Presidential Building, claiming that he would keep to his word and continue the protest until Chen stepped down.

On 1 April 2007 at a press conference entitled 'The Red will Arise Again' ('紅將再起'), Shih Ming-teh announced an end to his self-imprisonment and the beginning of preparations for a second wave of anti-Chen protests. Plans include presenting candidates for the 2007 legislative elections (*Epoch Times* 2007).

### Red Implications

Red has long been a taboo colour in the socio-political geography of Taiwan. People's fear of the colour red is linked directly to the fear and ignorance of Communism propagated by the KMT during the martial law years and to the state terror perpetrated by the KMT against suspected Communists and their sympathisers in various incidents (such as the Luku Incident, see Shih 2006), which in public memory are described as the 'White Terror' (The term 'White Terror' was borrowed from the Russian civil war of 1917 to 1921 when the so-called Whites, led by former tsarist officers, were defeated by the Bolshevik Red Army. The term was used in Taiwan to describe the counter-revolutionary, or more precisely, the anti-Communist, violence exerted by the right-wing KMT between the 1950s and the 1980s).

One incident which shows this taboo occurred in 1984, when the Taipei Fine Arts Museum opened, dedicated to the development of modern art in Taiwan. In its first exhibition, a work by the artist Lee Tsai-chien (李再鈞) entitled *Minimalism without Limits* (低限的無限) was displayed in the plaza in front of the Museum entrance. The piece was an abstract sculpture in red stainless steel, and after few days the Museum's Director, Su Rui-pin (蘇瑞屏), received a complaint from a retired soldier, commenting that Lee's sculpture looked like a Red Star, the symbol of Communism. In response, Su ordered Lee's sculpture to be re-painted silver (Schoeber 2006). Lee's sculpture could only be understood in terms of one dimension of a diverse field of possible meanings; that is, the political implication of the Red Star, which made it impossible for it to be appreciated as a purely aesthetic object. Re-painting it silver suggested a solution to a political problem, but also seemed to suggest that all forms of material culture in Taiwan would be read in terms of a very narrow field of political meanings. The result of this would be that 'art' could have no autonomy from the state and from the political.

Since 1987, when martial law was lifted, and following the recognition in the mid-1990s of the victims of the White Terror, Taiwan has undergone a political transition to democracy. In particular, in December 1998 the Legislative Yuan passed regulations regarding compensation for those wrongly sentenced (either to imprisonment or to death) during the martial law period either for sedition or as Communist spies. However, while compensation money might buy off a defiled reputation, it cannot buy off the deep fear still buried within the unconscious that the colour red, in the context of politics, still holds. When in 2005 I interviewed a man in his fifties from Luku while conducting research on trauma and social memory regarding the White Terror, the word 'Communist' and the image 'red flag' instantly caused goose bumps to appear on his arms. This indicates his physical fear of Communism and its association with the colour red.

Thus, in 2006 during the Red Protest from 9 September to late November, people in Taiwan, both participants in the protests and non-participants, were faced with a unique spectacle: public displays of red in a political demonstration. I spoke with a man in his thirties, who said that, 'My parents seemed uncomfortable at seeing a sea of red during these days. In the first few days, whenever they saw my brother and me watching the reports of the Red Protest on television, they commanded us to switch to other channels. After the first week, we were allowed to watch this Red Demonstration but they themselves avoided these images. However, after many more days, they occasionally watched it from a distance.' I argue that this is due to his parents' experience of the White Terror. The colour red is a taboo in particular for that generation in the context of politics. Indeed, there was a worry from the beginning that this protest might be a conspiracy signifying unification with China, a theory that seemed all the more plausible given that 9 September was the anniversary of Mao's death.

Yet, this interpretation, associating red with fear and red with Communism, ignores the multi-vocal meaning of the colour red in Taiwan. For instance, in rituals, the so-called 'red matter' ('紅事') refers to weddings where the colour red is associated with auspiciousness (Suzuki 1989: 175-195). In religious festivals, the so-called 'red envelope' ('紅包') with money enclosed is normally used as a gift to ward off misfortune in a ritual transaction (Stafford 1995: 83-85). In domestic worship, the so-called 'red table' ('紅格桌') is a sacred object, on which one does not carry out activities other than the worship of the gods, and in this context red is associated with efficacy (Jordan 1985: 93-94).

### **Concluding Remarks**

With the fading of the so-called Red Tide Anti-Corruption Protest, we are left with the question of how to interpret this unusual and ambitious demonstration. This protest tied a number of conflicting aims together, such as anti-corruption and the ousting of DDP President Chen, into one single movement, with special symbolic importance placed on the colour red.

Typically, analysis of the campaign has focused on how individual politicians or political parties gained or lost as a result of this Red protest. However, this is not the concern of this paper. In fact, none of the politicians or political parties or groups could be called winners or losers. For instance, the DPP Green camp and anti-CPP Falun Gong tried to demonise the Red Protest, respectively by linking it with unification with Red China or by associating it with manipulation by China, but both failed because the CCP government was silent and no definitive meaning can be ascribed to silence. The KMT Blue camp tried to use this demonstration to unseat President Chen, but it failed as the politicians who allegedly misuse state funds are not only Green but also include many Blue members, such as KMT chairman Ma Ying-jeou.

For Shih Ming-teh, the anti-corruption protests of 2006-07 were a kind of figurative re-working of the anti-authoritarianism protests of the 1970s-80s. Between the 1970s-80s, Shih believed that by an act of personal and political will on his part the landscape of Taiwan could be changed forever. In 2006-07 he utilised the same strategy. If this strategy of willpower was successful during the 1970s and 1980s, it was totally ineffective in 2006-07 – none of the aims of the

Protest were met. Perhaps this points to the limits of charisma or 'great man' politics in current Taiwan, or perhaps merely to Shih as an anachronism.

Furthermore, I would like to argue that the conventional focus on Blue-Green gain or loss fails to understand the significance of the Red phenomenon in Taiwan's democratic history. The Red Protest Phenomenon took everyone by surprise not because it was well planned and conducted, but because it exposed the lack of political choices and imagination available in Taiwan. Taiwanese politics has for a long time been dominated by elections, personalities and ideologies rather than policies, issues, and substantial debates, and in consequence by allegiance to Green or Blue camps.

Despite attempts by Green and Blue to control the movement, its focus on the issue of corruption – an issue that transcends conventional political identification in Taiwan – gave the movement uncertain status in Taiwan's political landscape. For once, even though just for a brief moment at the beginning of the protests, the domination of the civic space was interrupted, making the idea of a new politics of dissent thinkable. Perhaps one way to think of this demonstration is as the expression of the unconscious recognition of the need for a 'third space' outside of purely Blue-Green ideologies of identity.

The colour red displayed in the campaign has a number of overlapping meanings which can represent more than one thing simultaneously. The interpretation that associates red with Communism and red with China ignores both the protesters' own association of the colour red with anger and further associations with righteousness, integrity, prosperity and honour, as well as meanings that are embedded in the prevalence of the colour red in rituals, festivals, and worship, where it may also signal auspiciousness, fortune, and efficacy. The choice of the demonstrators to wear red must be seen as part of a complex field of culturally embedded meanings and significances, some of which are overtly political but many others of which are not. For example, Chen Ching-yu (陳幸妤), President A-bian's daughter, was dressed in red on the day when her husband Chao Chien-ming was in court to face charges of corruption (*MSN* 2007). As regards her choice of red dress, the layers of meaning and counter-meaning were woven so densely as to resist proper questioning. We might at least wonder if this 'mini-protest' against corruption associated with Shih's Red-Shirt Army was understood as such even by Chen Ching-yu herself?

This Red Demonstration is now part of Taiwan's democratic history and a sign of the development of its civil society. According to the results of the 2006 Freedom in the World survey released in early October 2006 by the US-based Freedom House, Taiwan received a rating of 1, indicating the highest degree of freedom in terms of both political rights and civil liberties, including, of course, the right to demonstrate and the tolerance of demonstration (Freedom House 2006). But, perhaps most importantly of all, Taiwanese people were demonstrating that party politics should not be reduced to election campaigns only, and that the campaigns of Blue and Green in terms of colours and identities are no longer enough. So if we really want to understand this Red Demonstration we must see it as the manifestation of a frustration with a party political system of colour/identity that needs radical change if it is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is

time for us to realise that neither Blue nor Green are enough.<sup>1</sup> We need more imagination from our political system: new voices and new ideas, and more debates on policies and issues, rather than the constant repetition of the same tired rhetoric.

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<sup>1</sup> One example of this is the Third Society Party (第三社會黨), established in July 2007 with the aim of moving beyond Blue and Green politics. Its website is <http://www.society3.tw>.

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