



Session Summary: 8 January 2018

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This session welcomed Vladimir Stolojan, doctor of History and Civilization and associate member of CESSMA (Paris Diderot University). His presentation entitled « Entre ‘chapeaux rouges’ et ‘chapeaux blancs’ : les mises en récits des expériences victimaires par les différentes associations d’anciens prisonniers de la Terreur blanche » (Between “red hats” and “white hats”: how various associations for former prisoners of the White Terror tell the story of the victims’ experiences) looks at stories of life under authoritarian power in Taiwan.

The presentation ties in with the last chapter of his thesis entitled « Le statu-quo de la mémoire nationale à Taïwan. Les dynamiques antagonistes de mises en récits publiques de l’expérience autoritaire » (The status quo of national memory in Taiwan. Antagonistic dynamics of public storytelling about life under the authoritarian regime). This presentation highlights the “interrelational dynamics unique to the collective formed by the victims” (« Le statu-quo de la mémoire nationale à Taïwan. Les dynamiques antagonistes de mises en récits publiques de l’expérience autoritaire »-V.Stolojan) and the storytelling of associations for victims of the White Terror, in particular, associations of former communist prisoners (nicknamed “red hats”) and proindependence prisoners (nicknamed “white hats”).

Former prisoners who were victims of the White Terror include just as many continental Chinese (*waishengren*) as native Taiwanese (*benshengren*), and what is clear in the stories of these former prisoners is that the distinction between “red hats” and “white hats” stems less from opposing *waishengren* and *benshengren* than from opposing ideologies. These different groups each coalesce around a different ideology, but do not remain isolated from each other: they can share a common cause and back similar claims.

Communists and supporters of independence alike were condemned, executed, imprisoned, shot, in the name of the democratization of Taiwan, or of its independence or even of its reunification with China. These people are at the heart of the concerns of three associations created after 1987, and which rallied for their rehabilitation. Associations to remember:

- The Fraternal Association of Taiwanese Political Prisoner brings together Taiwanese nationalists, later reformed under the name “Association of Formosan Political Prisoner.” Former prisoners help with the rehabilitations of the victims of the events of 228 and other actions regarding Taiwanese nationalism during democratization.
- The Association of Mutual Aid for Political Victims of the Land of Taiwan brings together communist prisoners in favour of unification with China, political autonomy and the implementation of democratic liberties.
- The Association for the Rehabilitation of the 1950s Taiwanese White Terror Trials includes the members of the previous Association and works mainly for the rehabilitation of the victims of the White Terror.

These associations communicate and act more or less in cooperation, and can support common claims, while their ideological positions can also see some evolution. What these collectives,



especially the first two, also share is how limited their representativeness is and how relatively marginal they are in Taiwanese society, confronted with the State's passivity with regards to the rehabilitation of these prisoners. The State, in fact, tends to make the status of prisoner into a stigma.

Pro-unification and communist associations nevertheless carry out their own actions to uphold the memory of these prisoners. This takes place especially through the institutionalization of certain spaces and through the process of memorialization by raising monuments, stelae, plaques, planning graveyards and "memorial parks," as well as commemorative acts specific to the different groups, songs and speeches to remember the prisoners executed by the authoritarian regime.

Vladimir Stolojan's discourse analysis shows, in particular, how the groups actively participate to winning recognition for these prisoners. In their speeches, they stress the actions and struggles which have been undertaken, and present themselves as fighters against the regime and want to see continued "in the present the commitments of the past."

What's more, although these collectives each carry out their own actions, they join up on important subjects, claims addressed directly to the government, such as the "demand for the revision of the law on national security," the "payment of compensation for all the victims" and the demand "that the value of goods looted by the regime be taken into account in the calculation of said compensation" (V. Stolojan).