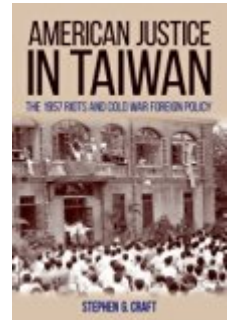


**Stephen G. Craft.** *American Justice in Taiwan: The 1957 Riots and Cold War Foreign Policy.* Studies in Conflict, Diplomacy, and Peace Series. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016. 284 pp. \$45.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8131-6635-3.



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Many recent scholarly publications on the early stages of the Cold War have become outdated shortly after publication as a result of rapid changes in the twenty-first-century international arena. Such an observation is also true for historical studies of Taiwan prior to the 1970s due to the restriction of governmental documents in Taiwan. Many books on the 1970s-80s “economic miracle” or “socioeconomic transformation” in Taiwan also reflect such a drawback. The book under review, *American Justice in Taiwan*, could be another example if Stephen G. Craft had kept the focus on American economic aid to Taiwan. However, the book retains its value by exploring two important issues. The first is the American response to the consolidation of regimes in East Asia. The US government struggled between the values of democracy and the risk of losing the frontline in the Cold War. The second concern relates to the factors that caused friction between the United States and its ally, the riot in 1957 Taiwan, which seems rather puzzling against the norms of both sides’ political systems. The book might lead to a better

understanding of contemporary Sino-American disputes or the American-Japanese relationship, including Barack Obama’s policy “pivot” to Asia.

In addition to an introduction and epilogue, the book has fourteen chapters. The arrangement of chapters and themes is different from typical academic writing on similar topics. The author starts to tell the story like a witness without concerns of keeping objective, a virtue many historians emphasize, until the analysis in chapter 3. The inconsistent writing and narrative styles are constantly staggered during the presentation of topics and arguments. Furthermore, some readers may be confused due to the lack of background knowledge of Taiwan as an ally of US Cold War policy.

In the first three chapters, Craft lays out the background of US Cold War policies in global and regional scopes. He attempts to make Taiwan an important case for revealing features of US foreign policies in the surrounding region. This arrangement leaves chapter 1, “A Shooting on Grass Mountain,” the vital beginning of the main theme

of the book at a relatively shabby two and a half pages. In addition to revealing the importance of the 1957 riot, or Liu Ziran Incident, in Taiwanese documents, the author portrays the severe tension between the two countries that had already developed prior to the outbreak of the riot. The tension, as Craft claims, resulted from a long history of mistrust in line with mutual exploitation between the United States and Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek or the Kuomintang's rule.

The archives and documents the author has collected, on the one hand, fully support his argument. On the other hand, official resources, such as the archives of Waijiao dangan in Taiwan and the United States Information Agency, limit Craft's interpretation of governmental viewpoints from both sides. These government files commonly reveal governmental perspectives on treating foreign counterparts as a whole without considering the possible conflicts between political consideration and social atmosphere. A simple cry for social just could be, therefore, portrayed as political manipulation. For example, a controversial Shen Ch'ung Incident in 1946 in China was introduced to reflect the similarity of political atmosphere and fear of riots in 1957 Taiwan. US diplomatic policies toward China prior to the 1950s, however, were very different from US Cold War strategies toward the East Asian region.[1] Moreover, the Kuomintang government was in double jeopardy during the 1957 riot. To survive, Chiang Kai-shek and his followers were eager to win back US support. However, the Kuomintang also wanted to wash away the humiliation of being the "watchdog of American imperialism" in communist propaganda. The dilemma obviously forced the Kuomintang in Taiwan to walk a fine line, balancing the demand from US policy and the social atmosphere.[2]

Chapter 6, "A Tale of Two Criminal Investigations," and chapter 8, "Justice of a Different Culture," touch on the dilemma from the legal process and cultural viewpoints. Further discus-

sion should be extended to a sense of social justice in 1950s Taiwan. With the definitions of mainlanders and ethnic Taiwanese in the book, the Shen Ch'ung Incident could remind mainlanders of the accusation of being "watchdogs of American imperialism" directed at the Kuomintang, while ethnic Taiwanese could empathize with the Japanese victim in the William S. Girard case, in which the American soldier killed a Japanese civilian while stationed in Japan. The author spends several pages describing the impact of the Girard case on the Liu Ziran Incident in Taiwan. The government in Taiwan, however, was very cautious not to expose the similarity of jurisdictional issues between the two cases. *Zhongyang jibao*, a Kuomintang newspaper, intentionally avoided the use of the term "extraterritorial immunity" in reports of the Girard and Robert G. Ronald (the American soldier who killed Liu Ziran) cases to bypass the possible risk of reminding Taiwanese readers, especially mainlanders, of anti-American feelings. [3] In addition, a magazine based in Hong Kong even appealed to the Kuomintang government to rename these Taiwanese mobs "protestors with justice (*yiming*)" to truthfully reflect the common sense of social justice in Taiwan.[4]

Generally speaking, Craft's major contribution could be the comprehensive description of US foreign policies to consolidate Taiwan as a front ally in 1950s East Asia. However, the book is not merely an academic narrative of history describing the 1957 riot in Taiwan but also an attempt to exercise influence over contemporary US foreign policy. The author claims, learning from the history of the riot, that the United States "needs to give host nations more jurisdictional voice" (p. 199). The United States' international image fell sharply after eight years of the George W. Bush administration. Coupled with long years of military campaigns abroad, fiscal difficulties, growing domestic problems, and China's continued rise, the Obama administration has introduced the pivot to Asia policy and the US Rebalancing Strategy. Craft's claim to promote understanding on cultur-

al and social, or even historical, levels between the United States and its allies should bring some light to those who operate related policies, especially for those who hold a position in the Potomac basin.

A book like this covering multiple goals obviously has pros and cons. The value of reading this book will differ based on the reader's background or status. To historians, the book leads the way to understand US foreign policy in the 1950s and the effects of that policy on Taiwanese society. To politicians, the book brings inspiration from a small piece of history but may overlook the difficulty of negotiating complexity among societies. To sum up, *American Justice in Taiwan* is a book worth reading for those with great curiosity and questions about either Taiwanese or US foreign policy in the Cold War period.

#### Notes

[1]. Robert Shaffer, "A Rape in Beijing, December 1946: GIs, Nationalist Protests, and U.S. Foreign Policy," *The Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 1 (2000): 31-64.

[2]. John P. Glennon, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, vol. 3, *China* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1986), 538-540.

[3]. *Zhongyang jibao*, June 2, 1957, 1.

[4]. *Xinwen Tiandi*, no. 488 (1957): 3.

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