

A Call to Action

Democracy and NIT

Asian Politics



The Elections In Senegal



IFLRY

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About LIBEL

LIBEL is a publication of the International Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth. LIBEL is published with the help of the European Youth Foundation and the Council of Europe. It is sent to all IFLRY member organisations as well as to international politicians, political parties, governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions and to young liberals all over the world.

Opinions expressed in LIBEL are - except if otherwise stated - the personal opinions of the authors, which are not necessarily the same as those of IFLRY or the IFLRY Bureau.

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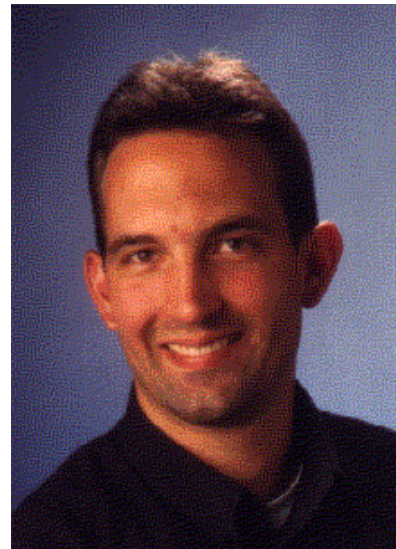
Dear fellow readers:

Once again “Libel” is delivered to you and we hope that it brings you the usual pleasure while reading it.

Yet the last years of the first millennium, but surely the upcoming years were always prized as the age of information technology, the years where information providing, managing, creating and selling will be the key factors for the economy, the wealth, the political and economical power. In the light of these developments IFLRY organised a very well attended seminar on the issue of ‘New Information Technology (NIT)’ this year in Strasbourg, France. We discussed the issues related with it extensively. A discussion on NIT and the development of democracy can be found in this issue of LIBEL.

Asia and Africa are two regions in which the liberal developments are getting settled and forces strengthened. The liberal parties are getting more and more support there. Therefore this LIBEL is also dealing with the developments in Asia and the successful elections of the liberals in Senegal. Austria and their political developments, the political ban of their European neighbours is discussed in another statement.

IFLRY as a federation of liberal youth and student organisations has to focus on the youth. Our participation and representation in politics is essential to have the voice of young people heard when decisions are taken. LIBEL tries to run this discussion with an article on the importance of youth involvement in politics.



Special thanks goes to the all our authors and the people that were working in the compilation of this issue. Please keep on contributing to it. Your opinion and articles are very much welcome at libel@iflry.org in any format that is PC (Windows or DOS) compatible. You can also find LIBEL on the internet at <http://www.iflry.org>.

I am looking forward to an intensive distribution and controversial discussion of the issues presented here.

Yours liberally,

Jonas Renz
IFLRY President

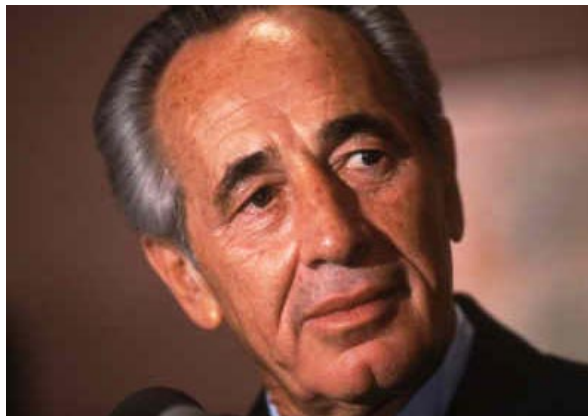
A NEW ERA FOR A NEW GENERATION

by Shimon Peres

The age has changed. It's not the continuation of what we know. Our history was written with red ink, a history of war, violence, hatred. Maybe there was a justification for it because we made our living from land and our quarrels from religions. We have since learned that we can make a better living from science and technology. We have learned the value of tolerance. Democracy is not a meeting of people who are alike, nor is it a gathering of like ideas. It is a meeting of people who are different, of ideas that differ. And we learn that we can live together in a pluralistic world and advance our age by education, research, and communication in a world without frontiers, without barriers, without prejudices and without distances.

It is really an age for young people. We talk so much about globalisation of the economy (but) the most important phenomena is the globalisation of young people. They are more globally oriented, more professionally inclined. They hardly understand the confrontations, wars and skirmishes we went through. Maybe they don't have declaration. But they do have a message. I think that the jeans and the t-shirts are a demand for equality, for openness, so you wouldn't judge a person by his dress- whether he is black or white, rich or poor, man or woman. And they dance and sing in the streets and the squares so they won't have to buy expensive tickets to opera houses and music halls. They have computers and internet-and

once you have the internet in your room, your room is no longer a room, it's a globe. And basically they don't understand why we want to mark, artificially, borders among nations. Or why we insist unnecessarily on going to war and fighting each other. We can agree while disagreeing. We can advance without fighting each other.



Shimon Peres

Today, a boy or a girl of 12, 13, or 14 is what we used to call a 'grown-up person.' They are better informed than we were at 17 and 18. They are stronger, better educated. Yet they don't have a role in life. They wander around looking for a role, for a challenge.

I think the young generation has a right to its own agenda.

I, personally, would like to see young people getting organized globally- non-governmentally- trying to put their own feelings and their own vision forward in an organized manner. We have to give them the right to have a future of their own. Because what's happening is a new age. A new concept. And a new generation. Hopefully much better.

Shimon Peres, a former foreign affairs minister of Israel and co-author of the Oslo Peace Agreement, was among the guests of honour at the launch of the International Year for a Culture of Peace at UNESCO headquarters on September 14th. He urged the world's young people to stand up and be counted, and decision-makers to make room for them.

Human Rights Protected in Austria?

by Natalie Schoonbaert

Democracy and Human Rights

The Council of Europe is in session four times a year. It is set up to defend the democracy and the Human Rights in the world. Every month political commissions meet to debate urgent matters. The Council of Europe is often underestimated. Though, during the plenary session in April 2000 for example the problems in Tchetcheny were discussed.



Council of Europe

Austria

Only two months ago Europe was in an uproar because of the exceptional government formation in Austria. I asked Nicky Van 't Riet about Austria and the role of the Council in this matter. In January 2000, during the former plenary meeting of the Council, the word had just gone out that an Austrian government was about to be formed between the conservative ÖVP and the ultra-right-wing FPÖ. By that time it was too late to put it on the agenda. Between January and April, political commissions thoroughly discussed the matter. By the time the plenary session of April took place, the representatives felt there was no point anymore in talking about Austria. There was nothing alarming happening in Austria at that moment. Of course, the Council has to see to it that the Human Rights aren't

violated there. It has to judge the Austrian government on their deeds. Nicky Van 't Riet approves the way Europe gave a signal of concern to the Austrian government. She still worries that other ultra-right-wing parties will enter other governments. Even though everything is now very quiet around Austria, she still keeps a stern eye on the country.

Jörg Haider

She strongly believes that -behind the scenes- Haider still has a lot of influence on the FPÖ. You have to keep in mind that it was Haider who was party leader during the election campaign and it was he who got the FPÖ in the Austrian government.

Nowadays, Austria is automatically linked to Haider. He has become a face for Austria. The man has incredible exposure in the media. He comes across very well on television and in interviews. He's a born diplomat. When his quotes go down the wrong way, he quickly takes them back and apologises for it.

Nicky Van 't Riet doesn't know the long-term consequences for Austria and Europe. But what she does know -and fears- is that a growing amount of countries will be facing ultra-right-wing parties in the near future.

Ultra-right-wing ideas in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands they don't have an ultra-right-wing party, because former leaders of such a party didn't get across very well. They couldn't convince people to vote for them. But if somebody like Haider would come along, that party would score very well (15 to 20%).

It's very obvious that there's a breeding ground for ultra-right-wing ideas in the Netherlands.



Nicky Van't Riet

Preventive action

When I asked her about preventive action against such parties, like Vlaams Blok (Belgium) and Front National (France), she tells me that the Council can not take action. These parties play the game very well. You can not legally challenge them. They're democratically elected and so the Council can't punish them. But when, for example, Vlaams Blok wins a lot of votes during the next election, she strongly believes that it should come on the Council's agenda.

Natalie Schoonbaert, a member of VUJO in Belgium, attended the 2nd Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe from April 3-7, 2000 in Strasbourg, France on behalf of IFRLY.

Democracy and New Information Technologies

by Joao Roma Neto

As Brazil's representative, I recently participated in a meeting promoted by IFLRY – International Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth, which took place in Strasbourg, from the 27th of February to the 5th of March 2000, during which the thematic of New Information Technologies was discussed. From the experience I gathered, living with youth from all over the world, I can say that the main one was to be able to think, without prejudice, about the possibilities of the positive innovation of new information technology.

Kai Yuan, who was one of the main unhappy youth leaders during the demonstrations at Heavenly Peace Square, attended and participated in the event as one of their most authorized voices. The Chinese leader, whose image is associated with the youth, showed courage and conviction in front the army's armoured tanks deployed to maintain order. He is currently a political exile in England. In his testimony, Kai Yuan knew how to discern the possibilities of an all-embracing philosophical and political application of new technological instruments.

He has never ceased to fight for a second on behalf of a free Fatherland, although he is living in an European country. The mechanism of participation which allows him daily contact with the Chinese reality is nothing else but the Internet.

It is true that the connected world suggests relevant debates. For instance, the debate of international regulation and national interference, and the debate of the peoples' cultural identity, which should be examined according to their challenges and perspectives. Some people see only the denationalizing and threatening aspects in the process.

The Council of Europe, the body which in the second postwar period chose cooperation and democracy as its maximum values, was quick to understand that if the instruments of communication were at the service of democracy, the horrors of Nazi-Fascist totalitarianism can be avoided through the free circulation of ideas.

The words of my Chinese colleague ended in a strong report of how, even physically distant from his fatherland, he was utilizing the available resources of information technologies to participate in the process of political transformation of his country. He is able to interfere, cooperate, lead, participate in decisions, warn, exchange information, and, by means of simply touching a button, remains a partner of those who fight *in loco* for the democratic cause. He is also, through this medium, allowed to keep a running dialogue with world entities interested in defending human rights.

Robert D. Putnam, Professor at Harvard University and author of the book *Making Democracy to Work*, is creator of the thesis that successful societies are those which come from solid community traditions, where, as in a play, the actors are linked to one another building a common destiny. Now, Putnam's pessimistic view consists a world where civic engagement and positive governments are a result of the egoistic and dissociative character of New Information Technology. This will lead the individual to an ever-growing isolation, making his participation in public activities uninteresting.

The democratic discussion, since Ancient Greece, has been about the degree of society participation. The modern concern, as studied by Rousseau, referred to the need of restoring the self-representation, as society gains the shape of mass presence.

Now, with Information Technology, the moment has come for democratic consolidation because, as Minister Gustavo Krause put very well in the essay, *Democracy: a new idea in the world*, "the ancient idea has been recently put in practice, which was rather an exception than a respect towards the majority will. It is important to deepen its positive agenda, which made the globalizing instinct of the Human Being feasible, what is extraordinarily comprisable."

Democracy is a fight against exclusion, which the interactive world enables to start on a planetary scale. The world is able to face world-wide problems such as: environmental protection, humankind claims, the struggle against misery, the search of a well-balanced model of development, and the consolidation of the ideals of freedom as a type of justice.



Joao at the NIT Seminar

I share with the Brazilian youth this experience. Even as a founder member of the Brazilian Institute of Informatics Rights – IBDI, to fight for information freedom, including a force leading to citizenship, is to fight for the democratic cause for a greater updating. Allowing an instantaneous intervention in the relevant debates of the current themes, wherever they may have started, is a way of devising a better future, which, I am sure, Kai Yuan is already glimpsing and helping to effectively build.

Joao Roma Neto, of PFL-Jovem in Brazil, was a member of the seminar team for the IFLRY New Information Technology Seminar.

Internet... et le reste

by Olivier LeBlanc

Il y a quelques semaines se tenait à Lisbonne le Sommet International sur l'économie. Les dirigeants discutaient entre autre des budgets à investir dans les connexions Internet de par le monde. Comme vous le savez sûrement, car on en entend parler de plus en plus, nos dirigeants sont pour une mondialisation d'Internet... Cela ne vous choque-t-il pas? Je dois vous avouer que je le suis.

Nous vivons dans des pays industrialisés et avons la chance de pouvoir utiliser Internet. En effet, Internet est déjà présent au travail, dans les Universités et, aujourd'hui, il apparaît dans les écoles primaires et secondaires. Quelle est l'utilité d'avoir Internet dans les écoles primaires? Il est vrai que les CD-ROM éducatifs existent et que l'ordinateur peut être utile mais qu'en est-il d'Internet? C'est vrai que moyen de communication permet de trouver des informations rapidement sur divers choses, et presque sur tout. S'il existe de bonnes choses sur ce support, il existe également énormément de mauvaises choses. Je pense aux sites érotiques ou pornographiques. Même si une partie de la population aime ce genre de choses, les enfants peuvent aller sur un de ses sites sans le faire exprès. Les conséquences ne seraient pas lourdes mais ce n'est pas la matière première que les professeurs ont le devoir d'apprendre à nos enfants.

En outre, n'est-il pas préférable de prendre un livre et de chercher après une information que d'aller uniquement sur Internet. Ce n'est qu'en confrontant les enfants aux livres que ceux-ci attraperont le plaisir de lire. De plus, le contact de la page au bout des doigts n'est-il pas plus sensuel que des touches de clavier? Les politiciens désirent mondialiser Internet. Même si cela peut paraître positif, je pense qu'il faut aller au-delà de cette offre et voir ce que cela implique.

Pour utiliser Internet, il faut savoir lire et écrire or, dans les pays industrialisés, plus de 200 millions d'individus sont illettrés. Est-il plus important d'investir dans un nouveau moyen de communication ou est-il préférable d'offrir une éducation pour tous.

Aussi, Internet demande une connexion à un modem et à une ligne téléphonique. Un habitant de la planète sur deux n'utilise jamais le téléphone. Il y a plusieurs raisons à cela. La première est que certaines personnes n'aiment pas le téléphone et préfèrent ne pas avoir le téléphone. La seconde raison, et c'est la plus importante, est que la majorité des personnes qui n'utilisent pas le téléphone n'ont tout simplement pas les moyens d'avoir le téléphone. De plus, Internet permet d'utiliser le courrier électronique. Cela est beaucoup plus rapide et plus sûr que le service postal. Pourtant, 70% de Boliviens n'ont pas de services postaux dans leur village. Donc nous parlons de placer Internet mais un Bolivien ne sait même pas écrire à une personne qui se trouve dans un village voisin. Il devra se déplacer, ce qui signifie se fatiguer en marchant jusque là, ne pas travailler pendant ce temps et ne pas gagner de l'argent.

La mondialisation d'Internet va demander quelques milliards mais plus de 800 millions de personnes dans le monde n'ont pas accès aux soins de santé. Cela se passe de commentaires quand on sait que, avec 50 BEF, on peut vacciner un enfant contre 6 maladies mortelles. En outre, plus de 200 millions d'enfants dans le monde travaillent. La mondialisation d'Internet va permettre de créer de l'emploi. C'est un bon point mais que ferons-nous pour tous ces enfants exploités qui travaillent entre 12 et 15 heures par jour pour un salaire de misère, voire pas du tout.

La dernière chose est que nous entendons plus en plus parler d'une connexion gratuite à Internet. C'est une chose mais Internet ne sera jamais gratuit car il faut de toute façon payer les communications téléphoniques. Beaucoup de personnes ne peuvent se permettre de dépenser de l'argent pour cela.

En résumé, je dirai que Internet, c'est bien mais il faut se demander quelles sont nos priorités... Internet ouvre des portes sur le monde mais il peut aussi en fermer... C'est ce que cela représente pour des millions de personnes: quelque chose d'inaccessible.

Alliance of Asian Democracy Groups Needed

by James Gomez

To keep the democracy ball rolling in Asia, there needs to be closer cooperation between those involved in each country.

Democratic forces in Asia need to form a multi-tiered alliance to consolidate gains made following the region's economic crisis. This is necessary in order to prevent the old economy from retarding reform efforts during this crucial period of transition.

Events following the Asian economic crisis are pointing towards a greater potential for pluralism in Asia. Changes in leadership and government in South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, and most recently in Taiwan are examples of outcomes following greater pressures for political liberalization.

This trend is also increasingly reflected in the other countries in the region. The Liberal Democratic Party of Japan continues to weaken, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)-led National Front faces daily challenges from civil-society groups and a newly strengthened political opposition, and in Singapore, The People's Action Party-led liberalization could set the momentum for political change. In short, Asia is undergoing a transition towards democracy.

However, a key challenge in this process lies in operationalising the necessary reforms needed to sustain this process. There is oftentimes inertia and the threat that the old ways stand to retard the transition to democracy. Those who were schooled and who operated in the old economy continue to claim that changes, if any, must be executed by being close to the existing regime. Further, the experiences in each country differ from one another.

In several of the democracies in transition, such as Indonesia and Thailand, new constitutions have been drawn up with new institutions and electoral laws put in place. Chief among these institutions are electoral and human-rights commissions, information

and privacy acts, a statement of citizen rights and the recognition of civil-society participation.

In Malaysia, old institutions are grappling to respond to political demands of a newly awakened society following the sacking of former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim. The recently set up Human Rights Commission is seen as being caught in the old economy as its composition ignores some that have been actively being working in the field, and the range of rights issues that it is prepared to take up is unclear.



Malaysian Government Buildings

The path to democracy has not been without sacrifices. Lives have been lost and broken. Many a time it was the consequence of responses taken by the authorities to political expression. The people of South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan have paid huge sacrifices to get where they are today. Other countries in the region, such as Cambodia and Sri Lanka, also make these very sacrifices as they work towards change.

A principle collaborator in this abuse of the rights has been a compliant judiciary. A mixture of patronage, rewards and fear has for a long time caused the rule of law to give way to rule by law. An independent judiciary is unlikely to emerge if a reform-minded executive or legislature is not in place.

Undoubtedly, an important contribution to the democratic process has been that made by civil-society groups. After decades of suppression, citizen in organised groups are forcing many governments to open up. In the Philippines the people sector continues to be strong, while in Malaysia many groups are active on a day-to-day basis.

Yet in countries like Singapore some civil society groups claim special wisdom in insisting that gains are made best by working with the existing regime and asking for space. Most are reluctant to question or campaign directly for changes in legislation that curb civil liberties.

An important source of control over the political process has been the presence of tightly controlled media. Singapore and Malaysia continue to be dominant examples. International and regional media that were once looked upon as a last resort have been cowed into self-censorship. However, the media in regimes that have been suppressed for so long are being challenged by the Internet and alternative methods of news delivery and distribution.

A major issue in many of the countries in the region had been the centralized nature of the state. A rich and dominant center is often put tension with the poorer parts of the country. One major reform has been to give local governments more autonomy over certain areas of legal control and revenue collection.

The military has for a long time played a major role in politics in the region. Indonesia and Thailand have been notable examples. Once the military straddled politics and owned big businesses; however, the political changes following the crisis are slowly reconfiguring the civil-military equation. Yet in not-too-distant Pakistan a military coup replaced a civilian government, and the former prime minister was sentenced to life imprisonment for terrorism and hijacking.

However, a principal problem of reform is that many of these measures to facilitate political pluralism are taken at different levels, areas, countries, and paces.

They are not synchronized. There is a need to forge some kind of grand alliance that pulls in the strengths of various issues and actors to leverage on the weakness of others as well as to facilitate mutual learning, and more importantly to build on some of the nascent regional structures that have begun to spring up.

Regional groupings such as the Southeast Asia Press Alliance have been one of the recent examples that can lend strength and structure for a stronger press voice, especially in countries that do not have a free press. Another has been the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats that serves as a regional platform for political parties in government and opposition to consolidate and coordinate a democratic political agenda.

There is also the Asian Human Rights Mechanism, which is trying to foster the setting up of human-rights commissions in the region. Efforts at looking at a regional safety net can be seen as another example set in motion by those interested in promoting social justice. Collectively these efforts should be seen as a growing number of geographical responses to form a democratic alliance. And as this momentum needs to be harnessed and expanded into other areas.

For instance, a regional secretariat to coordinate the activities of civil-society groups that have a democratic agenda could be one initiative. Others could include a regional network of electoral monitoring organizations and an Asian watchdog mechanism to survey the independence of the judiciary. A regional privacy-of-information and access-to-information project is another network to consider among the number of possibilities to foster and Asian democratic alliance. Finally, an Internet portal to connect all these various initiatives through cyberspace could add a communications advantage to this endeavor.

The many victories by liberal democratic forces in the region has created a sense of optimism. This optimism can be consolidated via a grand, multi-tiered Asian alliance for democratic development.

CHINA AND THE INTERNET

by Kai Yuan

Modern History of China

China means the Central Kingdom with five thousand years of history recorded by written material. China relied on its agriculture, powerful empire army, and Confucianism to rule one of the biggest empires in the world.

However, China met great challenges from Europe one hundred and sixty years ago. The Qing Empire restricted trading with Europe. When the European found that China only exported tea and silk and needed nothing from them, they started to smuggle opium into China. During the Opium War in 1840, the Empire's army was quickly defeated by a few thousand British soldiers armed with guns and backed by warship cannons. China fell into the hands of warlords backed by different Western powers.

From then, China sent thousands of officials and yang students to study modern technology in the West. Modern schools and industry were built up in China. Railways linked major cities and parts of China. Engineers, lecturers, and bankers became important social classes. Shanghai even developed into one of the biggest financial and commercial centres in the world during the 1930's. However, what China never adopted was the concept of rule of law, human rights and democracy. Chinese people have not had any kind of protection against powerful rulers. What was more, people even became the state's slaves under Mo's Communist regime.



The port of Shanghai

Communists gained power in mainland China after winning the civil war in 1949. Chairman Mo and his leadership had been pursuing three goals.

First, they wanted to re-build centralism to protect against bullying from Western powers and wash away the shameful history of the last century.

Second, they thought that they could build up a communism country if they used the power of the state to brainwash Chinese and convert them into self-less slaves of the state.

Third, they wanted to be the leader of the communist world by beating down the Soviet Union by export revolution into third world countries.



A Communist Parade

To achieve such targets, individual people in China have to be part of the state machine. Individual human rights are regarded as a tumour of western imperialism. The state dominates all aspects of individual life from birth to grave. Class clearing has been ruthlessly taken.

More than two million so called anti-revolutionaries were executed in the early 1950's

Around six hundred thousand intellectuals charged as rightist were sent to labour camps in 1959. Many of them died of hard labour in the next twenty years.

During the great leap forward campaign, sixty million farmers and workers were forced to do steel-smelting work. Nobody was working the land. This caused three years of famine, from 1960 to 1963. Hungry farmers were stopped from seeking refuge because authorities did not want the Chinese and world know the scope of famine. The refugee would defame the socialist China. As consequence, more than twenty millions farmers died from starvation.

Tiananmen Movement

Dong Xiaoping lead China to new stage of economic reform, and he adopted an open door policy in the post Mo era. With foreign investment and importing of commodities and technology, the Chinese people were shocked by the material development of the West. They have been taking any opportunity to gain wealth. The Party's officials and their relatives certainly have been taking advantage of this and have become wealthy by spreading corruption.

However, Dong and his Party have been the same as Mo's regime toward the political dictatorship system, value of human rights and free circulation of information. They deny individual human rights by using so-called collective survive rights. Collective has the same meaning of the state in China. Individuals are nothing to state machine. More prisons have been built to fit political dissidents.

In university, students can read foreign book and newspapers. Chinese try to receive the radio channels of BBC or Voice of America in order to get true information. Foreign films and TV programs are the most popular in China. Many students and scholars have chances to study and visit abroad. All this information about modern civil society have contributed gradually to Chinese thinking about democracy and rule of law. People began to demand to stop corruption, freedom of expression and adopt rule of law in 1980's. This new social awareness reached its peak in 1989.

Beijing students and citizens occupied the Tiananmen Square during the Party's General Secretary, Hu Yaobang's, day of public memorial service in April

of 1989. Hu got his good name by advocating social and political reform. He was sacked by Dong Xiaoping two years ago. The current General Secretary Zhao Ziyang was facing same fate when Dong felt his paramount power in China being threatened. In the next fifty days before June Fourth Massacre, more than five million students from around China came and set camps in Tiananmen Square.

Dong and Primer Li Peng refused to promise to stop corruption, give freedom of public assembly, and the freedom to set up political organisations. After the Government rejected a continuing dialogue with students' representatives, more than five hundred students went on a hunger strike for ten days and were taken to hospital.

When Gorbajovia took his first visit to China and had meeting with Dong in ThePeople's Great Hall facing Tiananmen Square in 20th of May, he was moved by people's power. This was probably one of reasons that he was on the people's side in the wave of Eastern European Democratic Movement in a few months later.

In the meantime, workers, journalists, clerks and students in every city went to the streets and had demonstrations to support the student and citizen action in Beijing. I was going between Hefei and Shanghai to organise support there. I also took part in many demonstrations. I witnessed millions of people occupying Shanghai People's Square for twenty days. China was in the hand of its people. Local governments got lost for a month because they did not get clear instruction from Party's leadership among which Zhao Ziyang was sympathetic with the students.

Dong and his fellows finally concluded that the Communist regime would finish if they gave up to people's demand. Student action also reminded Dong of The Cultural Revolution. He ordered a massacre in Beijing. At least five thousand students and citizens were killed.

We did not give up our belief on democracy. The Alliance for Democracy in China was set up after the Tiananmen Massacre.

State control of Internet

Internet is a booming industry in China. According to state official statistics, there are nearly ten million subscribers to the Internet in China. The number could reach twenty million in this year. Most Internet users are professionals, intellectuals, and officials in China. Their average age is in the 30's. Many of them participated in the 1989 movement.

The Bureau of State Secrecy Protection promulgated new regulation on the Internet at the start of this year. Any information sent to Internet web sites should be examined by a government agent. Anyone who wants to set up web site, chat room, and web news on the Internet should get a permit from the authority. State secrets are not allowed to be put in Internet. However, there is no definition of State secrecy. This leaves authorities freedom to punish any Internet user. In March 1998, Lin Hai was tracked down and arrested. He was tried for providing 30,000 e-mail addresses to our overseas Internet pro-democracy publisher. Li Hai was sentenced two years in prison under the charge of the leak of state secrecy.

The authority also ordered all foreign companies to submit their software programs of confidential code (PGP) and Internet secret information protection program. The authority has the power to check any software program in the market. Chinese are not allowed to use such PGP programs. Li Hai would not have been tracked down if he had used such PGP program. Commentators suggest that this order was similar to asking Coca-Cola to submit its recipe.

However, there are many ways to break through official control of the Internet. One example is to use a web page to create a mirror web site which is forbidden in China. Our web sites keep searching for free web pages and applying for uploading mirror web sites to Internet service providers in China. It takes time for authority to block mirror sites. Our web site could move to other web pages.

Some activists set up Internet forums by using forged registers. Such as <http://freethinking.virtualave.net> and <http://freethinking-forum.virtualave.net/www-board/multiboard1.html>. Democracy forums on the Internet attract people by talking about people's suffering under the Communist system.

Our key activists in China are using various e-mail addresses to keep contact with us. We send a small piece of information to each address. The authority could not get the whole picture even if they track down one or two addresses. We also change our contact address quite often. For important discussions, we prefer to use public telephone to do it.

Our Alliance has developed a daily pro-democracy electronic newsletter circulating among Chinese around the world. It is directly e-mailed into subscribers' mailboxes. Using the Internet means that our newsletter is capable of reaching hundreds of thousands of Chinese, and it distributes news, analysis, commentaries and research articles throughout China. We are looking to upgrade this Internet usage to a web site or electronic publisher disseminating our policies. Our influence on Chinese social change will increase when we deliver a reliable political and moral message through this new information technology.

Kai Yuan is a Chinese dissident who uses NIT to fight against the Communist system. This article is an excerpt from a speech that Kai Yuan gave at the NIT Seminar hosted by IFLRY.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE ROC / TAIWAN 1947-1996

by Åsa Nilsson

Establishment of the Republic of China (ROC)

1949-1986

On December 25, 1947, the constitution of the Republic of China came into force. It had been adopted a year earlier by a National Assembly dominated by the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), in Nanking on the Chinese mainland. The constitution was rather democratic, but in 1948 it was suspended under the Temporary Provisions Act. At this time, China was in the middle of a civil war, and the communists were becoming stronger. In 1949, the nationalist government lost the Chinese mainland to Mao Zedong and his communists. Soon afterwards the entire government, headed by Chiang Kai-shek, fled to Taiwan. To the island of 36.000 km² with 7 million inhabitants, came also 1,5 million KMT supporters, mainly state employees and military personnel. On December 8, 1949, a proclamation stating that the Executive Yuan (the cabinet) had decided to transfer the nationalist capital from the mainland to Taipei in Taiwan was released. The KMT leadership intended to continue the civil war from Taiwan, and was convinced that they would one day once again be the rulers of all China. In the meantime they wanted to show their good rule in Taiwan.

Thus the KMT established the Republic of China (the ROC) on Taiwan and claimed to be the sole legitimate government of all China. This was widely accepted in the international community until the 1970's, when the People's Republic of China (the PRC) gained in power. The result was that many countries broke its diplomatic ties with the ROC, and they were even forced to leave the United Nations.

During this time all national opposition was prohibited. Supporters of the opposition were often imprisoned and there have also been cases of politically motivated assassinations. On the local level there was, however, some political pluralism and local elections were held regularly. But the opposition was under the strict control of the KMT.



In spite of the oppression, the opposition began to organize itself in the late 1970's. Those elected representatives who were not members of the KMT were called *Tang-wai* (outside the party). At first the political discussions between the government and the opposition were held mostly in the street-arena. However, compared to the situation in other countries, the violent clashes between government and opposition have been very limited in Taiwan.

The three national institutions are the National Assembly, appointing the president (until 1996), the Legislative Yuan, passing the laws and the Control Yuan, which controls the government and the

government employees. The institutions are supposed to represent the people, but for none of the three regular elections were held, since the representatives could no longer act in their constituencies on the mainland. This meant that in 1980 only 320 of the 760 original members of the Legislative Yuan were alive. Supplementary elections had been held for 48 seats. In the National Assembly only 1.128 out of the 2.961 members, who were elected in 1948 were still in office. 62 persons had been elected for six-year periods in supplementary elections.

1986-1996

In 1986, the KMT initiated several political changes that moved Taiwan towards a pluralistic, representative democracy. The most important political changes were that the KMT lifted the martial law, entered into political dialogue with the opposition, created a new security law, and introduced a new law for the creation of political organizations. In September 1986, a new political party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was formed in violation with the current laws. The KMT did, however, not take any repressive action.

In addition to these changes, parliamentary reforms were carried out. The result was that politicians who had been in the national institutions since 1947 were forced to retire, and that elections were held for all seats. The period December 1991–March 1996 was characterized by several “first-time elections”; first for representative organs and later on for executive positions. In December 1991 the first full-scale election for the National Assembly was held, and in December 1992 representatives for all seats in the parliament (the Legislative Yuan) were elected. Thanks to this election, the highest decision-making body had to answer to the people of Taiwan, and leaders of the opposition, who had formerly been imprisoned because of their opinions, could now express the same opinions in parliament.

In 1994 the Governor of Taiwan and Mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung were the first executive positions to be filled via popular elections. This process was continued on March 23, 1996, when the Taiwanese people for the first time in history could choose their president in a direct, popular election.

Åsa Nilsson is an IFLRY Vice-President and a member of LUF from Sweden. She attended the Liberal International Executive Committee meeting in Taipei, Taiwan as an IFLRY representative. She wrote her thesis on this topic, titled, „Legitimacy and Democratization in Taiwan.“

Revolutionary Changes in Senegal

by Martin Sjogren

The atmosphere was tense when Mr Abdoulaye Wade, leader of Senegal's liberal party, held the last press conference before the decisive second round of the presidential elections where he would face Abdou Diouf, leader of the socialist party.

Abdou Diouf had been president for 20 consecutive years and his Socialist Party and its predecessors had been in power ever since Senegal's independence from France in 1960. Wade and the journalists knew that this was, indeed, the greatest possibility for a change in power in the history of Senegal. Still, the feeling in the air was that it just wouldn't happen, somehow the ruling Socialists would triumph, possibly using their wealth and control of the state apparatus to rig the elections as they had done so many times in the past.

Despite its name, one cannot say that that the Socialist Party is left-wing. In the 90s it has, for example, privatised state-owned companies even more fiercely than what has been on the liberal party's agenda. It is, in fact, hard to apply a left-right scale on a country where the family is a by far more important provider of safety and security than the government is. What one can say about the Socialist Party is, however, that it has become synonymous with the state and has made Senegal look more like a one-party state than a democracy. Senegal's wealthiest men are almost all politicians and were, at least, members of the Socialist Party until March 19th, 2000. Power brought money to the Socialist Party, and money gave the power to continue to rule. This was the vicious circle Mr Abdoulaye Wade has been trying to break ever since he created the Senegalese Democratic Party in 1974.

Now, 26 years later, Wade, had his last but also best chance to take over power from the socialists in next day's presidential election. The Socialist candidate had in all previous elections gotten more than the needed 50% to win directly in the first round, but this time the socialist Abdou Diouf had achieved only 41% against Wade's 31%, hence there would be a second round between the two.

Wade had formed an alliance with Mustapha Niasse, a socialist dissident who arrived in third position with 16% in the first round. This would in theory give Wade a fair chance to win, but then one had to consider the possibility of the elections being rigged. Wade himself claimed that the real result of the first round was 39% for him and 33% for Diouf. These kinds of numbers are very hard to verify, but most independent observers say that Wade would beat Diouf in a clean poll. Some journalists I talked to said that they estimated the incidence of fraud to be 5 to 10 %.



Wade opened the press conference by stating that it had been discovered that hundreds of election bureau chiefs had been replaced at very short notice, something clearly in violation with the Senegalese electoral code. All the new chiefs were members of the Socialist party. Wade had made it clear that, in the event that Diouf won, he wouldn't try to calm down his enraged supporters as he had done in the past. An American journalist sitting next to me said that the question wasn't if there would be violence but the amount of violence there would be if Diouf won. It was likely that if Mr Diouf had tried to hang on, despite losing, it would lead to civil unrest, maybe prompting a coup d'etat. This fact might very well have been the opposition's best weapon in preventing the socialists from rigging the elections.

At the end of the press conference, Wade was asked if he would try to take command of a possible unrest. He answered coolly that he hadn't the temper of a revolutionary and that using force to get power never had been an option for him. He continued by saying that revolutions are not lead by old leaders but by new ones who emerge from them. In the audience, we got the feeling that it was very hard to predict what was going to happen the next day, but that certainly history was going to be made.

A fact worth noticing about the press conference was that there were journalists from almost all Senegal's private newspapers and radio channels, but none from

Senegal's only TV channel, which is controlled by the state, nor from the pro-government newspaper "Le Soleil". This is Senegal's largest newspaper but it almost never writes about the opposition and when it does it is always in very negative terms.

On the Election Day, I went to Pikine, a suburb of Dakar where the opposition usually scores good results. A delegation from Wade's party's youth organisation UJTL, which is a full member of IFLRY, took me around to the several election bureaux in the area, all located in school buildings. The temperature was high but the voting proceeded calmly. Once we saw quite a queue of people on the street. I was told they were waiting to get their voting cards which they should already have gotten by that time. Something that had happened too often in past elections was that suddenly there are just no voting cards left in areas where the opposition is strong. This time there were, fortunately, voting cards for all the people, and we estimated that they would all have the time to cast their ballots before the election bureaux closed at 18:00.



We never saw any violence in Pikine but we heard reports coming in from confrontations between Diouf and Wade supporters outside election bureaux in other parts of Dakar. The radio reported that a socialist party member had been arrested when caught with dozen of electoral cards that hadn't been taken out. The worst act of violence we heard of was, probably, that the cars of two socialist mayors had been burned by an angry crowd.



As a way to preventing people from voting twice, all Senegalese voters have to dip one fingertip in violet ink. A member of UJTL demonstrated though that it isn't difficult to scrub off the ink and that he after the first round talked with some friends, not knowing he was an UJTL member, gladly boasted they had voted twice.

Walking around without sitting down in 35C half a day makes you tired, especially if you are used to Scandinavian climate. So, while I spent most of the afternoon recovering, the members of UJTL and the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) set up strategies for protection of the election bureaux in Pikine. In the past, saboteurs have come to unguarded elections bureaux in areas where the opposition is strong to destroy the ballot box and create so much damage that the votes must be declared invalid. The UJTL people told me that, though, it has never been proven these saboteurs are of course paid by the Socialist Party, since the country is poor you easily find people who do most things for money.

In Senegal, an election campaign isn't over until the result is properly proclaimed and the politicians have begun their work in the parliament or the government. Abdoulaye Wade was for example confident of victory when a part of the votes were counted in the presidential elections 1988, then he was arrested and the Socialist administration proclaimed the victory of Diouf with 76% of the votes. Wade was kept in prison for three months until the protests of the people became so strong that the government had to let him out. Many PDS members stayed longer time in prison, though.



No saboteurs came to the election bureaux we guarded that evening, instead hundreds of people came to hear the results with us. Most of the people were young and there were many children which is almost always the case in a crowd in Senegal as 48% of the population is below age 15. Recently, several FM radio stations have been established in Senegal. Today, the stations sent reporters to hundreds of individual voting bureaux and within minutes of the local returning officer announcing the result, the reporters got on their cellphones and broadcast it. I had never seen so many people with a radio glued to their ear as that evening in Pikine. The first results were from Dakar and were good but expected. The PDS and Wade usually beat the PS and Diouf in Dakar. The situation is however the opposite in the interior of the country where the illiteracy rate is higher and possibilities to fraud and buy votes greater. Then more good results came in and a slight optimism turned into a truly festive atmosphere. After two hours, still not one single election bureaux had reported a win for Diouf, people started dancing like crazy and shouting "sopi" which means change and is the slogan most used by the opposition. The results were much better than anyone had expected, Wade won in many places where the Socialist party

never had lost before Thanks to the radio the electorate knew about it making it virtually impossible for the authorities to rig the result at this point.

At one point the radio Walf Adjri broadcast:

‘Results from Rufisque
Ecole Cheik Mamadou Diop
Bureaux No7
Maître Abdoulaye Wade 385 votes
Exiting president Abdou Diouf 65 votes’

We burst out laughing. In Dakar, Wade more than tripled the score of Diouf winning in every election Bureaux of the city. Wade had beaten Diouf with as much as 5 to 6 times as many votes in our part of Pikine, making local representatives very happy.

Some of my friends in the UJTL said they just couldn't believe it, Wade would be president, the Socialist Party had lost its 40 year long grip of the power. It was possible for the Senegalese people to chose its leaders and no violence had been necessary.



In the evening, we went to Mr Wade's home closer to central Dakar Journalists there described the atmosphere to the celebrations near the Champs Elysées when France won the World Cup. Wade made a speech thanking the people, myself, and some journalists, and speculated about what impact this would have on Senegal. We thought that it would have great beneficial influence on a In the long term, but that there were things Wade could do immediately. One of them would be to abolish the senate that had been created to decrease interior tension in the Socialist Party giving more people good positions and salaries. Another thing

to abolish was the so-called ministry of communication, which had in reality served as a ministry of censorship. "Take it away and you will be free" said an Ivorian reporter to his Senegalese colleagues.

The next day Abdou Diouf admitted defeat and congratulated Wade for the victory, making Senegal turn from a de facto one-party state to a democracy over a night. That day, the independent newspapers with "WADE PRESIDENT" in huge letters on the front pages were sold out everywhere while the pro-government *Le Soleil* was left on the shelves. *Le Soleil* had "A victory of democracy" as its head line, not alluding at Wade's victory, but to the fact that the elections had been relatively smooth. The results were not mentioned at all, all it did was to declare stubbornly that the elections had been exemplary in places where the Socialist Party was strong and the stronger the opposition was, the more problems there had been. However, in the next issue even *Le Soleil* acknowledged facts and had "Senegal chose change" as title and a note that the editor in chief resigns as a result of the elections.

Further commentary:

Wade has now been the president of Senegal for a month. He has started to carry through a fairly market-liberal program without big promises to deal with the country's problems. (Look at www.seneweb.com for more info) I hardly believe all Senegal's troubles will be overcome quickly and even Wade's governance will probably be affected by corruption

But,

-This corruption will be a lot lower than it has been during the 40 years of socialist rule.

-Use fraud in future elections will be very, very difficult.

-The people will start demanding more and more from the persons they elect. It is now possible to dismiss the persons in power if they don't do a good job. Before March 19th it felt like anyhow you voted the Socialist Party would win.

-Freedom of press and of expression is secured, probably for many, many years.

-Senegal has begun to put pressure against non-democracies in the region. During the first week as president Wade made two quite brave statements. One was that Alpha Condé, the opposition leader of Guinea should be released from prison. The reason he is in prison is mainly the fact that he is the opposition leader.

The other statement was that it might not be very good for the democracy in Côte d'Ivoire if the military junta leader Gen. Guey runs for president in the next elections. Both those statements were in my ears so obviously right, but still I haven't heard any other African leader say the same thing.



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