

In the post-Umbrella movement era, Beijing is seemingly turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to Hong Kongers' demands — relentlessly suppressing their basic human rights — and forcing them to express solidarity with China.

This can be seen in the most recent policy address of Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying's (梁振英) administration, which not only ignored Hong Kongers' plea for genuine democracy, but also criticized students and the pan-democracy camp for advocating Hong Kong independence.

The chief executive's criticism was weakly grounded, because it was based purely on a few articles published about a year ago in the Undergrad, the University of Hong Kong's student magazine. Actually independence is not a real issue in Hong Kong politics at all. Leung's criticism has raised serious concerns about restrictions on freedom of speech on one hand, and China's increasing control of Hong Kong on the other.

China's model of governance over Hong Kong is similar to that of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) over Taiwan from the 1940s to the 1980s. In Taiwan, during the White Terror era, people were also deprived of their right to express their opinions or organize opposition parties, not to mention advocate democracy.

There are two reasons for expressing solidarity with Hong Kong in support of self-determined democracy and freedom of speech.

First, in terms of democratic development, Taiwan and Hong Kong have either experienced, or are experiencing, "colonization" — or, in the case of Hong Kong, "mainlandization" — in parallel with rising local consciousness and the search for identity.

In Taiwan, the transition from authoritarian governance to democratization was to a large extent attributable to change brought about by the illegal publication by dangwai ("outside the party") magazines, such as Formosa and Free China, which had to a considerable extent established a Taiwanese, rather than a Japanese or Chinese identity.

At this critical moment, Leung has condemned the Undergrad articles pushing for autonomy as advocating Hong Kong independence and transgressing the core value of the Basic Law. His criticism shows that academic autonomy and freedoms that people enjoy in Hong Kong depend very much on the ideological preferences and interpretations of Chinese bureaucrats.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Furthermore, the freedom of opinion and expression lays the foundations for democratization and civilized development of society on the basis of the values of human dignity and social emancipation. Critically, Hong Kong, under the absolute rule of China, is moving on the road to serfdom as a result of China being a cult of party state feudalism and the enemy of an open society.

Is there any reason why people should not be able to say: "Je suis Hong Kong"?

Second, Taiwan and Hong Kong were among the Asian Tigers in the 1970s because of their infrastructures of freedom and democratization.

It is said that the sense of Taiwanese identity is propagated through social movements in which new media are playing a crucial role in establishing this self-image.

Similarly, the Undergrad magazine and other media outlets in Hong Kong have to insist fearlessly on freedom of speech and expression not only to build genuine democracy, but also to reconstruct a strong Hong Kong identity separate from China. This would help to spur the development of Asian democratization. Is there any reason why Taiwan would not express solidarity with Hong Kong?

## Beijing's muzzle on the HK media

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Taiwan and Hong Kong share a similar history and are both faced with Chinese oppression in the political and social domains. In essence, it is demonstrable that the suppression of freedom of speech in Hong Kong is, in the end, humiliating China itself because it gives the world a clear understanding that the Chinese Communist Party regime is a tyrannical body without a democratic soul.

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