This article seeks to answer the question: why did Palestinians in the occupied territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) develop political activities that differed from those of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), but at the same time maintain strong support toward the PLO? Primary documents collected in al-Wathā‘iq al-Filasṭīnīya al-‘Arabīya (The Documents of Arab Palestine) can help illuminate the dynamic politics inside and outside the territories. Following analysis of historical developments using these primary documents, this article concludes that strict control by Israeli authorities inside the territories and Palestinians’ fear of the appearance of an alternative leadership brought their own political program to support the PLO within a relationship of co-existence. Inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it was very difficult to insist on the full liberation of Palestine (which the PLO did), because of the stringent Israeli control, but Palestinians inside the territories needed the PLO to prevent another leadership from forming that might collaborate with Israel or Jordan. However, changing international politics led to cooperation between the PLO and Jordan: the very country that intended to create an alternative leadership inside the territories. The paper shows how the dynamics of international politics created an ironic situation inside the territories.
Chinese Taipei