

World League for Freedom and Democracy

The World League for Freedom and Democracy (WLFD) is an international non-governmental organization of anti-communist politicians and groups. It was founded in 1954 as the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League (APACL) under the initiative of Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Republic of China (first on Mainland China, after 1949 on Taiwan) and retired General Charles A. Willoughby and established by Ku Cheng-kang. During the Cold War, WACL actively participated in anti-communist and anti-Soviet positions.

In 1990, the organization changed to its current name, but has preserved its traditions and former ties. It unites representatives from more than 100 countries and has eight regional divisions. It has its headquarters in Taipei, Taiwan. [2]

History

The WLFD descended from the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League. Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan, Elpidio Quirino of the Republic of the Philippines, and Syngman Rhee of the Republic of Korea founded the APACL in Jinhae, the wartime capital city of the Republic of Korea (ROK) on 15 June 1954. Its first general conference was held in that city and was hosted to advocate and support the causes of anti-communism. The other participating

states, including <u>South Vietnam</u>, <u>Thailand</u>, <u>Okinawa</u>, <u>Japan</u>, <u>Hong Kong</u>, and <u>Macau</u> also sent representatives.

World Freedom Day

World Freedom Day <u>Chinese</u>: 世界自由日; <u>pinyin</u>: *Shìjièzìyóurì*) is a memorial day celebrated on 23 January in <u>Taiwan</u> and <u>South Korea</u>. In Taiwan, the event is also known as 123 Freedom Day (Chinese: 一二三自由日), due to a hand gesture devised by the *Voice of Justice*. The thumb (one) represents freedom,

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Logo of the World League for Freedom and

Democracy

Abbreviation WLFD

Predecessor Asian Peoples' Anti-

Communist League

Formation 1966

Founded at Taipei, Taiwan

Headquarters Taipei, Taiwan

Secretary Ger Yeong Kuang (葛永光)

General

President Ku Cheng-kang (Eternal)

Yao Eng-chi

Budget 22 million TWD $^{[1]}$ (2017)

Website wlfdroc.org.tw (http://wlfdro

c.org.tw/)

Formerly called World Anti-Communist

League

World Freedom Day

Date 23 January

Next time 23 January 2026

Frequency annual

the <u>V sign</u> is two, and the third finger represents the <u>Three Principles of the People</u>. World Freedom Day marks the return of some 22,000 ex-communist war prisoners of the <u>Korean War</u> (1950–1953) to Taiwan, of whom 14,000 Chinese soldiers arrived at <u>Keelung Harbor</u> on 23 January 1954, and were given the title "<u>Anti-Communist Heroes</u>". Republic of <u>China</u> (ROC) government subsequently declared 23 January as World Freedom Day to honor these soldiers, and created the "Anti-Communist League" (which later became the World League for Freedom and Democracy) to fight communist expansion worldwide. The league is led by President <u>Yao Eng-chi</u>, a former <u>Kuomintang-MP</u> and Secretary-General <u>Ger Yeong-kuang</u>, a professor of political science at <u>National Taiwan University</u>. Every year World Freedom Day Celebrations are held in Taiwan, and the event is attended by both local and foreign delegates from all over the world. Usually, the president of the ROC delivers congratulations, and cultural events are held.

Asian Pacific League for Freedom and Democracy

The Asian Pacific League for Freedom and Democracy (APLFD) was founded in 1954 as the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League in Chinhae, South Korea with the support of the governments of the <u>Philippines</u>, <u>South Korea</u> and Taiwan (as the <u>Republic of China</u>). The APLFD is a non-profit international organization for interchanges among the Asians for peace and prosperity of the region.

The APLFD was founded in the same year and under the same international background as the forming of the <u>South East Asia Treaty Organization</u> (SEATO), or the Manila Pact, in 1954, when the Second World War had concluded. However, while the SEATO (1954–1977) was sort of an Asian Nato in nature, the APLFD is a people's organization trying to secure peace and prosperity through ideas and convictions and friendship.

Having founded the APACL, the government of the Republic of China prepared to organize the second conference and chose <u>Taipei City</u> as the place to set up the Republic of China Chapter of the APACL on 1 July 1954. <u>Ku Cheng-kang</u>, President of the Chinese Refugees Relief Association of the Republic of China, was designated as the first president of this Chapter. Over the years, successors to the presidency of the Republic of China Chapter are <u>Clement C. P. Chang</u>, <u>Chao Tzu-chi</u>, <u>Yao Eng-chi</u>, and <u>Tseng Yung-chuan</u>. As of 2013 the president was Yao Eng-chi, former Vice President of the ROC Legislative Yuan (Parliament) and also Senior Advisor to the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

World Anti-Communist League

In 1966 the memberships of the APACL had increased to 27, in Asia, Australia, and Africa. At its 12th Conference in Seoul on 3 November 1966, a fifteen-member committee was formed to discuss the expansion of this organization. The committee eventually decided to set up a new anti-communist organization, including the APACL, regional organizations, and an international anti-communist organization. On 7 November 1966, the delegates adopted the "Charter of the World Anti-Communist League" at the plenary session. It also resolved that the Republic of China Chapter was in charge of organizing the first General Conference.

The Charter of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), with 8 chapters and 32 articles, came into effect on 1 April 1967. It stated that the WACL should immediately set up its regional organizations in six regions: Asia (now known as Asian Pacific League for Freedom and Democracy), the Middle East (now known as Middle East Solidarity Council), Africa (now known as the African Organization for Freedom

and Democracy), and Europe (now known as the European Council for World Freedom), North America (now known as the North American Federation for Freedom and Democracy), and Latin America (now known as the Federation of Latin American Democratic Organization). The organization in the Asian region was the main force to push for the mission of the World League.

Renaming

To adjust to the worldwide political changes after the <u>dissolution of the Soviet Union</u> and the end of the <u>Cold War</u> and to strive for recruiting more people to join, the WACL held its 22nd General Conference in <u>Brussels</u>, <u>Belgium</u> on 23 July 1990, and the delegates resolved that the organization should be renamed the "World League for Freedom and Democracy" (WLFD). This resolution came into effect on 1 January 1991.

On 21 August 1991, with the new name, the WLFD held its 23rd General Conference in San Jose, Costa Rica. Rafael Ángel Calderón Fournier, President of Costa Rica, and vice presidents from six countries in Latin America, gave speeches. The conference passed a resolution to set up the Presidency of League, a new post to highlight the leading center of the WLFD and also to take responsibility to organize WLFD activities. Chao Tze-chi, President of the Republic of China Chapter of WLFD, was elected as the first President of the WLFD, and re-elected in 1995. U Chae-sung of the ROK was named as the Secretary-General.

On 19 January 2006, the WLFD adopted its charter amendment in the 34th General Conference. According to the Amendment, the President of the League shall be "the top official of the League" and shall represent the League, and shall supervise the performance and development of the League in compliance with the charter. According to the previous charter of the WLFD, the President of the League shall be "the Leader of the League" and shall represent the League. This person shall supervise the performance and development of the League in compliance with the charter.

According to the Charter of the WLFD, the President of the League shall be elected by and from the members of the executive board of the League. The result of the election shall be reported to the General Conference. The President shall hold office for a term of four years and shall be eligible for re-election. In October 2000, all members of the executive board approved Yao Eng-chi, President of the WLFD ROC Chapter, as the third President of the League during the Executive Board Meeting in New York City The executive board also amended the charter to add several positions such as four vice presidents and two deputy secretaries-general. The decision made by the executive board was also confirmed by the members at the 31st WLFD General Conference in Taipei, ROC, on 13 January 2001. President Yao Eng-chi was re-elected as President of the League at the 33rd WLFD General Conference in Melbourne, Australia, on 20 December 2003. Ger Yeong-kuang was named as Secretary-General of the League. On 1 August 2008, Ger resigned and was succeeded by Hsieh Wen-huang, Parliamentary Assistant to Vice President Tseng Yung-chuan of the ROC Legislative Yuan (Parliament). Hsieh resigned; Chou Yujen's was nominated to replace him on 23 January 2013.

Membership

According to the charter, national, regional or international organizations that subscribe to the purposes of the League are eligible for membership. Membership shall consist of Regular Members with voting rights and Associate Members without voting rights.

The Asian Pacific League for Freedom and Democracy (APLFD) was formed in 1954 as the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League. The APLFD Secretariat was first established in <u>Saigon</u>, <u>Vietnam</u> in 1957; then the Secretariat moved to <u>Manila</u> in 1964. Three years later, the Secretariat moved back again to Saigon until <u>its fall in 1975</u>. After some compromise and a resolution, the APLFD Secretariat was reestablished in Taipei, Taiwan in 1976 where it remains active. [6] In 1983, at its conference in <u>Fiji</u>, it changed its name to the Asian Pacific Democratic League.

The APLFD has 18 member nations. It holds an annual conference every year.

The number of members in Denmark is unknown, but several politicians have or have been connected to the organization. <u>Progress Party</u> leader <u>Pia Kjærsgaard</u> participated in 1988 as WACL's guest at the organization's congress in Taipei. [7] The Danish WACL leader has been municipal politician Erik Dissing.

The French chapter was headed by <u>Suzanne Labin</u>. The president of the German section as of 2012 has been Axel Fischer. [8]

In Sweden, a department of WACL was established in 1967. The Swedish organization has been characterized by strong participation among exiled <u>Estonians</u>. Among the member organizations in the late 1960s were <u>Democratic Alliance</u>, <u>Baltic Committee</u>, Nordic War and UN Veterans Association [9] and the <u>Committee</u> for a Free Asia. The <u>National League of Sweden</u> was also linked to the organization for some time. Swedish chairman has been <u>Birger Nerman</u> (1967–70), <u>Arvo Horm</u> (1970–1984), <u>Birger Hagård</u> (1984–88) and <u>Åke J. Ek</u> (1988–2011). [10]

Controversies

In 1978, British anticommunist activist <u>Geoffrey Stewart-Smith</u>, who led the British affiliate out of WACL, declared that despite a publicized housecleaning, "The World Anti-Communist League is largely a collection of Nazis, Fascists, anti-Semites, sellers of forgeries, vicious racialists, and corrupt self-seekers. It has evolved into an anti-Semitic international." [11]

In 1978, Roger Pearson became the World Chairman of the WACL. Pearson was described in a Washington Post article as having neo-Nazi associations [12][13][14][15][16][17] and sources report that as a result of an article in *The Washington Post* in 1978 critical of WACL and alleging extreme right wing politics of Pearson that either he was expelled from WACL or at least was pressured into resigning from his position as World chairman. [18][19][20]

The US chapter of WACL, the United States Council for World Freedom (USCWF) was founded in 1981 by Major General <u>John K. Singlaub</u>. Singlaub was the former US Chief of Staff of both United Nations and American forces in <u>South Korea</u>, but was relieved in 1977 by U.S. President <u>Jimmy Carter</u> after publicly criticizing Carter's decision to reduce the number of troops on the peninsula. Singlaub became a

member of the WACL in 1980, and founded and became president of its U.S. chapter, the United States Council for World Freedom. This branch generated controversy when it supported Nicaraguan guerrillas in the Iran—Contra affair[21] and, in 1981, the USCWF was placed under watch by the Anti-Defamation League, which said that the organization had increasingly become "a point of contact for extremists, racists, and anti-Semites". During the 1980s, the USCWF and WACL conducted a purge of these elements, and invited ADL observers to monitor its conferences; by 1985, the Anti-Defamation League declared itself "satisfied that substantial progress has been made since 1981 in ridding the organization of racists and anti-Semites." [25]

It is alleged that in the mid-1980s WACL had become a supplier of arms to anti-communist rebel movements in southern Africa, Central America, <u>Afghanistan</u> and the Far East. During the 1980s, the WACL was particularly active in Latin America, notably by aiding the <u>Contra</u> forces in <u>Nicaragua</u>. During this period, WACL was criticized for its presence in the organization of neo-Nazis, war criminals, and people linked to <u>death squads</u> and assassinations. Other allegations have included reports claim that the World League for Freedom and Democracy is responsible for producing what its opponents call "troops of killers", while ostensibly organizing to provide support for <u>Corazon Aquino</u> from the rightwing in the <u>Philippines</u> and for supporting the <u>Mozambican National Resistance</u> (RENAMO) movement in Mozambique.

The World Anti-Communist League held annual conferences at various locations throughout the world. Numerous groups participated, including the <u>Unification Church</u> of the Rev. <u>Sun Myung Moon</u>. WACL also enjoyed support from many U.S. Congressmen, most notably <u>2008 presidential nominee</u> Senator <u>John McCain</u> (R-AZ), [21][30] who sat on the United States Council for World Freedom (USCWF) Board of Directors in the early 1980s. [31][32] When his membership was brought up during the election, McCain said he resigned from the council in 1984. In 1986, he asked to have his name removed from the group's letterhead. However, there was absolutely no evidence that McCain had ever resigned or asked for his name's removal from the United States Council for World Freedom. [33]

Controversial participants of WACL conferences

Numerous Nazi collaborators and Latin American death squads were active in the World Anti-Communist League. Some prominent individuals who attended conferences included: [34]

- Ryōichi Sasakawa, Fascist and billionaire jailed as a suspected war criminal after World War
- Reverend Sun Myung Moon, head of the Unification Church (Moon sect)
- Yoshio Kodama, behind-the-scenes power broker and uyoku from Japan
- Osami Kuboki, member of the Moon sect, president of the <u>International Federation for</u> Victory over Communism (IFVC) and the Japanese Unification Church
- Mario Sandoval Alarcón, Guatemalan politician, "Godfather" of Central American death squads
- Giorgio Almirante, founder and leader of neo-fascist Italian Social Movement
- <u>Dsmitryj Kasmowitsch</u>, the Belarusian policeman of <u>Smolensk</u>, who was responsible for fighting partisans
- Theodor Oberländer, Nazi German politician in the NSDAP, participant in the Beer Hall Putsch, Oberleutnant of the Nachtigall Battalion
- Otto Skorzeny,^[35] Austrian Nazi German <u>SS</u>-<u>Obersturmbannführer</u>
- Alfredo Stroessner, dictator of Paraguay

See also

- American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia
- American Security Council
- Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations
- Australian League of Rights
- Bamboo Curtain
- British League of Rights
- Captive Nations
- Croatian Liberation Movement
- Le Cercle
- Western Goals Institute
- Western Goals Foundation
- Los TECOS

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