

The KMT is still hurting Taiwan as it flounders

Written by Lee Min-yung 李敏勇

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On behalf of Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) government, Chen Yi (陳儀) accepted the Japanese instrument of surrender from Rikichi Ando at Taipei City Hall — which is now Taipei Zhongshan Hall — on Oct. 25, 1945. Chen did so on the authorization of US general Douglas MacArthur's General Order No. 1, while the flags of four allied nations, the US, Britain, the then-Soviet Union and the Republic of China (ROC), flew side-by-side at the ceremony.

Meanwhile, the Russian representative accepted Japan's surrender in the Manchurian area in northeastern China and Chiang's representative accepted Japan's surrender in northern Vietnam. Then-Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh immediately demanded that Chiang's troops withdraw from the nation. The ROC was able to occupy Taiwan and maintain its long rule since 1949 because it served as Washington's Asian front line during the Cold War.

At the time, Taiwanese warmly welcomed the “motherland” due to a misjudgement based on national sentiment rather than the legal principles of international law. They were confused and deceived.

After entering Taiwan, Chiang's troops and military government were mentally unprepared for Taiwan, which after having been colonized by Japan for half a century had moved from a period of resistance to a period of assimilation. Since war between the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was about to break out in China, the KMT was deeply anxious in the face of its many crises.

When the 228 Incident occurred in 1947, the KMT government took the opportunity to eliminate Taiwanese intellectual elites and dissidents. After the party-state was completely relocated to Taiwan in 1949, it tried to implicate possible dissidents and communists during the White Terror era of the 1950s to achieve its goal of implementing the “Chiang system.”

Despite its actions, the ROC had the chance to gain a new lease on life in Taiwan, but it lost this chance and has failed to recognize democracy and freedom as true values. In the end, the KMT is reduced to leaning on the CCP and it has taken the ROC and attached itself to the People's Republic of China (PRC).

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The “Lei Chen (雷震) incident” in the 1960s was an unsuccessful attempt at political reform, as Taiwanese elites opposing the government and some Mainlanders used Lei’s magazine, Free China, to criticize Chiang for serving a third presidential term. However, they failed to establish the China Democratic Party, which could have been the nation’s first opposition party. Lei was imprisoned for 10 years from 1960 to 1970 and many others were also implicated in the case.

In 1964, three Taiwanese activists — Peng Ming-min (彭明敏), Wei Ting-chao (魏廷朝) and Hsieh Tsung-min (謝宗敏) — released A Declaration of Formosan Self-salvation to expose the lie of “regaining the mainland.” They demanded reform and reconstruction, hoping to build a government in line with reality, but they were sentenced and imprisoned, and Peng later fled the nation and lived in exile for more than 20 years.

Unfortunately, the KMT and the Chiang regime missed critical chances during both these periods. Moreover, after the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident, the lifting of martial law, the establishment of free elections of the legislature and six direct presidential votes, the KMT still has not eliminated its colonialist nature or adapted to democratization or a more Taiwan-centered society.

The KMT is a fragmentary remainder of a China that does not belong to Taiwan. As the ROC loses its status as a nation and the KMT causes universal anger, the party is simply digging its own grave, but the most hateful thing is that it is also dragging occupied Taiwan down with it.

Lee Min-yung is a poet.

Translated by Eddy Chang

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