

Transition of Elites in Post-War Taiwan: A Case Study of Farmers' Associations from 1945 to 1953

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the transition of local elites under change of regime in Taiwan. After World War II, the Nationalist Government took over Taiwan from the Japanese colonizers and then established the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office. The February 28 Incident of 1947 was triggered by the arrest of an illegal cigarette seller. Many Taiwan elites were injured, missing or even killed. According to previous researches, the February 28 Incident had a significant impact on the transition of political elites of Taiwan.

With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the U.S. 7th Fleet was sent to protect Taiwan and the Kuomintang regime was recognized as the only lawful representative of China. Thus, the Kuomintang regime concentrated on tightening the control of Taiwan society. One of its policies was to reorganize the Farmers' Associations because the agricultural sector played an important role in promoting Taiwan's economic development in the 1950s.

Following the reorganization of the Farmers' Associations, new leaders were appointed, among which were many local elites well connected with the Kuomintang regime. With the collaboration of the local elites, the Kuomintang regime successfully strengthened its grip of Taiwan society.

Keywords: Transition of Elites, February 28 Incident, Farmers' Associations