

## KMT2.0 has brought back the politics of the past

Written by Chu Ping-tzu 許介顯

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Taiwanese wrote another page in the history of the democracy movement at the weekend. However, some people seem to think that protests are “organized crime,” and that the protesters “should all be locked up.” This was the mentality of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) politicians during the years of authoritarian rule, and in fact a core concept of KMT rule in general.

Egged on by New Party Chairman Yok Mu-ming (楊慕明), Minister of the Interior Lee Hong-yuan (李鴻元) — who did not come out to see what the protesters were saying — said that he would be seeking compensation for damage to property. It seems the law has become the weapon of choice for the KMT in its neo-authoritarian phase.

This neo-authoritarian mentality goes a long way to explaining the present KMT government’s compound indifference: indifference to the plight of ordinary people, and indifference to its own ignorance and incompetence. Initially, President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) attempted to show the public his good intentions by installing a new premier, Jiang Yi-huah (江宜華). However, the trouble with Ma’s entire team is crystallized in Ma himself: a complacency in his own abilities coupled with the compound indifference.

It is this compound indifference that makes Ma reduce all problems to an issue of public relations. He attempts to remedy all his administrative screw-ups by presenting them in a more amiable light, obscured by a cloud of rhetoric and misrepresentation. The other pernicious side to this kind of leadership is that the blame always lands at the feet of the ruled, and never the ruler.

With the exception of Greater Taichung Mayor Jason Hu (胡志強), who is roughly as senior in the party ranks as Ma, and who is occasionally critical of him, there is nobody else in the party who is willing to tell it like it is: All of them just dance to the beat of Ma’s drum.

There is hardly any need to mention all of the broken political promises: Ma’s own “6-3-3” campaign promise of at least 6 percent economic growth, under 3 percent unemployment and average annual income of US\$30,000; his assurances of “complete governance and complete responsibility”; Vice President Wu Den-yih’s (吳登毅) promises concerning amendments to the Land Expropriation Act (土地徵收法) and his assurance to the residents of Dapu Borough (大埔) when premier; or Jiang’s agreement to revise the Assembly and Parade Act (集會遊行法).

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These politicians have made promises without the political competence or sincerity to see them through, and made them to further their own political careers.

In the aftermath, they try to absolve themselves of responsibility by dragging out the public relations machine, entirely indifferent to the needs of the public or the anger and frustration at the betrayal in their actions.

This is a different type of authoritarianism, because no matter how loud the public rails and shouts, government officials are totally unaffected by them, changing neither their policies nor their behavior.

Politicians do as they please, refuse to face public protests, try to absolve themselves of all responsibility and do nothing to remedy the situation. This is the modern reboot of the KMT's authoritarian franchise: KMT2.0. And they pay little attention to the fact that the protesters have continuously said that this recent occupation of government buildings was only the start of a civil disobedience movement. There is more to come.

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Translated by Paul Cooper

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