

Boycott represents Ma's failings

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉

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This is a fresh tale of official practices, or perhaps of the actions of an inferior government.

When Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Ting Shou-chung (鄧守中) asked National Development Council Minister Kuan Chung-ming (關中明) in the legislature if he was boycotting Ting Hsin International Group (鼎新國際) products, Kuan answered: "I support a boycott and I have already taken action by not buying their products."

What is this?

The question was posed by a legislator from the ruling party to a government minister. Could it be that neither knows that it is a basic responsibility of government to see to it that the public does not have to worry about having enough to eat?

The public is resorting to a boycott because they have no other choice. Could it really be that the same is true for the government? What is the KMT doing — does it not have any governmental powers at its disposal?

That the public is forced to resort to a boycott is tantamount to saying that the government is powerless, that it can do nothing and that we all have to fend for ourselves.

It is not surprising that a recent opinion poll showed that the campaign to boycott Ting Hsin was supported by 82 percent of respondents. What is surprising is that the cooking oil problem cannot be resolved. The political implications of Taiwanese now having to fend for themselves by boycotting tainted cooking oil is that they are in fact boycotting the inferior practices of the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九).

So is it an exaggeration to juxtapose the bad practices of Ting Hsin with the inferior government of the Ma administration? No. The two are closely connected. Without the government's protection, Ting Hsin would never have been able to act with such impunity.

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A comparison between the statements and actions of senior Ting Hsin executive Wei Ying-chun (魏英欽) and Ma shows how similar they are. However, mere rhetoric proves nothing, so here is some hard evidence.

Both Ma and Wei are adept at delivering pretty lies. Ma has talked about a *modus vivendi* and "lasting values," while Wei has talked about "treating everyone the same way" and a "conscientious life's work." What is the difference?

Ma's election promises, such as the "6-3-3" promise and the promise that "everything will be fine as soon as Ma takes over," are no different from Wei's statements about the "we can" guarantee in the Wei Chuan (偉傳) song, which in effect is a response to Ma's failed election promises.

Ma's pledge that he would cut his salary by half if he did not deliver on the "6-3-3" promise and Wei's way of handling the cooking oil scandal by pledging a compensation fund of NT\$50 million (US\$1.65 million) were issued in the same vein and failed with the same "pop."

The difference is that Wei is a small-timer, while Ma is a big shot. When a small-timer's tricks and games are over, they are over, but when a president is done, the effects continue to reverberate.

During the so-called Double Ten National Day celebrations last year, Ma said: "Remake the nation, identify our niche, find a viable way forward," but he has led the nation down a dead-end street. Why else would he have a support rating of only 9 percent?

In the same speech, he talked about "grand liberalization, grand skill sets, grand stage and grand dreams" and said that "these are the grand pledges we make to our young people."

The Sunflower movement made it clear that they also oppose the president, so how dare he go on with all his grand talk?

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The most ridiculous part of the speech was when he said: “[To] my way of thinking, there are two indicators by which the degree of civilization in Taiwan’s society can be measured: its civil society and its concern for the disadvantaged.”

What kind of civil society do we have when we can be pushed about by a big manufacturer of tainted cooking oils? In what way does that display concern for the disadvantaged?

His statement that “the rule of law is thoroughly implemented, and the judiciary is independent and impartial” is particularly interesting against the backdrop of Wei’s talk about a “conscientious life’s work.”

Despite their intense dislike of Ting Hsin, the public have stood silently by as the government has run amok over the past six years. This year, though, Ma had barely finished delivering his National Day address before the pro-KMT United Daily News published an article headlined: “Watch out, Taiwan is moving backwards.”

It is easier to get rid of Ma and his gang than it is to deal with Ting Hsin — all we need to do is cast our votes.

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Translated by Perry Svensson

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