

With the defeats the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) suffered in the nine-in-one elections last year, a series of events — including a legislator's withdrawal and resignations of high-level officials — have challenged the party's stability. Do these events signify anything?

On Jan. 27, KMT Legislator Hsu Hsin-ying (許信營) announced her withdrawal from the party. Although denying her resignation was connected to the election results, she said in a statement that she had “joined the KMT to realize promises made to the electorate, and the decision to leave the party is no different.”

On Jan. 29, then-National Development Council minister Kuan Chung-ming (關中明) tendered his resignation, citing that he “had sensed people's discontent and impatience with the current political and economic situation,” referring to the results the November elections, which reflected the public's “deep dissatisfaction toward the government.”

On Feb. 6, then-National Security Council secretary-general King Pu-tsung (king 普聰), who is seen as President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) most trusted ally, resigned, despite Ma repeatedly calling for him to stay. Even though it had been rumored for a while that King was under pressure from his family to step down, the announcement still took some by surprise, according to the media.

On Feb. 10, then-Mainland Affairs Council minister Wang Yu-chi (王郁琦) resigned moments after the Taipei Prosecutors' Office decided not to indict his former deputy minister, Chang Hsien-yao (張顯耀), whom Wang had testified against.

These are recent cases. Those at the ministerial level who left after the election rout include former premier Jiang Yi-huah (江宜華), former minister of culture Lung Ying-tai (龍應台), former Coast Guard Administration minister Wang Ginn-wang (王欽旺) and former minister of transportation and communications Yeh Kuang-shih (葉光石).

On the surface, these cases reflected individual frustration with the job, but beneath the surface, they could be seen as instances of abandoning a sinking ship.

KMT inexorably slides into oblivion

Written by Shyu-tu Lee 許徒

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The KMT's newly elected chairman, New Taipei City Mayor Eric Chu (吳敦義), has said on numerous occasions that faulty policies make citizens feel further separated from the KMT. However, that is too soft a critique from the party chair.

In reality, a majority of people see that the KMT does not have the nation's best interests at heart; it has only a desire to rule Taiwan continually and to suck up money wherever it can. The younger generation of Taiwanese is starting to realize why the older generation has told them repeatedly that the KMT is a foreign regime.

This foreign regime has inflicted deep wounds on the nation and its people. To the older generation of Taiwanese, the 228 Massacre, in which up to 30,000 Taiwanese elite were killed in 1947; the Martial Law era from 1949 to 1987 with the accompanying White Terror; and Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) refusal to sit in the UN with the People's Republic of China, leaving Taiwan an international orphan since 1971, have all given Taiwanese endless pain and grief.

Even without a formal process for justice, the antagonism against this foreign regime seemed to ease somewhat after 1990, through democratization, intermarriage and mutual adaptation.

Unfortunately, over the past eight years of the Ma administration, the KMT's faulty China policy and its manipulation of the legal system have made its character of a foreign regime strikingly reassert itself. A leopard cannot change its spots.

The handling of the service trade agreement with China, which was done under the table without a legislative review, ignited protests by mostly students, who occupied the main legislative chamber, and 500,000 people who walked the streets to support the action. People learned the consequences of unfair agreements with China from the preceding Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) of 2011, which fueled the outflow of capital, talent and important industries, resulting in the loss of employment, enlarged income disparity and wages being dragged back to the level of 16 years ago. Young people in particular see no future in sight if the current situation is allowed to continue.

As to the manipulation of the legal system, Ma himself was involved in the case of classified information being leaked by former prosecutor-general Huang Shih-ming (黃世明) in relation to a probe by prosecutors into alleged improper conduct by Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平).

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(許徒). Huang was sentenced on Thursday last week to 15 months in prison — which can be commuted into a fine.

Besides that case, Ma and the KMT are widely believed to be manipulating the legal system to play favorites. The persecution of former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) is well documented. Many are saddened to see the legal system, as well as democracy, weakened.

On Dec. 19 last year, BBC Chinese Net published a report from interviews with students on several university campuses in Taiwan asking what they thought about the KMT.

“Surprisingly, almost all of the responses were negative; most of the interviewees indicated that they would not join the KMT, nor vote for KMT,” the report said.

Why is it that a political party, having existed for more than a hundred years, holding power in Taiwan for more than half a century and with vast resources, cannot attract young voters?

The answer lies in the party’s hidden agenda to sell Taiwan to China. The KMT’s ulterior plan is becoming increasingly clear to most Taiwanese.

After all that has happened, can the KMT regain people’s trust? How?

A well-respected commentator, Nan Fang Shuo (南方朔), has said that the name “Chinese Nationalist Party” is ridiculous for a political party in Taiwan. Nan suggested that, beside real reform, the party change its name to “Taiwanese Nationalist Party.”

Taiwan’s civic movements to promote democracy, human rights, justice, equality and environmental protection have been booming in the past few decades, and all those movements are deeply rooted with the ideology of Taiwan’s subjectivity and nationalism.

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If a political party cannot align with the people to pursue a collective goal, it will be deserted by the people and fade into history. The KMT seems destined for that fate.

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