

## KMT's grip unlikely to survive our new times

Written by James Wang 王健

Wednesday, 03 June 2015 07:53

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The slogan of last year's Sunflower movement — “Unless the Chinese Nationalist Party [KMT] falls, Taiwan will never do well” — is, in the eyes of most people, an argument that requires no supporting evidence. However, die-hard KMT loyalists — apparently worried that some Taiwanese are yet to wake up to the truth — unceasingly search for ways to prove that the party is not just at death's door, but also completely at odds with the nation's democratic values.

President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) attitude and leadership style are stuck in the era of dirty patronage politics. Ma's die-hard followers and his decaying party are the leftover dregs of party-state serfdom.

They do not understand the right to freedom of choice in a democracy; they only know how to carry out orders, which is something that comes naturally to them.

At a news conference, one of the president's national policy advisers, Li Tsung-chi (李登輝), rewarded Ma for his kindness and favors.

Not only did he refuse to criticize Ma's record in office, he also disregarded the freedom of speech guaranteed by the Constitution, and, unbelievably, criticized former president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) for ending the restrictions on newspapers, calling it Chiang's biggest mistake, presumably because free speech has unmasked Ma's ugly side.

Instead of just attacking Chiang and protecting Ma, reminiscing over the Martial Law era and pining for a time when the press was in the pocket of the KMT, depriving the public of the right to information — why not raise the stakes and say that Chiang's biggest error was to end martial law, as it brought about the failure of the Chiang family's political run and led to the KMT struggling to hold on to the reins of power, something for which Ma has been amply criticized?

The KMT wants to modify its selection process for presidential candidates, but the party had not expected that some candidates would run scared, that others would be unused to fighting a fair contest and that there would be malign forces giving directions from the wings.

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When minor figures within the party — who do not command popular support — asked the deep-blue Huang Fu-hsing military veteran faction for signatures in support of their candidacy, they were roundly rebuffed. This was because the faction had not received orders from the boss.

This is just like a scene from George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and is exactly how they do things in China.

Taiwanese businesswoman Susan Tung (王淑芬), who is vice president of the worldwide Friends of Ma Ying-jeou Association, a member of the Overseas Community Affairs Council and even an overseas executive member of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) United Front Work Department, criticized Chiang for being soft-hearted, saying that he had killed too few people and failed to eliminate China's traitors and [Japanese] imperial subjects.

Had he done so, the KMT would not have been challenged with such brass-neck effrontery by Taiwanese, she implied.

These die-hard Ma loyalists reminisce about Taiwan's murky past; an age when it was the public's duty to stay uninformed, slavishly receiving orders.

The KMT rulers never had to worry about checks, questions or challenges, and they could sleep peacefully in their beds at night. And yet, they always knew that they would be unable to acclimatize themselves to a rapidly approaching new environment; now the KMT is following destiny, as it makes designs to return home to its lost paradise, China.

*James Wang is a media commentator.*

Translated by Edward Jones

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2015/06/03](#)