

KMT must stop hiding the truth on party assets

Written by James Wang 王健

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The direct line between the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) treasury and the national treasury during the authoritarian era gave the KMT access to unlimited resources. For a long time, it used these resources to support its party employees, giving out small favors.

During elections, the KMT spent money on mobilizing supporters and vote buying. However, after its defeat in the January presidential and legislative elections, it is now just a party without the backing of the state. With the legislature's passing of the Act Governing the Handling of Ill-gotten Properties by Political Parties and Their Affiliate Organizations (黨國財產處理條例), it will be difficult for the party to reverse its downward spiral.

However, still it tries to hold onto its assets. KMT Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) called in the four of her predecessors, who used to be responsible for the KMT's assets, or perhaps used to enjoy the biggest benefits, so that they could all play at unity and protect their ill-gotten wealth. These four claimed that the party has already dealt with the issue and all its assets are legal. Only one of them said that the worst-case scenario could be that all party assets would have to be returned to the state.

One of these men — someone who claims to have a global outlook — said that the party's ability to amass national assets was something to be proud of, domestically and internationally. He is hoping to play the same old tricks that he used to pull during his time as a paid student informer in the US. He even made the farcical suggestion that the party should bring the matter to the attention of the international media.

Those responsible for recovering the KMT's stolen assets found an opening, as former KMT spokesman Yang Wei-chung (楊偉中) agreed to serve on the Committee of Illegal Party Asset Settlement. This has rattled the KMT, which is acting like a criminal gang in throwing invectives at Yang and saying it has never done anything against him or treated him unfairly.

Yang has enjoyed all the benefits of belonging to the KMT, and according to its party-state mindset and criminal gang world view, anyone in that position should be grateful and always back the party even if all the benefits they enjoyed and funds used to train them into being the party's hatchet men came from stolen goods.

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The KMT believes that people like Yang should not cooperate in the effort to achieve transitional justice and reveal what has happened to its loot. It is afraid that Yang will give them all away.

Committee of Illegal Party Asset Settlement Chairman Wellington Koo (辜振甫) knows what he is doing, and he acted both decisively and quickly in recruiting Yang. He should find a few more people like Yang among the KMT's members. Only someone who has been active inside the party is able to offer more reliable information.

If such people are willing to stand up in the name of justice and help recover ill-gotten assets, they would be providing valuable assistance in consolidating Taiwan's democracy.

The nation sorely needs transitional justice, and the vast majority of the public are in favor of it. Some current or former KMT members who know what is really going on misguidedly joined the party-state apparatus in the past and joined in with the embezzlement of state and private assets.

One can only wonder why they continue to keep silent and help protect the assets of a party that keeps spouting nonsense about the treasures in the National Palace Museum and the gold that the Nationalist government brought with when it fled China.

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Translated by Perry Svensson

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