

The KMT's demise is wonderful to behold

Written by James Wang 王健

Thursday, 03 November 2016 07:20

After Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and his forces were defeated by the Chinese Communist Party and exiled to Taiwan, Chiang called on everyone to “save the nation and ensure its continued survival.” His hangers-on proved unworthy of the task.

Instead of taking the initiative to resolve the issue of the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) ill-gotten assets, they waited until their party was routed in January's presidential and legislative elections before belatedly letting out a cry to “save the nation.”

Chiang fell back on slogans such as “retake the mainland” and “save the nation” under the banner of the Republic of China to stamp his dictatorial authority on Taiwan and suppress the masses. His party-state military junta ruled with an iron fist: whatever the Generalissimo said was gospel.

Few thought that KMT Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) stood a chance when she ran for president, and she was later replaced as the party's candidate, although the KMT repaid her by making her the leader of the party — a party that made its fortunes by embezzling and defrauding fellow countrymen. Now that the government is demanding the party hand back its ill-gotten gains, the KMT is once again letting out cries to “save the nation.” Just like Hung, no one thinks the KMT stands much of a chance as it has failed to elicit a response from voters.

The KMT, which is structured along Leninist lines, has always relied on party reserves — transferred from the state coffers — to pay its workers. KMT staffers are not necessarily true believers in the snake oil that the party is flogging: They are there simply to make a living and pay the bills. If their salaries are no longer paid, they will eventually abandon ship.

Faced with a desperate situation, KTM elders have approached party-affiliated corporations for interest-free loans and asked party members and staffers for donations to stave off disaster.

During the heyday of the KMT's wealth and power, money was spent like it was going out of fashion: Party bigwigs binged and engorged themselves, while the lower orders spent what they could get away with. The whole party loved election time: Members who wanted to be nominated as candidates would send gifts of money, and the money that flowed into the

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party's coffers would be allotted to the chairman and secretary-general to be saved up, dished out or taken for themselves as they pleased, without any need for receipts.

Hung has called on these wealthy elders to cough up some of their booty to "save the nation," yet she has only been able to raise NT\$2 million (US\$63,363.33). This shows that KMT grandees and members of the pan-blue camp have no confidence in Hung as leader: She is out of her depth.

Chiang's "retake the mainland" slogan can still be employed to intimidate KMT members. Hung has called on her party to help "save the nation" and she has played the unification card, which is tantamount to selling out Taiwan to China.

Hung has dispensed with former president Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) formula, "one China, with each side having its own interpretation," and instead advocates "peaceful unification" with China.

The KMT has lost the support of the public and revealed its true colors. The party is reliant on funding from big corporations and support from China to keep it afloat, it is riven with internal conflict, its spokesman issues vulgar statements saying that Ma "has no balls" and the chairperson seems determined to bet it all on one card. The party's imminent demise is a truly wonderful event in the political history of Taiwan.

James Wang is a media commentator.

Translated by Edward Jones

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2016/11/03](#)