

KMT and Women's League deny links

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Members of the Ill-gotten Party Assets Settlement Committee attend a hearing at the Executive Yuan in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Peter Lo, Taipei Times

The National Women's League yesterday denied that it was an affiliate of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and that it exploited its connection to the party to secure financial aid and tax privileges, while the KMT accused the government of fabricating evidence in a bid to prove the alleged links.

In an investigation of possible connections between the league and the KMT during the KMT's one-party rule, the Ill-gotten Party Assets Settlement Committee highlighted the predominantly KMT leadership of the league, the use of KMT government power to finance it and close cooperation between the two entities.

The league was led by wives of KMT dignitaries, most notably Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) wife Soong Mayling (宋美齡), while the KMT government diverted revenue from a military surcharge and other taxes to the league, as well as granting it special subsidies and tax exemption privileges, a committee report said.

The league collaborated with the KMT and in 1957 the then-Kaohsiung County chapter of the KMT asked the league to campaign for it in an election, suggesting a strong link between the party and the group, the report said.

Lawyer Hsu Lu-ping (許路平), a representative of the league, said the report was biased and that evidence in favor of the league's position was excluded.

Although the committee cited a German political party assets law, which defines affiliates as organizations whose purpose is to solidify the party's power, the committee did not apply this definition to the league and ignored the fact that the league had contributed nothing to the KMT's political power, Hsu said at a public hearing yesterday.

"According to the German experience, the league is definitely not an affiliate of a political party," Hsu said.

There is no evidence that Soong followed the KMT's orders, while her dominant leadership style, which the committee mentioned repeatedly, is irrelevant to establishing there was a connection between the KMT and the league, Hsu said.

The league's collection of a military surcharge and other taxes were legally grounded, and the revenue distribution was managed by the Importers and Exporters Association, not the government or the KMT, lawyer Shen Cheng-hsiung (申成興) said.

The league's purpose was to build military housing and take care of members of the military and their families, not consolidating the KMT's status, Shen said.

According to the Act Governing the Handling of Ill-gotten Properties by Political Parties and Their Affiliate Organizations (黨產處理條例), a necessary condition to establish affiliation between a political party and a subgroup is that the party gives up control of an affiliated organization without receiving proportional payment, but the committee did not find any such evidence in the league's case, KMT Administration Committee deputy director Lee Fu-hsuan (李福全) said.

"The committee needs, at the very least, to understand the act correctly if it wants to incriminate somebody, but there is not even a single mention about [proportional payment] in its report," Lee said.

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Soong held only a peripheral position in the KMT and the league operated independently of the party, Lee said.

Lee said the committee had fabricated evidence, with a previous report misquoting a document signed by Chiang to suggest that the KMT had used government power to fund the league.

The complete abstract of the document indicated that Chiang was actually rejecting the budget proposal, Lee said.

The committee misquoted data to serve its purposes and was not willing to make corrections, he said.

In related news, the KMT said it would file an administrative lawsuit against the committee over its order that the KMT should pay NT\$864.88 million (US\$28.48 million) for selling properties appropriated from the Japanese colonial government.

The payment was due on Monday and failure to meet the deadline could result in the freezing of assets and detention of the KMT chairperson, who acts as the party's legal representative.

The assets committee said it would transfer the case to the Administrative Enforcement Agency to secure payment.

The KMT would request the assets committee to reconfirm the order before filing an appeal, KMT Administration Committee director Chiu Da-chan (邱達昌) said.

"The KMT has difficulties paying salaries. How can it pay such an amount?" Chiu said.

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