

Has the ACT party betrayed its principles on China?

By Weijian Chen

It's voting time in New Zealand. Until fairly recently, I had the comfort of knowing that there was a party and politician that stood for the values I cared about: David Seymour's ACT.

When Seymour supported the Hong Kong protests here in Aotearoa he captured my interest. He was the only New Zealand politician to express solidarity by appearing in person at gatherings of students in this country supporting the rights of Hong Kong. Seymour delivered well-considered, passionate speeches backing the demonstrators.

That was when I decided to vote for the ACT Party.

However, David's recent actions are inconsistent with the words he spoke when I took him for that rarest of species: a politician of principle.

David, and the party he leads, have chosen the 'Chinese Herald' as a target for political advertising this election; in my view, that paper is a mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The 'Chinese Herald' carries articles from Chinese state-run publications like Xinhua and relays deceptive Communist propaganda which misrepresents the cause that these brave people stand for.

Why would the ACT Party choose to place its advertising in a newspaper with links to a regime whose ideology and outlook is hostile to democracy and freedom?

Many Chinese voters will be disappointed- for like me, they have followed David Seymour's impressive performances in the mainstream media on issues that fundamentally matter to us. But now they know that the ACT Party is effectively endorsing the Chinese Communist Herald. The only conclusion for the Chinese voter is that ACT is untrustworthy and will not honour our support.

Chinese voters will recall that David Seymour is not the first ACT leader to shift his loyalties.

Rodney Hide, a previous ACT Party leader, once positioned himself close to the Chinese pro-democracy activists. He even invited these freedom fighters to parties at his residence. Rodney attended many of the June 4 commemorations of the Tiananmen

Square massacre.

At one of these ceremonies I remember he declared, **“The Communist Chinese government was not elected by the people, so the Chinese people have the right to remove it from power.”** Rodney’s words were met with loud applause.

With the rise of the Chinese Communist Party influence in New Zealand Mr. Hide changed his tune and gradually became, to many of us, a pro-communist politician.

Kenneth Wang started as a pro-democracy Chinese activist. Then Kenneth became an ACT Party MP. He surrendered his principles to become, in my view, pro-communist. At an ACT Party event Mr. Wang was praised by a CCP official who declared: **“Mr. Kenneth Wang has turned a page in his life.”**

Later, Wang became a guest of honor at embassies and consulates and led many delegations to visit China. He worked his way up to deputy leader in the ACT Party- and then resigned before the 2017 election.

In my opinion, the ACT Party has found a CCP sympathizer to replace Kenneth Wang- Chinese-born Ada Xiao, who seems to have the right connections and background for her political mission.

ACT’s Ada Xiao studied Missile Specialization at the Beijing Institute of Technology. After graduation, she was assigned to the China Rocket Research Institute (CRRI), and during this period, she took her graduate students to North Korea to do research.

Why did Ada come to New Zealand and join Pacific Aerospace, a local aircraft maker? She worked in this company because she is technically qualified. However, what happened next, in my opinion, exposes Ada’s real mission.

Pacific Aerospace, located at Hamilton airport makes small drone aircraft that can take off and land on short runways, a cutting-edge technology. Ada Xiao worked for the company for eight years, then the business was bought by the Chinese Capital Auto Group. They set up a production line in China.

Then a serious incident placed the company under United Nations sanctions. Their planes were filmed participating in a North Korean military exercise. Obviously the Capital Auto Group sells them its planes. The company acts as a front for the CCP to supply military equipment to the rogue regimes of North Korea and Iran.

Note this convenient coincidence in ACT candidate Xiao's career. Very few Chinese ever get to do business in North Korea. Such people usually have special missions. Ms. Xiao was selected to go to North Korea. Then she found a role in Pacific Aerospace in New Zealand that matched her qualifications. The business was purchased by a CCP proxy. The company happened to sell militarized drones to North Korea.

After Pacific Aerospace was sold to the CCP proxy company Ms. Xiao started teaching at the University of Waikato; she then developed a sudden interest in politics and joined the ACT Party.

Most Chinese immigrants, even if highly educated in China, do not rise to such high status positions so soon after settling overseas. However, Ms. Xiao's ascent has been preternaturally rapid.

Right now, fellow liberal democracies such as the USA and Australia are working hard to squeeze out CCP influence through party-state organs such as the United Front and other limbs of Beijing. Many people with special relationships and obligations to the CCP are in a panic.

It is my strongly held conviction that New Zealand must do the same, and ACT, as a leading voice for liberty, should do the same. Until that happens, they will never get my vote.