

Political Life in China's Border Regions

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When China's national front was formed in 1936/7, the North-West Soviet area became the Border Region of Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia. Later, in 1937/8, in the rear of the Japanese invaders, Chinese soldiers, guerillas and citizens built up two more Border Regions in the northern provinces as bases for anti-Japanese resistance. Government in all three Border Regions (called "border" because they include the borders of two or three different provinces) has always been especially democratic (through local and regional councils elected by universal suffrage) and their strength has been the unity of all sections of the people within them.

In 1941, in order to give fuller expression to this unity, the "three-thirds system" was adopted, by which the Kuomintang and Communist Parties agreed that if their candidates won more than one-third of the seats to any council, then they would resign, in order to make the representation to the council one-third Communist, one-third Kuomintang, and one-third non-Party. In elections since then many Communists who have been elected have resigned their seats so that Kuomintang or non-Party people should be fully represented.

While these Border Regions were' authorised by the National Government of-China, while the Chairmen of two of them are prominent members of the Kuomintang Party appointed by the National Government, and while they have been engaging half of the Japanese armies in China, yet for two years they have been prevented by other Chinese generals from receiving supplies and money from the rest of Free China. Now some of these generals are even threatening to attack them.

Recently we received a speech of Mao Tse-tung to the People's, Political Council of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, meeting at Yen-an, on the working of the three-thirds system and the tasks it imposed on the Communist Party of China:—

“Victory is yet to be won. In order to win it China should continue to struggle hard and to put the Three People's Principles (of Nationalism, Democracy and People's Livelihood enunciated by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Kuomintang) into practice. Why should we put the Three People's Principles into practice? Because Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles have not yet been realised throughout China. Why should we not put socialism into practice? Certainly socialism is a better system and it has been practised by the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, China today has not yet the condition to practise it. What we are . practising in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region are the Three People's Principles.

“None of its work and solutions of the practical problems oversteps the Three People's Principles. The principle of nationalism is to overthrow Japanese imperialism. The principles of the rights of the people and the livelihood of the people are in the interest of all anti-Japanese people in the country, not just a few. People of all classes and nations in the country must enjoy the rights of man, political and property rights and the right to freedom of speech. They should have clothing, food, work and education.

Care for the Middle Portion

“Chinese society is a society with two small extremities and a big middle portion. Both the capitalists and the landlords constitute a minority only. Therefore the policy of whatever party, while ignoring the interests of the middle portion of the people, denying their right to speak, giving them no clothing, no food, no work and no education, will fail to be a good policy. With

such a policy national affairs will be impossible to be managed in the right track.

“The Chinese Communist Party has drawn up the three-thirds system and other policies. They are all for the interests of all the classes of the people, especially the people of the middle portion of society; and for the purpose of uniting all the anti-Japanese people. The policy of the 3-3 system set up by the Chinese Communist Party in the Border Region is a policy which gives access to people of different classes to speak and to work. It is a real Three People’s Principles policy.

Peasants and Landlords, Workers and Capitalists

“Regarding the agrarian problems, on the one hand we advocate a policy of reducing rents and interests so that the peasants can have clothing and food; on the other hand, we are also carrying out the policy of recognising the payment of rents and interests as obligatory so that the landlords can also have clothing and food.

“ Regarding relations between labour and capital on the one hand we are realising the policy of helping the workers so that workers can have food and clothing; on the other hand we are also carrying out the policy of industrial development which provides the capitalists with profit.

“All these are to unite the people of all classes and strata so that they may unite their forces to resist Japanese aggression and to reconstruct the nation. Such a policy is a policy of new democracy, not of one party rule; neither is it the old-type democracy in the foreign countries, but is what is embodied in Dr. Sun’s idea of the Three People’s Principles. It is a policy which fits in with the Chinese national conditions. We hope that it will not only be realised in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region and the various anti-Japanese base' behind the enemy’s lines, but also throughout the whole country.

Practise Co-operation

“We have achieved much by practising such a policy; and we have received the approval of the people of the whole country. However, we admit that there is the weakness that a part of the Communist members are not well accustomed to democratic co-operation with people outside the Party. There is an item in the programme for administration in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region which states that Communist members must co-operate with people outside the Party. If what other people say is right, we must accept it and study from other people. Even if other people make a mistake, we allow them to express their ideas in full; then we may convince them with the truth through methods of reasoning and explanation.

“Members of the Communist Party must not be so self-conceited and haughty to think that they are the only people who are good and others are all bad; and shut themselves in a room quite contented with themselves.

“Except the enemy, the traitors and those who do harm to the resistance war and national unity, everybody has the right to speak, even if his speech is not always correct. National affairs are the public affairs of a nation, not the private affairs of a single party or group. The Communist Party is a party which works for the interests of the nation and the people; the Party itself has no private goal to strive for. It should be under the watch and guard of the people, it should never be in opposition to the will of the people. Its members must place themselves *among* the people, not *above* the people.

“Comrades, our principle of carrying out democratic co-operation with people outside the Party is consistent and remains unchanged...”

THE STRENGTH OF COMMUNISTS

"The strength of the Bolsheviks, the strength of the Communists lies in the fact that they are

able to rally millions of active non-Party people around our Party. We Bolsheviks would never have achieved the successes we have now achieved had we not been able to win for the Party the confidence of millions of non-Party workers and peasants. And what is needed for this?

“What is needed is for the members of the Party not to isolate themselves from the non-Party people; for the Party members not to withdraw into their Party shell, not to get puffed up about belonging to the Party, but to heed the voice of the non-Party people; not only to teach the non-Party people, but also to learn from them” (From a recent Pravda editorial on Political Education in the countryside.)