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Desultory Remarks on Chinese Politics.

The Republic of China has not, as may often be supposed from its name, a republican form of government, with taxation and representation carefully apportioned, popular suffrage, general elections of president, legislators, etc., and other features which we associate with our republican form of government. The nation is at present living in the so-called "period of political tutelage," during which, in accordance with the will of the founder, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the government shall be entirely in the hands of the National People's Party, or Kuomintang. During this period there is to be no popular government, but the people, as yet unfit for suffrage, are by the inculcation of Dr. Sun's "Three Principles of the People" (Nationalism, Democracy, and Livelihood) to be educated toward popular government. That the people of China, an enormous number of them illiterate, are really unprepared for popular suffrage is an undoubted fact; but with regard to the proportion in which the paternal and the educational functions of the tutor are combined in the Kuomintang's tutelage there is much room for difference of opinion. The educational element would seem to come short of its due unless education and propaganda are regarded as identical. The effort is to standardize and unify the thinking of the people rather than to supply them with a basis for the formation of independent political judgment. If the reader can imagine one of the great political parties of our country furnished with a set of fully elaborated and comprehensive principles, ruling the country along one-party lines, forming its policies without reference to popular opinion, self-perpetuating without reference to popular suffrage, and controlling popular education even to the exclusion of parochial schools, one may form some conception of what the ideal state of things in China during the "period of political tutelage" is supposed to be according to Kuomintang "ideology." That, as a matter of fact, conditions are not exactly thus will be pointed out later. It is, however, clear that where such ideals are cherished and worked out so far as practicable by those in power, the form of government is by no means a democracy, but a bureaucracy.

The central government of China is a self-constituted political party, the Kuomintang, and this party does its work of governing through committees, or departments, called Yüan (the administrative Yüan, the legislative Yüan, the judicial Yüan, etc.). To claim an understanding of the machinery of government at Nanking would be supreme presumption on the part of a missionary with short experience in China. To gain such an understanding would be a sufficiently difficult task even for a trained political observer, for the system is extremely complicated and is made more difficult of comprehension by its unlikeness to any other form of government in the world. For China's new government is not constructed on the model of

a Western state. This is not to say that Western ideas have not gone into the making of it. Western ideas from all sources, the American Constitution, the French Revolution, Rousseau, Marx, Soviet Russia, etc., have been incorporated profusely into the structure, but the use of the materials has been so exceedingly eclectic that the result is not to be classed under any Western category, but is a distinctive Chinese product. It is well known that some years ago the Chinese nationalist movement was closely bound up with Russian influences. But whatever of the old leaven may still be working and occasionally manifesting itself, especially in the attitude toward religion, Soviet advisers and Soviet cooperation have been definitely thrown overboard by the central government of China. It is a fact most worthy of note that, whereas the communist agitation five years ago was chiefly directed against foreigners, to-day it is mainly directed against the Nanking government. Communist marauders, who in former days might conceivably have trodden upon the American or British flag, as symbols of the "foreign oppressors," are lately reported to have trodden upon the picture of Dr. Sun Yat Sen. So clearly is this change of attitude recognized by those in authority that the practical measures taken against Communists have quite lately become even more stringent. In Hankow the Chinese officials have recently issued a strict order that no strikes will be allowed, owing to the opportunity they give to Communists. General Chiang Kai Shek in Nanking has also lately issued a warning that the government "would not hesitate to adopt drastic measures" in dealing with students who become involved in destructive agitations.

But the central government of China does not rule China. After making due allowance for the superior hold they achieved upon the popular fancy by the skilful, persistent, and far-reaching use of propaganda, by catch-word slogans, such as the abolition of extraterritoriality, the crushing of "imperialism," etc., and by the general popular aversion to any change which means more civil war, more lawlessness, and more looting, the Nanking government is still far from achieving its dream of ruling a united China. Last summer, shortly after General Chiang Kai Shek had bought out the forces supporting the local opposition to the central government in the Wuhan cities (Wuchang, Hankow, and Hanyang) and had entered Hankow and taken control, a special postage-stamp was issued "commemorating unification." It is almost needless to state that the "consummation devoutly to be wished" which was thus commemorated has never taken place, and with one of the strongest coalitions which has ever combined against the central government since the foundation of the republic now raising the standard of civil war in the North, it does not seem likely that the commemorated event will occur in the near future. A united China remains a dream, a dream which the well-meaning authorities at Nanking would like to realize, and a dream

the realization of which some foreign statesmen and politicians whose political interests demand the surrender of treaty-rights to the Nanking government insist on presupposing, but a dream which to an unbiased observer, however well-wishing, appears far from realization in fact. In the mean time the actual local government controlling affairs, especially in the districts acknowledging the supremacy of Nanking, among which (since last summer) Hankow must be numbered, is a more or less independent party organization, usually called the Tang-Pu, a most nondescript body. A Tang-Pu may be almost anything. In some places, particularly smaller towns, it may be a clique of addle-brained high-school boys and girls who are as deficient in the science of government as they are in any other useful knowledge and who have learned only to wear foreign clothes and carry a brief-case. In other places, particularly Hankow and other large cities, it may be a group of more or less experienced men who, together with a little too much zeal to make changes quickly and to regulate all details under their jurisdiction, nevertheless show some intelligence in their decisions. From the mere standpoint of organization, the Tang-Pu may perhaps be called a "soviet," as the term is translated in a quotation from the Rev. E. W. Burt (English Baptist Mission, Tsingchow), which appeared in the LUTHERAN WITNESS; but, according to the principles espoused, the Tang-Pu certainly need not necessarily be a "soviet" such as the one described in that very interesting article. The local government in many places may be, and is, as strongly opposed to the Russian system as is the central government, and that is saying much.

However, this very looseness of connection between the local government and the central authorities may entail the following evil, namely, that the Tang-Pu (in the regions under the control of Nanking) may adduce the authority of the central Kuomintang for its actions, and yet the central authorities, if appealed to, may disown the Tang-Pu, somewhat as a lodge may represent certain local peculiarities as in accordance with the principles of Masonry, which would nevertheless be repudiated by those actually in a position to speak for that anti-Christian fraternity. On the other hand, this somewhat anomalous situation may also have its advantages, depending on the disposition of the local authorities. It would be quite possible, for instance, for any Tang-Pu which desired to absolutely abolish religious instruction from the required curricula of the mission-schools in its territory, to adduce abundant authority from the central government to support their insistence. It would only be necessary for them to require registration of all schools, which means the formal acknowledgment of the principle that no pupil may be forced or even "enticed" to attend classes in religion, in accordance with the regulations promulgated by the central government, and to enforce this requirement to the extent of closing the schools which

refused to comply. But here in Hankow the local board of education, after sending some strong letters to our schools (which caused us certain qualms of apprehension and served to bring out a splendid declaration on the part of our congregations to the effect that they would never submit to an alteration in the primary purpose of our schools, and to clarify members and even teachers as to the true position occupied by our schools), appears to have preferred to simply drop the case, which may have been taken up in the first place merely to satisfy the demands of a Kuomintang conscience. So for some time our schools have been proceeding in the usual manner and with the usual emphasis on instruction in the true religion for all pupils who attend, quite without molestation from the government or further correspondence on the subject.

Recent proclamations of a rather alarming sort, emanating from the central Ministry of Education, seem to indicate an intention of entering the sphere of higher education, with the aim of hampering or preventing instruction in Christianity. There is evident and undeniable opposition to Christianity, as belonging to that phantasma "foreign imperialism," the Christian religion coming under the specific category of "cultural aggression." Such terms are *schwankende Groessen* and express little more than the discovery of convenient catch-phrases for propaganda purposes. Some foreign newspapers have emphasized the striking coincidence between these pronouncements and the antireligious campaign in Soviet Russia. But who knows? China is, after all, a heathen country, where the opposition of the natural man against the religion of grace, which proclaims its own absolute validity over against all hell-born religion of works, must necessarily be strong. The evident desire to divert mission institutions from the purposes for which they were founded and for which they are supported may be chiefly inspired by the desire to make them useless to their original owners in order that they may be more easily "taken over" by a government which cannot afford to establish such institutions itself, but which would fain make use of them for the intensive imparting of its "tutelage" and the training of its future nationalist leaders.

God rules over all the nations of the earth for the benefit of His Church and for the gathering into the fold of all His elect. And we thank Him that we are enabled to continue the propagation of the only saving Gospel in this great land, teaching His children and our brethren to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's, to render the obedience God's Word requires to the powers that be while preserving inviolate that higher obedience to God rather than men, to respect and serve their own government and love their own country, without becoming embroiled in the confused and troubled sea of Chinese politics.

Hankow, China.

WALLACE H. McLAUGHLIN.