

The Internal and External Competition and System Changes Under the Background of Modern Chinese Party Politics

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Abstract

Since modern times, Chinese intellectual Liang Qichao and others have imitated the Western political system and vigorously advocated and implemented party politics in order to promote the historical process of political democratization and diplomacy in modern China. As China was in the current situation of internal and external troubles, various political parties have advocated national diplomacy, and have written national diplomacy policies into the party constitution or political program as a guideline for the fierce competition on the domestic and foreign affairs arena. Due to the frequent divisions and reorganizations between political parties, the political programs and political ideas of the political parties were confused with each other, and the responsibilities and obligations of party members were blurred, resulting in the increasingly complex internal and external competition of modern Chinese political parties, which reflected the modern Chinese political system Major changes.

Key words: Party politics; National diplomacy; System changes

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of Chinese party politics began in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China. Liang Qichao, Ma Xiangbo, Yang Du and others imitated the Western political system to advocate party politics in China, which strongly promoted the historical process of China’s political democratization and diplomatic democratization. In response to the current situation of China’s domestic and foreign troubles, the people’s requirements for participating in the country’s political and foreign affairs by organizing political parties have been increasing. Based on the consideration of gaining an important position in internal affairs and diplomacy, all major political parties, including Xianyouhui, Xinhai Club, National Association, National Public Party, Republican Federation of Five Nationalities, Populace Party, Progressive Party, etc. who were directly written Diplomacy into the party’s constitution or political program.

Due to frequent divisions and reorganizations among political parties, their respective political programs and political ideas were confused with each other, and the responsibilities and obligations of party members were ambiguous, leading to increasingly complex internal and external competition under the political background of modern Chinese parties, which reflected the historical state of mutual influence and mutual restraint between party politics and internal affairs and diplomacy under the background of the changes of modern Chinese political system.

1. THE FORMATION OF PARTY POLITICS

During the Reform Movement of 1898, Chinese intellectuals Liang Qichao, Yan Fu and others were yearning for the political party system in Europe and the United States. They were keen to learn, introduce and spread the constitutional theory and party system of Western countries. In particular, some constitutionalists actively used newspapers, public opinion, assembly speeches and other methods to vigorously advocate Western party politics. Judging from the situation at the time, the people's reference and dissemination of the Western party system generally experienced a complex process from propaganda and learning, to the establishment of an organization, and finally to differentiation and combination.

After the Qing government issued a preliminary constitutional decree, the Chinese people set off a wave of learning about the party system of Western countries. On October 7, 1907, the official publication "Zhenglun" of Zhengwensha was launched in Tokyo, Japan. The journal separately invited Japan's former Liberal Party Prime Minister Itagaki Retire and Constitutional Improvement Party Prime Minister Okuma Shigenobu to write prefaces to express their respect and yearning for political parties in European and American countries. At the same time, Liang Qichao, Ma Xiangbo, Yang Du and others vigorously advocated and formed political parties in China. In a letter to Yang Du, Liang Qichao proposed to form a political party. In response, Yang Du agreed in his reply and emphasized that convening the Congress is the first priority for the establishment of a political party (Ding, 1983, p.398). With the increasing public opinion in the convening of parliaments from all walks of life, the Constitutional Research Association established by Lei Fen, Ma Xiangbo and others, the Zhengwen Society organized by Jiang Zhiyou and others, and the Constitutional Conference initiated by Zhang Jian and others have become notices initiated by Chinese political parties.

In the current situation of China's domestic and foreign troubles, the Qing government's foreign policy of losing power and humiliating the country aroused the strong desire of citizens to participate in diplomacy. The people consciously included diplomacy in the discussion of party politics-related issues, and triggered a discussion on the relationship between party politics and national diplomacy. On April 21, 1908, an editorial in the "Ta Kung Pao" titled "The So-called National Diplomat" emphasized the importance of the people's participation in the country's political and diplomatic affairs, and believed that the role of public opinion in citizens' participation in political and diplomatic issues has become increasingly prominent.

It is an indisputable fact that the internal and foreign affairs of modern China influence each other. At the

same time, the participation of the people in the political demands has increased their influence in foreign affairs. In this context, the people have explored feasible ways to participate in political and foreign affairs by learning from the party systems of Japan and Western countries. On May 23, 1909, an editorial in the "Shengjing Times" pointed out: All countries in the world today have political parties and organizations that belong to a constitutional government. For example, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party oppose each other and become an important force influencing national politics. Although Japan's implementation of a constitutional government was relatively late, Japan's Seiyukai and constitutional parties hold important seats in the House of Representatives and became key forces influencing political trends. Obviously, in the eyes of people at the time, establishing a political party and using it to supervise the government and participate in diplomacy was a viable path for citizens to participate in foreign affairs. Therefore, someone proposed at that time: constitutional politics has certain feasibility and superiority, but the prerequisite for implementing constitutional politics was to organize a strong political party, which represented the opinions of the people and implements the supervision function of the government.

What needs to be clarified is that the people's discussion of the diplomatic relationship between political parties and citizens has borrowed from Japan's experience in a sense. On June 14, 1910, Huang Yuanyong, hailed as China's first truly modern journalist, once said that in the early Meiji era of Japan, under the strong promotion of political parties, citizens participated in diplomacy to abolish unequal treaties, and to achieve equality in national diplomacy. However, in China, the issue of political parties has become a key issue related to national sovereignty and interests. In this regard, Huang Yuanyong proposed that the establishment of a political party within the last two to three years would be a prerequisite issue related to the survival of China (Huang, 1910). Huang Yuanyong's forward-looking words reflected the people's strong desire to form a political party to realize government supervision and participation in diplomacy. In this context, the public has gradually stepped into the implementation stage of the establishment of the organization from the introduction stage of the propaganda of the political party.

In August 1910, China's provinces established the Federation of Advisory Bureaus, a public opinion organization composed of elected members and with the nature of local councils. In March 1911, Sun Hongyi, the representative of the Federation of Consultative Councils, formally proposed the formation of a political party. On May 25, the formation of a political party was officially launched. On June 4, Xianyouhui held its inaugural meeting at the Huguang Guild Hall in Beijing. The participants formulated six opinions including

the development of national diplomacy. Xie Yuanhan elaborated on the purpose of the conference, saying that the current national political thoughts in our country have been initially formed. He believed that this was not only an important prerequisite for organizing political parties, but also provided an important foundation for citizens to participate in political and foreign affairs in the future (Xie, 1911).

It needs to be emphasized that the establishment of Xianyouhui is of great significance in the history of modern Chinese diplomacy. This group not only clearly stipulates that national diplomacy should be carried out, but also set a precedent for launching national diplomacy as a parliamentarian. More than ten days later, the Xinhai Club, initiated by Chairman Fu, Luo Jie, and Yi Zongkui of the Consultative Council, held its inaugural meeting in Beijing. The Xinhai Club was called the bureaucratic party in the council because of its special relationship with the council (Xie, 1924, p. 33). The Xinhai Club was very close to the Xianyouhui in its establishment time, and the political programs of the two parties were relatively similar, so it attracted widespread attention from the domestic media. After comparing the political platforms of the two parties, the "News" found that the foreign policies of the two parties included the development of national diplomacy in their political platforms. The editorial of *The Times* focused on analyzing the source and composition of the members of the two parties, and pointed out that the members of the Xinhai Club have strong official backgrounds and are called official parties. Xianyouhui, as the core of the Consultative Council Federation, is the representative of most of the opposition constitutional forces, because it is called a purely non-governmental party. It should be said that the two parties have different sources of members, but their leaders all have the background of parliamentarians. Therefore, they are both political parties that are led by members of the Senate Council and carry out national diplomacy as their political platform.

2. ADOVOCACY OF NATIONAL DIPLOMACY

After the initial establishment of the republican system, political parties and groups across China have sprung up. As far as the category of national diplomacy is concerned, among the political parties established during this period, the National Association and the National Public Party were the first to enter the field of inspection. In October 1911, Zhang Jiaao and others initiated the preparation of the National Association in Shanghai. On January 21, 1912, the association held its first general meeting in Shanghai and formally established the Shanghai headquarters of the National Association. Its manifesto publicly stated that it aimed to develop national

diplomacy and promote national politics. Different from the establishment of the National Association, the Nationalist Party was reorganized from the Chinese Republican Research Association. On March 14, 1912, the Chinese Republican Research Association issued a notice, announcing that it was renamed the Kuomintang Party. The party adhered to the mission of the Chinese Republican Research Association, paid attention to the maintenance of national sovereignty, advocated civilian politics, and promoted national diplomacy.

On the day the Kuomintang Party issued the notice, the "Five National Association Declaration" was published. On April 10, 1912, the Five National Republican Federation was formally established. The following month, the Five Nationalities Association and the Chinese National Association were established one after another, both of which aimed to unite the five major ethnic groups in the country and jointly safeguard the republic. Due to the similarity of the purposes of political parties, groups such as the Five National Union and the Chinese National Union have been merged into the Five National Republican Unions, which has rapidly expanded their membership and scale. What needs to be emphasized is that the five national republican federations have formulated their statutes and set forth ten objectives including striving to develop national diplomacy. The political party stated in its policy of striving to develop national diplomacy: In foreign policy, national diplomacy is the most important. According to the research of political scientists from various countries, the policy of national diplomacy includes two aspects. One is that the driving force of diplomacy is the citizen, and the other is that the focus of diplomacy is the citizen. At the same time, the Kwantung Branch of the Five National Republican Federations stipulated in the charter: The branch strives to carry out national diplomacy. The Kwantung Branch of Fengtian province compiled and printed international law into a vernacular version, and strengthened propaganda through lectures to promote national diplomacy. This move by the five national republics has played a role in promoting the effective implementation of its political platform.

With the establishment of political parties in various places, more and more people have been absorbed into political parties. In this context, public opinion regarded civilian politics as an important factor affecting social development at that time. In his article "The True Interpretation of Civilian Politics", Zhang Shizhao used the French historian Tocqueville's theory of civilian politics to make a preliminary definition of civilian politics (Zhang, 2000, p.82). Dai Jitao believed that the spirit of the Republic of China lies in abolishing the privileges of the minority and implementing platform politics. Therefore, the civilian spirit was an indispensable element of civil affairs (Tang, 1990, p.604).

In the early days of the Republic of China, while political parties were established one after another, the phenomenon of differentiation and reorganization of political parties was very common. The establishment of the Progressive Party's organization was one example. In order to fight against the Kuomintang and win seats in the parliament, under the impetus of Liang Qichao, on May 29, 1913, the Republican, Unification and Democratic parties jointly established the Progressive Party. After the reorganization of the Progressive Party, both the number of party members and the size of the party were larger than before. In terms of diplomacy, the Progressive Party has set up a special department of diplomacy and communication to adapt to the trend of world development, promote world peace, and enhance the interests of the people. In order to achieve this goal, the Progressive Party included the development of national diplomacy activities into the daily work of the Department of Communication, and expressed its good desire to use the power of political parties to implement national diplomacy.

Unlike the Chinese Populace Party and the Progressive Party, the Kuomintang did not mention the word national diplomacy in the party platform, but applied the concept of national diplomacy to specific political and diplomatic affairs. As the official newspaper of the Kuomintang, "Minli Daily" published a large number of editorials on national diplomacy. When reviewing the history of the newspaper, an editorial with the title "Recent Declaration of the Paper" proudly declared: In the last years of the Qing Dynasty, the "Minli Daily" vigorously advocated national diplomacy remarks everywhere. Around 1913, Sun Yat-sen repeatedly expressed the view that China's major issues are not as important as diplomacy. In order to promote the early recognition of the legal status of the Republic of China government by the United States, Japan, etc., Sun Yat-sen personally served as the honorary chairman of the China-US Alliance, and co-founded the China-Japan Alliance with Japanese Prime Minister Katsutaro.

After the establishment of the Republic of China, the national foundation was not yet stable, and the encroachment of the powers of various countries caused a serious border crisis. The Sino-Russian and Outer Mongolia issues, Sino-British Xinjiang-Tibet issues, and China-Japan Manchurian-Mongolian issues have all become extremely challenging diplomatic problems. In this regard, Song Jiaoren encouraged party members and comrades to actively participate in state affairs when he delivered a speech at the KMT Welcome Conference. On the one hand, he called on the citizens to wake up quickly, and on the other hand, he emphasized the importance of people's participation in political and foreign affairs. He called on everyone to give full play to the backing role of national diplomacy and contribute to the resolution of

border crises and the maintenance of national territorial and sovereign integrity.

3. THE COMPETITION OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

This article examines the establishment, purpose and activities of the political parties in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, with the aim of better understanding the historical situation of the political parties playing against each other on the stage of domestic and foreign affairs under the background of social changes. With the continuous improvement of the political and ideological awareness of the people in modern China, all political parties have made specific regulations on citizens' participation in political and foreign affairs, emphasizing the importance of democracy for national diplomacy. The above-mentioned concepts are quite consistent with the concepts of democratic diplomacy or the diplomacy of the people in the European and American national diplomacy theory.

In 1915, the famous American political commentator Walter Lipman proposed the concept of democratic diplomacy. (Keppel, 1916, p.312). In the same year, British politician Arthur Ponsonby proposed the concept of democratic control of foreign policy. (Lindsay, 1916, P.507). It can be said that the two advocates of democracy and the rule of the people give new connotations of democracy to the thought of national diplomacy. Political parties vigorously advocate democratic politics and become important promoters of this trend. In the context of the inauguration of the Republic of China and the unstable social foundation of the country, the promotion of democracy by various political parties became common and accepted by people from all walks of life.

In the early years of the Republic of China, most of the party members had a background of members or officials, thus creating a precedent for leading national diplomacy as members of Congress. Some party members even hold important positions in the government, which helped to expand the party's influence. According to statistics, 310 political parties and organizations in the early years of the Republic of China experienced differentiation and combination. By 1913, it had merged into four major political parties: the Kuomintang, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, and the Unity Party. In March 1913, among the 274 seats in the Senate, the four major political parties occupied 209 seats. Among the 596 seats in the House of Representatives, the four major political parties occupied 565 seats. The four major political parties accounted for approximately 89% of the total seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. This was evident in the fact that political parties controlled the Congress and the resulting situation in which parliamentarian controlled national politics and foreign affairs.

Soon after the founding of the Progressive Party, its member Xiong Xiling became prime minister (Zhou, 1996, P.659). On September 11, 1913, the list of cabinets formed by Xiong Xiling was announced, which was then called the Talent Cabinet. Because of the nine cabinet members Liang Qichao, Xiong Xiling, Wang Daxie, Zhang Jian, and Zhou Ziqi were members of the Progressive Party, they were also called the Progressive Cabinet. (Ding, 1983, p.659) The Progressive Party directly appoints its own party members to serve as important government posts, which reflected the trend of the people to participate in national politics and foreign affairs by means of political parties.

It is worth noting that the political parties in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China exhibited the characteristics of short maintenance time, frequent division and combination, cross-party membership and passive participation in party affiliation, which directly affected the party's executive ability in handling national political and foreign affairs. For example, the Xianyouhui and Xinhai Club that were established in June 1910, most of their members were transferred to the National Association of the People's Republic of China, which was established on March 18, 1912; the National Association, which was established on January 23, 1912, was established on October 27. The Japanese and Republican Construction Seminar, the Republican Unification Association, the Republic of China Xinzheng News Agency, the Republic Promotion Association, and the Republic Advancement Association jointly formed the Democratic Party. The Kuomintang Party established in March 1912 was merged into the Kuomintang two months later. April 1912 The Republican Federation of the Five Nationalities, which was established on the 10th, was reorganized into the Populace Party on June 29 of the following year and then merged into the Kuomintang.

In the process of division and reorganization, political parties often followed and inherited the platform of national diplomacy. However, the instability of the political party has led to a decline in its executive power in national politics and foreign affairs. At the same time, the phenomenon of members of various political parties being admitted to the party and cross-party is very serious. In order to expand their scale and influence, some political parties often include government officials or celebrities on the conference list, especially to win a majority of seats in the Congress. Some people are listed but never participated in the party's affairs. Not only that, the same person has joined several political parties, or a political party is divided into several political factions. It is not uncommon for political parties or political factions to attack and slander each other, which greatly weakened the influence and penetration of political parties in society.

In fact, most of the political parties' definitions of national diplomacy are ambiguous. When Song Jiaoren commented on the political platform of the Xianyouhui, he pointedly pointed out: Although the party claims to promote national diplomacy, it only stays verbally. In its specific actions, it does not distinguish between diplomatic subjects and diplomatic purposes, which often leads to political programs. It cannot be upgraded to a national policy and cannot have a real impact on national politics and diplomacy. (Chen, 1981, p.230).

Coincidentally, when expounding the concept of national diplomacy, the Five National Republican Federation obviously did not take into account China's special national conditions, but directly copied the national diplomacy theory of Japanese political scholar Kihei Onozuka. (Kiheji Onozuka, 1903, p.160). The confusion of the political platform and the ambiguity of the responsibilities and obligations of party members would inevitably lead to a decline in the influence and execution power of the party in political and foreign affairs.

Take the Five National Republican Federation as an example, although its Kanto branch advocated national diplomacy, compiling vernacular books and publishing speech manuscripts. However, as Liang Qichao said at the inaugural meeting of the Progressive Party: In the past year, the popularization of common sense of the people's politics has been shown by political parties only as advocacy for speeches, publications, etc., but no one has taken action. (Liang, 1913) Although Liang Qichao's exclamation was an encouragement to the Progressive Party, it revealed the ineffective implementation of the political platform by various parties and reflected the increasingly complex historical aspects of internal and external competition under the political background of modern Chinese parties.

CONCLUSION

In short, the advocacy of Chinese party politics at the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China promoted the democratization of politics and diplomacy. In response to the current situation of China's domestic and foreign troubles, various political parties have advocated national diplomacy and written it into the party constitution or platform to launch a fierce competition on the domestic and foreign affairs arena. Due to the frequent divisions and reorganizations of political parties, their respective political platforms and ideas were confused with each other, and the responsibilities and obligations of party members were ambiguous, leading to increasingly complex internal and external competition between political parties in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, reflecting the major changes in the modern Chinese political system.

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