

X - 78 - 31. N.C.D.N. 1936 - "From Fushih" - Writing on February 21 from Yennanfu (Fushih) where Communists have their headquarters in Shensi, Miss Agnes Smedley is good enough to correct what she believes was a statement in this journal to the effect that the British church in Fushih had been burnt to the ground ..."

NC 7-11-36  
FROM FUSHIH

Writing on Feb. 21 from Yennanfu (Fushih) where the Communists have their headquarters in Shensi, Miss Agnes Smedley is good enough to correct what she believes was a statement in this journal to the effect that the British church in Fushih had been burnt to the ground. No such statement was made but on Feb. 16 a special article from that region contained this passage:

Reliable news from the north states that the Reds at Fushih 200 miles north of Sian, are at their old tricks again. They are occupying the premises of the English Baptist Mission and have burnt down the pulpit in the church and smashed up the church furniture. A suite of rooms in one of the houses formerly occupied by the foreign missionary has been burned down.

Miss Smedley states that she lives "very near the British church" and can assert definitely that it has not been burnt to the ground "nor has it been damaged in any way" that she can see. She adds:

The church is in good condition. A couple of weeks ago I studied a big official notice posted on the walls of Yennanfu and on the walls of the church compound informing the population that all church property was to be protected.

Miss Smedley considers that the Communists in Fushih are carrying out their promises to be tolerant of all faiths and she states that being informed that no Christian services were conducted in Fushih in the winter time, the Communists on arrival at that place took the benches from the church for use in the "many schools established here since the Soviet Government was moved here." She proceeds:

every institution which borrowed these benches or anything else from the church, recorded what it had borrowed and where the property was located. Next door to the building in which I live is a new educational institution, and some of the benches of the church are used there.

The Communist leaders have assured Miss Smedley that the missionaries can return without fear of molestation and that the borrowed benches will be given back to them. Moreover compensation will be paid for property damaged. The Communist leader, Peng Teh-wei, whom Miss Smedley has interviewed is represented as confirming the new tolerance of the Red Armies. This, of course, accords with the information brought by missionaries from Sian, but there is reason to advise caution in accepting these assurances too blindly at their face value. The Central Government has defined its attitude clearly. If the Communists are sincere in their desire to become reconciled with the Kuomintang they have their course clear: the abandonment of the propaganda and insignia of political doctrines which have no root in that Chinese soil which they profess to be so ready to unite with the Government in defending.