



CHAPTER XXVII

THE NATIONALIST REVOLUTION

The Chinese revolution of 1911, which led to the overthrow of the Manchus the following year, was complex in its origins and confused as to its outcome. There is no single trend of thought or political action with which it can be identified. Nevertheless, amid the shifting currents of ideas and events in the two decades following, nationalism and republicanism emerged as perhaps the leading slogans in the political arena; and in the popular mind (if we may so speak of a people just awakening to political consciousness), it was Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) and his Kuomintang followers who stood out as the most eloquent, though not always the most effective, spokesmen for these concepts. To express their basic aims and hopes is the purpose of the selections which follow. The next chapter will illustrate parallel developments in the intellectual sphere during this same republican era.

SUN YAT-SEN AND THE NATIONALIST REVOLUTION

The origins of the revolutionary movement may be traced back to 1895 when Sun, convinced that the Manchu regime was beyond hope of reforming, attempted his first abortive coup in Canton. As a practitioner of revolution Sun was never a great success, though this was his chosen profession; nor did he, on the other hand, stand out as a brilliant theoretician preparing the ground for revolution by the force and clarity of his ideas. It was rather as a visionary that Sun caught the imagination of Chinese youth—as a man of intense convictions and magnetic per-

sonality, who, through his crusading and somewhat quixotic career, dramatized ideas and catalyzed forces far more powerful than he. The first clear sign of this came just after the Russo-Japanese War, which gave great impetus to revolutionary nationalism throughout Asia. Japan was a hotbed of agitation among Chinese in exile and students sent abroad for study under official auspices. Sun, in 1905, joined his secret revolutionary society with other extremist groups to form the League of Common Alliance (*T'ung-meng hui*), out of which later grew the Kuomintang. Through its party organ, the *People's Report* (*Min pao*), this group published a manifesto which stated the aims of the movement, including three from which evolved the Three People's Principles.

One significant feature of this new movement is that it derived its inspiration very largely from Western sources. We have already seen how the thinking of the late nineteenth-century reformers was often decisively influenced by the West, either through its ideas or through the alternatives it confronted them with. In most cases, however, these reformers had been trained in the classical disciplines and prepared themselves for entry into the old elite. Even as reformers they felt a need somehow to reconcile the new with the old. Sun Yat-sen's case is different. His training was almost entirely in Western schools (including secondary education at a mission school in Hawaii). In contrast to generations of office seekers who had passed through the examination halls, this prospective leader of the new China aspired first to a military career and then went to medical school in Hongkong. Knowing little of classical studies, and inclined at first to think them useless, he inspired respect or enthusiasm more by what seemed his practical grasp of world trends than by any Chinese erudition. Moreover, his knowledge of China itself was limited, since his life was mostly spent in a few port cities, in Western outposts like Hongkong and Macao, or in exile abroad.

This is not to say that Sun was wholly Westernized. One whose early years had been spent in a peasant household, whose boyhood hero had been the Taiping leader Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, and whose associations in later life were for the most part with overseas Chinese, could be cut off from the official tradition and Confucian orthodoxy without ceasing in many ways to be Chinese. But it does mean that Sun's aims, primarily political in character and suggested by prevailing modes of thought in the West, were little adapted at the outset either to traditional Chinese

attitudes or to the realities of Chinese life. They were inspired rather by a belief that, with the progress of civilization and the advance of science, Western ideas and institutions could be adopted quickly and easily by the Chinese, without regard to their past condition. Yet the bridging of this gap, between China's sluggish past and Sun's high-speed future, proved to be the great despair of the nationalist movement. China, as events after 1911 showed, could not be remade overnight. Sun's own program he was forced to modify, and others after him still faced an enormous task of assimilation and re-evaluation. This, however, is for our later readings to take up.

HU HAN-MIN

The Six Principles of the People's Report

The basic platform of the League of Common Alliance (*T'ung-meng hui*) was set forth in a manifesto issued in the fall of 1905. It reiterated Sun's early anti-Manchu and republican aims, as well as a third, "Equalization of Land Rights," which showed a developing interest in socialistic ideas. The manifesto also stated Sun's plan of revolution in three stages: 1) military government; 2) a provisional constitution granting local self-government; and 3) full constitutional government under a republican system.

A somewhat fuller statement of the League's basic principles was written for the third issue of the party organ, *People's Report*, in April, 1906, by its editor Hu Han-min (1879-1936). The statement carried Sun Yat-sen's endorsement. Three of the six principles set forth here—nationalism, republicanism, and land nationalization—correspond roughly to Sun's famous Three Principles. The other three, not reproduced below, dealt with problems of immediate concern to the revolutionists in Yokohama, as affecting their relations with others, especially the Japanese. The fourth principle asserts the indispensability of a strong, united China to the maintenance of world peace, since it is China's weakness which encourages the great powers to contend for special advantages and risk a catastrophic war. Here the influence of the Japanese statesman, Ōkuma Shigenobu, liberal leader whose support the revolutionists counted heavily upon, is evident. The fifth and sixth principles advocate close collaboration between the Chinese and Japanese, and urge other countries also to support the revolution. Nationalism, at this point, is thus not opposed to foreign intervention but in fact welcomes it—on the right side.

While the Manchu regime is the prime target of the revolutionists' indignation, their actual antagonists in the political struggle are not so much those in power at home as reformers in exile (like Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, then also active

in Yokohama) who remain loyal to the dynasty and favor constitutional monarchy. During the first decade of the twentieth century the contest between these two groups, reformist and revolutionary, for the support of Chinese students in Japan was bitter and sometimes violent.

[From Tsou Lu (ed.), *Chung-kuo Kuomintang shih kao*, pp. 442-47]

1. *Overthrow of the Present Evil Government.* This is our first task. That a fine nation should be controlled by an evil one and that, instead of adopting our culture, the Manchus should force us to adopt theirs, is contrary to reason and cannot last for long. For the sake of our independence and salvation, we must overthrow the Manchu dynasty. The Manchus have hurt the Chinese people so much that there has arisen an inseparable barrier between them. Some have argued that the Manchus can be assimilated to Chinese culture as were the Ti, Ch'iang, and Hsien-pi tribes after their invasion of China. We need not discuss the incorrectness of this analogy, but let us ask this question: Were these tribes assimilated to Chinese culture during their rule of China, or were they assimilated after China's regeneration and their defeat and subjugation by the Chinese? Those who advocate assimilation of the Manchus without having them overthrown merely serve as tools of the tyrannical dynasty and are therefore shameless to the utmost. Our nationalism is not to be mixed with political opportunism. What distresses us sorely and hurts us unceasingly is the impossible position of subjugation we are in. If we recover our sovereignty and regain our position as ruler, it is not necessary to eliminate the evil race in order to satisfy our national aspirations. As an inferior minority, the Manchus rule the majority by means of political power. If their regime is overthrown, they will have nothing to maintain their existence. Whether they will flee to their old den [in the North] as did the defeated Mongols, or whether they will be assimilated to the Chinese as were the conquered Ti, Ch'iang and Hsien-pi tribes, we do not know. But unless their political power is overthrown, the Chinese nation will forever remain the conquered people without independence, and, being controlled by a backward nation, will finally perish with it in the struggle with the advanced foreign powers. That is why we say Manchu rule is contrary to reason and cannot last for long.

The Manchu government is evil because it is the evil race which usurped our government, and their evils are not confined to a few political meas-

3. *Land Nationalization.* The affliction of civilized countries in the modern age is not political classes but economic classes. Hence the rise of socialism. There are many socialist theories, but they all aim at leveling economic classes. Generally speaking, socialism may be divided into communism and collectivism, and nationalization of land is part of collectivism. Only constitutional democracies can adopt collectivism, for there the ruling authority resides in the state and the state machinery is controlled by a representative legislature. Thus there is no inequality involved if a democratic state, in reflecting social psychology, should adopt collectivism in order to promote the welfare of the people. Such, of course, cannot be said of a regime which allows of any political classes.

Not all collectivist theories can be applied to China at her present stage of development. But in the case of land nationalization we already have a model for it in the well-field system of the Three Dynasties, and it should not be difficult to introduce land nationalization as an adaptation of a past system to the present age of political reform. Nationalization of land is opposed to private ownership. It is based on the theory that since land is the essential element in production and is not man-made, any more than sunshine or air, it should not be privately owned.

The landlord system arises from many causes. At first land may be obtained as capital through accumulation of labor and used for productive purposes. Subsequently, as feudal domains develop, land is monopolized, and both capitalists and laborers become dependents of the feudal lords who are the first to receive the crops. The laborers borrow money from the capitalists, and the reason the latter are able to exploit the former is that the former cannot own land. Land values vary from age to age, but as civilization advances, the increase in land value is considerable—an increase not due to any effort on the part of the landlord, but nonetheless enjoyed by him alone. This is not just to harry men in society but completely to make servants of them.

The evil consequences of this system are that the landlord can acquire absolute power in society and thereby absorb and annex more land, that the farmers can be driven out of work, that people may be short of food and thus have to depend on outside supply, and that the entire country may be made poorer while capital and wealth all go to the landlords.

Land in China today, as affected by commercial development in the coastal ports, may in ten years have its value increased more than ten

times what it was formerly. We can see from this that after the revolution with the progress of civilization, the same process would be accelerated in the interior. If a system of private monopoly is re-established, then the economic class will perpetuate itself as a political class, but if we make adequate provision against this at the beginning, we can easily plan so that the evil never arises.

There are various measures for carrying out land nationalization, but the main purpose is to deprive the people of the right of landownership while permitting them to retain other rights over land (such as superficies, emphyteusis, easement, etc.). And these rights must be obtained by permission of the state. There will be no private tenancy, nor will there be any permanent mortgage. In this way the power of the landlord will be wiped out from the Chinese continent. All land taxes levied by the state must have the approval of parliament; there will be no manipulations for private profit, nor heavy taxes detrimental to the farmers' interests. Profit from land will be high, but only self-cultivating farmers can obtain land from the state. In this way people will increasingly devote themselves to farming and no land will be wasted. Landlords who in the past have been nonproductive profiteers will now be just like the common people. They will turn to productive enterprises and this will produce striking results for the good of the whole national economy. [pp. 445-47]

SUN YAT-SEN

The Three People's Principles

After the revolution of 1911 Sun Yat-sen reluctantly allowed his secret revolutionary society to be converted into an open political party, the Kuomintang (National People's Party). It accomplished little through parliamentary politics, however, and even when Sun reverted to revolutionary tactics the lack of military support and his failure to obtain sufficient help from Japan or the West kept him from registering any substantial progress. Nevertheless, Sun was impressed and encouraged by the success of the Russian Revolution, and offers of Soviet help induced him in 1923 to reorganize the Kuomintang along Communist organizational lines and to enter upon a period of collaboration with the Soviets and the recently founded Chinese Communist Party. Even so, while making certain tactical adjustments in his propaganda line and adopting a more anti-Western tone, Sun was steadfast in his repudiation of Marxism as such.

The *Three People's Principles* (*San min chu-i*), which served as the basic text of the Nationalist movement, was given its final form in a series of lectures by Sun to party members in 1924, after the Kuomintang's reorganization with Soviet help the year before. It attempted to reformulate the principles put forward in 1905, modifying them in accordance with Sun's subsequent experience and the altered circumstances in which he was making a bid for military and political unification of the country.

Sun's nationalism, in 1905, had been directed mainly against the Manchus. Events after the revolution of 1911, however, proved that ridding China of foreign rule was not enough to assure her future as a nation. Even with the Manchus gone, China was as weak as ever, and still more disunited. Consequently, by 1924 foreign rule had been superseded in Sun's mind by two other issues. First was the Chinese people's need for national solidarity; though possessing all the other requisites of a great nation, they still lacked a capacity for cohesion. Second (and this was perhaps one means of generating the first), Sun found a new target of national indignation: foreign economic imperialism. This was an issue to which Sun acknowledged the Chinese people were not yet alive. Yet it had assumed new significance for him now as the basis for collaboration with the Communists in a national revolution against imperialism. And it reflected Sun's increasing bitterness toward the West for its failure to support him.

The lack of national solidarity Sun saw as in part the legacy of long foreign rule. It was aggravated, however, by a growing cosmopolitanism and internationalism resulting from the West's disenchantment with nationalism after the First World War. Sun, who had once represented the vanguard of nationalism from the West, now found himself fighting a rear guard action in defense of his old cause. He spoke more and more in deprecation of the modern West—its materialism especially—and increasingly sought in Chinese tradition the basis for a nationalism which it had never been made to serve before. In this Sun's political instinct was undoubtedly sound, whatever the deficiencies of his intellectual approach. For nationalism remained in fact a potent issue, in China as in the rest of Asia. Ironically, though, it was to be exploited most effectively by those whose "internationalism" Sun himself condemned—the Communists.

[From *Chung-shan ch'üan-shu*, I, 4-5, 15-16, 28-29, 51-52]

[*China as a Heap of Loose Sand*]. For the most part the four hundred million people of China can be spoken of as completely Han Chinese. With common customs and habits, we are completely of one race. But in the world today what position do we occupy? Compared to the other peoples of the world we have the greatest population and our civilization is four thousand years old; we should therefore be advancing in the front

rank with the nations of Europe and America. But the Chinese people have only family and clan solidarity; they do not have national spirit. Therefore even though we have four hundred million people gathered together in one China, in reality they are just a heap of loose sand. To-day we are the poorest and weakest nation in the world, and occupy the lowest position in international affairs. Other men are the carving knife and serving dish; we are the fish and the meat. Our position at this time is most perilous. If we do not earnestly espouse nationalism and weld together our four hundred million people into a strong nation, there is danger of China's being lost and our people being destroyed. If we wish to avert this catastrophe, we must espouse nationalism and bring this national spirit to the salvation of the country. [pp. 4-5, Lecture 1]

[*China as a "Hypo-colony"*]. Since the Chinese Revolution, the foreign powers have found that it was much less easy to use political force in carving up China. A people who had experienced Manchu oppression and learned to overthrow it, would now, if the powers used political force to oppress it, be certain to resist, and thus make things difficult for them. For this reason they are letting up in their efforts to control China by political force and instead are using economic pressure to keep us down. . . . As regards political oppression people are readily aware of their suffering, but when it comes to economic oppression most often they are hardly conscious of it. China has already experienced several decades of economic oppression by the foreign powers, and so far the nation has for the most part shown no sense of irritation. As a consequence China is being transformed everywhere into a colony of the foreign powers.

Our people keep thinking that China is only a "semi-colony"—a term by which they seek to comfort themselves. Yet in reality the economic oppression we have endured is not just that of a "semi-colony" but greater even than that of a full colony. . . . Of what nation then is China a colony? It is the colony of every nation with which it has concluded treaties; each of them is China's master. Therefore China is not just the colony of one country; it is the colony of many countries. We are not just the slaves of one country, but the slaves of many countries. In the event of natural disasters like flood and drought, a nation which is sole master appropriates funds for relief and distributes them, thinking this its own duty; and the people who are its slaves regard this relief work

as something to which their masters are obligated. But when North China suffered drought several years ago, the foreign powers did not regard it as their responsibility to appropriate funds and distribute relief; only those foreigners resident in China raised funds for the drought victims, whereupon Chinese observers remarked on the great generosity of the foreigners who bore no responsibility to help. . . .

From this we can see that China is not so well off as Annam [under the French] and Korea [under the Japanese]. Being the slaves of one country represents a far higher status than being the slaves of many, and is far more advantageous. Therefore, to call China a "semi-colony" is quite incorrect. If I may coin a phrase, we should be called a "hypo-colony." This is a term that comes from chemistry, as in "hypo-phosphite." Among chemicals there are some belonging to the class of phosphorous compounds but of lower grade, which are called phosphites. Still another grade lower, and they are called hypo-phosphites. . . . The Chinese people, believing they were a semi-colony, thought it shame enough; they did not realize that they were lower even than Annam or Korea. Therefore we cannot call ourselves a "semi-colony" but only a "hypo-colony." [pp. 15-16, Lecture 2]

[*Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism*]. A new idea is emerging in England and Russia, proposed by the intellectuals, which opposes nationalism on the ground that it is narrow and illiberal. This is simply a doctrine of cosmopolitanism. England now and formerly Germany and Russia, together with the Chinese youth of today who preach the new civilization, support this doctrine and oppose nationalism. Often I hear young people say: "The Three Principles of the People do not fit in with the present world's new tendencies; the latest and best doctrine in the world is cosmopolitanism." But is cosmopolitanism really good or not? If that doctrine is good, why is it that as soon as China was conquered, her nationalism was destroyed? Cosmopolitanism is the same thing as China's theory of world empire two thousand years ago. Let us now examine that doctrine and see whether in fact it is good or not. Theoretically, we cannot say it is no good. Yet it is because formerly the Chinese intellectual class had cosmopolitan ideas that, when the Manchus crossed China's frontier, the whole country was lost to them. . . .

We cannot decide whether an idea is good or not without seeing it in practice. If the idea is of practical value to us, it is good; if it is imprac-

tical, it is bad. If it is useful to the world, it is good; if it is not, it is no good. The nations which are employing imperialism to conquer others and which are trying to retain their privileged positions as sovereign lords are advocating cosmopolitanism and want the whole world to follow them. [pp. 28-29, Lecture 3]

[*Nationalism and Traditional Morality*]. If today we want to restore the standing of our people, we must first restore our national spirit. . . . If in the past our people have survived despite the fall of the state [to foreign conquerors], and not only survived themselves but been able to assimilate these foreign conquerors, it is because of the high level of our traditional morality. Therefore, if we go to the root of the matter, besides arousing a sense of national solidarity uniting all our people, we must recover and restore our characteristic, traditional morality. Only thus can we hope to attain again the distinctive position of our people.

This characteristic morality the Chinese people today have still not forgotten. First comes loyalty and filial piety, then humanity and love, faithfulness and duty, harmony and peace. Of these traditional virtues, the Chinese people still speak, but now, under foreign oppression, we have been invaded by a new culture, the force of which is felt all across the nation. Men wholly intoxicated by this new culture have thus begun to attack the traditional morality, saying that with the adoption of the new culture, we no longer have need of the old morality.² . . . They say that when we formerly spoke of loyalty, it was loyalty to princes, but now in our democracy there are no princes, so loyalty is unnecessary and can be dispensed with. This kind of reasoning is certainly mistaken. In our country princes can be dispensed with, but not loyalty. If they say loyalty can be dispensed with, then I ask: "Do we, or do we not, have a nation? Can we, or can we not, make loyalty serve the nation? If indeed we can no longer speak of loyalty to princes, can we not, however, speak of loyalty to our people?" [pp. 51-52, Lecture 6]

The Principle of Democracy

In 1905 Sun had proclaimed the principle of democracy mainly against the advocates of constitutional monarchy whom he identified with "absolutism." In 1924 his notion of the forms this democracy should take is given more explicit expression, and against a background of personal experience which con-

² See Chapter XXVIII.