

#### 11.4 TONGMENG HUI REVOLUTIONARY PROCLAMATION, 1907

By 1905, nearly ten thousand Chinese students, most of them studying law or military subjects, were enrolled in Japanese institutions of higher learning. Confronted with the dramatic proof of Japan's success as a modernizing nation, many Chinese students felt great disillusionment with the Qing government's haphazard steps toward reform. The political activism of these students was stimulated by the presence of a community of mature revolutionaries, like Sun Yat-sen, who had been forced to seek asylum in Japan following violent protests mounted against the Qing state.

In the fall of 1905, the merger of radical student groups established the *Zhonghua Tongmeng hui* (Chinese Alliance Association) with Sun Yat-sen as its leader. With its headquarters in Tokyo and branches in the Chinese communities of Singapore, Saigon, Vancouver, San Francisco, and Chicago, the *Tongmeng hui* probably comprised some one thousand members in its first year of existence (1905–1906).

The document that follows was a proclamation by the *Tongmeng hui* published a year after its founding that was designed to establish its position as a "Military Government" in exile. As in many other *Tongmeng hui* writings, the major motif here was anti-Manchism; the political program, with its stress on a three-stage passage from military to constitutional government and equalization of land rights, was visionary but vague. In later years there would indeed be a long period of military "tutelage" but it would occur in a far less orderly way and with different results than any of the authors of this proclamation envisaged.

#### A PUBLIC DECLARATION

Since the beginning of China as a nation, we Chinese have governed our own country despite occasional interruptions. When China was occasionally occupied

by a foreign race, our ancestors could always in the end drive these foreigners out, restore the fatherland, and preserve China for future generations of Chinese. Today when we raise the righteous standard of revolt in order to expel an alien race that has been occupying China, we are doing no more than our ancestors have done or expected us to do. Justice is so much on our side that all Chinese, once familiarizing themselves with our stand, will have no doubt about the righteousness of our cause.

There is a difference, however, between our revolution and the revolutions of our ancestors. The purpose of past revolutions, such as those conducted by the Mings and the Taipings, was to restore China to the Chinese, and nothing else. We, on the other hand, strive not only to expel the ruling aliens and thus restore China to the Chinese but also to change basically the political and economic structure of our country. While we cannot describe in detail this new political and economic structure since so much is involved, the basic principle behind it is liberty, equality, and fraternity. The revolutions of yesterday were revolutions by and for the heroes; our revolution, on the other hand, is a revolution by and for the people. In a people's revolution everyone who believes in the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity has an obligation to participate in it, and the Military Government is merely the means whereby he can fulfill this revolutionary obligation. In short, the responsibility of the people and the responsibility of the Military Government are one and the same, and the accomplishments of the Military Government are also the accomplishments of the people. Only when they cooperate fully with each other can our revolutionary goal be attained.

At this juncture we wish to express candidly and fully how to make our revolution today and how to govern our country tomorrow.

1. *Expulsion of the Manchus from China.* The Manchus of today were known as the Eastern Barbarians *Tung hu* during bygone years. Toward the end of the Ming dynasty they repeatedly invaded our border areas and caused great difficulties. Then, taking advantage of the chaotic situation in China, they marched southward and forcibly occupied our country. They compelled all Chinese to become their slaves, and those who did not wish to subjugate themselves were slaughtered, numbering millions. In fact, we Chinese have not had a country for the past two hundred and sixty years. Now that the day has finally arrived when the brutal and evil rule by the Manchus must come to an end, we do not expect much resistance when our righteous army begins to move. We shall quickly overthrow the Manchu government so as to restore the sovereignty of China to the Chinese. All the soldiers on the Manchu side, whether they are Manchus or Chinese, will be pardoned despite their past crimes if they express repentance and surrender. If they choose to resist the people's army, they will be killed without mercy. The same can be also said about the Chinese who have collaborated with the Manchu government as traitors.

2. *Restoration of China to the Chinese.* China belongs to the Chinese who have the right to govern themselves. After the Manchus are expelled from China, we will have a national government of our own. Those who choose to follow the example of Shih Ching-t'ang and Wu San-kuei will be crushed.
3. *Establishment of a Republic.* Since one of the principles of our revolution is equality, we intend to establish a republic when we succeed in overthrowing the Manchu regime. In a republic all citizens will have the right to participate in the government, the president of the republic will be elected by the people, and the parliament will have deputies elected by and responsible to their respective constituents. A constitution of the Chinese Republic will then be formulated, to be observed by all Chinese. Anyone who entertains the thought of becoming an emperor will be crushed without mercy.
4. *Equalization of landownership.* The social and economic structure of China must be so reconstructed that the fruits of labor will be shared by all Chinese on an equal basis. Every tract of land in China must be assessed to determine its fair value in monetary terms, and this value belongs of course, to the landowner. Any added value, which results from social progress after the revolution, will, however, belong to the nation as a whole and must be shared by all Chinese. The ultimate goal of a responsible society is the guarantee of a satisfactory livelihood for all of its members and everyone, whomever he happens to be, shall have his own means of support, via gainful employment or some other source. Anyone who attempts to monopolize the livelihood of others will be ostracized.

To attain the four goals as outlined above, we propose a procedure of three stages. The first stage is that of a military rule. During this stage when people all over China are responding to our righteous uprising and when all the territories are only recently freed from the Manchu control, we should strive for harmony and cooperation among all Chinese, so that jointly we can face our common enemy. It is essential that during this period of chaos and disturbance both the people and the army must be subject to military rule. While the revolutionary army is fighting in the front, people in the rear must supply it with what it needs and must not do anything that would affect adversely its security or its capacity to complete successfully its mission. In areas that have been recently taken over by the revolutionary army, local governments will be administered by the military command which shall see to it that all the political and social abuses of the past will be eliminated. By political abuses are meant governmental oppression, bureaucratic corruption, extortion by the police, marshals, and other law-enforcement personnel, cruelty in punishment, excessive taxation, and the wearing of pigtails as a symbol of submission to the Manchu government. By social abuses are meant the ownership of domestic slaves, the

cruel custom of foot-binding, the smoking of poisonous opium, and the belief in geomancy and other superstitions that are an impediment to modern progress. All these abuses must be eliminated when the Manchu influence in China is eliminated.

The stage of military rule should not last for more than three years. After a district has succeeded in attaining the goals prescribed for the stage of military rule, military rule will come to an end, and the second stage, the stage of provisional constitution, will then begin. After a district has entered the second stage, a provisional constitution will have been proclaimed and put in force, since by then the military command would have already handed over the power of government to the people of that district. The people then govern themselves by electing as their representatives deputies in the district council as well as all the executive officials. The rights and obligations of the Military Government toward the people and the people's rights and obligations toward the Military Government will be prescribed in the provisional constitution and must be observed by the Military Government, the district council, and the people in the district. The party that violates the provisional constitution shall be held responsible for the redress of its action. Six years after the nation has been pacified, a constitution will be proclaimed to replace the provisional constitution as described above, and then nation then formally enters the third or final stage, the stage of constitutional rule. The Military Government relinquishes its executive power, including its control over the nation's armed forces and hands this power to the people's representatives. The President of China will be popularly elected; so will all members of the Parliament. All policies to be pursued by the nation must be in conformity with the letter and spirit of the proclaimed constitution.

In short, during the first stage the Military Government, in cooperation with the people, will eradicate all the abuses of the past; with the arrival of the second stage the Military Government will hand over local administration to the people while reserving for itself the right of jurisdiction over all matters that concern the nation as a whole; during the third or final stage the Military Government will cease to exist and all governmental power will be invested in organs as prescribed in a national constitution. This orderly procedure is necessary because our people need time to acquaint themselves with the idea of liberty and equality. Liberty and equality are the basis on which the Republic of China rests.

To the attainment of the four goals and the implementation of the three stages, as outlined above, the Military Government will dedicate itself on behalf of all the people in the nation. It will do so with loyalty, faith, and total determination. We firmly believe that all our brethren will join us in performing the difficult task ahead, so we can accomplish a great deed together. The brilliant achievements of China have been known throughout the world, and only recently has she suffered numerous difficulties. We shall overcome these difficulties and march forward. The harder the task is, the harder we shall work.

On this day of restoring China to her own people, we urge everyone to step forward and to do the best he can. As the descendants of Huang-ti, we shall regard one another as brothers and sisters and assist each other regardless of the difficulty of the circumstances. Whatever our station in society is, rich or poor, we are all equal in our determination to safeguard the security of China as a nation and to preserve the Chinese people as a race. We shall do so with one heart and one mind. When our soldiers are willing to sacrifice their lives and when everyone else is sparing no effort for the attainment of our noble goals, the revolution will succeed and the Republic of China will be established. Let each and every one of the 400 million people do his very best.

### 11.5 PRESS COVERAGE OF THE WUCHANG UPRISING, 1911

The 1911 Revolution started with an uprising in Wuchang, the provincial capital of Hubei, on October 10, 1911. On the night of October 9th, bombs accidentally exploded in one of the revolutionaries' secret branches in the Russian Concession in Hankou (now part of Wuhan). Police arrested dozens of revolutionaries, searched their secret meeting places, and discovered weapons, explosives, and lists of names of revolutionary converts in the New Army, which were handed over to the Qing authorities. Upon hearing the news of impending government crackdown and arrests, the revolutionaries hastily took up arms and launched their uprising. There was no coordinated plan nor structured leadership, but their efforts succeeded and the local Qing civilian and military officials were scared into flight. While battles raged on in the Wuchang-Hankou region, provincial governments all over the country, especially in south China where revolutionary and reform climates prevailed, proclaimed their independence from the Qing central government and finally forced the regents of the Xuantong emperor to agree to an announcement of abdication.

The documents selected here are reprinted from the contemporary accounts in *The Hankow Daily News*, a local English newspaper. The dating used in the first proclamation follows a calendar never officially used in China's imperial history but which was that of the Yellow emperor, the legendary progenitor of the Han Chinese. The use of this date emphasizes the beginning, after Manchu domination, of a new Chinese historical era.

#### PROCLAMATION

The eighth moon of the four thousand six hundred and ninth year of the Wuchang Dynasty.

"I, the Hubei General of the People's Army, am to overthrow the Manchu Government, and am here to revive the rights of the Han people. Let all remain orderly and not disobey military law.

- Those who conceal any Government officials will be beheaded.
- Those who inflict injuries on foreigners will be beheaded.
- Those who interfere with commerce will be beheaded.
- Those who indulge in wanton slaughter, burning, or adultery will be beheaded.
- Those who fight against the volunteers will be beheaded.
- Those who attempt to close the shops will be beheaded.

#### REWARDS

- Those who supply the troops with foodstuffs will be rewarded.
- Those who afford protection to the foreign concessions will be highly rewarded.
- Those who guard the churches will be highly rewarded.
- Those who lead the people to submission are to be highly rewarded.
- Those who encourage the country people to join the revolution will be rewarded.
- Those who give information as to the movements of the enemy will be rewarded.
- Those who maintain the prosperity of commerce will be rewarded."

#### THE VICEROY'S ESCAPE

The above proclamation showed that the worthy General of the People's Army [the identity of the general in question is unclear] had great hopes of success and these were apparently justified by the arrival, in the morning off the Russian Bund, of the Viceroy's launch accompanied by a cruiser. It was soon learned that the Viceroy had made his escape during cover of darkness and had reached his launch without mishap, teaming over to the side of the river later on to be out of the way of an attack. At 2 p.m. the cruiser and the launch again weighed anchor, the former proceeding close to the Wuchang shore while the latter steamed up slowly in mid-stream. The cruiser was shortly joined by two torpedo boats and firing on the city was commenced, but as far as could be judged only black ammunition was used.

#### FIGHTING IN WUCHANG

Meanwhile heavy fighting was going on in the city, especially to the southward where the sound of field guns could be heard and an occasional prolonged rattle of small arms, while shots were also being exchanged between the soldiers inside