

HISTORY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN CHINA

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A Thesis  
presented to  
The School of Political, Economic  
and Social Sciences of  
the University of Ottawa

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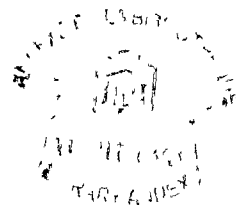
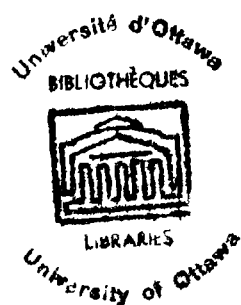
In Partial Fulfilment  
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Master of Arts

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by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

The political situation in China, and in fact in the Far East is in ferment. The establishment of the People's Republic of China by the Chinese Communist Party and the existence of the National Government under the old leadership of Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa claiming as the real Government of China, have created intricate international problems as the People's Republic of China has not been recognised by the United Nations Organization and some governments, while it has been recognised by others.

This situation has become more complicated by the outbreak of the Korean war which is being fought between South Korea and the United Nations on the one side and North Korea and the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China on the other. The Chinese Communists have also established their suzerainty and control over Tibet. All these developments indicate that the Communist regime in China is not only powerful but has also gained support of the indigeneous population and has presumably come to stay. The Chinese Revolution which, it may be said, started with the Tai Ping Rebellion (1850-1865) and developed through various phases, thus appears to have ended with the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

However the international tension has grown since and certain Western nations do not favour that government. Their attitude in this respect has been lucidly described in C.P.Fitzgerald's article entitled "The Chinese Revolution and the West".<sup>1</sup> He has stated therein that the American opinion considers that the establishment of the Communist regime in China is a manifestation of international communism which must be fought in the name of democracy. The British incline to the view that it is primarily the result of Chinese development and the inevitable result of the follies of the Nationalist Government. If this British view is to be accepted, and no doubt it appears to be logical and impressive, then one may like to know how the Chinese developments led to the establishment of the Government by the Communist Party in China.

### Scope

While studying this problem in this thesis, it will not be possible for us to go into details for want of space. It is therefore proposed to give in the following pages a short description of the systems of Government in China before and after the Revolution of 1911, the conditions of the people under those governments, the impact from the West, causes of the rise and fall of governments in the Chinese history and then the diagnosis and the recipe for the once most civilised and prosperous but now ill fated land of China.

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<sup>1</sup>C.P.Fitzgerald, "The Chinese Revolution and the West", Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXIV No.1 (March 1951), pp 3-17.

## CHAPTER II

### GOVERNMENT OF CHINA IN PREREVOLUTION PERIOD

#### Chinese People

The beginnings of the Chinese are shrouded in obscurity, although there have been produced volumes of Chinese literature in the past twenty-four hundred years. Theirs is the longest civilization known to us so far. They have uninterrupted existence as a political and cultural entity for over 4000 years. "The Chinese were old when the ancient Greece was young; They produced Confucius before Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar; They were having a magnificently mature development when Europe was a medieval shambles. Chinese history goes back at least to 2800 B.C."<sup>1</sup>

The Chinese number about 450 million and the density of population which comes to 120 to the square mile, does not seem excessive when compared to that of some of the Western countries like France (190 to per square mile). But two-thirds of the land is mountainous or semiarid and six-sevenths of the population in China is concentrated in the remaining third, consisting of the fertile river valleys and the plains and the eastern coast. It is estimated that the agricultural sections support 1,479 inhabitants per square mile of

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<sup>1</sup>John Gunther, Inside Asia, (New York: Harper and Broths, 1939), p.146.

cultivated land.<sup>1</sup> Viewed in this light, China is the most populated country and larger masses suffer from malnutrition and poverty as the economy of that country is mainly agricultural and there is often a failure of crops through droughts or floods.

Racially, the Chinese are a mixed people. There were many invasions of North China by non-Chinese people from the north, north-east and west and during their extensive occupation of the territory, it is believed that there has been intermixture of blood and population. In spite of this, the great mass of the Chinese people is remarkably homogeneous in physical appearance and in culture. "The approach to uniformity is probably due chiefly to the type of government and culture under which the Chinese have lived. The political structure of the Empire, made up largely of a bureaucracy educated in the orthodox philosophy of the state, and inculcating conformity to this philosophy, welded people into a cultural whole."<sup>2</sup>

The language of the people in China is also an unifying force. The great majority of people speak variants of the Mandarin dialect and others speak other dialects. But the written language (which is based on ideographs rather than on a phonic alphabet) is the same regardless of the dialect. Eighty per cent of the population is, however, illiterate and this has along with other factors hindered the growth of democracy in China.

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<sup>1</sup>J.C.Ranny & G.M.Carter, The Major Foreign Powers, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1949), p.717.

<sup>2</sup>K.S.Latourette, The Chinese Their History and Culture, (3rd edn, New York: MacMillan Co., 1950), p.499.

The Chinese are rational, passive and their power of endurance is remarkable. In the words of John Gunther "the Chinese withstand bad government, floods, disease, famine, corrupt administration, poverty of unspeakable nature, invasion from outside, civil wars, outrageous taxation, physical discomfort, physical labour almost unparalleled elsewhere in the world - and thrive cheerfully and multiply."<sup>1</sup>

### Social Life

Even in early years of the Chou dynasty (1100-221 B.C.), Chinese culture was well advanced. The social structure was based on family and village life. The basic industry was agriculture and millet, rice, wheat and barley were grown on land. There was a sharp distinction between the lower or peasant class and the upper or aristocratic class. The first one was occupied with the cultivation of the soil and the second one did the governing of the country. This distinction appears to have been accentuated with the growth of the towns. The urban civilization spread and centred in the capitals of feudal princes and the wang or monarch. The towns had a market place, an altar to the earth, and an ancestral temple of the ruling lord. Permanent individual ownership of the land did not exist and the title to the land was vested in the lord.

The villages were usually walled and clustered around the residence of officials and the life of the community centred round the market place and public grounds. The aristocracy were distinguished from the peasants by an elaborate family and hierarchial organization. Each clan was divided

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<sup>1</sup>Gunther, op cit., p.149.

into families each with its male head who had controlling authority over its members. From the upper classes came the lords and landed proprietors. Others were employees of the state, school teachers, diviners, merchants, experts in rituals and so on.<sup>1</sup>

The village life of China goes on whatever may happen elsewhere. No threat or experience of devastation stops the Chinese from cultivating his land for which he has great love and attachment. This is possible because of the immense strength in China of the family as an institution. The practice of ancestor worship which prevails in China aptly symbolises this strength. Whatever happens in the wider field of politics the family holds together as an economic and social unit, and the grouping of families holds the village together and that in turn has helped to stabilise the Chinese social and political structure.

### Religion

There is another such stabilising factor and that is the effect of religious teaching on the people. There is in fact no well organized church which is directly or indirectly active in politics in China. Yet there has been a tremendous and far reaching effect of religious ideas and philosophy on the social and political life in China.

We are not aware of what the nature of the earliest Chinese religion was. It is however known that during the early Chou period, the Chinese religion was crude. They were

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit., pp.55-59.

under the divine influence of spirits and various kinds of Gods. There were house gods and gods of rivers, mountains, stars and other natural objects. The ancestors, too, were believed to live on, and in course of time the souls of the deceased disintegrated and absorbed into the forces of nature. The spirits and gods were superior to men. The cooperation of the spiritual beings was regarded as essential to the welfare of men and society; it was to be secured by the performance of sacrifices and by right ethical conduct; it was also a matter of public concern and the chief function of the state.<sup>1</sup> Each feudal lord and the wang had to perform these ceremonies. According to the theory of the Chinese, the Emperor was the religious as well as the political head of the state. He was regarded as a part of the order of the universe and was commissioned by Heaven not only to rule mankind but also to perform certain religious functions. The state cult therefore consisted in performing certain sacrifices and religious rituals in honour of Gods, spirits and ancestors.

Before the end of Chou period several schools of thought which were tinged with the above religious beliefs were developed of which Confucianism and Taoism are important. Buddhism was then introduced into China in the second century A.D. ~~This religion~~, and also Christianity, had a profound effect on China as we shall see later.

### Confucianism

Confucianism is a set of ethical beliefs accompanied by the performance of certain rituals. Confucius himself wished

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libid, pp. 67-75.

to develop a code of ethical conduct which would enable human beings to live harmoniously and peacefully. His interests were chiefly those of the statesman and the teacher of ethics. He was concerned with the achievement of good government by the maintenance of the proper ceremonies as was done in the past, and the exhibition by the ruling classes of a good moral example. Society, he believed, was kept prosperous and at peace not by force but by the influence of high character on the part of monarchs and members of the upper classes and by adherence to customary rituals.

He attempted to reform the Chinese feudal system and his ideal society was marked by definite ranks, with each person falling into his proper place, loyally obeying superior authority, and receiving the proper respect from inferior orders.<sup>1</sup> The Confucian system was based upon the assumption that both rulers and people, when properly educated, would act righteously; and the history of the political systems in China shows that this was true. Various rulers encouraged the study of Confucianism and the scholar bureaucracy had to be trained in that before they were appointed to public service. It was also a part of the Confucian tradition that an unjust ruler would make his country liable for the wrath of Heaven in the form of famine, flood, and popular uprisings and a successful revolution by the people against their ruler was regarded as the judgment of Heaven on his evil deeds. This tradition is similar to the teaching of John Locke which is incorporated in the American Declaration of Independence and which enunciated

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<sup>1</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit., p.179.

the democratic right of the people to overthrow their government which does not represent their will.<sup>1</sup>

### Taoism

The next to Confucianism in lasting influence was Taoism the founder of which was Lao Tzu. It represents the thought relating to tao i.e. the great reality at the back of and in filling the universe or what the western philosophers call the Absolute. Knowledge of tao is not to be attained by reason and study, but by contemplation and inward illumination. Man's conduct they urged should confirm to the tao,<sup>2</sup> and that was held to be wu wei, that is a way of "doing every thing by doing nothing". The Taoists were therefore opposed to elaborate rituals, the pedantic cultivation of character and the intellectual approach to Confucianism. In contrast to the influence of Confucianism among the educated upper classes, Taoism was popular among the mass of people. It however degenerated in popular practice marked by magic and miracle in the sense that it encouraged cynicism and absence of resistance.

### Buddhism

The third powerful religion Buddhism came to China from India and it was closer to Taoism than the Confucianism. Its founder was a prince who later became known as Lord Buddha when he founded this religion with the object of teaching humanity how to get rid of suffering and sorrow in life. It preaches, in brief, that life and suffering are inseparable;

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, p.719.

<sup>2</sup>Latourette, op cit, p.74.

suffering is due to desire; and to free one's self from suffering, one must emancipate from desire by following the eight-fold path which includes right views, right aspirations, right meditation, and right actions.<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that Buddhism arose out of the land whose interests were vastly spiritual while except Taoism, the Chinese thought was absorbed by the worldly society and human problems. Buddhism advocated celibacy, a practice destructive to family system which was so important in China. And yet it won a great following in China perhaps because it seemed to meet some basic demands of human spirit for which the then religion of China offered no solution. Besides, with its philosophy, saints, images, worship and music, it must have attracted the Chinese people.

### Christianity

A few decades after the first Portuguese traders arrived in China in 1515 A.D., Roman Catholic missionaries began to establish churches and to make converts among the Chinese. In the nineteenth century both Catholics and Protestants carried on their missionary work in China with great enthusiasm and perseverance, gained thousands of followers, undertook manifold philanthropies, erected churches, schools and hospitals and exercised in the shaping of new China a tremendous influence which it is impossible to measure. It is true that Christianity has not had such large results in philosophy and religion as it had in other phases of Chinese

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, pp.126-127.

social and political life. With the coming of the West and its religion, the state religion and with it Confucianism were disintegrated. We will know more about the impact of the West and its religion on Chinese moral, social and political life in the chapter 'Impact of the Occident' in this essay.

Here it must be pointed out that the great majority of the Chinese were not, and have not been, exclusively Confucian, Buddhist, Taoist or Christian. They had been influenced by ~~all of these systems~~ in ethical standards, in conceptions of the universe and of divine beings, and in beliefs about the future life. In addition, they were influenced by other elements such as animism and polytheism.

#### System of Government

At the outset it may be pointed out that it is not our intention to go into the detailed history of the Chinese political institutions, firstly because of the limited space here, and secondly because the specialized studies on the subject are still lacking.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore proposed to give here a brief historical background and then the main outline of the system of government as was found in the nineteenth century during the period of the Manchu dynasty.

The earliest dynasties in the Chinese history are the Shang, Chou and Han which cover ~~the~~ a period of about nineteen hundred years before the end of the Han in 221 A.D. The political organization had probably developed since the Shang

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libid, p. 518.

and was largely of the patriarchal ideal. Civilized society was regarded as a huge family and its units as smaller families.

The head of the state was the wang or monarch. In theory the wang ruled the state because of the decree of Heaven (t'ien ming) and the te' (which meant originally magical power and then virtue) of himself and of his ancestors obtained through obedience to the commands of Heaven. If the monarch turned out to be unjust, immoral or cruel, it was believed that the ruler met with the wrath of Heaven who withdrew its command to rule. When, for example, Wu Wang, the founder of the Chou dynasty, led a revolt against the then Emperor, the excuse given was that the latter had not fulfilled the decrees of Heaven, and had thereby forfeited the claim to the throne.<sup>1</sup> In practice, however, the authority of the wang depended on his own ability and character. After the first few monarchs of the Chou, it seems that most of them became a sort of high priests and sources of titles.

The monarch was assisted by a chief minister and six subordinate ministers in charge of different administrations, namely, agriculture, army, public works, religious rights, the monarch's personal affairs and punishments. Below these ministers there were other ranks and officials. In course of time there were gradual changes in this system, and the power of the monarch was considered to have practical religious importance. Its function was held essential to the cooperation of Heaven, Earth and the human society upon which depended the prosperity and welfare of the realm.

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1W.S.Williams, The Middle Kingdom, Vol. I, (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1904, p.381.

The realm was divided in two main parts, the royal domains ruled by the wang , and the fiefs of the many feudatories. The realm was further divided into nine provinces each with a kind of governor appointed by the wang from among the local lords. These provinces, however, possessed only a ceremonial significance. Every lord was also bound to perform sacrifices to the spirits of the land and to his ancestors to maintain peace and justice amongst his subjects.

The Chou dynasty was followed by the Ch'in dynasty in 221 B.C. and the whole Chinese cultural area was organized into a mighty Empire.<sup>1</sup> At the head of the whole organization was the Emperor and an elaborate bureaucracy was created with diverse functions. At the capital was a numerous administrative staff divided into several departments like military affairs, provincial affairs, imperial equipage, justice, police, imperial works, and barbarians. The Empire was divided into forty one provinces called chun and each in turn into counties called hsien. This organization was not entirely new and the concept both of hsien and chun had come down from the Chous. But the main difference was that while the power of government was decentralized under the Chous, it was exercised by the Emperor through a strong bureaucracy in the Ch'in.

After the collapse of the Ch'in in 206 B.C. came the Han dynasty which made further contribution to the administrative machinery devised by the Ch'in by combining the political philosophy of Confucius with the administrative

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit, p.89.

machinery. It was in this dynasty that the well known system of competitive examinations for the choice of the worthy for office was introduced. The Emperor strove to exalt the authority of the throne and rule through bureaucracy and official hierarchy which was to be one of the outstanding features of the Chinese state.

With the end of the Han dynasty in 221 A.D. began the period of civil strife, internal division, and weakness which lasted for about four centuries. Non-Chinese peoples also invaded the land, sometimes settling there and setting up kingdoms which lasted for long periods. The administrative structure set up by the Ch'in and the Han could not properly be operated and often much weakened.<sup>1</sup> The cultural unity achieved by them was also often threatened. Foreign influences, especially Buddhism, wrought striking modifications in the life of the country. When at the beginning of the seventh century the Empire was brought together under one strong rule, the Chinese civilization had become much different from what it had been under the Han.

This internal strife and weakness came to an end under the Sui and T'ang dynasties (618-907 A.D.). Under them, China registered fresh advances in civilization. Originality in political thought, although by no means absent, was not so marked as in the later years of the Chou, and the dynasties produced no innovating administrative genius equal to those of the Ch'in and the Han. While

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, p.143.

in political theory and governmental organization the Sui and the T'ang were content to build upon the foundations laid in the past, they showed great skill in utilising the political principles and framework which they had inherited from the three preceding dynasties, namely, the Chou, the Ch'in and the Han.<sup>1</sup> Some administrative modifications were made. The Empire was divided into tao or provinces, and these in turn in chou or administrative divisions, and the chou into hsien or districts. In addition to the official hierarchy assigned to each of these divisions, there were commissioners sent directly by the Emperor to handle some emergency such as a drought, a flood, or a rebellion. All appointments were made from the capital and the administration of the Empire was centralised. The system of public examinations for such appointments was followed and Confucian ideals were infused in the civil officials who were charged with the welfare and encouraging the morals of the people.<sup>2</sup>

The fall of the T'ang was again followed by internal division and civil strife until the inauguration of the Sung dynasty in 960 A.D. After that the Empire was once more centralized under the autocrat ruling through the bureaucracy. Then came the Mongols in 1279 A.D., but they also did not attempt to revolutionize the government although they appointed non-Chinese in the administration and discontinued the civil service examinations presumably to

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, p.177.

<sup>2</sup>ibid, pp.181-182.

facilitate the entry of the non-Chinese into public services. The Mongols had wisely adopted a policy of conciliation of the conquered and of attempting a cosmopolitan blending of races in the government. Khubilai appointed travelling inspectors to report on the economic status of his subjects, maintained public granaries in which surplus grain of good season could be stored for distribution in the days of famine. A provision was made for the public care of aged scholars, orphans, and the infirm, and for the distribution of food among the poor. Education was encouraged and the support of the Chinese scholars was enlisted. Thus the Mongol period was marked by distinct changes in Chinese life, but did not contribute very much to the cultural side.

The Mongols were succeeded by the Ming dynasty in the year 1368 A.D. From the military stand point, the Ming was very strong and it became the master of all of what we call China proper. In government it was content to perpetuate, with some modifications, the machinery of its predecessors, and under it the Empire was wealthy and populous. The Emperor Hung Wu promulgated a code of laws modelled on those of T'ang. He adopted the traditional bureaucratic organization of the Empire, but he abolished the system of premiership and replaced it with a system of Cabinet or Grand Secretariat. This was an innovation which tended to accentuate the actual power of the sovereign. He also reestablished firmly the civil service examination which was abolished by the Mongols and adopted the principle of

filling up the government offices from the successful candidates alone. One of the marked features of the Mongol period was the extensive contacts that took place between the foreigners and the Chinese. Similarly the marked feature of the Ming was the extensive foreign commerce of China with Asiatic world. It is also during the period of the Ming that the expansion of Europeans who were merchants and missionaries began afresh after the fall of the Mongols.

The Manchus followed the Ming in 1644 A.D. They also adopted with suitable changes the same pattern of government which was handed down to them by their predecessors and which is described in some detail below. From the foregoing account it will, however, be observed that since the Han, no basic revolution had been made in the form of government. We particularly find that during the Manchu period the government was systematized so thoroughly that it was wonderfully stabilized during the long rule of the **Manchus**. We must, indeed, look into the structure of the **Empire** in order to discover the causes of this stability, in as much as there was no standing army to enforce nor the machinery of a state religion to compel obedience to a sovereign. A short inspection will show that the great leading principles by which the Chinese administration under the Manchus commanded power over the people consisted in a system of strict surveillance and mutual responsibility among all classes, These were added in their efficiency by the geographical isolation of the country, a remarkable

spirit of loyal pride in their own history, and a general system of political education and official examination.<sup>1</sup>

The general examination of the structure of the Chinese government here proposed may conveniently be considered under such heads as the Emperor, the machinery of the central government, the provincial or local government, revenue and the execution of laws.

#### Emperor.

The Emperor was at the head of the state and its constitution and was declared to hold office through a mandate of Heaven. He was regarded as a kind of father of his people and an object of almost unbounded reverence and loyalty. He was believed to retain his mandate only through his own virtue and force of character. If he did prove unworthy, Heaven might transfer its mandate to another ruler. Tyranny and oppression by the Emperor were regarded as a breach of trust reposed in him by Heaven and a revolt against him was justified. The Emperor was regarded in theory as supreme over all civilized human society. He was the administrative director of the state and officials derived their authority and titles from him. In him resided the power of legislation and justice. He was the religious head of society and performed many ceremonies as the high priest of mankind.<sup>2</sup> In practice, however, his powers were much curtailed by delegation of powers, by public opinion, and democratic spirit, distances and elaborate formalities.

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, op cit, p.382.

<sup>2</sup>Latourette, op cit, pp.519-521.

of the court. Although the Emperor was regarded as the head of the great organization, as the fly-wheel which sets other wheels of the machine in motion, he was still considered as bound to rule according to the code of the land; and when there was a well known law, he, though a source of law, was expected to follow that law in his decrees.<sup>1</sup>

#### Government Machinery.

Below the Emperor there were two imperial councils which were the organs of communication between the head and the body politic. They were the Cabinet or Imperial Chancery, and the Council of State.<sup>2</sup> Both of them partook of a deliberative character, but the first had the least power. Subordinate to these were the "Six Boards", the Censorate, Courts of Representation and Appeal, and the Imperial Academy; making in all thirteen principle departments which are briefly described below. There was nothing like an elective body in any part of the system.

(1) The Cabinet (Nui Koh): The Cabinet was also called the Grand Secretariat and consisted of four Chancellors or Grand Secretaries and two assistant Chancellors half of whom were Manchus and half Chinese. Their duties were to deliberate and aid the Emperor in directing the affairs of the state.

(2) The Council of State (Kiun Ki Chu): This was the most influential body and was composed of princes, chancellors,

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, op cit, p.384.

<sup>2</sup>ibid, pp. ~~415~~ ff.

presidents and vice-presidents of the six boards and chief officers of the courts, all selected at the pleasure of the Emperor. Its duties were "to write imperial edicts and decisions, and determine such things as are of importance to army and the nation in order to aid the sovereign in regulating the machinery of affairs."

(3) The Board of Civil Offices (Li Pu): This had the government and the direction of the civil services, including their selection, promotion, degradation and rewards.

In this connection mention may be made of the very excellent system of recruitment to public services by holding civil service examinations. The beginnings of this service can be traced back to the Han dynasty and later it became a great force in helping to stabilize the machinery of government in China. "The examinations for the public service were open to all except the sons of barbers, butchers, and actors."<sup>1</sup> The poor could try their luck in getting into the government service along with the rich and aristocratic class. A son of the poorest peasant could become a viceroy if he could get through these most formidable and exhausting examinations which were largely in Chinese literature of the Confucian school. This explains why the Confucianism had dominance in the system of the Chinese government.

(4) The Board of Revenue (Hu Pu): This directed the territorial government of the Empire, and whatever related to the levy and collection of taxes and duties, to the

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<sup>1</sup>E.R.Hughes, Invasion of China by Western World (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1937), p.132.

revenue and expenditure, measurement of land and so on. It also maintained the lists of population and ascertained the latitude and longitude of places.

(5) The Board of Rites (Li Pu): It examined and directed the performances of five kinds of ritual observances, and made proclamation thereof to the whole Empire, thus aiding the Emperor in guiding all people. The Five classes of rights were defined to be those of a propitious and those of a felicitous nature, military, and hospitable rites, and those of infelicitous nature.

(6) The Board of War (Ping Pu): This had the duty of aiding the sovereign to protect the people by the direction of all military affairs in the metropolis and provinces.

(7) The Board of Punishments (Hsing Pu): It had the government and direction of punishments throughout the Empire, for the purpose of aiding the sovereign in correcting all people. This Board had jurisdiction over both the civil and criminal courts in the country.

(8) The Board of Works (Kung Pu): This was in charge of the public works throughout the Empire for the purposes of aiding the Emperor to keep all people in a state of repose.

(9) The Court for the Government of Foreigners (Li Fan Yuan): This was commonly called the Colonial Office and had the government and direction of the external affairs, foreigners, their emoluments, honors, appointments and their visits to Court, and punishments in order to show the majesty and goodness of the Empire.

(10) The Censorate (Tu Ch'a Yuan): This was the most powerful and all examining Court and was entrusted with the care of manners and customs, the investigation of all public offices within and without the capital, the discrimination between good and bad performances of duties and between depravity and uprightness of the officers employed in them. Its duties included the criticism of government actions, assisting in the investigation of corruptions, keeping watch on state property and the conduct of the government servants. It was not afraid of criticizing even the Emperor. ~~Censors~~ were given a great liberty of speech and they discharged their duties fearlessly.

(11) The Court of Transmission (T'ung Cheng Ssu): This consisted of six officers whose duty it was to receive memorials from the provincial authorities and appeals from judgments, made by the people, and to present them to the Cabinet.

(12) The Court of Judicature and Revision (Ta Li Ssu): This was entrusted with the duty of adjusting and controlling all the criminal courts in the Empire and formed the nearest approach to the Supreme Court. When a case of crime involved life, this Court and the Censorate sat together as one court, and if the judges of such court were not unanimous in their decision, they were required to report the case to the Emperor with reasons for his final decision.

(13) The Imperial Academy (Hanlin Yuan): This was entrusted with the duty of drawing up governmental documents

histories and other works; and its officers took interest in promoting the advancement in learning of various classes in order to prepare them for employment and fit them for attending upon the sovereign.

In addition to these departments of state, there were other administrations like Sacrificial Court, Ceremonial Court, Imperial Astronomical College and so on.

#### Provincial and Local Governments.

The territorial administrative divisions of China were called the provinces or sheng. The highest officers in the provinces were a Viceroy or Governor-General (Tsung Tu) and the Governor (Fu T'ai). There were also treasurers, judges, chancellors, commanders, admirals, prefects, and magistrates. These members of the hierarchy came in touch with the masses and had charge of the performance of police, religious rites, collection of taxes and other administrative functions.

Under the official hierarchy was the local government.<sup>1</sup> Most of it consisted of self-governing units such as the village, the family, and the guild. The village government had its chief organ a council of elders and a headman (ti pao) who was chosen by the magistrate. The elders were nominated by the villagers and confirmed by the magistrate who was in charge of a county or hsien which was regarded as the basic unit of administration in Chinese system of local government. This organization of

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit, p.533.

Local government was to be found not only in villages but in towns also. The hierarchy intervened only when these units failed to function properly. The imperial government provided for the general supervision of economic enterprises, extensive public works, defence, and things like internal disorders.

#### Law and Justice.

Law in China was a matter of tradition and custom. Certain ethical principles were recognized as authoritative and based on the Confucian theory. Life and conduct was to be governed by certain universal principles called li which was regarded as binding on all. The enforcement of li and customs was done through public opinion and also through various local organizations.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these, there was a body of statutory laws which was perpetuated by dynasty after dynasty although it was altered to some extent from time to time. These laws related to several matters such as civil, criminal, fiscal, ritual, military, public works, and general. Judicial decisions given by courts ~~were~~ also played an important part in legal cases by way of precedent. An extensive legal literature existed, and magistrates, along with their other duties, were supposed to be sufficiently acquainted with the law to act as judges within their jurisdiction. The magistrates had jurisconsults but the litigants could not employ counsels. Punishments for crimes were barbarous from the Western point of view and the rules of evidence were dissimilar to those

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ibid, p. 535.

in the West. Such differences were one of the causes of friction between the foreigners and the Chinese officials in pre-treaty days and the foreigners had therefore asked for extraterritorial jurisdiction from the Chinese government.

#### Revenue.

The revenue to support the government expenditure came chiefly from the four sources, namely, the land tax, tribute, customs duties, and the salt monopoly. The land tax was supposedly fixed according to an assessment made in 1713, but in practice it was as much more as the collectors could get. Usually the addition seems to have been from ten to fifty per cent. The revenue was collected by the officers of the departments of the provinces and it was paid in sundry ways and articles, as money, grain, manufactures, etc. The method of collection of taxes was oppressive and led to abuses and corruption of officials. We shall discuss in chapter VII the effect of such oppressive and crushing taxation on the subjects.

Thus the system of government in China was the monarchy in form but democracy in spirit. The Chinese Emperor was regarded as the servant of his people and he held authority so long as it was administered unselfishly and with ~~with~~ wisdom and virtue. Mencius, the great philosopher has summed up this idea thus. "The people are the most important element in the nation; the spirit of the land and grain come next; and the sovereign is the least important of all."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lacy Creighton, Is China A Democracy? (New York: The John Day Co. 1943), p. 20.

So if the Emperor did not rule in the interest of the people and there was tyranny and oppression, he could be over-thrown by revolt. In that case a rebel who succeeded in placing himself on the throne, was regarded as having received the divine commission. This is no doubt similar to the fundamental rights of the people proclaimed in the American Declaration of Independence which says that the people have a right to over-throw their government which rules against their wishes.

### CHAPTER III

#### IMPACT OF THE OCCIDENT

One of the most important developments in the Chinese history is the contact of China with the Western world which transformed the structure of the Chinese national life and brought about tremendous changes in the social, political, economic, religious and cultural institutions in China. The Chinese Empire considered itself most civilized and self sufficient. But that was not the case with the foreigners who had been making strenuous efforts to trade with China since the sixteenth century. They ultimately succeeded in opening trade with China, then in winning certain economic and political concessions in order to insure safety of their trade, and finally in securing the economic and political control of China to exploit it.

This pressure of the foreigners on the Chinese was growing through trade and missionaries, and ultimately the friction resulted in the Opium War of 1839-42 between the Chinese and the British and the consequent treaty of Nanking which marks the opening of China to the Western influences of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The story of these influences can conveniently be described under three heads, namely, the missionary movement, invasion by western powers, and influences of western political thought.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hughes, op cit, pp.17-148.

Missionary Movement in China.

One of the important sources of friction in the nineteenth century between China and the western powers was the Christian missionary movement which has resulted in the revolution of the Chinese religious, social and also the political life. Although this movement was prominent in China in the nineteenth century, its roots can be traced back to 1294 A.D. when the first missionary traveller John Montecornio came to China in the Mongol period. Then came the great Jesuit St. Francis Xavier in 1552 A.D. and his followers. In the course of time Macao became the seat of Bishop and several churches. The first successful mission outside Macao was established by the Jesuits and its leading figure was Mathew Ricci who arrived in China in 1582. In the twenty-eight years of his stay there he won great sympathy for his faith and was respected because of his knowledge of mathematics and astronomy.<sup>1</sup>

In 1683 French missionaries came to China. Emperor Kang Hsi was friendly to these missions and studied science, mathematics and music with them and employed them in literary pursuits. In 1692 he issued an edict of toleration protecting church buildings and permitting freedom of worship. Unfortunately a prolonged dispute called the Rites of Controversy arose among the missionaries. This related to the permission to the Christians in participating in the customary Chinese rites in honour of ancestors and Confucius. The Pope

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, opcit, pp.298 and 318.

decided against such participation although the Emperor had expressed his own conviction on the issue. He was therefore offended and asked the missionaries either to abide by his decision or to leave the country. After this event followed the persecution of missionaries. In the meantime, Protestant missionaries had also arrived in China in 1807.

Then came the Opium War and the Treaties of 1842-44 with the Western powers in China which provided the legal basis for foreign penetration in China. According to those treaties the persecution of Christians was stopped, their confiscated properties restored and they were allowed to erect churches in the treaty ports. By the treaty of 1860 signed at Peking, the Christians were allowed to propagate Christianity and were granted toleration in the practice of their faith.

The result was that the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries penetrated in every province and in almost every important city, and in many cities and villages churches were erected, schools organized and hospitals opened. Manifold philanthropies had been undertaken and Christian literature was distributed. The number of professed Christians went above three million and they became very prominent in the life of the nation particularly in politics and education. The history of the Tai Ping rebellion shows how Christianity influenced the minds of people and infused new ideas and led to political movement.

Through men like Sun Yat-sen, educated at the hands of missionaries and avowed Christians, Christianity has exercised great influence in the shaping of new China.

### Invasion by Western Powers

The events in the nineteenth century were without precedent in Chinese history. Before that period foreign invaders had come to China from north and west by land and although they conquered China, they adopted the Chinese culture and ruled as Chinese monarchs and preserved the Chinese culture and civilization. But the invaders from the West were quite different. The industrial revolution in Europe had infused the Western people with enthusiasm and venture. They were moved by their desire for markets and raw materials and by their passion for power over the undeveloped lands in Asia. A large number of merchants and missionaries therefore gradually came to China and consequently the economic, social, political, religious, and intellectual life in China was disturbed. The Chinese regarded the intruders as barbarians and tried to resist them. The friction between them was growing day by day but in the course of time the Chinese were defeated again and again with the result that the whole nation's destiny was changed.

The war of 1839-42 generally known as the Opium War was the first open clash as a result of this friction. It was really fought to decide the terms on which the Europeans were to be allowed to trade with China. Opium trade was

however, an immediate and ostensible cause of the war but there were other causes also that led to the tension between the British and the Chinese to a breaking point. Opium had long been used in China and the Chinese authorities deplored the spread of opium habit in their country as it had deleterious moral and physical effects. Partly for this reason and partly because it reversed the balance of trade and led the export of silver from China, the Chinese authorities had renewed their long standing prohibitions against the importation of opium. The violation of these prohibitions resulted in this war in which the Chinese were defeated and came to terms at Nanking with the British in 1842. By the treaty of Nanking, the five ports of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai were opened to the residence and trade of the British subjects to whom the island of Hongkong was also ceded as a naval and commercial base. Agreements were made for a footing of equality between the British and Chinese officials, for the establishment of regular tariff and the payment of indemnity for the opium destroyed by the Imperial Commissioner Lin Tze-hsu. China also agreed with the British to grant them the extraterritorial rights and the most favoured-nation principle. Within ten years, France, Belgium, America, Sweden and ~~Norway~~, and Russia also obtained treaties on the same basis. This enabled the foreign governments to build up treaty ports as they had now right to erect houses, churches, schools and hospitals. This facilitated the contact of the Chinese with the foreigners and

their ideas began to flow across the country and filter into Chinese life.

In the meantime a growing discontent was spreading in China because of increasing economic pressure on the increasing population and the hostile work done by the secret societies which have been one of the most interesting features of the Chinese life. These societies were religious but had in secret a political and social objective in addition to their religious purpose. The extravagant luxury of the Manchu Court resulted in heavier taxation on the poor peasants. The increased opium consumption drained silver out of China only to impoverish the country and to produce degrading moral and physical effects on the people.

In 1851 a weak Emperor, Hsien Feng, came to the throne. As he could not control the internal disorder which had started since 1848, it developed a great uprising called the Tai Ping Rebellion. It took place under the leadership of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan who had inaugurated a movement which had in it the outward features of Protestant Christianity. Out of his teaching arose a sect called "The Worshippers of Shang Ti" (a Protestant term for God). Soon the sect grew into a political and a religious movement and they sought to overthrow the Manchus and establish a new dynasty in their place to be called the Tai Ping or Great Peace with Hung as a monarch. Hostilities began in 1848, but they became serious in 1851. They captured several towns and made Nanking their capital in 1853.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, pp.354-355.

The Tai Ping government is not known to have organized any form of civil administration. It first lived on money and food found in the public treasuries and grainaries, but when these supplies were exhausted, they freely drew upon the personal wealth of the country. They captured and pillaged city after city and gathered wealth. The country was devastated and its wealth dissipated.<sup>1</sup>

The Tai Ping revolt attracted much attention of the western countries and the foreign community in China had different opinions about it in the beginning. While the missionaries were disposed to regard the Tai Pings as the champions of Christianity, the merchants considered them to be disturbers of peace and enemies of commerce. But the foreign governments adopted a neutral attitude towards this internal warfare between the Tai Pings and the Manchu government. This rebellion was a source of domestic weakness to the Manchu government at the time of its struggle with the foreign powers which ultimately ended in 1860 with the treaty of Peking. Then that government implored the aid of the English and the French authorities in suppressing the Tai Pings. By this time the foreigners had come to regard the latter as undesirable and besides they saw that it was in their interest to help the Imperial government at Peking. They therefore helped the Manchu government in this respect and the rebellion was finally quenched in 1865 with the help of foreign forces.

This rebellion had important political and economic

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<sup>1</sup>D.C.Boulger, A Short History of China, London: Gibbons & Co., 1900, pp. 242-246.

effects on China. Had the Tai Pings been more tactful and had the foreigners not helped the Imperial government at Peking, the Manchu dynasty would have fallen long before the Revolution of 1911 as the Empire had come to the brink of destruction. Because the weak Manchu government was saved by the foreigners, they got further opportunity of expanding their interests and exploiting incapable China as we shall see later. The disorder during the Tai Ping Rebellion created difficulties in the collection of customs duties on exports and imports, and that then resulted in the creation of the Imperial Maritime Customs service managed by the foreigners. Another result was that the Manchu authorities realized the need of having ships and guns on western lines and thus introduced the element of western warfare in the orthodox Chinese fighting machine.

Still another result may have been a delay in reforming the Empire. For because of the excesses committed by the Tai Pings, intelligent and influential Chinese tended to abhor all alterations in the established order and conservatism was reenforced.<sup>1</sup> The Yangtze delta a long centre of wealth and culture was devastated by the rebels and it gave a setback to the scholarly pursuits.

As regards the economic effects, the most important was the shocking effect on trade. When Shanghai was taken over by rebels in 1853, access to the whole of Yangtze basin was barred and the consuming markets for Shanghai imports were closed. The result was that the general imports then consisting

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit, p.362.

mainly of manufactures of cotton remained unsold in the cotton growing country. The demand for opium however increased. For instance the deliveries at Wusung in 1847-1849 amounted to 18,814 chests; in 1853 they increased to 24,200 and in 1857 to 31,107 chests.<sup>1</sup>

On exports the effect was opposite. During the time of disturbance the quantity and value of exports of tea and silk were largely increased with the result that exports exceeded imports. This balance could be adjusted only by importation of treasures like silver. The <sup>demand</sup> on Europe for silver was therefore hard and money stringency became intense which resulted in the rise in bank exchanges. Similar situation existed in the case of Canton. ~~All~~ this led to the stagnation of trade. Besides this disorganization <sup>of</sup> trade, economic condition of the people <sup>w</sup> deteriorated because of the loot and pillage repeatedly carried on by the rebels. Thus from one point of view the Tai Ping rebellion was a political reform movement, but from another point of view it was a social and economic revolt by poor peasants and rural proletariat against the landlords, rich peasants, merchants and well to-do class.

Under the new treaties that were ~~made~~ between China and Western powers between the year 1842 and 1855, the pressure of the West upon China was increasing. Neither the Chinese nor the Western powers were, however, satisfied with those treaties. From the Chinese point of view too much had been granted, while from the foreign standpoint not enough. As a

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<sup>1</sup>H.B.Morse, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire, (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1910), pp.464-465.

result friction followed and the situation became strained. As often happens in such strained circumstances, war again broke out on account of a small incident in which the Chinese officers boarded the lorcha Arrow having a British captain and a British flag, and arrested the Chinese crew therein. This war resulted in the treaties of Tientsin in 1856 and of Peking in 1860 which laid China open to foreigners to all intents and purposes. The powers concerned were Britain, France, Russia, and the United States of America. Ten new treaty ports were opened, Peking was allowed to be the residence of foreign ministers or ambassadors, indemnity for war operations was exacted and its payment guaranteed from the Maritime Customs service which came into being under foreign supervision. The import of opium was legalised by imposition of a duty on the drug, and so on.

From 1860 to 1894 there was a continuous expansion of foreign interests who were the supporters of Manchu dynasty. During this period the missionary movement also made enormous strides as we have already seen. This created a lot of bad feeling about the foreigners among the Chinese. The relations of the Chinese government at Peking with the foreign legations were also not pleasant. But the American envoy, called Anson Burlingame, had gained confidence of the Emperor, and after his resignation of his post, he was appointed as the ambassador of China and sent to America, England and European countries to open Chinese legations there for the first time.

In 1854 the Imperial Maritime Customs Service was

established under the control of a foreign Inspector General, Robert Hart, to ensure the collection of revenue to Chinese government. But really speaking this arrangement was made to safeguard the foreign interests. For under the conventions of Peking the indemnity demanded by the foreign powers was secured on the customs revenue and hence the foreign inspectors were appointed for the purpose. The steady revenue derived from customs was of immense benefit to China, but the fixed tariff which was a part of the treaties hindered the industrial growth of China.

In a fight with Japan in 1894 over Korea, China was defeated, and by the treaty of Shimonsaki in 1895 she had to acknowledge independence of Korea and cede Formosa to Japan. The result was that seeing the weakness of China, other foreign powers also started the renewal of their aggression in China. France had already annexed Annam and then got the lease of the Bay of Kwangchow; Germany obtained the lease of Kiaochow Bay and right to construct two railways in Shantung province; Russia obtained Bairen and Port Arthur with the privilege of building a railway across Manchuria. Britain was opposed to any alienation of Chinese territory as that threatened to close the open door to its trade. The British therefore acquired a lease of Weihaiwei and also of Kowloon opposite to Hongkong. Besides, France had obtained from China a promise not to cede Hainan to any other party. Britain also obtained an assurance that China would not alienate to any other power the territory near Yangtze. The British also

obtained a predominant financial position in the Peking-Mukden line and secured concessions for roads from Shanghai to Nanking and to Hangchow.<sup>1</sup>

While this scramble for power by the European powers in China was in full swing, the United States of America was advocating and following what was called an "Open-door policy" as enunciated by Secretary of State John Hay in 1889. Briefly, it meant equal opportunity for citizens of all nations to trade with China or to carry out other economic activities on the basis of equality. This policy was not, however, altruistic; for the powers who were leading advocates had their own interests in mind. In any case, it certainly contributed to avert the partition of China as it admitted existence of spheres of interests.

All this foreign activity made the Chinese feel that their country was about to be torn to pieces by these foreign powers and they therefore felt very uneasy about it. This feeling inspired a strong sense of nationalism, specially among the educated classes which was of critical importance in the political history of the twentieth century. A cry for reform was raised by these educated classes and Sun Yat-sen, a western trained doctor, began to collect arms in 1894 with a view to rise in revolt against the Manchus as his petition for reforms was not granted. The plot was however discovered and he had to escape to Hongkong and then to Japan. Another reformer was K'ang Yu-wai who had worked out a radical social

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<sup>1</sup>Lateurette, op cit, pp. 380-384.

and political philosophy of his own about which we will discuss later. Thus the foreign invasion of China was responsible for an anti-foreign upheaval and also the cry for reforms in China.

### Influence of Western Political Thought

The above historical background will enable us to understand how the western political ideas could influence the Chinese mind and were ultimately responsible for destroying the old Chinese Empire. "The first Chinese observers of western political institutions and the students of western political principles started with the rooted conviction that whatever other nations excelled in, the Chinese excelled in their art of government."<sup>1</sup> The treaty of Tientsin in 1860 however gave a rude blow to this conviction. With the establishment of foreign legations in Peking, a department (Tsungli Yamen) had to be organized to carry on negotiations and to deal with the foreign representatives. An institution for the training of diplomatic staff was also started under the guidance of the foreign professors. Thus the insidious foreign influence started to work.

Relations of foreign legations with the Tsungli Yamen were not smooth. But Anson Burlinghame and Sir Robert Hart were trusted by the Chinese officials at Peking and it was Anson Burlinghame who had persuaded the Grand Council to appoint representatives of China to foreign courts. Influential

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<sup>1</sup>Hughes, op cit, p.106.

scholars were appointed to these posts and it is through them that the western political ideals penetrated into China.

In addition to the political and economic effects of the Tai Ping Rebellion which we have already considered elsewhere, another result was that the Chinese government took interest in the manufacture of guns, ammunition and ships on the western lines and obtained foreign machinery and engineers. Tseng Kuo-fan took great interest in these matters immediately after the rebellion was over. Later Chinese engineers were trained and ships were build and a foundation of merchant service was thus laid in China.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese organized in 1873 the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company which came to have a large share in coastal and river transportation. Even as early as the Opium War, some Chinese had realised that "self-strengthening" was necessary and by the sixties that realisation began to take practical shape. They began to be more and more conscious of the fact that behind the technical achievement which seemed to make the West so strong, there lay a western culture which was worth consideration. The western books on technical works, international law, history and literature were therefore translated into Chinese. Many Chinese students also began to go abroad to Europe and America for education. By 1880 the first students sent to study abroad began to return back to Chinese society. These students found that the old must give place to the new they saw in the West. At this time the mission schools founded in China were also giving the western education and the Chinese daily news papers started giving foreign political news. All these things exercised great

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, p.23.

influence on Chinese mind and created unrest and awakening in them.<sup>1</sup> Thus China was realising and accepting the significance of western culture and political thought and many of the students who had been educated abroad or in the western schools in China began to feel that China's repeated humiliations resulted from the failure to organize the government on Western lines and to imitate the civilization of the West.<sup>2</sup> This view was particularly favoured by those who were educated in Japan that had become strong enough to defeat China in 1895 and Russia in 1905 by adapting itself to Western ways of life. After 1900, the structure of China's older culture crumbled due to the latent forces that were affecting the political, economic, intellectual, religious and social life of China. For there was a progressive collapse of central and local government and an increase in civil strife and anarchy. The troubles were complicated by corruption, intruges and clashes between the different social and political groups. Secret societies, indeed, played a very important part in these troubles. Economic factors accentuated the breakdown of the Ch'ing (~~Manchu~~) dynasty and the government which had already become too weak due to the increasing pressure of the Occident and of Japan.

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<sup>1</sup>Hughes, op cit, p.109.

<sup>2</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, p.736.

## CHAPTER IV

### REVOLUTION OF 1911

We have seen in the previous chapter how China was being exploited by the foreign powers, how the Chinese were inspired with a sense of nationalism and then raised a cry for reform.. This cry led to an effective reform movement which resulted in the revolution of 1911. This revolution gave a sudden turn not only to the time honoured political system of monarchy in China, but changed her destiny altogether as we shall see in the following pages.

#### Reform Movement

The reformers were numerous but were divided into two broad groups. The first group thought that the reform could be achieved peacefully, on the Japanese pattern without abandoning the Empire, the Confucian tradition, or the system of government from above. The second group on the other hand was insisting on the over-throw of the Manchu dynasty and establishment of a republic.<sup>1</sup>

The great Viceroy, Chang Chih-tung, belonged to the first group and he pressed for loyalty to the Emperor and to Confucianism while adopting some of the western methods. The writings and counsel of Protestant missionaries like Timothy Richard guided this movement.

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<sup>1</sup>ibid; p.736.

Sun Yat-sen and Kang Yu-wei belonged to the second more radical group of reformers. Sun Yat-sen had received western education in Honolulu and Hongkong. He formed a reform society and petitioned Peking for certain reforms. We have already seen how he had to escape for life from China as his petition was not granted and his plot to revolt as a result, was discovered.

Kang Yu-wei was a most influential advocate of reforms and a brilliant scholar. He wrote a book, namely, "Confucius as a Reformer" and tried to prove that Confucius far from being a conserver of values of the past, was a creative ethical leader and statesman in whom support could be found for his radical views. He had realised that China had traditionally democratic spirit, but had not devised machinery for making the wishes of the people effective in the Council of State and Parliament as was done in the west. He felt that the governing classes in China should also do the same. The principle of democratic government propounded by the western political philosophers like Montesquieu had made a deep impression on the mind of the reformers of this group.

The reformers found a champion in the Emperor, Kuang Hsu, who also keenly felt that some thing must be done. In the summer (June to September) of 1898, the Emperor, with the advice of Kang Yu-wei, issued edict after edict reforming the political, educational, and economic systems. This period is known as the hundred days of reform.<sup>1</sup>

This raised a storm of opposition from the conservative

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction, op cit, p.388

element who found support in the Empress Dowager, Tzu Hsi, who was watching the situation just as a cat watches a mouse. When Kaung Hsu secretly ordered the death of her loyal adviser Jung-lu and the plot<sup>1</sup> was revealed to her, she immediately took over the government, imprisoned Kuang Hsu, arrested some reformers, and countermanded certain reformers. This reaction culminated in 1900 in an uprising known as the Boxer Rebellion. The Boxers with the tacit encouragement of the Empress Dowager sought to massacre the Christians and oust the aliens and his ways from the Empire. This irritation against the aliens was the cumulative effect of several factors, namely, the humiliation caused by the defeat by tiny Japan, the seizure of ports and various concessions by the European powers threatening the partition of the Empire, bitter feeling against the missionaries and above all the devastating famine conditions. After 1897 sporadic outbreaks against the foreigners were frequent. The Northeast was the scene of most of the violence as there were some anti-foreign officials. The Empress had ordered the local train bands to be ready to defend the country. These groups known as Boxers because of their gymnastic exercises, adopted such slogans as "Protect the country, destroy the foreigner". They were also associated with some secret societies. They started persecuting and killing the foreigners. It is reported that the Empress had ordered their extermination. As a result of these developments, an international army was

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<sup>1</sup>Wen Ching has given a different version of this plot in his book The Chinese Crisis From Within, (ed. by Rev. G.M. Reith, London: Grant Richards, 1901), p. 125. According to him Kuang Hsu had plotted to imprison Empress Dowager in her palace as he thought she might bring a coup d'etat.

raised by foreign powers which suppressed the rebellion and China had to agree to a further burdensome and humiliating terms of Post Boxer Settlement of 1901. According to it, among other things, China had to pay a heavy indemnity of 333 million dollars to foreign powers, stop import of arms, reconstruct the Tsungli yamen into a Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give dignity for intercourse with foreign powers, and reserve for foreigners a legation quarter in Peking.<sup>1</sup> China thus had to pay a very heavy price for this reactionary move which ultimately relegated it to a weaker position and helped to enhance the prestige and power of foreign powers in that country.

Thoroughly alarmed, the Dowager Empress tried to save the dynasty by introducing many of the reforms which she had already opposed. A commission of distinguished scholars was sent to the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Japan in 1904 to study their governments as preparation for drafting a Chinese constitution. In 1906 a program for the introduction of constitutional government by gradual stages was announced. The administration was to be reformed, education promoted, and provincial assemblies were to be created as a step towards a later National Assembly. In 1908 a provisional constitution was promulgated providing for a National Assembly, popular elections, and the civil rights. All power, however, was retained in the hands of the Emperor, who alone could make laws, declare war and peace, make treaties, summon or dissolve the National Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit, pp 389-393.

<sup>2</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, p.737.

Establishment of the Chinese Republic.

These reforms were not, however, adequate, and therefore unacceptable to the radical group which was revolutionary. Under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen they demanded the destruction of the Manchu dynasty and establishment of a democratic republic.

In the meantime the Emperor Kuang Hsu and the Empress Dowager died in November 1908, and an infant came to the throne. The regent was not a capable person to face the revolutionary elements. There had been unrest in the Yangtze Valley over foreign loan to finance railways in south, central and west China and an accompanying greater centralization of railway administration under Peking. That resulted in a rebellion which was supported by students, merchants, militarists and supporters in the provincial autonomy. A republic was declared in strategic cities like Wuchang, and Hankow fell to the rebels. The rebellion spread out rapidly and city after city and province after province threw off the Manchu yoke and in them independent governments were set up. In several places Manchu garrisons were massacred. Before the end of the year (on the 28th December 1911) a national council representing the revolutionists assembled at Nanking and Sun Yat-sen was elected as the Provisional President of the Republic. The Emperor then abdicated and thus the revolution brought an end not only to the Manchu dynasty but also to the institution of monarchy itself.

Within a few days, Sun Yat-sen had to withdraw from the Presidency in order to insure peace and the Republican body at Nanking elected Yuan Shi-kai as the President. For he appeared to be indispensable as he was powerful with military strength behind him. He had even persuaded the Emperor to abdicate the throne and accepted the responsibility to organize a republic. The revolutionists were anxious not to weaken the country by giving any cause to further civil strife. Besides Yuan controlled the strongest army, and had outwardly the support of republicans and former adherents of the Manchus. He kept the capital at Peking and the foreign powers accepted him as the head of the republic.<sup>1</sup> The nation, thus outwardly united, had embarked on a new experiment of republican government.

In the revolution there were two main factors which were responsible for the success.<sup>2</sup> The first was the ancient idea that no dynasty could continue to rule unless it perpetuates its heavenly commission and that the hour of the over-throw of the Manchu dynasty was long over due. The second was the new idea of the new people promulgated by the revolutionaries and the students who declared that it would make China rich, free, and democratic. This new idea of the new people was quite full of promise and hope and therefore appealed to the common inarticulate people like

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit, p.402.

<sup>2</sup>Hughes, op cit, p.130.

peasants, farmers, craftsmen, and shopkeepers in villages and towns, as they were seeing with their own eyes the remarkable changes brought about by the new learning, new industries, new transport, and so on. They were therefore so much fascinated by this new idea that they willingly sided with the revolutionists and welcomed the establishment of the Chinese Republic with enthusiasm.

## CHAPTER V

### THE KUOMINGTANG

The establishment of the Chinese Republic did not bring immediate peace and emancipation of China. On the other hand it created more difficulties and civil strife. It is really a classic example of the fact that mere adoption of a constitutional form of government is quite different from running a constitutional government with success. Although China had a great tradition of local self government in the past, the Chinese had no practical experience of popular elections, and self government on the national scale. The overwhelming majority of the people were illiterate and had only the vaguest notion of the existence of a national government in the person of the Emperor and had no understanding of the structure of the republic. The members of the National Assembly had good enthusiasm but no experience of legislative work and self discipline. Yuan Shih-kai himself<sup>who</sup> had spent his life in the service of the imperial government, was accustomed to rule by force and not expected to understand the functions of a president of a constitutional democracy.<sup>1</sup> There is therefore no wonder that a civil strife started in China soon after the declaration of China as a republic.

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<sup>1</sup>Renney & Carter, op cit, p.738.

Civil War

In 1912, Sun Yat-sen's organization, the T'ung Meng Hui, united with other revolutionary organizations and the Nationalist Party of China called the Kuomintang was formed. It actively campaigned to elect the members to the National Assembly and was to be the guiding force of the republican government. But within a short time Yuan Shih-kai had a quarrel with it. For the provisional constitution which was passed at Nanking in March 1912, placed the President under the control of Parliament. The Parliament when elected was dominated by the radicals who had organized the Kuomintang. Since Yuan did not like this position, clashes followed between him and the radicals in 1913. In the same year, the south rose in revolt under Sun's leadership. ~~But~~ Yuan ~~suppressed~~ the revolt and Sun escaped to Japan.

Yuan then managed to adopt some sections of a permanent constitution according to which he got himself elected to the office of the President. He then unseated the Kuomintang members and then dismissed the Parliament. Yuan outwardly maintained the form of a republic, but made it submissive to himself. In 1915 he proclaimed himself as the Emperor and thus attempted to found a new dynasty. But as a sudden revolution broke out, he had to cancel his enthronement. Still the revolutionists were not willing to leave him in power.<sup>1</sup> However, he unexpectedly

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit, p.403.

died thereafter.

In the meantime the members of the radical Parliament dismissed by Yuan set up at Canton a government based on the constitution of 1912 which they held to be binding. Almost the whole of South accepted it as their government, of which Sun Yat-sen became the President in 1916. The story of the government at Peking in the North becomes very complicated for the next period of about eight years as the country was divided according to the spheres of influence of different warring chieftains most of whom tried to snatch away power from the other which resulted in the shift of power from time to time. For our purpose, however, it is not necessary to go into the details of that story.

The course of the Southern Chinese government also was not smooth. Sun returned to lead the rebelling provinces in the south, but war-lords forced him out of his power in 1920. When he was again elected President of the Southern government next year, he was again ousted in 1922. He, however, again headed the government from 1923 till his death in 1925.

### Kuomintang and the Communists

Long before Sun's death the Russian influence began to spread in China through the Chinese students in Russia and the Russian agents in China who began to preach the gospel of communism. As a result the Communist Party was founded in China in 1920. It grew very rapidly and for some time the Communists and the Kuomintang worked in

opposition. But in 1923 both the parties came to an understanding through the efforts of Sun Yat-sen and the Communists entered Kuomintang while retaining their own party organization. The Communist government in Russia provided Sun with help by sending both military and political advisers of whom the most important was Michael Borodin. The Kuomintang was reorganized in 1924 on the lines of the Russian Communist Party and it adopted a program of radical social reform.<sup>1</sup>

The basis of the understanding and cooperation between the Communists and the Kuomintang was the acceptance by them of the two major principles. The first recognized the necessity of an anti-imperialist policy in the recovery of complete political, territorial, and economic sovereignty by revolutionary action. In other words, this related to the achievement of China's freedom from foreign aggression. The second demanded an internal policy of antifeudalism and antimilitarism. In other words, this related to the realization of democratic revolution against the landlords and warlords and the construction of new forms of social, economic and political life which according to both the parties was to be of a democratic character.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately Sun Yat-sen died in 1925 before he could unite the north and south China and complete the revolution. A struggle for power between the left and the right wings then developed within the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek ultimately emerged as the leader of that

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<sup>1</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, p.739.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, (New York: Random House, 1938), p.75.

party as he was able to eliminate his rivals and to gather devoted followers around him. The left wing was organizing struggle against foreign capital and forming unions of labourers and peasants, and tried to consolidate the Communist control over the Kuomintang government. Capitalists and imperialists were denounced by the Communist wing of the Kuomintang and many of the wealthy were dispossessed of their lands and some of them were even murdered. The headquarters of the government, established at Hankow, was dominated by left wing. Communism was strengthened by the return of some Chinese students from Russia. It was out to destroy not only religion but also Confucian morality. The moderate elements led by Chiang Kai-shek were alarmed at this and they attempted to restrict the power of the Communists. The issue came to a head after the capture of Nanking in March 1927 by the Nationalist forces of which Chiang Kai-shek was the Commander-in-Chief. The left and right wings of the Kuomintang then broke away from each other. The left wing organized a government at Hankow, and the moderate right wingers led by Chiang Kai-shek established a strong anti-communist government at Nanking in opposition to the one at Hankow, and then proceeded to drive away the Russian advisers.<sup>1</sup> There were big massacres of Communists, some of them had to go into exile, and Communism was outlawed. Chiang Kai-shek was strongly supported by bankers, merchants and foreign governments which regarded him as the saviour of China from the evil of Communism. In 1928 the "Nationalist Army" advanced

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<sup>1</sup>Latourette, op cit, pp.409-410.

towards Peking and occupied it, and thus China was theoretically united under Chang Kai-shek.

### Constitution of Government.

At Nanking an administration was set up on the outlines suggested by Sun Yat-sen in his last will and testament directed to the nation and several books outlining his program. After his death, he was regarded as a national hero and his testament and other books as infallible guides for the party and the nation. The will was regularly and solemnly read in the public and one of his books, the San Min Chu I, or the Three People's Principles, became the Kuomintang party's manual. These three principles were min-tsu, min-chuan, and min-sheng. He defined them as nationalism, democracy, and livelihood, comparing them directly with Lincoln's great principle of democracy, namely, "of the people, by the people, for the people". To the revolutionists, nationalism meant two things, namely, the elimination of unequal treaties which were gradually choking the political and economic life of China, and the recognition of all racial groups within the nation as equal. The second of Sun's principle meant government by the people or democracy. In other words, it indicated the introduction of western forms of government as direct and universal suffrage, referendum and recall. The third principle meant economic democracy or socialism, emphasizing the rights and needs of the individuals and introducing control and supervision only in so far as it is absolutely necessary. Although Sun Yat-sen

admired Soviet measures which raised the level of the Soviet proletariat, he could not reconcile himself to communism. The Marxian argument for appropriation of all profits were also repugnant to his mind. He, however, favoured equalization of landownership by the application of a single tax based on the owner's assessment, with a right of purchase by government in the case of under valuation or community need.<sup>1</sup>

It will be observed from these principles that Sun Yat-sen's teachings contain the essence of all the well known three revolutions. The American Revolution was fought for national independence or nationalism; the French Revolution for political equality or democracy; and the Russian Revolution for economic justice or livelihood. But the Chinese Revolution was fought for securing all these three.

Sun Yat-sen had realised that the ~~form~~ Western form of government was not quite suitable for China. He therefore advocated the establishment of a five-yuan or department government. These five yuans or departments were Legislative, Executive, Judicial, Examination and Control. The Legislative yuan corresponded to the legislatures in the western countries, the Executive to a cabinet of a western government, and the Judicial yuan to the western judicial court structure. On the other hand the Examination and Control yuans were ancient and traditional bodies which had proved themselves to be so excellent and useful in old form of Chinese government.<sup>2</sup>

He had also suggested the program of revolution by

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<sup>1</sup>Creighton, op cit, p.45

<sup>2</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, p.746.

three stages. First, there would be a period of military operations during which the Kuomintang would conquer power and bring about the unification of the country. The second stage was of the tutelary dictatorship ~~of the~~ Kuomintang while democracy was being installed and adopted from bottom up. During this period of political tutelage, experts were to go round the country to train people in the local self government and the Kuomintang was to guide the national government. The third stage was to come after the people had been trained in the use of initiative, referendum, election and recall. It was the period of constitutionalism requiring the Kuomintang to abdicate in favour of a popularly elected government.<sup>1</sup>

As we have already seen China had theoretically united in 1928 and the first stage of military operations was regarded as over and the second stage of political tutelage had begun. In reality, it may be observed, China was never united and military warfare never stopped since the Revolution of 1911. However the national unification of the country was assumed to mark the beginning of the second period and the Constitution of 1928 called the "Organic Law of the National Government of the Republic of China" was adopted by the National Conference of the party and promulgated at Nanking in October of that year. The object and the scope of that constitution will best be known from the preamble to that law reproduced below:

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<sup>1</sup>Paul M.A. Linebarger, China of Chiang Kai-shek, (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1941), p.6.

The Kuomintang of China in order to establish the Republic of China on the basis of the Three Principles of the People and the Constitution of Five Powers, which form the underlying principles of the Revolution, having conquered all opposition by military force and having now brought the Revolution from military stage to the educative stage, deem it necessary to construct a frame work for the constitution of Five Powers with a view to developing the ability of the people to exercise political power, and that constitutional government may soon come into existence and political power be restored to the people; and further, in virtue of the responsibility hitherto entrusted to the party for the guidance and supervision of the government do hereby obtain and promulgate the following Organic Law of the National Government.<sup>1</sup>

According to this law the National Government was to exercise all the governing powers of the Republic and it was to be composed of the following five yuans: the Executive Yuan, the Examination Yuan, the Legislative Yuan, the Judicial Yuan, and the Control Yuan. There was to be a President and from twelve to sixteen state counsellors of the National Government. As required by this constitution, the National Government was set up, their heads being appointed by the Kuomintang's Central Executive Committee. The presidents and the vice-presidents of the five yuans formed a State Council which received its directions from the Central Political Council of the Kuomintang.

The Executive Yuan was the highest executive organ of the National Government and more or less corresponded to the Cabinet in other countries. It was to establish ministries of the government each under a Minister and two Vice-Ministers. In addition to the ministries, there were various commissions each under a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman

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<sup>1</sup>Chao-Chu Wu, The National Program for China, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p.89.

all appointed by government. Under this yuan, there were ten ministries, viz, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Defence, Interior, Education, Railways, Communications, Agriculture and Mining, Industry Commerce and Labour, and Public Health. The head of the Executive Yuan was commonly known as the Premier.

The Legislative Yuan was a law making body but comparatively weaker. Its authority was mainly confined to the drafting of bills and treaties and annual budgets. The members of the Legislative Yuan were appointed by the President on the recommendation of the President of the Legislative Yuan from the Kuomintang and not chosen by election from public.<sup>1</sup>

The Judicial Yuan consisted of the Ministry of Justice and exercised control over the administration of justice and the codification of laws. The Examination Yuan was in charge of elaborate system of examinations for public office, which from time immemorial played a large part in the Chinese administrative machine. No public officer was allowed to be appointed except after examination under the auspices of this body. Finally, the Control Yuan was to supervise the administration and impeachment of the entire public service and was responsible for audit of public accounts.

Three years after this constitution, a provisional constitution was adopted in 1931 as a further concession to the demand for constitutional government. It was to serve the purpose during the transitional period until a permanent constitution could be framed. Such a transitional period was then estimated to last for about five years, but actually it

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<sup>1</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, pp 747-748.

lasted for various reasons up to 1947 when China's new constitution was adopted by the Chinese National Assembly in 1946 and promulgated on the 1st January 1947.

In this provisional constitution the Kuomintang continued to hold all political power and the pattern of government remained the same. With the outbreak of the Japanese war, the Central Political Council through which the Kuomintang party exercised control over the government, was replaced by a Supreme National Defence Council which was ~~realized~~ a committee of the Kuomintang. It decided both the military and administrative policy matters and issued orders to the State Council for their execution.<sup>1</sup>

It is essential to note here that in the National Government there was, strictly speaking, no President of the Chinese Republic as such. The highest office was the President of the National Government of the Chinese Republic, and he was the titular head of the state for international purposes. In his official capacity he acted as chairman of the Council of State and performed ceremonial functions.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of time, there were demands from within and without the Kuomintang party for initiating the promised popular government. For the rule by the National Government was, particularly after five years of the provisional constitution, regarded as the Kuomintang party dictatorship without any pretence of democracy. Actual experience had shown that the government was a loosely organized oligarchy in which the party, the government, the

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, p.747.

<sup>2</sup>Linebarger, op cit, p.52.

army and the regional military and independent leaders (such as bankers, secret society chiefs, community spokesmen and presidents) had shared the power. The centre of such power was always Chiang Kai-shek as he was the chief of the party, President of the Executive Yuan, Chairman of the Supreme National Defence Council, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Navy and Air Forces.<sup>1</sup>

To meet such demands half way and to facilitate the representation of non-Kuomintang groups, a body called the "People's Political Council" was established in 1938. At first all the members were appointed by the Kuomintang, but later certain members were chosen by provincial and municipal assemblies. In theory, government was to present to this council all measures concerning domestic and foreign policy and the council had a right to criticize them. But in effect the Kuomintang remained in direct control of the situation.<sup>2</sup> A further progress was made towards the goal of achieving the popular government when a National Constitutional Assembly was set up in November 1940 for framing a new constitution, but later it was postponed indefinitely.

After the end of the war, the Chinese National Assembly adopted a new constitution in December 1946 which came into force in January 1947 as mentioned before. Even before this constitution was framed, certain important changes were introduced into government early in 1947. The Supreme National Defence Council was abolished and its functions were divided between the Council of State and the Central Political Council of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p.47

<sup>2</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, p.748.

Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek had also announced that non-Kuomintang parties were to be invited to join in a coalition government, and the Executive Yuan was made responsible to the Council of State. The President of the Executive Yuan was to be appointed by the President of the National Government after winning the concurrence of other parties and the Kuomintang. Thus for the first time after the establishment of the Chinese Republic, some practical measures were taken to form the government on the democratic lines. In spite of these changes, the Kuomintang continued to be in control of the government as a great majority of posts in the State Council and the important ministries after the new constitution came into force remained in the hands of the Kuomintang.

The structure of the Chinese Nationalist Government according to the constitution of 1947 which is in force at present in so far as the Nationalist Government is concerned, is based on the scheme of five power structure as in the old constitution in addition to the National Assembly. The highlights of that constitution may be briefly be stated as below.<sup>1</sup>

The National Assembly is elected for a six year term by a popular vote. It elects its President and Vice-President and has power to recall the President or Vice-President, to amend the constitution, to ratify amendments proposed by the Legislative Yuan and meet at least once during its term. The President is elected for a six year term and commands the armed forces, promulgates laws, concludes treaties,

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<sup>1</sup>libid, pp.750-753.

declares war or makes peace, in times of crises exercises limited power of ruling by decrees and so on.

Below the National Assembly are the five-fold divisions of government, namely, Executive, Legislative, Judicial, Examination, and Control Yuans.

The Executive Yuan consists of a President called the Premier appointed by the President of the Republic with the consent of the Legislative Yuan, and other members appointed by the President of the Republic on the recommendation of the Premier. It directs the administration of the state, controls the ministries and presents administrative policies and legislative and budgetary proposals to the Legislative Yuan.

The Legislative Yuan is elected for three year term by popular vote, and its President and Vice-President are elected by its members. It exercises the legislative power and decides upon any statutory or budgetary bill or any bill concerning marital law, general amnesty, declaration of war or peace, making of treaties and other important matters.

The Judicial Yuan is appointed for life. Its President is appointed by the President of the Republic with the consent of the Control Yuan. It exercises jurisdiction over civil, criminal and administrative suits involving public functionaries and interprets the constitution.

The Control Yuan is appointed by the provincial, municipal and local councils for six years and its President and Vice-President are elected by its members. It exercises

powers of impeachment, rectification and auditing.

The new constitution also contains an elaborate bill of rights guaranteeing the freedom of speech, academic instruction, writing and publication, secrecy of correspondence, freedom of assembly and of association, and so on. In addition it contains a statement of national policy which declares that all armed forces are to be independent of party affiliation; that there should be equitable distribution of land ownership; control of capital; protection and restriction of private ownership of land acquired in accordance with law; state ownership; state ownership of natural resources; taxation of unearned increases in the value of land; public ownership of public utilities and monopolies. It also guarantees certain economic and social rights, e.g., the right to work, the protection of women and children in industry, social insurance and so on. It further declares that the foreign policy of the Republic is to be based on the principles of equity and reciprocity and upon the United Nations Charter.

A passing reference must be made here to the local government in China as eighty per cent of her population live in rural areas and the Nationalist Government program has been committed to local self-government. But at the same time Nationalist China lays more emphasis on centralisation as they have looked upon provinces and their subdivisions as a means of controlling the basic local unit called the hsien.

A province is the unit of local administration which prior to the new constitution was controlled by the Central

Ministries through Commissions appointed by the Nationalist Government. According to the new constitution, each province is now under a governor elected by the people. Each province now organizes its own form of government through a provincial assembly which draws up a provincial constitution providing for the election of the governor and the council and describing the relationship between the province and the hsien. The Provincial jurisdiction includes power in every field except defence, foreign affairs, air and sea communications, the postal system, currency and judicial system which are controlled by the National Government.<sup>1</sup>

The hsien or county is the basic unit in Chinese local government. Its history can be traced back to two thousand years. Before the new constitution, the magistrate who was responsible for the administration of the hsien, was traditionally appointed by the Central Government. But the new constitution extends the principle of election and recall to the magistrate and other hsien self-government officers. In Nationalist China the traditional functions of hsien are to collect taxes, provide for irrigation and public health. The hsien has also power over police, public works, public utilities, schools, libraries, and so forth. Un-fortunately, however, the achievements in local self-government have not been substantial as there has been much less decentralization in the Nationalist China perhaps due to constant warfare.

As a result of defeat at the hands of Communists the

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, pp.802-812.

Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek had to leave the main land of China and the seat of that government was established in Taiwan in Formosa on December 7, 1949. Chiang Kai-shek had stepped down from the office of the President in January 1949, but he again announced his assumption of office on March 1, 1950. This development has naturally affected the powers of the Taiwan Government. The National Government looks after foreign affairs, national defence, the administration and adjudication of national laws, national revenues, and foreign trade policies. The powers of the provincial government consist of those that are inherent and delegated by the National Government. The matters of local self-government, division of administrative areas, forestry, industry, mining and commerce, educational system, banking, commodity control, navigation, public enterprises, land registration, police system are legislated by the central government and may be delegated to the provincial authorities for execution. Matters pertaining to agriculture, commerce, industry, education, finance, taxation, and enterprises and cooperatives may be legislated by the provincial government. In actual practice, important legislation concerning Taiwan is enacted by the provincial authorities.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we have seen that a stage of constitutionalism and popular government was reached according to the program of Sun Yat-sen's legacy on the day the new constitution was proclaimed. But, as is well known, this constitution could not really

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<sup>1</sup>Gung-hsing Wang, "Nationalist Government Policies, 1949-1951", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol.277, September, 1951.

be effective due to the civil war between the Nationalist Government of China and the Communists. Besides Chiang Kai-shek often made promises regarding the establishment of the constitution, but he failed to carry them out for one reason or other, and delayed the matter until it was too late. Ultimately the result was that he alienated the sympathies of the people, the Nationalist Government was driven away from the main land to the island of Formosa, and the Communist Government established its rule over China's main land and passed its own constitution. It is therefore evident that today the new constitution of the Nationalists remains only in name and in their claim over China. This claim of the Nationalist Government to represent the whole of China has been a matter of keen and prolonged international discussion in which we need not enter at present.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE COMMUNISTS

#### Establishment of Communist Government

We have already surveyed in brief in the previous chapter the struggle between the Kuomintang and the Communists resulting in the establishment at Hankow of a separate government by the Communists and the left wing of the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek then chased them out of Hankow in 1927 and the leftists who escaped the terror organized a ~~new~~ government in Kiangsi. In these areas there were poverty stricken peasants who were only too ready to follow the leaders who offered them relief. The Communists when ever possible deprived the old upper classes of political power, set up soviets of workers, peasants, intellectuals and guerilla soldiers on the Russian model, reduced the hours of work, raised wages, abolished taxes of the central government, simplified tax structure, and confiscated the land of landlords and religious bodies and redistributed it among the peasants. Such a program became extremely popular and its power grew rapidly until it commanded a large area, no matter how hard Chiang fought to beat it down.

Ultimately, Chiang Kai-shek decided in 1930 to launch a series of expeditions to exterminate the Communists and their government. In the early part of these campaigns, the

Communists were remarkably successful as their party and army were skillfully organized and inspired with a burning faith in communism. In 1934, however, Chiang's armies made the position of the Communists untenable and when the thing became too hot for the reds, they began to move their entire 'nation' towards the north. This move is known in the Chinese history as the epic "Long March" of the Communists which was "one of the most extraordinary feats in modern annals."<sup>1</sup>

Thousands of soldiers and peasants marched about 6000 miles first to the west and then to the north and finally came eastward to Shensi. There at Yen-an they proclaimed the establishment of the Chinese People's Soviet Republic with Mao Tse-tung as its Chairman. There they introduced the policies which had been mentioned above and had become popular in the south. These policies were mainly aimed at bringing about the agrarian revolution and undertaking an extensive program of education and indoctrination of communism.

When this internal warfare between the Communists and the Kuomintang was going on, Japan had evil designs against China. In 1931 the Japanese conquered Manchuria and established there an independent state of Manchukuo with P'u Yi, the last Emperor of China, as its head. In stead of resisting this aggression by Japan, Chiang Kai-shek continued to consolidate his power and to fight the Communists. The Communists on the other hand were eager to resist Japan and willing to compromise with Chiang on that account.<sup>2</sup> They thought that as a result of Nanking's "no-war policy" against Japan, China had lost

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<sup>1</sup>Gunther, op cit, p.215.

<sup>2</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, pp.741-42.

to Japanese invaders about one fifth of her national territory, over forty per cent of her railway mileage, eighty-five per cent of her unsettled land, a large part of her coal, iron deposits and finest forest lands.<sup>1</sup>

This policy of Chiang Kai-shek was however suddenly changed because of a dramatic incident in 1936 at Sian where Chiang was kidnapped and released only when he agreed to join with the Communists in common policy of resistance to Japan, reorganize the national government and to end civil war. To facilitate cooperation with the Nationalists, the Communists introduced modifications in their policy. No lands were then confiscated from the landlords; they regarded themselves not independent but as agents of the Nationalist Government; and the Communist Army considered itself as a part of the National Army.

In 1937 Japan again renewed its attack on China and then both the countries were at war for eight years. When the war with Japan ended in 1945, both the Communists and the Kuomintang entered a race for control of railroads the cities and industrial areas which were formerly under the control of the Japanese. The American government helped Chiang Kai-shek by transporting his troops to various strategic points in this race for power. However, the Communists succeeded in occupying most of Shensi, Shansi, Jehol, Chahar, Shantung, and Manchuria.<sup>2</sup>

After the Japanese surrender, the peasants urgently demanded land and the Chinese Communists made the timely

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<sup>1</sup>Snow, op cit, p.79

<sup>2</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, pp. 742-743.

decision in 1946 to change the agrarian policy which was hitherto followed after the compromise with the Kuomintang in 1936 and to adopt the policy of confiscating the lands of the landlords and distributing them to the peasants. In 1947 the Communist Party convened a national agrarian conference, worked out the Basic Programme of Chinese Agrarian Law and immediately carried it out universally. This law stipulates that all land shall be equally distributed according to population, on principle of eliminating the agrarian system of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation and putting into practice the agrarian system of "land to the tillers"<sup>1</sup> Because of these sagacious and most welcome necessary reforms and attempts to solve the intricate economic problems, the Communist Party got more and more followers and the position of the Communist Government became stronger and stronger, and it gained control over vast areas in north and east China. On the other hand, Chiang Kai-shek not only failed to carry out such reforms but, after his government was reestablished at Nanking, threw away the best opportunity to start the recovery programme. "With credits in hand amounting to more than a thousand million U.S. dollars, not a single piece of machinery was imported to make good the losses of capital equipment destroyed in war. Imports of expensive cars, radios, perfumes, and other luxury goods accounted for a great deal of money. The rest, squandered or embezzled, disappeared in the bottomless sink of Kuomintang official corruption."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sprenkel, Otto B. Van Der, New China, (London: Turnstile Press, 1950) pp. 160-161.

<sup>2</sup>ibid, p. 29.

Whatever may be the force in the statement quoted above, there is no doubt that after the end of the war the Communists emerged stronger in power, organization and strategy while the Nationalist Government of China became weaker in all these respects and depended more and more on the American aid.

#### Recurrence of War with Kuomintang

When the war with Japan was over, the American Government tried its best to bring about reconciliation between the contending parties in China as on it depended the peace in that country. General George C. Marshall was sent to China in 1945 by President Truman. The frame of reference within which he was to work was indicated in a statement by the President in December 1945 which stated that the United States believed that truce between the Kuomintang and the Communists and a national conference of representatives of major political parties to bring about the unification of China was essential. General Marshall tried his best to persuade the Communists and the Kuomintang to join in a democratic coalition government. The Kuomintang was willing to do so, but only on certain conditions. They refused to accept the existence of a Communist state within the Chinese state and insisted that there must be only one government and one army. They therefore wanted the Communists to disband their army and accept the authority of the Nationalist Government. The Communists of course could not agree to these terms as they felt that if they disbanded their army and yielded their territory to the Nationalist Government, they would be exterminated by the

Kuomintang. They therefore urged a "federal" system of government under which they could retain their provinces and also take part in the national government. In 1946 a Political Consultative Council including the representatives of the Communists, the Kuomintang and the Democratic League, began the preparation of a coalition government and a new constitution, and an agreement was also arrived at.<sup>1</sup> But the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang which was dominated by the reactionary element in the party was obstinate and insisted upon the modification of the agreement. Ultimately, this agreement was broken and Chiang Kai-shek launched a nationwide war against the Communists. The Communist forces called the People's Liberation Army repelled Chiang Kai-shek's offensive and then forced him to be on the defensive. In the end, in spite of all the military and economic aid received by Chiang Kai-shek from America, his armies were finally defeated, he had to quit the main land of China and move his government to Formosa, and the victorious Communists established on October 1, 1949 the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China which was soon recognized by Russia, India, Great Britain, and other countries, but not by American, some European and other countries.

#### Constitution of Communist Government

The overall Communist program for the reorganization of China was termed by Mao Tse-tung as "New Democracy". In his celebrated work "New Democracy" written in 1940, he outlined the general principle, of New Democracy which the

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<sup>1</sup>Ranney & Carter, op cit, pp.743-744.

Chinese Communists have accepted during the transition period to ultimate communism. Mao supplemented his writing on New Democracy by his other articles, namely, "On Coalition Government" (1945), "The Present Position and the Task Ahead"(1947), and the "People's Democratic Dictatorship"(1949).

The basic idea of this doctrine is that communism which is the aim of New China is a distant aim. Knowing full well that the conditions in China differ from those in Russia, Mao has not attempted to plant the doctrinaire Marxism in China, and has therefore modified it to suit the situation in that country. For some time China will be governed according to the principles of New Democracy which is the first step towards communism. Before that end is reached, backward China must be industrialized. So New Democracy has promised protection to 'national capitalists' that is to say to patriotic capitalists who cooperate with the new government. They will be able to retain surplus profits so long as they are reasonable. The bureaucratic capitalists are to be penalised. Their money and undertakings will be taken over by government and utilized in nationalizing transport, banking, munitions, and other industries. In the rural districts the agrarian reform which is the vital point of the program will create peasant property by redistribution of land equally between all those who work by themselves. The big land-owners would not be completely stripped of their land but they would be allowed to retain as much as anyone else.<sup>1</sup> In politics there is to be no one party system and other political parties are to be recognized. That is why<sup>in</sup> the Provisional

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<sup>1</sup>Sprenkel, op cit, pp.96-97.

National Assembly that met in Peking in September 1949, the Communist Party gave place to numerous groups. In theory the government formed on October 2, 1949 is not a Communist Party government as others are also included in it. The women are also to get suffrage as well as for men.

In his important article "On People's Democratic Dictatorship" written to commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party in July 1949, Mao outlined the theoretical foundation of his new state which he originally termed "New Democracy" and later "People's Democratic Dictatorship"<sup>1</sup>. He has defined "People's Democratic Dictatorship" as an alliance between labour, peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie who together make up the "people". This dictatorship is to be led by the working class acting through the Communist Party. The "People" are to exercise their dictatorship over the "reactionaries" which term includes the bureaucratic capitalists and landlords. Only the "people" will have the right to vote, while the reactionaries will be suppressed. This according to Mao will result in democracy for the people and dictatorship for the reactionaries which when combined will mean the People's Democratic Dictatorship.

This, in brief, is the ideological frame work on which the new state of the People's Republic of China has been built. The organization of this new state is based on two important basic documents which taken together resemble a constitution in our sense of the term. The first one is the Common Program of the Chinese People's ~~Political Consultative Conference~~ Conference and

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, pp.180-198.

the second is the Organic Law of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. Both these documents were adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on the 29th September 1949.<sup>1</sup>

The Common Program gives a detailed statement of policy in all fields - governmental organization, economic affairs, culture and education, national minorities and foreign affairs; and it is to be the political foundation of the state. Thus it guarantees the "people" the usual civil liberties, but at the same time admonishes the state to suppress all counter-revolutionary activities. It vests all state power in the people but ordains democratic centralism. It proclaims the policy of agrarian reform and state owned economy but encourages private economic enterprise and so on.

The Organic Law outlines the structure of government, which, pending the eventual convocation of the all China People's Congress through universal suffrage, is to exercise the powers and functions delegated to that Congress which is to be the supreme organ of the state. Thus plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is empowered to amend the Organic Law of the Central People's Government, to elect the Central People's Government Council under that law and to vest it with authority to exercise state power. The Central People's Government Council represents the People's Republic of China in international relations and assumes the leadership of the state apparatus at home. It has a Chairman, six Vice-Chairmen and fifty-six members. The

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, pp 199-227.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Vice-Chairman are respectively the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Central People's Government.

The Central People's Government Council is scheduled to meet ~~every~~ two months and has executive, legislative and judicial powers. It enacts and interprets laws, supervises their execution and decides administrative policies including the question of war and peace. It has the ultimate authority of appointment or removal of all important central, provincial and municipal government officials. It has to set up the Government Administrative Council, the People's Revolutionary Military Council, the Supreme People's Court and the People's Prosecutor-General's Office, a brief description of which is given below.

The Government Administrative Council is "the highest executive body for state administration" and corresponds somewhat to a cabinet in the Western political systems. It consists of a Premier, a number of Vice-Premiers, a Secretary General, seven Vice Secretaries General, and fifteen members of the Council. These members may or may not be the heads of the ministries or commissions.<sup>1</sup>

The Council is empowered to issue orders and decisions on the basis and in application of the Common Program and verifying their execution. It has to coordinate the work of various ministries and commissions and submit bills to the Central People's Government Council to which it is responsible. It also directs the work of local government through out the

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<sup>1</sup>S.B.Thomas, "Structure and Constructional Basis of the Chinese People's Republic", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol.277 (Sept.1951), pp.46-55.

country, and controls the administrative personnel at or above the county and municipal level who are not already within the pervue of the Central People's Government Council. The Government Administrative Council has under it Committees of Political and Legal Affairs, of Financial and Economic Affairs, Cultural and Educational Affairs, and of People's control. It has also ~~under~~ it several ministries and commissions such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, and so on.

The People's Revolutionary Military Council has control and command over all armed forces in the country and it has a Chairman, a number of Vice-Chairmen, and a number of council members.

The Supreme People's Court is the highest judicial body of the country, and is charged with the direction and supervision of the judicial bodies of the country. It has a President and a number of Vice Presidents and committee members.

Finally there is the People's Procutator General's Office which has the supreme power to ensure the strict observance of the law by all government institutions and public functionaries as well as by nationals~~of the~~ of the country.

In its final structure, the Chinese People's Republic is based on ~~an~~ ascending hierarchy of people's congresses and of people's governments elected by these congresses at each administrative level into which China is divided, namely, district (ch'u), county (hsien), special commissioner district, special municipality, province, and administrative region.<sup>1</sup> It ultimately

culminates in all China People's Congress which in turn is to elect the Central People's government. In line with the declared principle of "democratic centralism" the government organ set up at each level is subject to ratification by the government of the next higher level and the People's Governments of the higher levels and all local People's Governments throughout the country have to obey the Central People's Government as stated in Art.15 of the Common Program. There is however no clear distinction between the central and local jurisdiction and the discretion has been given to the Central People's Government Council to determine it according to the requirements of national unity and local expediency.<sup>1</sup>

The political system outlined above has not fully been implemented. In large areas of the country, military control committees continue to operate side by side with the local government which in many cases are appointed by the Government Administrative Council.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the election of people's congresses, the Common Program requires that such elections should be conducted only where the military operations have completely ended, agrarian reform has been thoroughly carried out and people of all circles have been fully organized. In areas where people's congresses have not been elected through universal suffrage, all-circles conferences exercise the functions of the people's congress and elect people's governments.

In the end it may be pointed out that the Chinese People's Republic and the whole governmental structure has been effectively

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, p.53.

<sup>2</sup>ibid, p.54.

controlled by the Chinese Communist Party whose ultimate aim is declared to be the realisation of communism in China. This control of the central and lower governments is maintained principally by assigning high and responsible positions in government at each level to party functionaries. Thus Mao Tse-tung, who is the Chairman of CCP (Chinese Communist Party) National Party Congress, Central Committee, Politburo, and the Secretariat, is also the Chairman of the Central People's Government, the Central People's Government Council, the ~~People's~~ People's Revolutionary Military Council and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee. Similar inter-relationship will be found at the provincial, municipal, town and village levels of both the governmental and party organizations where key posts in government are held by party men.<sup>1</sup> The Communist Party also controls the press and radio and lays down policies for the state in various fields.

#### International Recognition

Immediately after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Communist authorities issued invitations to various foreign governments to establish diplomatic relations with the new government. The Soviet Government of Russia accepted the invitation on October 2, 1949 and sent its ambassador to China shortly afterwards. It was thus Russia who recognized the Communist regime in China first. That lead was then followed by most of her satellites. In December of that year India and Burma extended their recognition and established diplomatic

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<sup>1</sup>H.A.Steiner, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 277, (September 1951), pp.56-66.

relations with China. The United Kingdom and Pakistan then followed suit in January 1950. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, and Netherlands took some more time to extend their recognition.

The United States of America, Canada, and other American, European, and Commonwealth countries have not, however, recognized the new Communist regime of China and when the question of recognition and admission of the People's Republic of China to the membership of the United Nations Organization was discussed, these countries strongly opposed it and supported the claim of the Nationalist Government of China as representing the people of China. Thus the world today is divided into two camps on this important question of recognition which is an act through which it is declared that an old state is ready to deal with the new state as an international person.

Those nations who have given their recognition to the People's Republic of China recognize the fact that the Chinese people by refusing to fight for the Kuomintang have in fact actively chosen the Communist regime which is supported by the majority of the population. The regime has introduced many reforms which were long over due and the standard of administration is said to be high and the officers to be honest and sincere. The government is de facto ruling the country and is sovereign, although it is not so recognized by certain nations. Since it is stable and no change is expected in the present situation, other nations felt it necessary to recognize it to avoid the cold war and to promote the world peace. The United States of America and other nations mentioned above have refused

recognition since they consider that the Nationalist Government of China is still the de jure government of China, and that the new government is a Communist Government whose policy is dictated by Russia, and since it is hostile to democracy, it should be over-thrown. Besides they think that there is no certainty that the present phase of the Chinese Revolution is final or that the Chinese Communists regime is stable.

This position has become more complicated by the sudden Chinese Communist participation in the war in Korea. The question of recognition of the Communist Government in China has now receded into background so long as her forces fight against the United Nations forces in Korea.

## CHAPTER VII

### PATTERN OF THE FALL OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT

We have seen in the previous pages how different dynasties rose and fell in the long Chinese history and how the old institution of monarchy disappeared with the fall of the last Ch'ing or Manchu dynasty. We also saw how China was declared a republic and ruled by the Kuomintang and how the Kuomintang was defeated and the Communist regime took its place. One interesting aspect of the Chinese history is that the symptoms which appear at the rise and fall of one dynasty or rule are also found almost common in the case of the rise and fall of other dynasties and governments. For example, the decline of the Manchu dynasty was evidenced during the early nineteenth century by the increase of banditry and piracy, the growth of secret societies, rebellions and the increase of official corruption and incompetency. When the weakness at the top was too marked, the dynasty was overthrown and a period of civil strife followed. Military chieftains then fought each other and the conqueror succeeded to the power. This has happened almost in the case of all previous dynasties and the strongest man came to the throne and founded a dynasty after defeating the weaker one.

These symptoms resulted from the same general causes,

that is, the growth of population without commensurate increase in production, the growth of landlordism with the resultant increase in tenancy and landless agricultural workers, the over elaboration, corruption, and demoralization of the bureaucracy, a decline in the ability of the rulers and pressure from outside.<sup>1</sup>

The part played by the Chinese economy and society in the rise and fall of ruling dynasties is very important.<sup>2</sup> There was prevalent in China a hereditary aristocracy and feudalism, and also a sharp distinction between the aristocratic and the common people. The aristocratic and the ruling classes owned large landed estates while the common people or peasants were illiterate small land holders or landless peasants. The revenue to support the government and the ruling hierarchy of officials came from the land tax, tributes, customs duties, and so on. But the main source of wealth was land tax, and government tried to exploit the land holders to the greatest possible extent. But since the interest of the landlords was to extract rent and to evade taxation on their own lands, which they could on account of corruption in bureaucracy, the volume of land tax revenue could only be kept up by an increased rate of levy on the decreased acreage of land held by peasants. This forced many peasants to part with their lands and became tenants with the result that the process of corruption and state decay gathered gradual momentum.

<sup>1</sup>E.H.Pritchard, "Political Ferment in China", 1911-1951", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 277, (Sept. 1951), pp. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup>Wang Yu-ch'uan, "The Rise of Land-tax and the Fall of Dynasties in Chinese History", Pacific Affairs, Vol. IX, 1936, pp. 201-220.

We find such a picture of exorbitant land tax in the Ming dynasty (1368-1643) which in addition levied special land taxes from time to time to finance armies fighting against the Manchus. This excessive taxation provoked peasant rising resulting in the conquest of China by the Manchus. The Manchus knowing the mind of the peasantry started land reforms. They started redistribution of land and issued "permanent settlement" decree in 1713 giving assurance that there would be no variation in the rate of land tax or poll tax. However, the Manchus soon imposed themselves as a privileged class and became corrupt by the same abuses and forms of exploitation that was prevalent in the Ming period. The Bannerman<sup>1</sup> and the Manchu nobility were the first charge on the revenue and diverted the rewards of power to their personal use thereby weakening the government.

By the middle of the nineteenth century this process had gone so far that they made easier the defeat of China in 1842 in the Opium War. Then there were the Tai Ping rebellion (1851), the Nien Min rebellion (1853), occupation of Peking in 1860 by the British and the French, Sino-Japanese war (1894), Boxer rebellion (1900). All these drained the financial resources of the Manchu dynasty and led to the assessment of new kinds of levies. From 1851 the collection of surcharges on the land-tax began under various names such as weighted measure (chung p'ing), extra margin (hsien-yu), miscellaneous

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<sup>1</sup> The Bannermen were mainly families of Manchu blood, but also some Mongolian and Chinese families descended from supporters of the Manchu invasion in the 17th century. They all received pensions from government.

charges (tse-fie) and so on. These surcharges were so heavy that they became unbearable by the peasants.

The abuse of the agrarian system was a vital part of the exploitation of the peasantry by the privileged classes. A few examples of such exploitation will reveal its appalling nature.

(a) It was traditional to underpay the civil and military officers who were allowed to supplement their small salaries out of the local tax which payment was known as "yang lien". In practice under the name of local levy, the officers demanded additional assessments while theoretically the intention was that these officers should not recover in excess of the amount of the fixed land tax and should only recover the living expenses.

(b) At the time of the collection of the land tax, if there was any delay in its payment, the peasants would be lashed till the blood spurted unless they paid as bribe what was known as "pocket money". In a memorial in 1885 the land tax collectors were described as "living on the blood they suck from the peasants."

(c) Even if the collectors received the tax in time, various demands for "wastage charge", "light weight charge", "cargo charge", "transport charge", "food money", etc. were made by them with the result that the actual land tax was far more exceeded by whatever extra was collected from the peasants.

(d) In addition to the exaction of this kind, there

was a heavy charge on exchange between copper and silver and on commutation of grain tax into money.

These examples will be enough to show how the life of the peasants had become miserable as the taxation had swollen up from 20 to 30 times of the permanent tax. The pressure on the peasants had become so severe that they "murmured like boiling water and rose against the government".

The landlords evaded taxation in various ways. For instance, when a landlord bought land, he would give false name to the officer in charge of the tax rolls and would not register the land in his name. Thus he would get the land but not an obligation to pay the land tax. If his land were in an irrigated district, ~~he would bribe the officials and~~ arrange to show his land in the register maintained for an unirrigated district where it would be assessed at a lower rate. If a rich man advanced a loan and took land as security, the land tax was collected from the borrower or debtor even though the mortgage was foreclosed. Some times the land was sold by a peasant to retain the liability for the payment of future taxes. Thus there arose a phenomenon of "land tax without land and land without land tax". These abuses became possible as the landlords became influential and the officials corrupt.

The increase of power of landlords and officials decreased the potential strength of government which could not then protect rich men in times of internal rebellion or external aggression. These methods of exploitation which nourished their private wealth made agrarian revolt inevitable.

Thus sporadic insurrections began in the reign of Tao Kuang (1821-1850), the most serious of them being in Hunan in 1844. There was then the Tai Ping rebellion in 1851, Nien Min rebellion in 1853, a general uprising against the collection of land tax in 1871, and then the Boxer rebellion in 1900. The Manchu dynasty then fell in 1911 mainly because the agrarian foundation on which the state was built was wrecked.

Thereafter came the Kuomintang rule which also did not bring about the most desired reforms in the agrarian system. In his report based on his own observation after touring the Kuomintang area, Dr.A.Stamper, a distinguished health expert sent by the League of Nations as adviser to the Nanking Government, described that during the great famine 62 per cent of the population died out right in Shensi. He estimated that two million people starved in Kansu alone. The Geneva investigator again observed as follows:

In Shensi it is considered a mark to pay no land tax; and wealthy land owners are therefore as a rule exempted.... A practice which is particularly undesirable is to claim arrears of taxes, for the period during which they were absent, from the farmers who abandoned their land during famines, the farmers being forbidden to resume possession until their arrears are paid.<sup>1</sup>

Dr.Stamper also found that Shensi farmers had to pay land taxes and surtaxes to about 45 per cent of their income, while other taxes represented a further 20 per cent; and not only was the taxation thus fantastically heavy, but also the assessment appeared to be haphazard and its manner of collection wasteful, brutal, and in many cases corrupt.<sup>2</sup>

In his book "Red Star Over China" Edgar Snow himself

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<sup>1</sup>Snow, op cit, p.208.

<sup>2</sup>ibid, p.209.

gives a pathetic description of the poverty and starvation of the people in China and says "I don't mean to dramatize horror. These are the things I saw myself and shall never forget."<sup>1</sup> Excessive taxation and indebtedness had forced many farmers to sell all the cattle and abandon their lands. Great areas had been bought over by officials, tax collectors and money lenders at cheap rates, but much of it remained waste land. In one district, it was found that 70 per cent of the farmers were in debt, and about 60 per cent were living on food bought on credit. In the same district 5 per cent of the people owned from 100 to 200 mou of land while about 60 per cent of the population had less than 15 mou of land.<sup>2</sup>

These were the conditions which were really responsible for nourishing communism in China which ultimately overthrew the Kuomintang rule and established a Communist Government in October 1949. For a number of years before that there was a state of disorder and discontentment and China had been attempting to give shape to its desire for a new order and a modern economy. But these attempts failed for some time for want of proper method, ideology and leaders. The Chinese soil had otherwise long become fertile for sowing the Marxist faith in it. That work was then methodically done by Mao Tse-tung and his companions. They realised that the cause of China's fall was mainly due to the degenerated agrarian economy, corruption, and foreign exploitation. They therefore started in right earnest with the agrarian reform policy which has played the most important role in the rise of communism in

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<sup>1</sup>ibid, p.206.

<sup>2</sup>ibid, p.316.

China. On the other hand, Chiang Kai-shek had evaded these most important problems, and the result was, as we know, the defeat of Kuomintang and the establishment of the Communist regime in China. Mr. Chester Bowles, the United States Ambassador in India, has very briefly but correctly expressed his reasons for the success of the Communist regime in China in the following words:

... It was Dr. Yen's conviction that China could be held against communism only by a village-by-village attack on poverty, disease, illiteracy, and outmoded agricultural practices. He believed, in short, that a free China could be won not on the battle fields but on the rice fields and in the villages. If his advice had been taken by Chiang Kai-shek in the crucial post-war period, the tragic story of Communist China might never have been written."<sup>1</sup>

Thus from the foregoing historical review of the developments in China, it appears that the present Communist rule in China is not a sudden and surprising phenomenon, but it is the precipitation or the culmination of the age-long unrest arising out of the neglect to meet the fundamental needs and aspirations of the peasantry and the masses in China.

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<sup>1</sup>Chester Bowles, "Asia Challenges Us through India", The New York Times Magazine, March 23, 1952, p.7.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FUTURE

#### Present Political Chaos.

From the historical sketch of the political systems in China which we have given in the preceding pages, it will be clear that if we regard the Nationalist Government in Formosa as the Government of China, then theoretically at least it can be said that there are two political systems in existence in China today. One is the political pattern of the Nationalist Government based on the constitution of the Republic of China, 1947 and the other is the system of the Communist Government as outlined in the Common Program and the Organic Law of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. In fact the former is confined to Formosa although the Nationalist Government claim as the Government of China, and the latter is in force on the main land of China.

The political systems based on two different ideologies had a terrific clash with each other with the result that the Nationalist Government had to quit the main land and take refuge in Formosa. It established its seat there and formed a new political program the main object of which, as announced, is to ~~re-store~~ national sovereignty and to put democracy into practice. It proposes to encourage private enterprise, to

welcome foreign capital, to carry out land reforms, to protect civil rights, and to punish Communists following the restoration of the main land of China.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, almost certain that this political objective of the Nationalist Government of which Chiang Kai-shek is again the head, will never be fulfilled. For even when the Communists were not so powerful as they are today and when Chiang Kai-shek was on the main land and receiving all the money and material for war from the United States, the Communist armies who enjoyed the unalloyed support of the population achieved tremendous victory over the Kuomintang armies and swept them into the sea. Now the People's Republic of China has become a completely sovereign state and enjoys the full support of the people as it has at its credit certain significant achievements. It has destroyed feudal system and accomplished the most needed agrarian reforms of reduction of rents and distribution of lands. It has checked the ever rising spiral of inflation. It has made possible the rapid restoration of railways and industries and launched a nation-wide movement of systematic promotion of literacy. All these achievements have made and will still make the position of the Communist regime very strong, and it cannot be believed that the unpopular Nationalist Government now sitting in the tiny land of Formosa will ever muster strong enough to overthrow the People's Republic of China which is supported by the people.

Practically speaking there is only one system of government functioning in China today and that is the Government of 1Gung-hsing Wang, op cit, p.215.

the People's Republic of China. But this **point of view does** not seem acceptable to those nations who have refused to recognize the Communist regime and are still recognizing the exiled, as we might say, Nationalist Government of China. It will not, however, be in the interest of any body to refuse to see the facts as they are, and the solution for the international chaos and tension will not be in sight until the facts are recognized first and all nations sit together and exchange their honest views.

Further there is an impending danger that the policy adopted by the United States of America and others siding with her, will drive China more and more into the Russian arms. Here it must be pointed out that China has not yet become really communist and Marxism is not yet the fundamental achievement in Chinese revolution. China is a country which has always conquered its conquerors and she generally changes every thing that comes to her. So it is hoped China will maintain this tradition and make the **Marxism Chinese**. The fact that private property is recognized in China and protection is promised to national capitalists will support this statement. According to the policy and program of New Democracy adopted by the Communists in China and discussed by us in Chapter VI, China is in a transition period and it will take a long time before she attains the goal of communism. We may also profitably quote here what the Economist published as it corroborates this view.

China today is a professedly totalitarian state of the left. It is still at the Pre-Communist stage. Mao Tse-tung believes that

it would take twenty years to make China truly Communist because of her class structure and by lack of an urban proletariat. He, ~~however~~ is determined to avoid Lenin's mistake of substituting a coup d'etat for the inevitability of history, gently helped along by the Communist party. He also knows he owes little to Russia and he has already indicated some of the differences between .. way in which he and Stalin interpret communist dogma. Thus even land distribution has in some cases been carried out by giving the new owners a title to their new holdings, while the private capital is actually encouraged by Government subsidy. Her relations with Moscow are not of the pupil and master but they are rather like co-partners, each having its own definite sphere.<sup>1</sup>

It therefore appears that there is still a chance to win over Communist China before ~~she reaches~~ her final goal of communism. If the United Nations do not recognize the People's Republic of China and the United States and other nations do not change their attitude in this matter, there is no wonder that such a huge mass of humanity in China will be driven to the Russian fold through mere desperation. And as the sphere of Russian influence will then increase, the chance of threat to peace will also increase.

#### The Solution.

To avoid this threat to peace the one way open to us is to recognize the new China, give her equal treatment, and help her people to develop themselves. Those who advocate the remedy of foreign intervention and support the Nationalist Government from outside to renew the civil war on the main land are gravely mistaken. For they forget that on all the

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<sup>1</sup>A Correspondent recently in China, "An Asian Looks at China", The Economist, November 17 and 24, 1951.

evidence available from the past revolutions one factor than any other rallies the people to the support of the new regime and that is an attempt on the part of the old masters backed by foreign assistance, to force an armed restoration of their lost power. For such an action is interpreted by the people, and particularly the peasants, as a move to deprive them of their land which they would get due to the revolution. This is what happened after the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. The earlier regimes did attempt to defeat the revolution and return to power with the help from outside. The result was the same in each case, that is, the rejection by the peasants of the old regimes and their armed support for the revolution. The French country people and the Russian peasants were not really fighting against the old regimes for any abstract principles of equality or socialism, but to keep their lands against their enemies who they thought would take them away from them. The same will be the fate of Chiang Kai-shek if he tries to return as a ruler to the mainland. The peasants whom the lands have been distributed are bound to fight against him to preserve their lands and private property.

As we know from the history of the Chinese Revolution, peasants' unrest is one of the main and deep rooted causes of the revolution and the ultimate success of the Communist regime that has tried to find a solution was due to the fact that they made a correct diagnosis of this disease of unrest. It will not therefore be prudent to do any thing against the warning given by history. We should try to understand the aspirations of the

people and help them to achieve them, if possible. Our sympathetic attitude towards them may possibly win them finally to our side of democracy, if we take action before it is too late.

But from where should such help and sympathy come ? The answer is obvious, and that is, it should come from the Western world. It is indubitable that there is a tremendous lag between the political and economic progress in Asia. While the people there are marching forward towards the goal of political freedom, they have not been able to attain the higher standard of life as those areas are undeveloped. The Western powers are fortunately in a position to extend their economic and technical aid to the needy countries of the East. By helping these countries to stand on their own legs, they can enlarge the area of human freedom and reduce by that much the opportunity of communism the gospel of which will otherwise be accepted by the people in despair. The Western countries have no doubt realised this aspect of the Eastern question, and schemes like the Colombo Plan initiated by the Commonwealth Countries, President Truman's Point Four Program and UNO's technical assistance program have been formulated. But these schemes should be extended to the whole of Asia, if it is to be saved from communism. In his speech at North Bay on the 21st January 1952, the Honourable Mr.L.B.Pearson, Minister for External Affairs, Government of Canada, has most aptly put the whole ticklish problem in a nut-shell and we may well end this thesis with his memorable words as follows.

If Asia goes communist, and this must be considered as ~~at~~ least a possibility, it will be for no love of Russia or of Marx, but because the agents of Russia and Marx were able to exploit and harness to revolution the longing for a piece of bread, a roof and the right to stand erect. It is only by their own exertions and their own policies that the peoples of Asia can secure these benefits. But we can help them, to some extent, materially, but also by our understanding of their aspirations and giving them the assurance of our desire to cooperate with them in the solution of their problems.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Statements and Speeches, Information Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of Canada, No.52/3.

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