

YUAN SHIH-K'AI AND THE 1911 REVOLUTION

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The Chinese revolution of 1911 began with the outbreak of the Wuchang uprising, and ended with the seizure of power by Yuan Shih-k'ai. Yuan became president in mid-February 1912, and dominated the government of the Republic of China following the *coup d'etat* in Peking in March of the same year. That was to be expected from the events prevailing inside and outside the China of that time. Yet lurking behind the scenes at the same time were the intrigues of Yuan. The Yuan presidency was often called political opportunism. Some even accuse Yuan of "stealing the fruits of the revolution through his trickery." The core of the problem, however, seems to lie in the perception of revolution and republicanism during the 1911 Revolution. It misses the point if the problem is approached simply from the standpoint of ethics, or from that of class indignation. This article therefore tries to examine the sequence of events leading to the advocacy of Yuan for president, and the circumstances under which he came to office. It also tries to probe the attitude of the Imperialist Powers towards the 1911 Revolution and their role in the realization of the Yuan presidency.

After the uprising in Wuchang on October 10, 1911, the Manchu court appointed Yuan on October 14 as governor-general of Hupeh and Hunan assigning him the task of suppressing the revolutionary army. The Manchu court was counting on Yuan's influence with the Peiyang Army; and there was also advice from such countries as Britain and America to the effect that only Yuan could put the house in order. Yuan refused to take the offer. As the battle raged on, the Manchu court yielded, and appointed Yuan as prime minister of

the cabinet. This time Yuan accepted the offer and went to Peking. But before assuming office, he made six demands on the Manchu court, including leniency towards insurrectionists at Wuchang (Demand No. 3), and lifting the ban on political parties (Demand No. 4). Clearly he wanted to keep the revolutionary army intact so that he could use it to blackmail the Manchu court. Yuan's comeback not only gave the Manchu court hope, but also fed illusions in the revolutionary camp. While the Manchu court was banking on him to put down the revolution, the revolutionaries were looking to Yuan to force the Manchu emperor to abdicate and bring about the overthrow of the dynasty at an early date. Things were not going well for the revolutionary army, and since Yuan was a Han Chinese they were willing to trust him. As for the Powers, they had come to realize that the Manchu government was on its last legs. They were looking for a "strongman", — a man like Yuan who could talk peace with the revolutionary army and bring order back to the country to protect the lives, property and privileges of foreigners in China. Yuan played a double games. He sent Feng Kuo-chang to attack the revolutionary army at Hankow as a show of his loyalty to the Manchu court, and at the same time dispatched Ts'ai T'ing-kan and Liu Ch'eng-en to the revolutionary camp to sound out possibilities for peace.

The call for "Yuan for president" first came from Li Yuan-hung, divisional commander of the Hupeh Army. In late October, Li sent Chu Fei-huang to Changte to meet Yuan K'eh-ting, Yuan Shih-k'ai's eldest son, with the proposition that Yuan be made president after the downfall of the Manchu Dynasty. ⁽¹⁾ Yuan had also written several letters to Li, and at the same time sent Ts'ai T'ing-kan and Liu Ch'eng-en to sound him out over terms for peace. ⁽²⁾

(1) Shang Ping-ho, *Hsin-Jen Ch'un-Ch'iu* (History of 1911-12), Wen Hsing Book Store, Taipei, reprinted, 1962, p. 157.

(2) Hu Eh-kung, *Hsin-Hai-Ke-Ming Pei-Fang Shih-Lu* (Annals of the 1911 Revolution in North China), quoted from *Hsin-Hai Ke-Ming (The 1911 Revolution)*, hereafter referred to as *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 6, p. 272; Kuo Hsiao-Ch'eng, *Chung-Kuo Ke-Ming Chi-Shih Pen-Mo* (Records on Chinese Revolution), *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, p. 65.

Li was forced to take this move, because the battle at Hankow was not going well for the revolutionary army, and also because there was discord in the revolutionary camp. There were even arguments to stay put at Hankow — evidently there were some who were willing to go along with Yuan. The move was clearly designed to embarrass the ardent revolutionaries such as Huang Hsing and Sung Chiao-jen, and yet it did not go beyond the revolutionary and republican camp.

By November, while Li was still entertaining the idea of Yuan for president, the tide of battle turned against the Manchu court and premier Yuan tilted toward the revolutionary army amid rising pro-revolutionary fervor across the country.

After the revolutionary army lost Hankow, rivalry between Li and Huang was put aside, at least for the time being, as one province after another declared independence. A council of representatives of provincial governors was organized. They adopted Li's Hupeh military government as their leader, and thus turned down the peace initiative from the north. It looked as if Li's idea of Yuan for president had come to an end. The opposite however, was true by mid-November, when arguments were being advanced to lure Yuan with the presidency in order to topple the Manchu Dynasty. ⁽³⁾ Li had still not given up his advocacy of revolution and republicanism. He even went so far as to say that "If I were in Yuan's place, I would not hesitate to turn against the Manchus. After Honan and Hopei were captured, Yuan would be the logical choice as governor-general of the northern Chinese provinces. With his prestige, Yuan would be the first choice as president." ⁽⁴⁾ This was in line with his statement in October that "after victory Yuan will be invited to become president". ⁽⁵⁾

The revolutionary army lost Hanyang on November 27. However, it took

(3) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 6, p. 275.

(4) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, p. 66.

(5) Wang Shu-t'ung, *Wu-Han Chan-Chi* (Battle of Wuhan), quoted from *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 5, p. 234.

Nanking, a strategic point in southeastern China, on December 2. The tide of events had turned; the revolutionary army had regained the initiative on the battlefield. It was indeed a turning point in the history of the revolution.

The first meeting of the representatives of various provinces on the revolutionary side was held in the British concession at Hankow on November 30. Some representatives contended that the Manchu government now existed in name only, and that the real issue now was between the revolutionary army and Yuan Shih-k'ai. To avoid further bloodshed, they advocated that Yuan be persuaded to give the Manchu court the *coup de grace*, and to found a republic. If Yuan was willing to go along, the revolutionary army would recommend him as provisional president. Accordingly, the meeting passed a resolution on December 2 to keep the office of the provisional president vacant and wait for Mr. Yuan Shih-k'ai to come over to their side.⁽⁶⁾

On the same day, Sir John N. Jordan, British minister to China, instructed the British consul at Hankow to approach Li Yuan-hung with his good offices to mediate in the civil war in China. As a result, Li and Feng Kuo-chang signed a three-day cease-fire agreement at Hankow. Subsequently the agreement was renewed and extended. During this period, Yuan's activities and Li's advocacy of Yuan for president were closely interlocked.⁽⁷⁾

In mid-December, provincial representatives met in Nanking to resolve the dispute on the selection of the Commander-in-Chief. It was then decided that they would meet on December 16 to elect the provisional president. But on the eve of the scheduled meeting, the representatives were informed that

(6) Lin Ch'ang-min, *Ts'an-Yi-Yuan Yi-Nien Shih* (One-year History of the Senate) has a description that the representatives decided in private that the office of the president be kept vacant to encourage Yuan Shih-k'ai to defect. Ku Chung-hsiu, *Chung-Hua Min Kuo K'ai-Kuo Shih* (History of the Founding of the Republic of China), p. 35 and Chang Nan-hsien, *Hu-pei Ke-ming Chih-Chih-Lu* (Recollection on the Revolution in Hupeh) state that "It was resolved that if Yuan defects, he be nominated as provisional president." See *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, pp. 13, 556.

(7) T'ao Chü-yin, *Pei-Yang Chün-Fa T'ung-Chih Shih-Ch'i Shih-Hua* (Historical tales about the period of rule by the Peiyang Warlords), Vol. 1, p. 96; Fujioka Kikuo, *En Sei-gai no Soto Shumin* (Assumption of Office as President by Yuan Shih-K'ai), *Toyo Gakuho*, Vol. 48, Part 3, December 1965, pp. 35-36.

T'ang Shao-yi, Yuan's peace negotiator, had arrived at Hankow, and that the Yuan Cabinet too was in favor of a republican form of government. Consequently it was decided to postpone the election of the president (i.e. they would stick to the Hankow resolution of December 12 that the office of the president would be kept vacant for Yuan). From this, it could be seen that the revolutionary army set great store by the office of president, and still harbored great hopes for Yuan; no matter how Yuan looked upon the revolution, he must be credited for advancing its cause. ⁽⁸⁾

Both Yuan and the revolutionary army were eager for peace. As a result, T'ang Shao-yi, representing the north, came down to Shanghai to meet Wu T'ing-fang, emissary of the south, to negotiate for peace. A peace agreement was reached on the basis of a five-article draft accord worked out between Ku Chung-ch'en (chief of staff of the United Kiangsu-Chekiang-Shanghai Army), and Liao Yu-ch'un (director of the Primary Military School at Yaotsun, Paoting). This was signed on October 20. ⁽⁹⁾ Of the five articles, Article 1, which stipulated to uphold republicanism, and Article 3, which stipulated that whoever toppled the Manchu Dynasty first should become the president, were related with the advocacy of Yuan for president. While at Wuhan, Huang Hsing opposed this peace accord; but now he was inclined to go along. This was another indication of the tilt the revolutionaries had taken. ⁽¹⁰⁾

By late December, the revolutionary camp was split over the choice of the Commander-in-Chief and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief. It was at this juncture that Dr. Sun Yat-sen returned to Shanghai from the United States

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- (8) Li Chien-nung, *Chung-Kuo Chin-Pai-Nien Cheng-Chih-Shih* (Political History of China's Past 100 Years), Commercial Press, Taipei, reprinted, 1957, Vol. 1, p. 320; Also see Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-K'ai* (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp. 72-73.
- (9) Ch'ien Chi-po, "Hsin-Hai Nan-Pei Yi-Ho Pieh-Chi" (Notes on the North-South Peace Talks in 1911), see *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, p. 103; Jerome Chen, *Yuan Shih-k'ai, 1859-1961* (Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 121.
- (10) Chün-tu Hsueh, *Huang Hsing and the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 134; *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, pp. 103-104.

by way of Europe. On December 29, Sun Yat-sen was elected provisional president. But that did not solve the problem. Ch'ien Chi-po, in his "Notes on North-South Peace Negotiations during the 1911 Revolution," wrote: "Showing the draft accord of Ku Chung-ch'en and Liao Yu-ch'un, Huang Hsing declared that 'do not make us break our promise!' Sun's assumption of office was only temporary in nature, as evidenced in the statement by the Senate. As soon as the form of government was decided upon, Sun would step down and Yuan would be so informed."⁽¹¹⁾ Sun's cable to Yuan that he was assuming the office of provisional president only temporarily followed the same line.⁽¹²⁾ He reiterated the earlier stand on January 15, 1912, stating clearly "If the Manchu emperor abdicates, the provisional government will not break its pledge. I (Sun Yat-sen) would resign. In prestige and ability, Yuan is the ideal choice."⁽¹³⁾

Huang Hsing's statement that no one should make us break their promise was enough to persuade Sun to accept the compromise worked out between the revolutionary camp and the north. It was indeed surprising that a mere statement should bring about such grave consequences. This may be explained in part by the close friendship between Sun and Huang, and in part by the particular circumstances under which the leader of the provisional government was selected. Sun was also easily persuaded to give up because he had just come back from abroad. There also were sentiments of support for Huang as provisional president. On the other hand, Sun himself was not keen on the office of the president. He was anxious to break the impasse in the course of the revolution.⁽¹⁴⁾

(11) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, p. 107.

(12) "Cable to Yuan Shih-k'ai on Assuming Office as Provisional President," dated December 29, 1911, in *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen* (compiled by the Kuomintang Archives, 1931), Section on Cables, Vol. 3, pp. 165-166; *Bulletin of the Provisional Government*, Nanking, No. 1, December 29, 1912.

(13) *The Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen*, Vol. 4, writings, Cables, & Declarations (December 29).

(14) Chün-tu Hsueh, p. 126; Nozawa Yutaka, *Sun Yat-Sen* (Tokyo, Seikodo-Shinkosha, 1956), p. 131; Tachibana Shiraki, *History of 30 Years of the Republic of China* (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1943), pp. 78-79.

After some ups and downs, Li Yuan-hung and the Hupeh Army's scheme to make Yuan president culminated in a resolution at the Hankow conference in mid-December, which was complementary to the "Organizational Outline" of mid-December. It also forced the postponement of the election of the president. Now all was set for the election of president Yuan by the Senate. This was the result of top level bargaining conducted without reference to the general public.

Though the revolutionary army had concluded a secret deal with Yuan, Yuan was unhappy that Sun should have assumed the office of provisional president. He was also unhappy with T'ang Shao-yi because T'ang had gone along with the formula under which the national congress was formed without consulting Yuan. T'ang resigned, and the peace talks were called off. Observers blame Yuan for this, accusing him of treachery.⁽¹⁵⁾ The fact was that Yuan was only looking for an excuse when he forced T'ang to resign for overstepping his authority. His real intention was to sabotage the national congress so that he could proceed with his plan of having the Manchu emperor abdicate in his favor.⁽¹⁶⁾

After T'ang's resignation, Yuan took up direct negotiations with Wu T'ing-fang. In the meantime, he was secretly searching for a way to persuade the Manchu emperor to turn over the throne to him. This can be seen from the request put by Liang Shih-yi to British Minister Jordan.⁽¹⁷⁾ On January 18, 1912, there was an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Yuan. Two days later, Yuan consulted with the British Minister to put off the election of the provisional president of the new government. In the meantime Yuan was to obtain

(15) See Yoshino Sakuzo & Kato Shigeshi, *History of Chinese Revolution*, Tokyo, Naigai Shuppan KK, 1922, p. 339; *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 6, pp. 298, 304-305; *Hsin-Jen Ch'un-Ch'iu*, p. 145; *Documents on Japanese Diplomacy*, Vols. 44, 45, and Supplement (China Incident), p. 489. Nagai Kazumi, "Shingai Nanboku Giwa Kosho no. Katei" (North-South peace Negotiations during the 1911 Chinese Revolution), in *Wada Hakase Koki Kinen, Toyoshi Ronso* (Festschrift on Dr. Wada's 70th Birthday Anniversary on Theses on Asian History), pp. 623-625; Jerome Chen, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125.

(16) Li Chien-nung, *Political History of China's Past 100 Years*, Vol. 1, pp. 334-335.

(17) *Documents on Japanese Diplomacy*, Vols. 44, 45 & Supplement (China Incident), p. 543; *China Papers*, 1912 (Further Correspondence, No. 38).

an edict from the Manchu emperor, authorizing him to organize a government. According to Yuan, this idea had the tacit support of the south, and the new government would come into being in Tientsin in two to three months.⁽¹⁸⁾ This fitted in with the statement made at the imperial conference by Chao Ping-chun, minister of the interior. Chao stated "(after abdication), the imperial government and the revolutionary government will both be dissolved. A provisional government, composed of Cabinet ministers from the two governments, will be created in Peking with Yuan as its president." It also tallied with the statement on a Tientsin government proposal, made by Chao and Liang Shih-yi at a conference in the court next day.⁽¹⁹⁾

It was now clear what Yuan was after. But this move ran counter to the proposed scheme under which Yuan would accept the presidency from Sun. This was indeed the weak spot in Yuan's scheme. As expected, Sun exposed Yuan's wheeling and dealing on January 20. In his telegram to Wu T'ing-fang, Sun stated:

1. With the abdication of the Manchu emperor, the regime ceases to exist.
2. There should never be a new provisional government in Peking.
3. After the Republic of China is recognized by the Powers, the provisional president should resign, and the Senate should elect Yuan as president. Yuan should not accept the mandate to rule from the Manchu court before the Republic of China comes into being.⁽²⁰⁾

Thwarted in his scheme, Yuan found himself in a dilemma.⁽²¹⁾ Yuan's intentions, however, found expression in the edict of abdication of the Manchu emperor. The edict said in part "At this time of juncture of transition, there should be a formula for reuniting the north with the south, namely that

(8) *British Parliamentary Papers, China 1912, Further Correspondence*, No. 56.

(19) *Documents on Japanese Diplomacy*, Supplement, p. 547.

(20) *Document on the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic of China*, Part II, Vol. 2, Chapter 4, p. 596.

(21) Pai Chiao, *Yuan Shih-k'ai Yu Chung-Hua-Min-Kuo* (Yuan Shin-k'ai and the Republic of China), pp. 19-20; *British Parliamentary Papers, China*, No. 67 (January 22, 1912).

Yuan Shih-k'ai should be given full powers to organize a provisional republican government to negotiate with the civilian army (the revolutionary "army) for reunification." The last phrase was drafted by Chang Ch'ien and others, and was inserted by Yuan himself without consulting anybody.⁽²²⁾ By this, Yuan wanted to exonerate himself of any accusation of seizing power. At the same time, he could make it appear that the republican government received its prerogatives from the Manchu court, and not from the Nanking government. Yuan's ultimate objective, as pointed out by G. E. Morrison, correspondent for the *London Times* and a leading journalist in Peking, was "a republic by imperial decree," or "Yuan's presidency by imperial decree."⁽²³⁾

For Yuan to be elected president following Sun Yat-sen's resignation in his favor was quite incompatible with his assuming office by imperial decree. Except for Dr. Sun Yat-sen and a few others, most people welcomed Yuan as president and were elated with the birth of the republic. They cared little whether the republic was born through an imperial decree, or through the free will of the people, or through revolution.⁽²⁴⁾

In short, it was Li Yuan-hung and his Hupeh military government that first proposed Yuan as president. Behind this lay a clear element of racial bias implicit in destroying the Manchu dynasty and reviving the Han Chinese power; some people still desired to establish a constitutional monarchy. Gradually there arose modern republican ideology, on the basis of which Sun Yat-sen was soon to advocate democracy. These changes were a stimulus for constitutional development. They prompted the drafting of the organizational outline of the provisional government and the provisional constitution, and also promoted the selection of representatives from each independent province, to a representative body which in turn culminated in the establishment of the Senate. The idea of promoting Yuan for president was, to some extent,

(22) Chang Hsiac-jo, *Biography of Chang Chi-Chih*, p. 155; Jerome Chen, *op. cit.*, pp. 128, 130; *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, p. 123.

(23) Jerome Chen, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

(24) *Ibid.*, p. 135.

a concession to Yuan, and went against the ideals of revolution. This idea was inherited by the representative body. As the new laws became more exhaustive and the organization was enlarged and became more independent, the idea underwent a metamorphosis, first asking Yuan to cooperate, and then demanding him to surrender. This aggressiveness was not so much a result of debates on republicanism as a product of ups and downs in the fortunes of political groups at the time. The perception of revolution and republicanism was as yet undeveloped. Besides one must bear in mind international situation at the time, when the carving up of China by the Powers was felt to be a real danger.

Yuan was supported by the imperialist powers, as long as the revolutionary camp was not too stringent in its anti-imperialist drive. The interaction between these two factors is worth further examination.

After the revolution broke out, the imperialist powers had three options. First, they could support the revolution, and assist China in establishing an independent government. This option was abandoned because the revolutionary army had shown a decidedly anti-imperialist tendency. The Powers feared that a revolutionary government might not respect their interests and privileges. Second, they could support the Manchu government and help maintain the status quo and their interests and privileges. Japan followed this option. Third, they could adopt a wait-and-see attitude, watch developments closely and take appropriate countermeasures. In the later period of the revolution, the majority of the Powers, headed by Great Britain, adopted the third alternative. Later when they came to realize that the Manchu Dynasty was all but lost, they turned to look for a "strongman" who could put the house in order. Yuan was their choice, and they went all out in their support for him.

Why did the revolutionary army fail to take advantage of the anti-imperialist sentiment prevalent among the people, and why did they adopt such a careful and conciliatory attitude? Most leaders in the revolutionary army were weary of the destructive intervention of the imperialist powers in the nationalist

movement in China, beginning from the Taiping Rebellion, and culminating in the Boxer Rebellion. They did not want to repeat the same mistakes. In order to forestall possible intervention by the imperialist powers, the revolutionaries decided to adopt an anti-Manchu but pro-foreign power strategy. Already as early as mid-summer of 1905, when the T'ung Meng Hui was founded in Tokyo, its platform did not reflect any inherent anti-imperialist ideology. ⁽²⁵⁾

Subsequently, this strategy became the guideline for the attitude towards foreign powers during the revolution. After the uprising in Wuchang in 1911, Hu Ying, who was in charge of liaison and negotiations with foreign powers, issued a memorandum to consuls of various powers in Hankow in the name of Li Yuan-hung, divisional commander of the Hupeh Army of the Chinese military government. The memorandum followed this stratagem, acknowledging all of China's international obligations incurred before the outbreak of the revolution, and offering to protect the property and vested interests of aliens, but refusing to acknowledge any commitments with the foreign powers which the Manchu Dynasty might have entered upon after the revolution. Aliens aiding the Manchu Dynasty would be treated as hostile to the revolutionary army. Any munitions intended for the Manchus would be seized. ⁽²⁶⁾

The consular corps in Hankow had a plan to have the revolutionary army bombarded in the revolution. They gave up their intention after receiving the memorandum described above. On October 17 and again on the next day, the consuls in Hankow and the envoys in Peking issued a declaration of "strict neutrality." ⁽²⁷⁾ Ostensibly, the Powers were neutral between the Manchu court and the revolutionary army, but behind the scenes they were actually in support of Yuan Shih-k'ai, for they were now aware that the Manchu

(25) *Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen*, (National Defense College, Taipei, 1963), p. 394.

(26) *Documents on the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic of China*, Part II, Vol. 1, pp. 377-378 (Uprising at Wuchang); Foreign Office, *Confidential Print*, Vol. 10032, No. 264; Sir John Jordan to Sir Edward Grey, October 23, 1911; Enclosure 2, Revolutionary Commander to Consul-General Goffe, October 12, 1911.

(27) *Uprising at Wuchang*, p. 379.

Dynasty was in a hopeless position. They were looking for a "strongman" who could bring order back to China, someone who could succeed the Manchu Dynasty and protect their interests. Britain and America had high hopes for Yuan, and British Minister Jordan was one of Yuan's most enthusiastic supporters. They chose Yuan because he was conservative in his outlook, and as such easier to manipulate. But more importantly, they considered that he had experience in government and was capable of providing leadership. He had all the qualities of a "strongman."

The first to recommend Yuan as leader was American Minister W. J. Calhoun.⁽²⁸⁾ British Minister Jordan proposed to the British government that it support Yuan. The proposal had received the blessing of British Foreign Secretary E. Grey.⁽²⁹⁾

How the British Minister and the British Consul tried to mediate in the peace talks between the north and the south, and the roles they played in the talks, have been discussed earlier. During the peace talks, Yuan maintained close contact with the British Minister, while T'ang Shao-yi was in constant touch with Britain's consul general in Shanghai, E. H. Frazer.⁽³⁰⁾

Not only were British and American diplomats whole-hearted in their support of Yuan, but press comments in Great Britain and the United States were also in favor of Yuan. They ridiculed Sun as much as they could.⁽³¹⁾ But after the provisional government came into being, Foreign Minister Wang Ch'ung-hui sent cables to various countries, requesting recognition of the new government. The new government was especially anxious for American recognition, but their request was rebuffed.⁽³²⁾

(28) Kikuchi Takaharu, *Gendai Chugoku Kakumei no Kigen* (The Origin of present Chinese Revolution), Gannando Shoten, Tokyo, 1973, p. 228.

(29) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, pp. 311, 314; Foreign Office, *Confidential Print*, Vol. 10032, Nos. 130, 153B, 156, 183, 302, 311.

(30) *F. O. Confidential Print*, Vol. 10032, Nos. 559 & 566; Jordan to Grey, December 20, & 21, 1911, Vol. 10153, No. 29, Jordan to Grey, December 17, 1911.

(31) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, pp. 496, 500-501. *The North China Herald*, January 13, 1912, Kikuchi Takaharu: *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.

(32) Kikuchi, *Ibid.* p. 243.

The anti-imperialist sentiment of the Chinese people was manifest during the 1911 Revolution. A British diplomat had come to realize that Chinese "patriotism" was no longer a minority issue; ⁽³³⁾ and that the idea of "China for the Chinese" was beginning to win popular support. Chinese students returning from Japan, Britain, and the United States were agitating for the abolition of unequal treaties. They wanted Chinese control of China's finance, railroads, and enterprises. ⁽³⁴⁾ The nationalism that was nurtured by the revolution became the main force preventing further intervention by the Powers. As the drive to make Yuan president took shape, and both Great Britain and the United States threw their weight behind Yuan, there was an increase in foreign interference directed against the revolutionary government. It was especially evident in financial affairs.

The provisional government in Nanking had been bedeviled by financial problems from the very beginning. The Powers resorted to economic sanctions, fearing that the civil war in China might hold up the regular payment of foreign debts and interest, as well as the payment of indemnities. Great Britain and other creditor nations of the Ch'ing Dynasty decided to take control of the Chinese customs in November 1911. ⁽³⁵⁾

Customs at Changsha, Hankow, Shanghai, Shashih, Canton, and Amoy were seized. Customs revenues were deposited with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, a bank with British capital. Subsequently the foreign diplomatic corps in Peking met and organized an "extraordinary committee," with Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and Deutsche Asiatische Bank as trustees. The committee decided that a foreign inspector general of customs should collect the duties and undertake the necessary financial obligations under the supervision of the legations. They did so, because they feared that the revolutionary army might use the customs revenues to

(33) *F. O. Confidential Print*, Vol. 2055, Wilkinson to Grey, November 29, 1911.

(34) *Ibid*, Vol. 22592, No. 371/1318, Jordan to Grey, May 6, 1912.

(35) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, p. 398.

procure arms and munitions once it had control of the customs.⁽³⁶⁾ This was in fact a naked intervention against the revolutionary army in the form of economic pressure. On the other hand, the four-nation consortium had offered Yuan loans at least five times between December 1911 and June 1912, totalling 12, 100, 000 taels.⁽³⁷⁾ Only a private Japanese financial syndicate sold arms and munitions to the revolutionary army. Later, as the revolutionary army was unable to pay for them, the Japanese syndicate forced the revolutionary army to borrow from Japan (The China Merchants Steam Navigation Co. loan, The Han-Yeh-Ping Co. loan, The Kiangsu railroad loan, etc.). Japan offered loans to the revolutionary army not because it supported the cause of the revolution, but because it wanted economic concessions from China, and also because it was in rivalry with Great Britain.⁽³⁸⁾

There were also Powers which tried military intervention. Japan and Russia were most ardent in pursuing this course of action. Though the Chinese revolution won popular support in Japan, the Japanese government was inclined to support the monarchy for China, advocating military intervention. Its basic policy was a "joint administration" of China in concert with the Powers.⁽³⁹⁾ Japan's Foreign Minister Uchida and War Minister Ishimoto consulted with Britain, the United States, and Russia on joint military intervention. Czar Nicholas II favored joint Russo-Japanese intervention to occupy Manchuria and Mongolia.⁽⁴⁰⁾ But since Great Britain was reluctant to see the unrest spread, it stuck to strict neutrality and a non-intervention policy from the outset. It

(36) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, pp. 267-268, 397.

(37) Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

(38) *Documents on Japanese Diplomacy*, Vols. 44, 45 & Supplement, pp. 170, 213-214; See P'eng Tse-tsou: "The 1911 Revolution and Japanese Saionji Cabinet," *Modern Chinese History*, Vol. 6, pp. 21-22.

(39) *Documents on Japanese Diplomacy*, Vols. 44, 45 & Supplement, pp. 57-58; *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, p. 295; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1912, p. 567.

(40) *The 1911 Revolution*, Vol. 8, pp. 438-439; Wang Kuang-Ch'i, tr. *The 1911 Revolution and the Attitude of Powers* (1929), p. 27; Chang Jung-ch'u, "Selected Translation of Materials Related to Negotiations on China in the Magazines in the Soviet Archives", p. 337; *Documents on Japanese Diplomacy*, Vols. 44, 45 & Supplement, pp. 498-502.

was critical of the Japanese move.⁽⁴¹⁾ Both the United States and Germany too were scandalized by the maneuver, and managed to restrain Japan.⁽⁴²⁾ Under these circumstances, Japan and Russia were unable to dispatch troops to China as they had wanted to. In other words, a conflict of interest among the Powers prevented any joint intervention against the revolution.

Though actual military intervention did not materialize because of the conflict of interest among the Powers, economic manipulation and political intervention did have a great bearing on the course of the revolution. Great Britain, undisputed leader in the world at the time, did its best to promote peace between the north and the south. It supported Yuan Shih-k'ai without reservation, and wanted to see a strong government in China. The British policy was seconded by the United States and Germany. This consensus among the Powers prevented possible Russo-Japanese intervention against the revolution. Such was the international background that led to the establishment of the Yuan regime. Politics in the early Republican period was conducted in this framework until Yuan ascended to the throne.

(41) See Chin-tung Liang, *The Chinese Revolution of 1911* (New York, 1962), pp. 26-28; Wang Tseng-ts'ai, "British Government Attitude towards the 1911 Revolution," *Monographic Studies on Modern Chinese History*, Vol. 3.

(42) J. G. Reid, *The Manchu, Abdication and the Powers, 1908-1912*, p. 267; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1912*, pp. 63-64.

