

**SUN YAT-SEN AND  
THE FRENCH, 1900-1908**

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*SUN YAT-SEN AND  
THE FRENCH, 1900-1908*

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陸世驥題

For Colleen Garrigus Barlow,  
who taught the ultimate victory  
of endurance and will.

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## Abbreviations Used in Footnotes

AOM	France, Archives Nationales, Section d'Outre Mer, Paris
Ch'iao-Yueh tang-shih	"Ch'iao-yueh tang-shih sou-chi-lu chi yu-kuan k'ao-ting wen-chien." (Collected records of the history of the party among Overseas Chinese in Vietnam, and related collated documents). The Executive Committee of the Saigon Humanitarian Society. MS., Kuomintang Archives 002/42.
Chüan-chi	Teng Mu-han. "Sun Chung-shan hsien sheng chüan-chi." (Biography of Dr. Sun Yat-sen). MS., 1934. Kuomintang Archives 030/245.
EMA	France, Etat-Major de L'Armée, Service Historique de L'Armée, Chateau de Vincennes.
FO	Great Britain, Foreign Office. Public Records Office and Annex, London.
KFCC	<i>Kuo-fu ch'üan-chi</i> . KMT, ed. (The Complete Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen). 3 vols.: Taipei, 1965.
KFCS	<i>Kuo-fu ch'üan-shu</i> . (The Complete Writings of Sun Yat-sen). Chang Ch'i-yün, ed: Taipei, 1962.
KFNP	<i>Kuo-fu nien-p'u</i> . (Chronological Biography of Sun Yat-sen). Lo Chia-lun, ed. 2 vols.: Taipei, 1969.
KMTA	Kuomintang Archives, Taipei. The call numbers cited, as KMTA 030/245, are from the printed catalog.
MAE	France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Archives Diplomatique, Paris.
SSTC	Sui-shou teng-chi. (Register of the work on hand). Archives, Palace Museum, Taipei. In the SSTC the palace clerks recorded incoming memorials and a short summary of their contents and the action taken.

# Introduction

In the following pages it is argued that during a critical period in his career, Sun Yat-sen sought to create a separate state in southwest China which would have been dependent upon French aid and guidance. Sun was supported in his attempt by the most overtly expansionist elements of the French political system, both in metropolitan France and in Indochina.

The materials upon which this analysis is based consist primarily of original accounts by direct participants in the events. Most of those materials are in Kuomintang (KMT) archives on Taiwan, although French reports in *L'Archives d'Outre Mer* and French Army accounts at Vincennes are also important. The facts outlined in those materials often differ radically from those in customary sources upon which many historians of the Chinese revolution have drawn. Sun and his immediate followers were directly involved in conspiring to create a revolution, and while they were concerned with creating useful symbols, they were much less concerned than those who were to write the semi-official histories of their activities. Sun and his followers were relatively untroubled by issues which later historians of the revolution felt obliged to conceal or minimize.

Sun was almost always accompanied in his Asian peregrinations during the years studied here by one or more of his close supporters, Teng Mu-han, Hu Han-min and Wang Ching-wei. Feng Tzu-yu was also sometimes a member of this inner circle, but was relatively uninvolved in the activities relating to the French. These men were all overseas students and confirmed modernists. Hu Han-min and Teng Mu-han, in particular, left in the Kuomintang archives a number of handwritten manuscripts, their own accounts of their travels with Sun in Southeast Asia from 1900 to 1908. These manuscripts have provided materials and perspectives on Sun's activities from 1900 to 1908 which have never been admitted into later, more orthodox compilations.

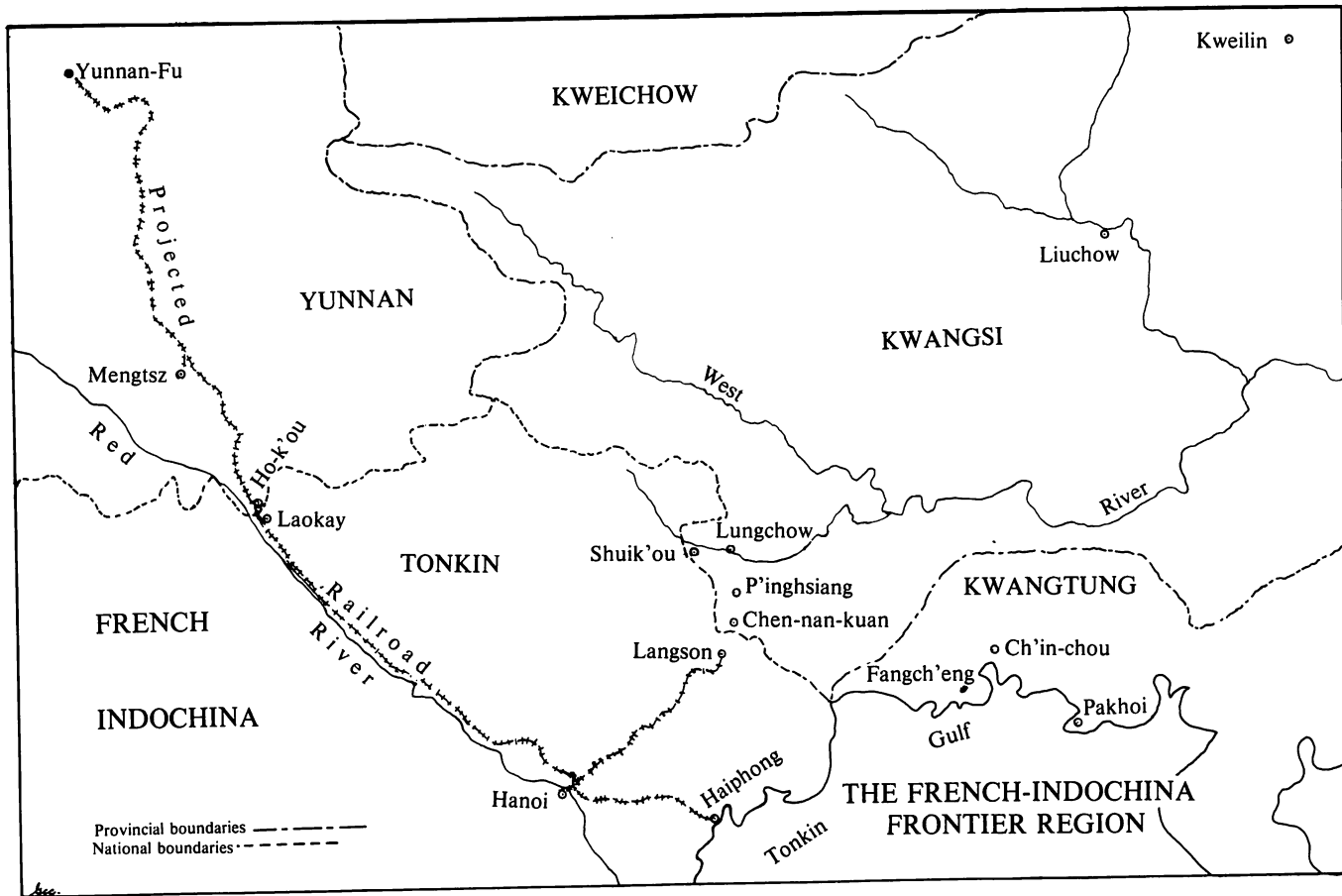
As an example of the process by which the importance of these manuscripts was minimized, let us examine an incident involving Teng Mu-han. Teng was a close comrade of Sun in the earlier years and was the major historian of the revolutionary groups in Vietnam. Teng was also the earliest secretary of the Kuomintang's archives and compiled many of the materials later published by others. In the KMT archives there are several related manuscripts written by Teng,

filed with a series of letters exchanged between him and the historians of the Central Party Bureau. The party historians had received several manuscripts compiled by the Chinese community in Vietnam, to celebrate its contribution to the revolution. The historians asked Teng for his comments on the documents' reliability. Teng replied that the manuscripts had some errors of emphasis and that they had failed to mention Sun's contacts with local French authorities. The historians, either truly unaware or more carefully orthodox, asked Teng for clarifications, which he provided. The comment of the party historians upon Sun's involvements with the French was: "As for the Tsungli (Sun) having discussed the revolution with the French. . . unhearable (*pu-k'e t'ing-wen*)."<sup>1</sup>

The following account could not have been written were it not for the professionalism of historians like Teng Mu-han and Hu Han-min and their successors who have kept intact for later generations of students the eyewitness accounts of the Chinese revolution on the Vietnamese frontier. I am also indebted to contemporary historians, friends and colleagues, who have helped me see this project to its completion. I am particularly grateful for advice and assistance given by Frederic Wakeman, Joseph Esherick and Daniel Valentine. For help in my research in the French materials, I am indebted to Kim Munholland, who saw me as a friend rather than as a competitor.

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1. "Ch'iao Yueh tang-shih sou-chi-lu chi yu-kuan k'ao-ting wen-chien" (Collected records of the history of the Party among Overseas Chinese in Vietnam, and related collated documents) [Henceforth Ch'iao-Yueh tang-shih] (Saigon, 1933). This file contains two manuscripts under similar titles. Frontispieces, letter of 12/22/29. KMTA 002/44.



# I

## Political Conditions in the China-Indochina Frontier

On December 2, 1907, a French artillery officer fired a Krupp gun into Chinese troops in the pass between Kwangsi and Tonkin, known in China as the Chen-nan-kuan. The killing of Chinese soldiers by Europeans was not unusual in the China-Indochina frontier, where blood had been spilled on a far larger scale in the Sino-French War of 1884-5. What was unique about the 1907 incident was that the Frenchman was acting for Chinese revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen, soon to be the first president of the Chinese Republic. After waiting in vain for reinforcements and additional munitions, Sun's group retreated to Hanoi. Shortly thereafter, Sun was expelled from French Indochina. Although important cadres like Huang Hsing and Hu Han-min were permitted to mount additional actions in the border area, they were not successful. These failures and Sun's deportation brought to an end a major relationship between Sun and the French, begun in 1900, which had substantially shaped his career as a revolutionary.

Taking advantage of political conditions in the China-Indochina frontier before 1908, Sun had worked at fomenting revolution there, often from a base in Tonkin. In concert with local secret societies and roving brigand forces, Sun worked to create a base in the frontier region. He planned to then expand that base into an independent federated republic of the provinces of the frontier zone. Sun assumed that the regime could be viable only with French assent and assistance, and to secure that assistance he worked closely with groups inside and outside the French government. In return for immediate and promised future support from the French, he pledged to grant railway, mining and trade concessions, as well as to place Frenchmen in key posts in his new regime.

The Frenchmen with whom Sun worked and planned can be loosely divided into two groups. From 1900 to 1906 his supporters were at the very center of the French government, both in Paris and in Indochina. These were die-hard colonialists, dedicated to the indefinite expansion of French interests in south China. With the aid of these men, Sun came close to success a number of times, most notably in 1906 when he narrowly failed to organize a coalition

of south Chinese secret societies, and to mount a major offensive with French money and weapons. Promises of substantial French aid were ultimately withdrawn when the French began to fear that Sun might not be able to control the obvious anti-foreign sentiments of his Chinese allies. Simultaneous changes in French internal politics, related to the conflict between backers of colonial expansion and those who wished to concentrate upon continental problems, resulted in the fall from power of his official supporters.

Although no longer able to rely on official support, Sun nonetheless pursued his plans for a separatist client state, with the aid the French in Indochina proper. With both covert and overt support, he was able to mount several risings in the border area until repeated failures and changing political conditions caused the local government to evict him.

The area herein termed the China-Indochina frontier consists of the Chinese provinces which border the former French colony of Indochina, namely Yunnan, Kwangsi and portions of Kwangtung. Physically, this area is marked by its immense size and mountainous terrain which caused daily life and communication to be difficult. The area, divided by the geographer Cressey into the Southwestern Tableland and the Liangkwan,<sup>1</sup> is about the size of the present-day Spain and Italy. The Southwestern Tableland is the eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau, and elevations in the provinces of Yunnan and Kweichow average from four to six thousand feet. The western portion of Kwangsi, where Sun was most active, is actually the border of the Southwestern Tableland.

Communications throughout this area were slow and difficult. A journey from Canton, the urban center of south China, to Yunnan-fu (Kunming), the capital of the hinterland, traversed 1500 kilometers of mountainous terrain crossed by unnavigable rivers in deep gorges. The trip required more than six weeks. To reach Yunnan-fu from the other possible entrepôt, Haiphong in Tonkin, travellers had to cross about 750 kilometers of somewhat easier terrain, a trip which still required two to three weeks before the completion of the French railway to Laokay in 1905.

The population of the area was small and dispersed. The major cities, Yunnan-fu and Kweilin, each had about 80,000 inhabitants. This area was a classical frontier region; a wild, underpopulated hinterland between two more hospitable areas, the Kwangtung plains

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1. George Babcock Cressey, *China's Geographic Foundations*, (New York, 1934).

of China and the Red River delta of Tonkin.

The Chinese population in the sanctuary from which Sun operated, French Indochina, was between Chinese estimates of 100,000 and French estimates of 233,000 in 1903.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese were concentrated in the south, in Cochin China, because its relatively commercialized economy provided more opportunity for them than the more static and agricultural Tonkin delta. Following the administrative divisions of the French colonial government, the Chinese, or *hua-ch'iao*, community of Vietnam can be divided into five groups or "congregations": Canton, Fukien, Hainan, Teochiu (Chiuchow people of the Foochow area), and Hakka. The divisions were based on provincial origins and linguistic differences. Sun's supporters naturally came from his own province, Kwangtung (the Canton congregation), due to both linguistic affinities and provincial loyalties. In addition to Overseas Chinese residents of Vietnam, there was a large group of Chinese coolies in the mines and on the railways. The numbers of these laborers fluctuated according to French need and can best be estimated as several thousand at any given time.

To Sun, the most important Chinese inhabitants of the border area were the bandits. It was from these men that he fashioned his military forces, and it was upon bandit leaders that he depended for his field commanders, men like Wang Ho-shun and Huang Ming-t'ang. The term "bandit" suggests a professional armed robber. This is a partial description of men like Wang and Huang, but the term fails to indicate the Chinese bandit's mutability. On the frontier, today's bandit was probably yesterday's soldier, and perhaps tomorrow's local administrator or revolutionary hero. It was also difficult to distinguish the bandits from other denizens of the frontier. The area also sheltered groups of deserters from Ch'ing armies, as well as primitive tribesmen and opium smugglers. Villages were literally armed camps, with and without government permission. None of the frontier regions of the border provinces was a significant departure from this warlike norm. Kwangsi was perhaps the least peaceful. A memorial to the throne in 1908 indicates the ubiquitous nature of disturbances: "We have thoroughly investigated the annual bandit troubles and managed them according to orders."<sup>3</sup>

2. *Yueh-nan hua-ch'iao chih* (Taiwan, 1958), p. 28. French statistics in FO 405/183, LXVIII, Carlisle to Grey, Hanoi, 11/6/08. (Great Britain, Foreign Office. Public Records Office and Annex, London.) [Henceforth FO].

3. *Sui-shou teng-chi* (Register of the work on hand), (Archives, Palace Museum, Taipei.) [Henceforth SSTC]. Kuang-hsu 34, Fall, 0001.



The financial mainstay of the "Men of the Greenwood" (*lû-lin*) on the frontier was the opium smuggling industry. Prior to 1907, when the government began efforts to suppress opium, it was the main crop of the frontier. Smuggling became a lucrative enterprise when production and consumption became illegal in China proper. Before that time the smuggler's major market was French Indochina where opium sales were a monopoly of the colonial government after 1899. These sales generated a significant portion of the government's revenue and as the French kept the price well above its price in China, smuggling was very profitable.

Sun Yat-sen's operations in the frontier were facilitated, not only by the large numbers of potential warriors, but also by the cultural relationship between Vietnam and China. The Sino-Vietnamese defeat by the French in 1884-5 had the legal consequence of ending the tribute relationship between Vietnam and China. The defeat did not, however, erase the cultural basis of the relationship, and Chinese and Vietnamese continued to share a common Confucian heritage. The presence of large numbers of Overseas Chinese, a still-shared written language, and familiar economic and cultural practices greatly aided Sun's revolutionary work.

The essential characteristic of the China-Indochina frontier was its great potential for change. It was an area which had not been absorbed into any social or political system, an area on the marches of society whose inhabitants followed many imperatives other than those of the traditional Confucian society, Vietnamese or Chinese. It must have seemed to the people of the frontier that almost anything could happen: marauding tribesmen could force one into slavery in their fortified mountain aeries; Chinese troops might finally destroy the base of the economy, opium production, and incorporate the area into the Chinese political system; or French troops might invade, cutting all ties with the past and shaping an unknown future. It was an atmosphere congenial to a revolutionary, an area where the status quo was less stable than in any other part of China.

## II

# Political Patterns in the Frontier

In the year 1900, when Sun's attention was drawn to the frontier, the primary characteristics of political life there were instability and uncertainty. Neither of the two contending governments of the region, French or Chinese, had yet succeeded in imposing centralized control upon the area. The two governments did not agree as to the limits of their respective sovereignty. The Chinese government and the population of the frontier feared that France intended to extend her colonial dominion further into south China. Aware of the antagonism of the Chinese, the French feared that each increase in Chinese military power brought closer an inevitable war with a resurgent China, determined to recover lost territory, and aided perhaps by Japanese expansionists.

After 1900, the Chinese and French colonial governments had also to contend with radical movements which threatened their domestic control. The French had virtually eradicated traditionalistic opposition to their dominion but were soon to face more modern conspiratorial movements. This internal unrest was a major factor in persuading the French that accommodation with China was preferable to continued attempts at expansion in China.

The problem for the Ch'ing was also twofold: how best to resist French imperialism, and how to combat rebellious elements. To prevent overt French intervention, the Court had to quell popular anti-foreignism in areas contiguous to French holdings. The French also demanded that the Ch'ing continue to support previously acquired French privileges.

Although anti-governmental disturbances on the frontier were numerous, sustained, and sometimes on quite a large scale, they were essentially traditional: "rebellious" rather than revolutionary.<sup>1</sup> In general, the outbreaks on the frontier were aimed at the occupants of the throne rather than at the institution itself, and at individual "bad gentry" rather than at the gentry as a group or class.

The anti-foreign attitudes in the frontier were also primarily traditional rather than modern—simple xenophobia rather than

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1. The analytical framework for this distinction comes from Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley, 1970), p. xxxvi.

anti-imperialism. The two were often intertwined, but in the frontier from about 1900 to 1908 a loosely drawn distinction is possible. There were frequent attacks upon obvious manifestations of the foreign presence, but they were seldom motivated by any political program.

By 1900, anti-imperialism, unlike xenophobic anti-foreignism, was informed by an awareness that the response to foreign aggression had to be suited to political realities. In such circumstances, local attacks against the foreigners often harmed the Chinese cause, serving as a pretext for additional control by foreign powers. Paradoxically then, anti-imperialism demanded considerable restraint to avoid damaging confrontations with the Western powers.

This conflict between a politically sophisticated anti-imperialism and simplistic anti-foreignism created many contradictions for both Court and local gentry. The Manchu Court was vulnerable to charges that Manchus could not and did not have the interests of the Chinese people foremost in their hearts. Preventing excesses of anti-foreignism placated the foreigners but further estranged the people. This conflict was even more acute for the local gentry, as it was the gentry who were responsible for preventing local xenophobic outbreaks. As long as the throne sided with the populace, the gentry could profitably and properly assume leadership to reduce the threat to local stability. In this 1871 memorial from the Kwangsi Governor, Su-feng, to the T'ung-chih Emperor, Su-feng says:

(There are) foreign residents at Pien-ho, Chia-ting, Yung-lung, An-yang, An-kiang and Ho-hsien, altogether in six places along the south and southwest borders of the province. Most of them are French, with a minority of English. They are using the missions as a pretext to raise taxes, to occupy territories, to raise troops and to choose officials from among the people. All this occurred at Chia-ting. The people of the six districts have resisted, but there is no way they can permit the foreigner to stay and attain victory.<sup>2</sup>

But, if the local population acted precipitously and damaged a foreign installation, the throne then had to suppress the people and reward the outraged foreigner, as happened in an incident of 1906.

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2. *Ch'ing-tai ch'ou-pan i-wu shih-mo* (The management of barbarian affairs of the Ch'ing dynasty from beginning to end) 80 vols. (Peiping, 1930), *Ch'üan* 80, p. 7357.

Hsi-liang memorialized: "Last year the Pa-t'ang minority bandits burned all the churches, therefore, please bestow upon the French Bishop a Cap of Rank." The throne complied.<sup>3</sup>

A constant source of anti-foreignism in the frontier was French interference in internal Chinese affairs. The French felt that their need to protect Tonkin gave them special rights in south China. This attitude can be seen in the instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Eugene Bapst, newly-appointed Minister to Peking:

It is important that French-acquired rights not be disturbed, either by general political or economic measures nor by local disorder or aggression. The more or less anarchical state of the three frontier provinces gives us legitimate cause for concern and confers upon us special rights of surveillance and vigilance over all local measures which might have immediate repercussions in our possessions. It is necessary then that the Chinese authorities continuously be aware of the eyes and hands of our representatives and that they keep French authorities quickly and completely informed.<sup>4</sup>

The superior financial resources of the French made it easy for them to suborn local Chinese administrators, which became a systematic French practice and an omnipresent concern of the Court. The French presence upon the border acted in another manner to disaffect local officials who were particularly concerned that conflicts in their jurisdiction not invite a French "protective reaction." An example of this fear comes from 1905: A message from the Palace to Hsi-liang, a frontier Governor-General reads:

A man has reported that the T'u-szu [local aboriginal chief] plans to rise up. This would be a dangerous situation which would affect the country. Investigate immediately, stabilize the border and avoid a foreign invasion.<sup>5</sup>

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3. SSTC, Kuang-hsu 32, Fall, 00104. For additional examples of the tensions created by the French presence, see Roger V. Des Forges, *Hsi-Liang and the Chinese National Revolution* (New Haven, 1973), Chapter 8.

4. France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Archives Diplomatique, Paris [Henceforth MAE]. Foreign Affairs, 198, China, Instructions to M. Bapst, 3/3/06.

5. SSTC, Kuang-hsu 31, Summer, 00021.

As a consequence of this concern, the local gentry sometimes found it wiser to placate the French than to resist their encroachments, a policy which not only minimized trouble with the French, but avoided local outbreaks which might draw the throne's attention.

The Court's preoccupation with avoiding conflict with foreigners might seem to indicate that the Court had become the puppet of the imperialist powers. This is inaccurate, although it does reflect a common scholarly bias to emphasize the enervated condition of the Ch'ing court. The Ch'ing had not bowed to the inevitability of expanded French interests in south China but were trying to deal with the conflicting pressures emanating from the foreigners and its own rebellious people. By 1906, the court was expediting modernization while buying time in order to prevent the very partition of China which the radicals were accusing the Ch'ing of facilitating.

Although repeatedly forced to compromise with the colonialists, the Ch'ing did occasionally gain ground in the struggle. In 1905, the French military attache in Peking informed the Minister of War:

The time of free incursions of foreign officers into Chinese camps and forts is no more. We now need special passes and authority from Chinese authorities. Non-authorized individuals will be stopped and risk being clubbed, bayoneted or shot if they persist. The Commander in Chief of the Legation Guard was clubbed for having photographed a monument in a prohibited area—he was in uniform but the soldiers did not respect it.<sup>6</sup>

The 1908 *Tatsu Maru* incident (in which Chinese troops confiscated weapons being smuggled to rebels), the military incursion into Macao to prevent arms smuggling in the same year, and many other examples listed by Mary Wright and John Schrecker, provide proof that the Ch'ing had the commitment and sometimes the ability to protect and extend Chinese sovereignty.<sup>7</sup> The New Army (*lu-chün*) was, of course, the primary instrument for resisting foreign

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6. France, Etat-Major de L'Armée, Service Historique de L'Armée, Château de Vincennes [Henceforth EMA] Carton 7n1675, Military Attaché, Peking to Minister of War, Peking, "Service d'Espionage en Chine," 4/15/05

7. FO 405/182, LXII, McDonald to Grey, January-June, 1908, p. 103, no. 70, de Souveral, 3/31/08; Mary Wright, ed., "Introduction" in *China in Revolution, The First Phase, 1900-1913* (New Haven, 1968); and John E. Schrecker, *Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 146, 251, 253.

encroachment. Increased Chinese military strength in the frontier area was a major factor in moving the French toward an entente with China which would require that the French cease sponsoring Sun Yat-sen.

Within this general context of anti-foreignism and rebellion, the political climate in the border region underwent considerable change from 1900 to 1908, the year when the French deported Sun. In 1900, the civil and military administration of the frontier provinces can best be described as traditional, marked by corruption, maladministration and insensitivity to popular sentiment. It is hard to disagree with the complaints of the Chinese student press in Japan that the Ch'ing were both hopelessly corrupt and unconcerned, at least with respect to Yunnan, Kweichow and Kwangsi.<sup>8</sup> Military administration in the frontier was initially no better than its civilian counterpart. The provinces of the area received some attention during the reforms of 1901-1904, and Kwangsi, Kweichow and Yunnan thus had some military elements which might be described as semi-modern.

New Army units were created only after 1906. Early in 1908, in response to Sun's rising at Chen-nan-kuan and out of fear of French aggression, two *lu-chün* units were created in Kwangtung and one in Kwangsi.<sup>9</sup> In Yunnan, the military centers were Ta-li in the north and Yunnan-fu in the central and southern region. Both had *lu-chün* forces by 1910.

In 1903 the central government also created a modern police force in the frontier provinces, at the urging of Yuan Shih-k'ai. These forces ranged from 2500 men in Kweichow to 3800 in Yunnan.<sup>10</sup> The frontier provinces thus underwent considerable change from 1900 to the fall of the dynasty in 1911. The Ch'ing was increasingly concerned about effective government and modern military forces, and reformed many of the abuses of local civil and military administration in the area. These reforms were not truly meaningful until about 1906, however, and earlier Ch'ing inability to control the frontier provinces was one of the lures which drew Sun Yat-sen into that area.

Sun first became interested in the southern provinces in 1900. In that year anti-governmental activity was so widespread in the

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8. *Yun-nan Tsa-chih* (Yunnan Magazine), (Tokyo, 1906; reprint, Taipei, 1968), nos. 2, 76; nos. 3, 94.

9. France, Archives Nationales, Section d'Outre Mer, Paris. [Henceforth AOM] B11 (37), Carton 34, 1/6/08, p. 8.

10. EMA, 7n1672, "Police," 4/25/11.

frontier that it can be termed a rebellion. The troubles had begun in 1897 with a Triad revolt led by Li Li-t'ing in Kwangsi. It was quelled the following year, but generalized unrest continued for some time. Kwangsi simmered during 1900 and 1901, a period marked by constant small-scale disturbances. The next year, 1902, was again a bad year, as rainfall was less than 15 percent of the annual average.<sup>11</sup> The scale of the unrest is indicated by the repressive measures taken by the government. In the Liangkwan alone some four thousand beheadings took place each year.<sup>12</sup>

During 1903, the disorders became more numerous and widespread. The Ko-lao hui (Society of elders and brothers) became involved and soon large armies of peasant irregulars were in the field. The societies of Kwangtung became interested and dispatched representatives into Kweilin, declaring that the city had been occupied. The intention of the society forces was to occupy Kweichow, then Canton, after which they planned to link up with the rebels in Kwangsi. The authorities of Kwangtung sent supplies into Kwangsi and rumors began to circulate, very common in later years, that the French had been asked by the court to help suppress the rebellion.<sup>13</sup>

The disorders in Kwangsi and the drought of 1902 began to affect Yunnan. In 1903, Yunnanese officials petitioned the court to sell bonds for relief of the province's estimated one million refugees.<sup>14</sup> Rebels led by Chou Yun-hsiang rose and occupied a number of towns. The provincial authorities were very alarmed and, doubting the loyalty of the standing army, called up an army of fifteen thousand reserves, which easily defeated the rebels.<sup>15</sup>

Sun's attention had been directed towards the disorders in the south for some time. In 1900, in an interview with the French Minister in Tokyo, he had outlined a plan which called for French

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11. Cressey, p. 75.

12. John Lust, "The Secret Societies and the Revolution of 1911," in Jean Chesneaux, ed., *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China, 1840-1950* (Stanford, 1972), pp. 6-7.

13. Information on this unrest can be found in: *Hupei hsueh-sheng chieh* (Hu-peh student world), (Tokyo, 1903; reprint, Taipei, 1968). first *ch'i*, January-February, 1903, II, p. 125; EMA carton 7n1668, "Army of Kwangsi," 2/18/03; *Kuo-min jih-jih pao* (The China national gazette), (Shanghai, 1903; reprint 1965), first *ch'i*, p. 16, 1903; second *ch'i*, p. 6.

14. *Yu-hsueh i-pien* (Translations by students abroad), reprint, Taipei no. 8, p. 0824.

15. Teng Mu-han, "Sun Chung-shan Hsien-sheng chüan-chi" (Biography of Dr. Sun Yat-sen), Ms., 1934, Kuomintang Archives 030/245 [Henceforth Chüan-chi] p. 2; EMA 7n1669, French consul at Yunnan-sen to MAE, 8/4/03.

permission to send arms across Tonkin to the rebels then in the field in Kwangsi. Sun pointed out that the rebels had been active for several years without arms or munitions from outside. Given new sources of supply, Sun believed that they could establish a revolutionary government in Kwangsi and, under his leadership, march upon Canton. The new regime would then menace the borders of Hunan and Fukien, and force the viceroys of these provinces to either join or recognize a new Federated Republic of South China. Sun could then treat with foreign governments for international recognition.<sup>16</sup> Variations on this plan were to be the center of his strategy for the next eight years.

His idea was not improbable; according to accounts in the Chinese student press in Japan it resembled in general outline that of the Kwangtung Triads. The plan took advantage of the several years of unrest in Kwangsi, its geographic isolation, and the importance of Canton to south China. The success of the concept depended, however, on getting arms to the rebels, both for their military needs and to guarantee their acceptance of Sun's leadership. Here an essential element of his strategy becomes clear: reliance upon foreign support to secure internal influence.

In 1900, although Sun had some reputation as a consequence of his involvement in the 1895 Canton rising and the publicity gained from the London kidnapping episode, he was only one among many rebels and certainly far less influential than either K'ang Yu-wei or Liang Ch'i-ch'ao. If he were able to present himself as chief armorer to the rebels, his influence would be assured. Securing the necessary financing was an additional difficulty. Sun tried to persuade the French to advance the funds, citing loans made to other rebel groups such as the Cuban independence movement. The French, not yet impressed by Sun, were unmoved. He left with some hope, however, and felt that if he could secure financing he could send arms in through Tonkin. The ability to move weapons through Tonkin was thus the *sine qua non* of his plan. Without this vital access, the arms would have to be landed on the Kwangtung coast, a dangerous proposition, as bitter experience would soon prove.

Sun was deeply involved in the Waichow rising at the time he spoke to the French minister in Tokyo and must have envisioned the proposal for Kwangsi as either complementary to the planned rising

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16. AOM B11 (36) carton 33, "Entretien avec Sun Yat-sen," 1900. For a restatement of this strategy, see interview with Sun in EMA 7n1676, Intelligence Service to Ministry of War, "Monthly Report," 5/10/06.



or perhaps as an alternative in the event of failure. It is also possible that his involvement with the Canton rising was far less than has sometimes been claimed,<sup>17</sup> and that, in fact, the Kwangsi proposal was his own plan which never came to fruition. His failure to follow up the proposal was consonant with the lower level of violence in Kwangsi during 1900 and 1901. It must have seemed to him that he had missed an opportunity.

In February of 1903, Sun again demonstrated interest in the Kwangsi-Yunnan unrest. While in Hanoi (under circumstances discussed below), he reiterated the 1900 plan to a more sympathetic audience, the governor-general's office. Sun cited the above factors and in addition emphasized that the Ch'ing forces in Kwangsi had been infiltrated by the Ko-lao hui and the Triads. Again he received some encouragement but no definite commitment. He left Hanoi for other ports in Southeast Asia in an attempt to raise money for the necessary arms.<sup>18</sup>

In Bangkok, Sun spoke with a local chief of a Chinese congregation, presumably of the Cantonese *pang*. This man was in the pay of the French Consul, who agreed with the opinion of Paris at that point that Sun was an undesirable character with no political future. The chief of congregation, under orders from the Consul, told Sun that money could be raised locally, but only after he secured official French support.<sup>19</sup> This left Sun where he had begun, awaiting French permission to act, but not completely discouraged.

By the fall of 1903, Sun had transmitted limited amounts of arms to the Kwangsi-Yunnan rebels, though neither the channels used nor his resultant influence are clear. In November, both the French and Chinese sources were linking Sun to the frontier unrest.<sup>20</sup> However, there were also reports attributing the unrest to the Pao-huang hui associated with K'ang Yu-wei, so the degree of Sun's involvement is unclear.<sup>21</sup>

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17. Harold Z. Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley, 1968), p. 233, has a very thorough treatment of Sun's part in the rising.

18. AOM B11 (36) Carton 33, Governor-General to Colonies, Saigon, 2/26/03.

19. *Ibid.*, Governor-General to Colonies, Saigon 10/9/03, and Charge d'Affaires at Bangkok to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 12/31/03.

20. *Kuo-min jih-jih pao*, third *Ch'i*, 1903, p. 8; MAE, China, Internal Politics, VII, French Consul at Hong Kong to MAE, 10/5/03.

21. MAE, China, Internal Politics, VII, French Consul at Hong Kong to MAE, 10/5/03.

By the time Sun began to send in arms, the fortunes of the rebels in Yunnan and Kwangsi had begun to decline once more. The dissidents broke up into small bands, making it more difficult for the government to eradicate them, but also limiting their offensive capacity. After a lull of a few months, the government suffered another catastrophe when an entire brigade of soldiers revolted in the Liuchow region of Kwangsi and in cooperation with other rebels prepared to march upon the provincial capital, Kweilin. The Liangkwang viceroy personally led forces from Kwangtung to interdict their line of march in late 1904. Repulsed by the Cantonese forces, twenty to twenty-five thousand rebels, armed with repeating rifles and automatic cannon, moved to the south. The rebels had by now taken on a political character, having added patches reading "Soldier of the Ming" to their uniforms. Repeatedly defeated by government forces, they devolved into smaller units, many of which made their way into Kweichow.<sup>22</sup>

During the early months of 1905, the disorders which had begun two years earlier still continued. The rebels still in the field were numerically inferior to the Ch'ing forces and their leaders were executed. By March, however, famine was again widespread and dissident groups began to clash with government forces.

The years 1904 and 1905 also saw Kwangtung and Yunnan beset by large-scale risings. The secret societies were plotting; several projected major risings were stifled just prior to the date set to act. In the spring of 1904 more than one hundred executions a month were occurring in the region to the north of Canton. In Kiangsi, the Triads and the Red River Society (Hung-chiang hui) were also said to be gathering their strength along the border with Kwangtung. In the northern part of Kiangsi there was a sizable rising in 1904 in which cadres from both the above groups reportedly participated.<sup>23</sup> Orders went out from the Palace in the summer of 1905 to "strenuously suppress" secret society bandits in Kiangsi, probably refugees from the failures in Kwangsi.<sup>24</sup> Yunnan also experienced a large-scale rebellion of tribesman in 1905, who spread the revolt into south Szechuan before submitting or fleeing into Tibet.<sup>25</sup>

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22. *Tung-fang tsa-chih* (Far Eastern miscellany) Shanghai. Kuang-hsu 30, Eighth *ch'i*, Eighth month.

23. *Ching-chung jih-pao* (Alarm bell daily), (Shanghai, 1904; reprint, Taipei, 1968), 10/30/04, p. 1.

24. SSTC, Kuang-hsu 31, Summer, 00199.

25. FO 405/169, VII, no. 1, p. 1.

This then was the political background of Sun's relationship with the French. The areas adjoining French Indochina were constantly in turmoil from 1900 to 1905, and at no time could the Chinese government have been said to have been in control of the entire area. During this period, anti-foreign manifestations in the frontier were remarkably few. There was continuing concern for foreign encroachments, expressed often by students, but overt violence was minimal. What incidents did occur seem to have been isolated criminal acts with no political overtones. The relative paucity of anti-foreign incidents in the provinces of the south, both during and after the Boxer disturbances, testifies to the often tenuous tie between political manifestations at the center of the empire and at its periphery. Away from the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, 1905 was an important turning point in the anti-foreign movement. The massive anti-American boycott indicated a new level of national concern. Outrage over the American exclusion acts extended even to Overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.

In the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, anti-government sentiments and anti-foreignism during 1905 seem to have remained two distinct phenomena. Esherick argues convincingly that by 1905 Chinese urban student circles had come to the conclusion that the two were interrelated.<sup>26</sup> That this was not true in the frontier testifies to both the slower pace of communications and to minimal student influence in that area. It is clear, however, that during 1906 the population of the frontier did begin to perceive a connection between rebellion and anti-foreignism or anti-imperialism.

The political conditions in the frontier from 1900 to 1905 created extremely favorable circumstances for Sun Yat-sen. Governmental control was either weak or nonexistent, the French had considerable influence across the border from their Indochinese holdings, and the population saw no essential link between anti-foreignism and rebellion. This permitted Sun to pursue a program which coupled rebellion and foreign assistance. By 1905, however, this favorable climate was passing, Ch'ing control was growing tighter and local outbursts of anti-foreignism would soon alarm Sun's French allies.

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26. Joseph Wharton Esherick, *Reform and Revolution in China: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hupei* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 55-56.

### III

## Ideological Foundations for Sun's Ties with the French

In arguing that Sun Yat-Sen had a close relationship with French imperialism and that, in search of aid, he was willing to pledge concessions which seem inconsistent with the usual picture of Sun Yat-sen as the determined nationalist, we are not arguing that he was simply an opportunist at this stage of his career. Some of his contemporaries professed to see no more than braggadocio and opportunism in him, hence the pejorative title "*Sun Ta-p'ao*" (Big Shot), which followed him all his life. His ties with the French were in fact carefully thought out, suited to the objective political conditions of the time, and founded upon a systematic hierarchy of values which made the relationship seem not only necessary but proper.

"If we divide people according to their individualities," wrote Sun, "we shall find three groups: the first, those who create and invent (They are called pioneers and leaders), the second, those who transmit or disseminate new ideas and inventions (These are called disciples), and the third are those who carry out what they receive from the people of the first two groups without hesitating. (These are called unconscious performers and people of action)."<sup>1</sup> Whether or not this typology is universally valid, it is an accurate description of the manner in which Sun allocated responsibility for the revolution. It also indicates the role which ideology played in his thinking and planning.

In this typology, for "pioneers and leaders," read Sun Yat-sen; for "disciples," Hu Han-min, Wang Ching-wei, Feng Tzu-yu and Teng Mu-han; and for "people of action," read Huang Hsing, Huang Ming-t'ang, Wang Ho-hsun, *et al.* In Sun's view, the role of the first group (composed, as far as we can judge, of but one man, Sun himself) was to create new ideas. He makes it clear that these ideas are the Three People's Principles, with which he is customarily asso-

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1. Sun Yat-sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary*, reprinted from the London edition of 1927 (New York, 1970), p. 112.

ciated. The responsibility of the second group was to transmit these ideas, a responsibility which Hu, Wang, and the others did indeed perform, most notably in the series of articles which they wrote to explain Sun's revolutionary ideals. The third group had only to faithfully follow orders, issuing ultimately from Sun himself.

Sun's attitude toward political leadership and the chain of command bears little relationship to the Three People's Principles of Democracy, Socialism and Nationalism. The central figure in this typology is certainly not the modern democratic leader, but a figure like the Confucian *chia-chang* (father), the model for every Chinese head of family in his familial relationships, and for the Emperor in his relationship with the people. This typology invokes a hierarchical ordering which subordinates the low to the high, posits the supremacy of patriarchal authority and depends ultimately upon personal loyalties. It is thus not modern but traditional in the Chinese context.<sup>2</sup>

Sun was able to reconcile the above traditionalistic typology with the Three People's Principles because for him revolution was a process which occurred in two distinct stages; in the first, the period of "destruction," the Manchu rulers were to be overthrown; in the second, the period of "construction," the ideas which he had created were to be implemented.<sup>3</sup> This belief in the need to root out and utterly destroy the old system before creating a new one was not unique with Sun Yat-sen. It was perhaps suggested by the very immensity of the task facing the revolutionaries, to destroy a system which had periodically reconstituted itself for two thousand years. In an earlier, less hesitant stage of his thought, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, too, had believed in the need to level entirely the old system before proceeding to the construction of a new one.<sup>4</sup> Sun was never slow to borrow useful concepts and terminology from his opponents, and it is probable that he was influenced here by Liang, as at so many other points.

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2. This definition is suggested by Michael Waltzer in his study of Puritan ideology, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 311.

3. Sun said in his *Memoirs*, p. 7, "When the first revolutionary wave went by (1911) and organic reconstruction had to begin, I could not help being agitated and delighted, because at long last I had united the ideals which had long matured within me with my plan of revolutionary action, in a program of national reconstruction for China." At another point, Sun speaks of these two stages as "the Destructive part of the Chinese Revolution. . ." and the "Constructive part," p. 7.

4. Frederic Wakeman, *History and Will* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 150.

For Sun, the ultimate goal of the Chinese revolution was the realization of the Three People's Principles. The Principles had, however, no implication for the conduct of the revolution itself. Sun believed the two stages to be entirely separable. In the first stage, the only function of the Principles was to inspire confidence in his modernity and to attract supporters to the cause of the revolution. The "New Ideas" of which Sun spoke were ultimate goals to be implemented upon the success of the revolution. The means of attaining the opportunity to implement the goals bore no necessary relationship to the goals themselves but could be chosen by the leader in accord with the needs of the moment.

Sun's conception of the revolution as a two-stage process can fruitfully be analyzed with the aid of Franz Schurmann's concept of ideology. Ideology, as defined by Schurmann, both posits ultimate political goals, and suggests the means by which they may be achieved. Ideology hence includes both ideas and means.<sup>5</sup> This definition permits us to encompass Sun's two stages and is thus very useful. If we are to remain within the parameters suggested by Schurmann, we must ultimately condemn Sun's ideology as literally incoherent, for (as will be argued below) the instruments of the first stage were ill-adapted to realizing the goals of the second stage.

The analytical approach adopted here prevents us from applying the term ideology to the Three People's Principles alone. For Sun, the Principles were "ideas" but not ideology.<sup>6</sup> In this analysis of Sun's ideology we are primarily interested in that aspect which he himself believed was relatively unimportant: the instrumental aspect by which he hoped to achieve political power through ties to the French. There is certainly adequate justification in the history and the development of the Three People's Principles for treating them rather lightly until well before 1905. Not until after the revolution did Sun begin to elaborate on them, and it was not until a series of lectures in 1924 that he began to give them systematic form.<sup>7</sup> But ultimate justification for virtually ignoring the Principles in analyzing Sun's ties to the French is that at no point in his activities in the frontier from 1900 to 1908 are the Principles mentioned.

It was not a lack of political acumen that caused Sun to so long neglect the Principles: it is simply that they were largely irrelevant to

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5. Schurmann, pp. 22-23.

6. See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1936), pp. 55-59, for a discussion of ideology which is useful in analyzing Sun's own approach.

7. Harold Z. Schiffrin, "The Enigma of Sun Yat-sen," in Wright, ed., *China in Revolution*, p. 463.

the process of revolution. Sun's constituency was not the intellectuals nor the students, but the overseas communities and the lower-class activists of the Sino-Vietnamese frontier. He did not elaborate upon the Principles because his audiences, unable to ask the right questions (or simply uninterested in them) did not force him to do so. These groups wanted to know why Sun opposed the Manchus and found sketchy references to "democracy" and "republican government" enough to establish his credentials as an impressive modern leader. He used, instead, the arguments familiar to his constituency: tales of Manchu atrocities and old racial hatreds.

That portion of Sun's ideology relevant to his ties to the French, then, is that which we have labelled "instrumental" or "practical," the short-run tactical approaches by which he strove to establish his leadership and to work toward the revolution. This aspect of his ideology falls into four different areas: reliance upon foreign assistance, racial anti-Manchuism, secessionism, and the "southern strategy." Reliance upon foreign assistance is discussed below in the context of the development of Sun's ties to the French.

The use of the term "racial" to describe Sun's anti-Manchuism raises some questions. To many of Sun's contemporaries—more cosmopolitan thinkers such as Liang Ch'i-ch'ao—the Han and Manchu peoples were one Chinese race. Such a usage is also more congruent with today's scientific attitudes toward race. To most people in the 19th century, Chinese or Western, race was more loosely defined. To these peoples it was taken for granted that "blood" carried "race," and they believed in a much more elaborate and differentiated concept of race than do most of us today. Just as Chinese believed in distinctions between Han and Manchu "races," so did Europeans accept inherent differences between Anglo-Saxon, Nordic and Mediterranean "races."

In making value-oriented appeals to potential recruits in the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, Sun relied primarily upon racial anti-Manchuism. The racist appeals Sun made referred to socio-cultural inequities between the two groups, particularly to unequal treatment before the law.<sup>8</sup> This places Sun well within the mainstream of Han anti-Manchuism as represented by the most popular and bitterly anti-Manchu of revolutionary tracts, Tsou Jung's *The Revolutionary Army*, which also stresses cultural and political distinctions between the two groups.<sup>9</sup>

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8. See example in *Kuo-fu Ch'üan-chi*, (The complete collected works of Sun Yat-sen), KMT, ed., 3 vols., (Taipei, 1965), section 7, p. 28.

9. John Lust, ed., *The Revolutionary Army, A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903* (The Hague, 1968).

Like all racist appeals, those of the revolutionaries not only served to identify and stigmatize the Manchu enemy, but also to produce very deep divisions within the supposedly superior group. From a racist point of view, hostility from other groups is natural and to be expected, but disagreements within the group, particularly when it is believed to be menaced by racial enemies, amounts to race-treason. Those who deny the validity of the racial point of view are themselves suspect, but for those who actually aid the race-enemy there can be no mercy. The proclamation posted by Sun's forces in the Chin-chou rising in Kwangtung in March, 1908, announced that those Han who supported the Manchus "truly have traitor's hearts and slavish characters and can no longer be considered as true men."<sup>10</sup>

The semi-bandit "Roving Brave" forces upon which Sun relied in the frontier battles were not in any event prone to the polite usages of Confucian society, but with their ethnic anti-Manchuism legitimated by Sun's arguments and his status as a modern revolutionary leader, they proved to be almost completely unrestrained. At the Ho-k'ou rising in April of 1908, the last time Sun had substantial French aid, the vice-magistrate was decapitated and his head displayed. In the Fang-ch'eng rising in Kwangtung in September of 1907, the magistrate, his advisors and all his women and children were massacred after surrendering.<sup>11</sup>

Sun's use of Han anti-Manchuism, like all his tactical approaches, was a very rational, if short-range, response to actual social conditions in the frontier. The long-term decline of Confucian society increased the appeal of racial arguments there. However it may have functioned at its height, by the mid-nineteenth century Confucian society began to lose its cohesion. Population increases eroded its efficacy as a mode of economic organization, and the Western impact challenged its compelling validity as a universal cultural system. This decline promoted racism in a number of ways. As the system declined, so too did Confucian cosmopolitanism. The T'ai-p'ing rebellion provides us with the most spectacular sign of increasingly important racial identifications, whether as Han, Manchu or Hakka, but it is clear that anti-Manchuism in general began to increase. This increase came first among those least committed to

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10. AOM B11 (37), carton 34, Military Attaché, Peking, to Ministry of War, reproduced in an enclosure to "Statements of Revolutionaries," 1/6/08.

11. AOM B11 (37), carton 34, Telegram from Bonhoure, Hanoi to Colonies, 5/1/08; EMA, carton 7n1669, "Revolution in South China," 1/6/08; *Tung-fang tsa-chih*, Kuang-hsu 33, 10th-12th Month, Tenth *Ch'i*.



Confucian orthodoxy and most ravaged by economic decline, the lower classes. The gentry remained loyal and aided the throne in putting down the threat. As the system continued to disintegrate, however, the gentry became not only increasingly sensitive to racial arguments, but also found them more useful in pursuing their own political ends.

Forces increasing ethnic tensions in Chinese society came from within and from without. By the mid-nineteenth century, Western scholarship and literature had been heavily influenced by various forms of racial analyses which emphasized race as a behavioral determinant.<sup>12</sup> These tendencies were greatly reinforced by Social Darwinism, although in their origins they were independent of it. To the Chinese, influenced by Western concepts and the signs of a White-Colored struggle which they could see in the colonial conquests, racial arguments became extremely persuasive.

For the members of the lower classes, beset by changes which they did not comprehend and caught in an economically and politically declining system, anti-Manchuism offered an important outlet.<sup>13</sup> Some degree of anti-Manchuism had always been present in these levels of society, particularly among the secret societies, and this resentment began to build. The political focus of lower-class anti-Manchuism was extremely diffuse, as in slogans calling for the restoration of the Ming. The response was one of generalized hostility resulting in spontaneous outbursts against local symbols of Ch'ing rule, directed particularly at the persons of the Manchus and those who collaborated with them. This lower-class anti-Manchuism was strongest in the south of China, in the backwaters of Confucian society where orthodoxy was lowest, and where gentry authority, which tended to oppose anti-Manchuism, was weakest.

For the elite, anti-Manchuism provided a means of channeling political discontent. Gentry and student anti-Manchuism was manipulative in that those who advocated it were those least likely to have a strong personal commitment to it. For those opinion-leaders the ultimate purpose of anti-Manchuism was not the extermination of the racially inferior Manchus, but rather a means of replacing

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12. See Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (New York, 1965), p. 155.

13. For a psychological explanation of political racism see: James G. Martin, *The Tolerant Personality* (Detroit, 1964), p. 53; Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York, 1958), p. 380; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New York, 1963), p. 75. For the link between prejudice and action, see Jerome Skolnick, *The Politics of Protest* (Washington, 1969), pp. 141-142; and Allport, pp. 77, 14-15.

their rule with a modernizing regime capable of resisting foreign imperialism.<sup>14</sup> Those two levels of anti-Manchuism were not mutually exclusive. Many who began with traditional racial anti-Manchuism, men like Liu Tao-i, Chang Ping-lin and T'ao Ch'eng-chang, ended with a politically motivated anti-Manchuism.<sup>15</sup> Sun was himself an example of this type, using both types of anti-Manchuism, depending upon his audience. Most Han Chinese were first exposed to simplistic racial resentment. For some people it provided a further incentive to analyze China's problems, and conscious of the danger posed by imperialism, to develop racial arguments which lead ultimately not to disunion but to union. For many, however, particularly the inhabitants of the frontier area, the primal hatred engendered by racial anti-Manchuism was sufficient. The hatred remained a primitive and volatile element in the body politic, a very useful element to revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen.

From the revolutionary viewpoint, racial anti-Manchuism provided one overwhelming advantage: it absolutely precluded the possibility of reform by the Manchu dynasty. Once classified as an inherent racial enemy, the Manchu had to remain in that position. In one of its first attacks on the reform movement, the *Min Pao* argued:

The intention of the Man-Ch'ing in establishing a constitution is to weaken the revolutionary tide, to fool the people [into thinking] that after the constitution is established there will be Man-Han equality, Man-Han friendship. . . . For China to establish a constitution is difficult. Only we Han people can establish a constitution . . . . The first goal is to expel the Manchu. The second is to do away with despotic government. The two are connected. When the first is attained, then the second will follow.<sup>16</sup>

By using racial anti-Manchuism then, Sun was able quickly and effectively to communicate with the ethnocentric inhabitants of the

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14. Mary Backus Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 26-27; Jerome Ch'en, "Modernization of Local Protest: A Study of the P'ing-liu-li Rebellion of 1906," prepared for the Conference on Local Control and Social Protest During the Ch'ing Period, (Honolulu, June 27-July 2, 1971), p. 13; Yoshihiro Hatano, "The New Armies," in Wright, ed., pp. 368-9; Schiffrin, p. 294.

15. *Kuo-fu Ch'üan-shu* (The complete writings of Sun Yat-sen), [Henceforth KFCS], Chang Ch'i-yun, ed., (Taipei, 1962), p. 393.

16. *Min Pao* (The people's journal) (Tokyo, 1905-1910; reprint, Taipei, 1969), First *ts'e*, p. 40.

frontier, using arguments which negated any attempts at reform with the Court might make.

Labeling Sun's use of anti-Manchuism as instrumental ideology might seem to place him among the ranks of the radical elite who preached anti-Manchuism to strengthen China against imperialism by removing the seemingly compliant Ch'ing. Sun did sometimes use anti-imperialist arguments, coupling anti-Manchu appeals to the need to establish a strong state to ward off foreign domination.<sup>17</sup> His original decision to devote his life to the overthrow of the dynasty has been said to have resulted from his outrage at the Ch'ing loss of Vietnam, a traditional Chinese dependency, to the French.<sup>18</sup> At one point Sun attempted to create a racial united front by supporting Aguinaldo's forces against the Americans.<sup>19</sup>

There was, however, one ineluctable difference between Sun and others who used anti-Manchuism to prepare the nation for an anti-imperialist struggle. More than any other Chinese revolutionary, Sun depended on foreign assistance. His entire approach to the revolution during the crucial years from 1900 to 1908 depended on the ability to move freely overseas and to secure various forms of direct and indirect aid. For him to have been identified with an anti-imperialist position would have destroyed his career.

If Sun's anti-Manchu racialism was suited to the immediate goal of fomenting revolution in the southern provinces, so was his plan for a secessionist Han state of south China. In light of past scholarly emphasis on Sun's espousal of the Three People's Principles and the almost complete absence of references to separatist goals in the accepted body of secondary literature, such an assertion provokes considerable skepticism. Nonetheless, an analysis of Sun's ties with the French reveals that until shortly before the Wuhan rising, Sun was working, not for a united China, but for a federated Han state of the border provinces.

A secessionist state of south China was, in the context of the first decade of the twentieth century, a thoroughly realistic proposal. Such a political program took advantage of the long tradition of southern regionalism. Seizure of the entire state also seemed impossible, but the comparative weakness of Ch'ing control in the south made the effort required to occupy it seem much less costly.

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17. *Kuo-fu nien-pu* (The chronological biography of Sun Yat-sen), [Henceforth KFNP], Lo Chia-lun, ed., 2 vols. (Taipei, 1969), vol. I, p. 215.

18. *Chüan-chi*, p. 31.

19. Ch'en Hsi-ch'i, *T'ung-meng-hui ch'eng-li ch'ien ti Sun Chung-shan* (Sun Yat-sen before the founding of the T'ung Meng hui) (Canton, 1957), p. 2.

That the program was reasonable is reflected in earlier proposals by other leaders to create separatist regimes. The Hunanese South China Study Society envisioned a separatist Hunan which would hopefully provide the nucleus for a separatist state in the event that the powers partitioned China.<sup>20</sup> No less important a unitary thinker than Liang Ch'i-ch'ao was involved in this plan, and in 1897 Liang addressed a memorial to the governor of Hunan, suggesting that if the court did not support reform, Hunan should secede.<sup>21</sup> During the Boxer troubles, T'ang Ts'ai-ch'ang, under the banner of the Independence Association, advanced such a plan to the southern viceroys.<sup>22</sup> The rationality of separatism is further demonstrated by political events between 1911 and 1927. What in fact occurred was a series of independent southern regimes founded on provincialism and integrative regional factors.

Sun's separatist aims, like all of his goals, were closely tied to the search for French assistance. He believed that in the period immediately after the foundation of a southern separatist state, European funds could be relied upon to develop the natural resources of the area, as well as its transportation and communication; with the aid of European advisers, a viable modern state could be constructed. When Sun offered the French open-ended concessions, he saw the offer not as the necessary price of French assistance, but as a positive advantage for the proposed state.

Racial anti-Manchuism and a Han separatist state provide the two aspects of Sun's instrumental ideology. All that remains is the tactical program by which he intended to create the state. The third element was Sun's "southern strategy." The essence of this strategy was repeated military actions in the south, based on existing local unrest, in order to gain a base area. The separatist regime was most often projected to be centered upon Canton.<sup>23</sup> Although Sun seems never to have elucidated the fundamental assumptions of the southern strategy, several are obvious. One was certainly that the south offered better tactical possibilities than did the north. Many agreed with this decision, although they differed with Sun in every other regard, because northern risings were consistently costly

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20. K.S. Liew, *Struggle for Democracy: Sung Chiao-jen and the 1911 Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 14-15.

21. Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), p. 126.

22. Joseph Wharton Esherick, "Reform, Revolution and Reaction, The Chinese Revolution of 1911 in Hunan and Hupei," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1971), p. 42.

23. AOM, Indochine, B11 (36) carton 33, no. 1, "Interview."

failures.

The decision to concentrate on the south offered Sun many advantages. One was the relationship with the French. Until Sun's ties to them were severed in 1908, the French offered him a sure refuge in the event of failure, modern channels of communications with overseas followers, and immediate support from the French expansionist community which would have been a crucial factor in widening any foothold he might have obtained.

Another obvious factor, one of major importance, was the language problem. Most south Chinese, like Sun and his entourage, (with the exception of Huang Hsing) spoke Cantonese. In the provinces further north, the communications barrier and local suspicions of such audibly obvious outsiders would have greatly restricted Sun's movements.

Another important factor was that in the south Sun could stay in close contact with his forces without endangering his life. Sun personally participated in only one of the frontier risings, that at Chen-nan kuan. There he was exposed to sporadic and long-range enemy fire. After their eventful but safe participation in the action, Sun asked Hu Han-min if he, too, did not feel that the whole episode had been quite dangerous. Hu replied that it had been, but that revolutionaries could not worry about their own lives.<sup>24</sup> Sun showed a high regard for his own security and only the south of China offered an adjoining sanctuary from which to direct operations.

Another premise of the southern strategy was the base area concept. Simply, this called for seizing and consolidating a base in the region farthest from effective Ch'ing control and eventually enlarging it. This was a strategy followed by many earlier rebels, enshrined in popular novels like *Water Margin* and in the more abstruse references to military geography in classical sources. It was also the strategy later followed by Mao Tse-tung.

The base area was one of the three tactical programs most often envisioned by Chinese revolutionaries. To many, the plan had the defect of permitting the enemy to concentrate his forces against the base, and this was indeed the eventual fate of all of Sun's temporary footholds, and of Mao's as well until the Japanese invasion altered tactical conditions. The concept preferred by most revolutionaries was the simultaneous general rising,<sup>25</sup> which made its

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24. Hu Han-min, *Nan-yang yü Chung-kuo ke-ming* (Southeast Asia and the Chinese Revolution), KMTA 002/39, first series, p. 10.

25. See *Min Pao*, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 1, for a discussion of these alternatives.

reappearance as the "Li Li-san line" during the Communist revolution. The advantage of this approach was that it would divide and exhaust the forces of counter-revolution. Some have believed that this was also Sun's underlying tactical program and that the series of risings in the frontier were intended by a sort of demonstration effect to spark risings elsewhere in such numbers that they could not all be suppressed. When Sun explained his plans to his French allies, it was to his advantage to present as detailed and optimistic a plan as possible. He always expressed it in terms of first creating a base, and then expanding that area into a separatist regime.

The third strategy which suggested itself to revolutionaries was to seize large urban centers, preferably the capital itself. This was clearly impractical but probably discussed because it was the pattern presented by European revolutionary models, and particularly by the French revolution.

As revealed in Sun's actions before the revolution by his ties to French imperialists, and his concept of the two-stage revolution, Sun believed that power was to be seized, not to be created. To elaborate upon this distinction, contrast Sun's approach with that of Mao Tse-tung. Sun thought foremost of gaining control of the formal institutions of power, of seizing the reins of government in a restricted area. Mao thought of power as something that one created in the hinterland, almost obviating the necessity of seizing it at the top level. When Mao was ready, he had a virtually complete alternative regime which replaced that of the Kuomintang with relatively little effort. The organization had previously been created and the ultimate goals institutionalized in the revolutionary organization itself. Sun, however, believed the period of "destruction" to be merely preliminary to the exercise of power.

The approaches which Sun used in the two stages of the revolution provoke generalization. In the first stage, Sun used essentially traditional methods to gain power. He used premobilized secret societies and bandit gangs without infusing them with any elaborate political program, because he depended upon his patriarchal authority and the personal loyalty of his followers. The method and the goal were traditional: to take a city, to establish a government. After this had been achieved, scholars—not Confucians but returned students—would come to submit to his authority and help him to create a modern state, as symbolized by the Three People's Principles.

## IV

# Sun's Organization in the Frontier

Until quite recently, there was an orthodox view of the revolution of 1911 which stressed the leadership and control of Sun Yat-sen over the revolutionary process. This view was promulgated by revolutionaries who had close ties to Sun himself, men like Feng Tzu-yu, and by later Kuomintang historians and the Western scholars who relied upon their works. Because the Communist Chinese historians also accepted the primacy of Sun, there were only minor differences between KMT and CCP historians on Sun's importance. This interpretation has it that Sun created both the organization and the ideology which were directly responsible for the success of the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

There is also a consensus, particularly among the supporters of this construction but also among its increasingly numerous detractors, that the T'ung Meng Hui was the successful culmination of Sun's search for a viable organizational vehicle with which to pursue revolution. Criticisms of this orthodox explanation of the revolution have been accumulating for many years. They have thus far taken essentially two forms. First, a denial that the T'ung Meng Hui was in fact instrumental in precipitating the revolution in 1911. This attack is frequently coupled with an analysis which stresses the importance of other groups, such as the provincial assemblies or the New Army soldiery. The second broad attack has been to de-emphasize the stability and unity of the T'ung Meng Hui and the degree to which Sun was able to exercise continuous control.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I have relied heavily for both terminology and analysis of the "orthodox" position upon Winston Hsieh's *Chinese Historiography on the Revolution of 1911* (Stanford, 1975). My own view is that the rigid view of the T'ung Meng Hui as central agent in the revolution is a direct consequence of the efforts of Sun and his immediate followers to create a political myth in support of his claims to leadership. For an early statement of this claim, see KMTA 030/245, Teng Mu-han, Chuan-chi, p. 23. The myth was then further promulgated by KMT historians, particularly in Feng Tzu-yu's many volumes, and then maintained as a consequence of the need to emphasize the legitimacy of Chiang K'ai-shek as heir to the founding father. The myth has thus become well embedded in orthodox party history. See Tsou Lu, ed., *Chung-kuo Kuo-min-tang shih-kao* (Draft history of the KMT) (Taiwan, 1960), p. 36 ff., for perhaps the purest expression of this school.

2. See K.S. Liew, *Struggle for Democracy* (Berkeley, 1971).

Evidence and analyses now exist for validating these criticisms of the previously accepted interpretation. An analysis of Sun's activities in the frontier and his ties to French expansionists requires that the process of criticism be taken yet one step farther. The successive organizations with which Sun was involved, including the T'ung Meng Hui, were not central to his approach to the revolution. Any approach which sees Sun's organizational ties as primary to his career obscures the true nature of his involvement in the revolution. As Sun saw little direct connection between the pre- and post-revolutionary periods, he did not value organizations as important political devices to be maintained over a long period. His use of organizations was discontinuous; he tended to rely upon them when they were useful and to ignore them when they were not.

In arguing this point here, we shall concentrate upon only one of Sun's many organizational groupings, the T'ung Meng Hui, and upon it only during the years from 1905 to 1908.<sup>3</sup>

The T'ung Meng Hui was founded in Tokyo in 1905. In that year, spurred by a sense of imminent danger to China and by the increased potential for revolutionary action presented by the turmoil in south China, the student groups in Japan sought to create an anti-monarchy front which would bring together previous groups. The group was organized at the initiative of Sun Yat-sen and Huang Hsing, then leader of the Hua-hsing hui in Hunan.<sup>4</sup> Huang was, of course, to become Sun's field commander and a major figure in the revolution. The T'ung Meng Hui's makeup and character are well-known, and there is no need to repeat additional generalities here.<sup>5</sup> The nature of the organization and its relationship to Sun Yat-sen's

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3. There is little point in a close analysis of the Hsing-chung hui, the predecessor of the TMH and the first group which Sun is said to have founded in 1894. There has long been general agreement that this organization was traditional and loosely organized, composed of Overseas Chinese bound to Sun by personal ties. Its members had a low level of ideological commitment and no real view of a future society. The group is often said to have been an imperfect forerunner to the TMH, which supposedly corrected the numerous shortcomings of the Hsing-chung hui. In truth, the Hsing-chung hui was defunct from shortly after the 1900 Waichow rising.

4. Sung Chiao-jen, *Wo-chih li-shih* (History of my life) (Taipei, 1962), p. 68.

5. See George T. Yu, *Party Politics in Republican China* (Berkeley, 1966); Chün-tu Hsüeh, *Huang Hsing and the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford, 1961); Huang Chen-wu, *Hua-ch'iao yü Chung-kuo ke-ming* (The Overseas Chinese and the Chinese Revolution) (Taipei, 1963); Tsou Lu, ed., *Chung-kuo Kuo-min-tang Shih-kao* (Taipei, 1960), pp. 469 passim; KFNP, vol. I, p. 201; Shelley Ch'eng, "The T'ung Meng Hui: Its Organization, Leadership and Finances, 1905-1912" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1962).



career can best be illuminated by analysis of Sun's activities following its founding.

The first action in which the T'ung Men Hui is said to have been involved was the P'ing-liu-li rising in Hunan-Kiangsi in 1906.<sup>6</sup> It has been solely the involvement of a single T'ung Meng Hui member, Liu Tao-i which has provided the only basis for this claim. Neither the organization *qua* organization, nor Sun Yat-sen, were involved.

The first opportunities to analyze Sun's interactions with the T'ung Meng Hui came in 1906 and 1907. The episodes began with Sun's involvements with the French, described below. Briefly, Sun's purpose was to take advantage of the continuing strife in the south and, with the French support, secure and deliver the weapons which would guarantee both his influence and a rebel victory, as he had envisaged in his plan for 1900 and 1903. French intelligence officers traveled through south China, with radicals selected by Sun, to gather information to be passed on to French intelligence, and to evaluate the desirability of open aid to Sun, then being advocated by powerful elements of the French metropolitan government and the *colon* community in Indochina. The French officers became convinced that Sun had put together an extensive ad hoc organization and that he had an excellent chance of creating the southern separatist regime, which was his immediate goal. This radical organization, or coalition of organizations, provides some insights, if frustratingly restricted ones, into Sun's use of organization in 1906 and 1907.

The limitations of the evidence in this area must be made clear at the outset. Although the analysis incorporates corroborative evidence from Chinese sources, the bulk of the information comes from French military reports. It was much to the advantage of Sun and his supporters to exaggerate the extent of the forces which they could raise, as well as the cohesion of the various groups. Some of the claims of Sun's French supporters that the organization had "millions" of adherents must clearly be discounted. These exaggerations are partially compensated for by the likelihood that had Sun secured direct French financing and access to modern weapons, the ranks of his followers would have indeed been swollen by tens of thousands of fresh converts, attracted either by the prospect of regular pay and a modern weapon, or by genuine antipathy to the Manchu regime.

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6. Esherick, p. 104; Jerome Ch'en, pp. 7, 24; George T. Yu, p. 52; Mary Backus Rankin, p. 41.

As Sun's plans for risings in 1906 and 1907 directly involved French support (a fact which those closely involved in the plans had to know), the young T'ung Meng Hui students, anti-foreign, romantic and impetuous, had to be excluded from the coalition created for the rising. By 1906, student opinion had made the link between imperialism and the need for revolution. Some members of the T'ung Meng Hui are mentioned by the French officers, but it seems probable that those students were in fact primarily members of secret societies.

Sun's failure to fully involve the T'ung Meng Hui students in his plans for the projected 1906 rising was a consequence of his close ties to the French and his long-term distrust of students. The emphasis placed on the student membership of the T'ung Meng Hui and its putative modernity has obscured Sun's genuine distrust of students. Sun felt they were unreliable and impractical, and most useful not in the revolution itself but in the construction of a modern state after the success of the revolution. Replying to a question from students in Paris in 1905 whom he was trying to persuade to join the T'ung Meng Hui, Sun suggested that they should not return home to labor for the revolution—the stance also taken by Hu Han-min and Wang Ching-wei in the T'ung Meng Hui controversy precipitated in 1905 by the suicide of Ch'en T'ien-hua—but should pursue their studies, become Ch'ing officials, and use their status to lead people toward a revolutionary attitude.<sup>7</sup>

After several students in Brussels did join the group, they became concerned over their impetuosity and rifled Sun's baggage to get evidence of his activities to turn over to the Chinese embassy. Sun then decided that not just these students but all students had betrayed him. Berating them, he said he had always known that "book-readers" could not become revolutionaries, and that students were far inferior to the secret societies as activists.<sup>8</sup> A report of a personal conversation that took place in 1904 between Sun and Chu Ho-chung also evidences this distrust of students:

While we were talking, Sun asked me, since I advocated revolution, what did I think was the proper way to achieve it? I replied that it would be best to proceed by converting the New Style armies and the intellectuals. Sun disagreed, he said that intellectuals were incapable of reform and that the new army could not revolt . . . Sun

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7. KFNP, vol. I, p. 190.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

considered the secret societies to be the most reliable forces.<sup>9</sup>

Sun's failure to involve the T'ung Meng Hui in his plans for 1906 raises a major question: If the group involved was not the T'ung Meng Hui, what then was it? French reports indicate that the organization was a loose coalition of secret societies, including the Ko-lao hui (recruited no doubt by Huang Hsing, himself a *lung-t'ou* [Dragon Head] in the society), Triad groups, the Large and Small Knife societies, and the Red Lanterns. The entire group was described to the French by Huang Hsing as the "T'ung Meng Hui, a coalition of secret societies created in Tokyo in 1905."<sup>10</sup> At least one of the French officers in the field was aware, however, that the T'ung Men Hui was a separate organization. He reports meeting with both society members and an occasional T'ung Meng Hui member, one of whom was a teacher in a secondary school and probably, therefore, a returned student.<sup>11</sup> The French reports, and those of an English spy who stole the notes of one of the touring French officers, all indicate that the heart of the coalition was the Ko-lao hui.<sup>12</sup> These reports are all in accord with the known facts about the society. In Changsha one of the officers, Captain Ozil, met a *lung-t'ou* dispatched by Huang Hsing who then explained to him the nature of the group. The man, a merchant, said that the society was divided into three groups; one styled the "Red," composed of poorly-armed brigands and *routiers*; and the "Blue" and the "Black," undifferentiated in the report, but said to be of higher social status and better armed than the Red.<sup>13</sup>

In all attempts to deal with the vast and complex system of secret societies in Ch'ing China, it has been difficult to assess the unity of the groups in question. The Ko-lao hui seems to have been not a single group but a coalition of groups differentiated by economic status and function. Charlton Lewis has taken note of this ambiguity in his article, "Some Notes on the Ko-lao Hui in late

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9. *Ke-ming wen-hsien* (Documents on the revolution) KMT, 3 vols. (Taipei, 1953-58), Vol. II, p. 256.

10. EMA, carton 7n1676, Intelligence Service, China, to Ministry of War, 9/2/06.

11. *Ibid.*

12. It is very likely that the groups with which Sun and his French supporters were in contact were at least in part tied to the earlier P'ing-liu-li rising. This is only a partial identification of the groups, however, as the French officers met with groups well outside the geographic area affected by the P'ing-liu-li affair.

13. EMA, carton 7n1676, Intelligence Service, China, to Ministry of War, 9/02/06.

Ch'ing China," but feels that the Red and the Green gangs were distinct but related groups.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, an anonymous manuscript in the KMT archives, one of several which appear to be copies of oral statements made by society members who preferred that their contribution to the historical record remain anonymous, refers to the Hung-pang or "Red Gang" as a branch of the Ko-lao hui.<sup>15</sup>

It is also clear that the societies with which Sun was allied had many members from the upper strata of Chinese society. Ozil reported from Changsha that the groups contained "merchants" and "notables" as well as coolies.<sup>16</sup> A report from the French Captain Vaudescal in Nanking indicated that the majority of the members he met were mandarins and army officers and that there seemed to be no merchants or common people.<sup>17</sup> Again these French reports accord with other opinions about the southern societies.

In Chinese rural society, with its complex interlocking groups, gentry members were often linked through temple or kinship groups to members of the secret societies. There are many examples of gentry cooperation with the societies. As the larger Chinese political structure crumbled and political relationships with the central government became less advantageous, local functional groupings like the societies became more useful to both gentry and peasantry. The major obstacle to gentry participation in the societies, status conflicts, could be avoided if the societies had class groupings which reflected differences within the larger social system, groupings such as those mentioned in the French reports.

French reports from the extreme south are less thorough, but do indicate that a high proportion of the conspirators were New Army personnel. The contacts between Sun and the soldiers were initiated possibly through secret society intermediaries as the ranks of the New Army were heavily infiltrated by *hui-tang* (society) members.<sup>18</sup>

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14. Charlton M. Lewis, "Some Notes on the Ko-lao hui in late Ch'ing China," in Jean Chesneux, ed., *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in Ch'ing China* (Stanford, 1972).

15. KMTA 002/30, "Nan-yang Hua-ch'iao yü ke-ming" (The Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and the revolution of 1911) Ms., Anon., (received at the KMT *Chung-yang wei-yuan-hui* in 1932). A first-person account by an anonymous society member, seemingly from Vietnam. Ca. 100 pages, no pagination.

16. EMA carton 7n1676, Intelligence Service, China, to Ministry of War, 12/20/05.

17. *Ibid.*, "Concerning Captain Vaudescal, Hankow," 12/20/05.

18. See AOM B11 (37), carton 34, 1/06/08; *Nan-yang hua-ch'iao yü Ke-ming*, p. 14 passim; see also Charlton Lewis, p. 99.

The inherent fragility of a multi-class grouping, be it the Ko-lao hui or the T'ung Meng Hui, is apparent. No single group is able to encompass all of the interests of all its members. Such coalitions were particularly vulnerable to conflicts arising from socio-economic differences. These groups were vulnerable, not only to internal dissension, but also to outside interests such as the government which could appeal to one group at the expense of others. This was in part the fate of Sun's coalition in 1906. The gentry members had been drawn into the coalition, at least in part, out of concern for the future of the Chinese state under foreign impact. This concern did not extend to the surrender of gentry influence and prestige, however. Gentry members were from the outset uneasy about their own future should lower-class activists predominate. When the Court evidenced a commitment to reforms which would expand gentry influence, the upper-status members defected and the coalition collapsed. Other pressures upon the coalition included the Court's intensive and bloody program of suppression, as well as the ultimate loss of French support.

Sun's involvements in the south of China, operating in the frontier with French assistance from Tonkin, also demonstrated the unimportance of the T'ung Meng Hui to his approach to the revolution. If there were validity to the conventional picture of the T'ung Meng Hui, then the "Vietnam branches" of the group must have been its primary element. It was from Hanoi that Sun planned the risings of 1907. And after he was expelled in January of 1908, it was from there that his followers conducted traditional actions. The money contributed to the revolution by the Chinese residents of Vietnam cannot be estimated, due to the complex and mysterious ways in which Sun secured and accounted for his funds, but it must have been an appreciable portion of the total. Many Chinese from Vietnam were killed in the frontier risings and others served as military cadres after Sun's rise to leadership in 1912. The guards who died defending his *yamen* from Ch'en Chiung-ming's forces in Canton in 1922 were also Vietnamese *hua-ch'iao*.<sup>19</sup> The government organized by Sun's forces in Kwangtung in 1911 depended heavily upon Vietnamese Chinese to fill many major and minor posts, both civil and military.<sup>20</sup> The Vietnam branches of the T'ung Meng Hui thus merit scrutiny because of their importance to the Chinese revolution, as well as for the insights such an analysis provides concerning Sun's relationships with the T'ung Meng Hui and the French.

19. *Nan-yang hua-ch'iao yü ke-ming*, p. 58 passim.

20. *Ch'iao-Yüeh tang-shih*, p. 14.

Sun's ties to radicals in Vietnam predate the T'ung Meng Hui itself. In 1902 Sun traveled to Hanoi and, after meeting with a representative of the governor-general's office, sought out a local Cantonese anti-Manchu, Huang Lung-sheng. Huang apparently asked Sun to found a revolutionary organization and introduced him to other sympathizers who joined. Some sources have entitled this group the "Hsing Chung Hui" and suggest that in three years it then joined the Vietnam T'ung Meng Hui.<sup>21</sup> However, several contemporary sources drawn from the reports of the Vietnamese Chinese fail to mention any title for the group.<sup>22</sup> Given the moribund condition of the original Hsing Chung Hui and the lack of contemporary references to a group of that name in Vietnam, if Sun did use the title it seems to have been relatively unimportant. Among those who associated with Sun in 1902 were several men who were later to become important figures. One, Yang Shou-p'eng, was the Chief of the Cantonese Congregation (*pang-chang*) and the evidence very strongly indicates he was bribed by the French to pass information pertaining to Sun's actions.<sup>23</sup>

In 1902 Sun spent a total of six months in Vietnam. He met a great many *hua-ch'iao* in Saigon but there are no indications that any formal organization resulted. One of the Saigonese *hua-ch'iao*, Huang Ching-nan, was to become the central figure in the radical groups in Vietnam, both before and after the revolution. As a consequence of a quarrel between the worldwide Triad lodges and Sun in 1915, Huang was to take almost the entire membership of the Vietnamese group into Ch'en Chiung-ming's Triad-related party, the Chih-kung t'ang.<sup>24</sup>

In 1902 Sun also had ties with a group calling itself the "Iron and Blood Society," organized in Saigon. The group was meant to be a cadre of assassins who would strike against Ch'ing officials in south China, a tactic which Sun apparently advised them to forswear.<sup>25</sup>

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21. Feng Tzu-yu, *Ke-ming i-shih* (Unofficial history of the revolution), 5 vols. (Taipei, 1963), vol. IV, p. 18.

22. *Nan-yang hua-ch'iao yü ke-ming*, p. 55 passim.

23. See Jeffrey G. Barlow, "Vietnam and the Chinese Revolution of 1911" (Ph.D dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1973), pp. 226-227.

24. KMTA 407/37, "Yueh-nan Hsi-kung tsung-shih-pu wei ch'eng-li Chung-Hua Ke-ming tang chih-pu shang Tsung-li shu" (Letter to the Tsungli from the Saigon General Department on the establishment of the Chinese Revolutionary Party) Ms., (September 1916). Additional references to this affair in *Nan-yang Hua-ch'iao yü ke-ming*, p. 58 passim.

25. *Ch'iao-Yueh tang-shih*, pp. 3, 10; KMTA 230/1, "Tieh-hsüeh-li-shih" (History of the Iron and Blood Society), Ms., Anon, (1920).

The ties which Sun established in Vietnam in 1902 were personal and of little importance in the following several years. His next contact came in 1905 when he was briefly in Saigon en route from Marseilles to Tokyo. In France he had been closely involved with French expansionist leaders and had begun preparations for the intended large-scale risings in central and south China which were to be his primary concern during 1906. While in Saigon he had some limited contacts with his allies from 1902, but commented that although the radicals had a new interest in the revolution and some plans, they lacked both talented men and a knowledge of tactics.<sup>26</sup>

After the T'ung Meng Hui was founded, Sun returned to Saigon from Japan. En route he met with the representative of the French expansionists and made preliminary arrangements for French aid in the forthcoming risings. After arriving in Saigon on October 7, 1905, he met with the leaders of the radical Chinese community. At this point the conventional construction states that Sun founded the Saigon T'ung Meng Hui.<sup>27</sup> This is a persuasive explanation, not only because it is supported by widespread scholarly agreement, but also because it seems logical that Sun would immediately move to create a branch of the newly-founded coalition group wherever possible. Nonetheless, the Vietnam T'ung Meng Hui was a much more complex organism than the conventional explanation has suggested.

When Sun arrived in Vietnam in 1905, he found the remains of a decayed and fragmented Triad organization; it was from these elements that a succession of organizations was created by Sun.<sup>28</sup> At no time did these groups have the unity of purpose or organizational cohesion to merit the application of the title "Vietnam T'ung Meng Hui." It is apparent from the materials prepared by the Vietnamese *hua-ch'iao* and now in KMT files that the label "T'ung Meng Hui" became much more important to the Vietnam group after the victory than before the revolution. Even then, the 1915 defection led by Huang Ching-nan raises serious doubts as to the applicability of the

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26. KFCS, p. 362.

27. KFNP, vol. I, p. 205.

28. I accept Willmott's argument that in Cambodia there was a surprising absence of Chinese associations, including secret societies, because the French *congrégation* structure provided a functional equivalent which, having useful ties to the colonial regime, obviated the need for the societies and reduced their power where they were present. I assume, on the basis of very scanty evidence, that the politicization of the Chinese community in Vietnam, resulting from the radical upsurge in the mother country, provided them with a function which the *congrégation* could not serve: political mobilization. Hence the societies grew strong once again. See W. E. Willmott, *The Political Structure of the Chinese Community in Cambodia* (New York, 1970), Chap. 12.

term.

These groups did take on greater cohesion and an enhanced sense of identity as a result of the heightened political atmosphere prior to the revolution, but they did not simultaneously become more centralized and more disciplined in support of Sun Yat-sen. Rather, the organizations, whether revivals of older lodges or newly-created groups, tended to become internally more cohesive and externally more competitive. Several groups thus arose which were in general agreement on the necessity for revolution. Split by differing interests and the local chauvinisms of their members, who came from sharply divided geographic areas of Kwangtung, they constantly fell to wrangling, which disrupted the unity Sun desired.

Sun was to make repeated attempts to unify these groups, first in 1905, then again in 1907 and 1908, and more successfully in 1911. In 1905 Sun's initial efforts at consolidating the groups were largely unsuccessful. At least two organizations resulted from his work, or perhaps continued despite it. One of the groups was the *Ch'i-ming yüeh shu-pao she* (Arouse the Ming reading society). The more important organization (the one sometimes referred to as the 1905 T'ung Meng Hui) was the *Tsu-wu ching-lu* (Cottage of the essence of martial arts).<sup>29</sup> This group was not a new organization, as several sources indicate that it existed well before Sun's arrival.<sup>30</sup> Whether this group was a full but temporary consolidation of urban Triads, or merely the largest of the groups which chose to consolidate with Sun, is not clear. It is evident that, if the centralization process ever began, it had ceased by 1907 when Sun returned to Vietnam.

In 1907, after he was expelled from Japan, Sun went to Saigon. He made some arrangements with the French and their Chinese contacts, then moved on to Hanoi where he established a command post for the planned risings on the frontier. Shortly after his arrival he sent emissaries, led by Wang Ching-wei, back to Saigon for the purpose of reorganizing the groups there. Teng Mu-han states in one source that it was at this time that the Saigon T'ung Meng Hui was founded, thus seeming to confirm the ambiguous nature of the putative 1905 foundation.<sup>31</sup> At this time several groups are mentioned but whether they were the pre-existing factionalized groups, or were new groups created in an attempt to minimize the in-fighting, is not

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29. *Ch'iao-Yüeh tang-shih*, pp. 34, 35, 42; KFNP, vol. I, P. 205; *Nan-yang hua-ch'iao yü ke-ming*, p. 53 passim.

30. KMTA 322/26, Teng Mu-han, "Yueh-nan nan-ti Chung-kuo T'ung meng hui" (The T'ung Meng Hui of Southern Vietnam) Ms., (undated).

31. *Ibid.*



clear.<sup>32</sup> The history of the 1907 reorganization is very chaotic. All that can safely be said is that the 1905 trip clearly had not resulted in any central revolutionary organization which could be called the T'ung Meng Hui. The 1907 reorganization was no more successful, for in 1911 Hu Han-min tried once more to unify the contending groups.<sup>33</sup>

Lacking clear evidence, we can only speculate on the causes of the repeated failures to cooperate mentioned above. It is likely that both internal and external factors were responsible. Split perhaps by differing local loyalties, the groups never cooperated internally. The evidence does indicate that the groups were composed of members united on a broad basis by origin in Kwangtung.

Sun himself never offered appeals which might have subsumed these differences. At the same time, he expected the organizations to collect funds and individuals drawn from all the groups to serve as soldiers.

It is quite likely that whatever socio-economic differences may have existed between the groups were probably exacerbated as the imminence of the revolution began to break down their original consensus on the need for and the nature of the revolution. We know, for example, that Sun had some quite wealthy supporters in the earlier period in Vietnam, but they eventually dropped out of the movement. They were most probably repelled because Sun's support came increasingly from the lower classes, and by the actual practice of revolution, as opposed to the theoretical discussions in which they had earlier engaged. Only the poorest among the early radicals, Huang Ching-nan, stayed in the group and rose to prominence. Hu Han-min also affirms that while Sun had had good contacts with the compradores in the early period, and had toned down his radical rhetoric so as not to alienate them, they too later became opposed to the revolution.<sup>34</sup>

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32. *Ch'iao-Yüeh tang-shih*, p. 3.

33. *Ch'iao-Yüeh tang-shih*, p. 37; KMTA 23/1350, "Hu Han-min mi-mi ke-ming shih-lüeh" (The secret revolutionary history of Hu Han-min) Ms., Anon, (undated); KMTA 230/1394, "Huang Ching-nan shih-lüeh" (The matter of Huang Ching-nan), *Ch'iao-Yüeh tang-shih*, p. 37, lists the three groups as the Wei-sheng She (The health society), the Chung-hsing She (The China prospers society), and the Chiang-hsueh She (Speech and study society). These groups were said to have about the same political line but were unable to cooperate. The result of Hu Han-min's efforts in 1911 was the creation of another consolidated organization, the Hsing-jen She (Humanitarian society). Huang Ching-nan was elected head. It soon became a branch of the KMT.

34. Hu Han-min, second series, p. 2.

Externally, the groups within Vietnam were split by the series of factional quarrels which divided the T'ung Meng Hui in general. The open conflict beginning in 1908 between Sun and the Kuang-fu hui was particularly corrosive in Vietnam, as were the later struggles mentioned above between Sun and the Triads.

Several patterns emerge from Sun's relationship with the Vietnamese radical organizations. He was concerned with them only when he was physically present. When engaged elsewhere, he ignored them and then upon returning found it necessary to undertake yet another "reorganization." This does not mean that the groups existed only while Sun was present. On the contrary, they were active throughout the period from 1900 until long after 1911. Rather, it was only when Sun had pressing needs for immediate support, funds, or soldiers that he undertook to reorganize the groups.

# V

## French Motivations

French interests in Asia long before and long after the Chinese revolution of 1911 centered primarily upon Indochina; French aspirations and concerns for Vietnam were integral to their relationship with Sun. The French had important additional concerns, however, which bore upon their ties to Sun Yat-sen.

French interests in Vietnam had from the first been related directly to plans for expansion into south China. The French were motivated by the common imperialist goal of economic gain. Secondary motivations included attempts to check British colonial expansion and the protection of French nationals in China. In this complex of interests, the frontier provinces adjoining Tonkin were naturally the center of attention. Of these provinces, Yunnan seemed of primary importance. These observations of a French intelligence officer in 1899 might summarize French hopes for all of south China:

Yunnan abounds in minerals of all kinds. Iron is the most common metal, followed by copper, tin, zinc, lead, cinabar and silver. Gold can be found, especially in the bed of the Yangtze river.

Precious stones have been noted, rubies, topaz, sapphires, emeralds and several unusual varieties of jade.

The alluvial terrain is in general suitable for all kinds of farming. Almost all the products of Europe are cultivated on the plateaus and in the south one encounters all those of the tropic zone.<sup>1</sup>

After France had extorted from China treaties which satisfactorily recognized French rights in China and delineated the borders between Tonkin and China, the French undertook a new phase of expansion. This phase was marked by a greater emphasis upon French governmental sponsorship of railway and mining companies. Railway development soon acquired the very highest priority.

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1. AOM, Indochine, B11 (29), carton 32, Etat-Major of the troops in Indochina, 2nd Bureau, Intelligence, "Notes on Yunnan," 12/15/1899.

Official sponsorship of railway construction firms and their attempts to gain concessions in China tied into French imperial aspirations in several ways. One was the almost symbolic appeal of getting in ahead of the British in the "imperial competition." Second was an attempt to realize the very tangible political and economic benefits which would accrue to the nation sponsoring the construction of Chinese railways and managing them after completion. The French government was also frequently moved by intensive pressures from domestic commercial interests.

Paul Doumer, governor-general of Indochina from February 1897, to March 1902, the man who initiated ties with Sun Yat-sen, was the major architect of the railway program for French Indochina that, if successfully extended, would have included south China as well. Doumer could not secure legislative approval in Tonkin for his entire program, which called for more than two thousand miles of track in Vietnam alone. His grand design was only partially realized by his successors. By 1905 the Hanoi-Langson line with an extension to the Kwangsi border covered only 102 miles. The Hanoi-Laokay line covered an additional 68 miles, with a later 50 mile advance toward Yunnan-fu (Kunming).<sup>2</sup>

France hoped eventually to use the Vietnam railways and their extensions into China to create one vast commercial area of south China and French Indochina. This area, spurred by French railways, would develop into a source of raw materials, such as the minerals of Yunnan, and would simultaneously become a market for French finished products. The area would become both France's India and her Hong Kong.<sup>3</sup>

Doumer had the support of portions of the French bureaucracy in his attempt to build the comprehensive railway net; but his term of office covered a period when the interest of other important sections of the official community was fading. The railway schemes were not a personal caprice of Doumer, but a policy which later lost its initial support. One reason why Doumer and other expansionists were moved to the extreme measure of supporting Chinese revolutionaries was their hope of regaining the initiative for French railway development and protecting the huge investment of time, energy, and personal prestige which they had made. The Yunnan line, in particular, is an example of this investment. The 1898 concession

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2. FO 405/162, Southwest China, Part VII, no. 157, p. 141, Consul-General Scott to Marquess of Lansdowne, Canton, 8/01/05.

3. See Secret Instructions to Doumer, AOM A11 (9), carton 3, "Very Confidential."

agreements secured for the French many of the prerequisites for their planned railway extension, including the lease-hold of Kwangchouwan and railway and mining rights in south China as well as the promise that territory in Yunnan, Kwangsi and Kwangtung would never be alienated to a country other than France.<sup>4</sup>

French financiers were not enthusiastic over construction in China, a country which seemed to them to be too unstable. Paul Doumer, the minister of finance under Leon Bourgeois before becoming governor-general, used his connections in the banking community to arrange financing. The contract for the most important section of the new line, that from Laokay in Tonkin to Yunnan-fu, was awarded to La Société de Chemin de Fer Indo-Chinois.<sup>5</sup> The company was also instrumental in the relationship with Sun, supporting him long after other French groups lost interest.

This discussion of railway concessions, mining rights, and the general expansionist program for Vietnam and south China must not be taken to depict a monolithic effort mounted with careful advanced planning and consistent determination. There were many important differences within the expansionist community on questions of tactics and geographic areas of concentration, and important changes within the group over time. Moreover, individual personalities are involved and seem frequently to have been more important than any general policy line laid down in Paris.

As the Frenchmen who supported Sun Yat-sen were members of several different elements of the expansionist community, an analysis of these groups and their evolution is crucial to an understanding of Sun's ties to the French. Individuals supporting the expansionist program for China held positions in the various levels of the French government, army, and economic community, both in Asia and in Metropolitan France. The foreign affairs bureaucracy was headed by the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, or the Quai d'Orsay. Directly responsible for colonial areas was the Ministère des Colonies, theoretically co-equal to the Quai, but in fact subordinate. In Vietnam, the primary administrator was the governor-general in Hanoi who was directly responsible to the Ministry of Colonies. He was also an important link with French consuls in south China until the French legation in Peking became more important prior to 1911.

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4. Tyler Dennet, *Americans in East Asia* (New York, 1963), pp. 603-4, p. 50.

5. Chang T'ien-hsu, *Fa-kuo yü An-nan* (France and Vietnam), (date and place of publication unknown—post 1936). Academia Sinica, Modern History Library, Taiwan, pp. 5-6

There were frequent differences at all these levels of the bureaucracy with regard to French colonial expansion in Asia. The most notable split was between the local administrations in Indochina, led by the governor-general and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Colonies seems to have been inconsistent and frequently engaged in mediating differences between the Quai and Indochina.

The various levels of the army were also riven by differences with regard to expansion. In Indochina, the army was under the command of the governor-general. At the top of the military hierarchy in Paris was the Ministère de la Guerre. Another important level was the Expeditionary Force in Peking, representing the French military presence in China. There were various sharp differences between the army in Peking and in Indochina. In general, the location of an administrative function in either Peking or Indochina was a critical determinant of its attitude; the Indochinese segment consistently adopted a more expansive and adventurous line. Another level of the military, the Service des Renseignements (or Intelligence) is discussed below.

Another center of expansionist sentiment lay within the French financial and economic community. Foremost among these interest were the large railways and banks and the chambers of commerce of the great ports. Mining and metallurgical interests were also important. These groups had their spokesmen in the Metropole and in Indochina.

As in all modern industrial nations, the commercial, banking, industrial, and political circles of France were closely related. Many important political figures had extensive ties with colonial interests, and the boards of directors of major banks and commercial firms contained many names of prominent members of the *Parti Coloniale*, the loose group of individuals and interest groups best described as the expansionist lobby.<sup>6</sup>

In Indochina, the center of the expansionist camp was the *colon* community, a group usually in favor of increasing French influence in China regardless of means. The attitude of the *colons* was later tempered by apprehension generated by Vietnamese anti-colonialism, but prior to 1908 they were generally supportive of the further extension of French interests. The *colons* were, of course, tied to mercantile and banking interests in Vietnam, and they also included many demobilized veterans, local administrators, adventurers,

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6. Henri Brunschwig, *French Colonialism 1871-1914* (London, 1964), p. 156.

shopkeepers, planters and plantation personnel. One British consul characterized the *colons* as "perhaps the least enlightened and educated portion of the whole French empire."<sup>7</sup>

From 1900 to 1911, elements of the above groups formed a community of interest in support of the expansion of French power in south China. Their goal was the formation of the market area described above, or some variant of it. These men usually acted with the knowledge and tacit support of the official community, but sometimes without it. It is this group, referred to here as the "Forward Party," which supported Sun Yat-sen as a tool for extending their interests. The Forward Party cannot be regarded as a tightly knit conspiratorial group, but as a community of opinion whose composition, but not goal, changed over time.

The climate of French opinion with respect to expansion responded to varying influences during the period up to 1911, and there were many changes within and between the groups which generally supported colonial expansion. The most important factor related to Franco-German tensions. The major question of French policy from 1874 to 1914 was whether to commit French resources to a war of revenge against Germany (or to prepare for what was regarded as an inevitable German attack), or to emphasize colonial expansion at the expense of a continental policy of defense.

If one examines the important political shifts on the issue of continental policy vs. colonial policy, rather than the continuity between such shifts,<sup>8</sup> it is evident that the major characteristic of the 1890 to 1914 era was political uncertainty. During this period there were elements of the pro- and anti-colonial groups simultaneously in power at the highest levels. No bureaucrat could afford a decisive commitment on any given issue, since a policy shift might suddenly favor the other side. Therefore, politicians made ad hoc decisions based on their perception of the political balance and the probability of being called to account.

This situation had its hazards for expansionists but it also presented advantages. The French supporters of Sun Yat-sen acted at a time when the climate of opinion was neither absolutely opposed nor absolutely in favor of their goals. Some must have seen this uncertainty as an obstacle tending to encourage inaction. For others,

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7. FO 405/115, III, p. 8. Acting Consul Carey to Marquess of Lansdown, Ssumao, 9/07/01.

8. See Jean Ganiage, *L'Expansion Coloniale de la France* (Paris, 1968), p. 15; Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France*, 3 vols. (Baltimore, 1970), III, p. 98.

however, this very lack of agreement favored audacious individual initiative. If there was not strong support for an extension of French interests into south China, neither was there yet concerted and consistent opposition.

In general, French policy toward China from 1890 to the fall of the dynasty in 1911 evolved from a commitment to expansion at Chinese expense to a policy which advocated coming to terms with the Ch'ing. Several general stages can be discerned in the evolution of this policy, although they cannot be said to be completely exclusive. The rapacious and overt imperialism of the years before 1900 was curtailed by the Boxer Rebellion. This outbreak demonstrated that, while the Chinese were still militarily inferior, the costs of warfare had mounted out of proportion to the advantages to be gained. After 1900, the Europeans refused to relinquish acquired privileges. Subsequent expansion consisted of incremental additions to prior gains, due to a reluctance again to provoke popular anti-foreignism.

By 1905, it was evident that railway and mining concessions were not as remunerative as had been hoped and that the Chinese government was increasing its resistance to such exploitation. The government was, however, showing a greater interest in centrally-directed development which would employ large amounts of European capital. From about 1905 to about 1911, China and the European powers, particularly France, began to move to a mutually acceptable understanding.

The evolution of this policy can be seen not only in terms of inter-governmental relations but also in attitudes toward the Chinese revolutionary movement in Tonkin and south China. Until about 1907, elements such as those which supported Sun had adequate room to maneuver, often with the covert aid of portions of the French government. By 1908 the pressures of events, both in Indochina and Europe, began to make the support of Sun prohibitively risky. From that point French interests evolved until they dictated support not of anti-Manchu revolutionaries but of the throne. France thus became a supporter of the status quo in China. This policy was greatly influenced by the relative increase in strength of the Vietnamese anti-colonial movement, and also by measures taken by the Chinese themselves. Chinese military progress after 1900 made foreign military encroachment increasingly less feasible. French military opinion in Indochina was particularly alarmed by these developments. By 1908 the army and the *colons* were openly concerned about the outcome of any war with China. One French



military mission reported:

The Chinese government has decided to as quickly as possible form two divisions of New Army in Kwangtung and one in Kwangsi. The Provincial defense forces of the two provinces will be reorganized at the same time. It would seem that these measures are dictated by the need to counter the insurrectionary movement, but it appears also to be inspired by a desire to oppose militarily all whims of intervention by foreign powers. In the current nervous state of the Chinese government, any incident on the frontier could take a disagreeable turn.<sup>9</sup>

After 1905, a more conciliatory French attitude in relations with China began to be evident. This change in attitude, and the alliance with England caused by French fears of Germany, made the French more willing to move slowly. This attitude was not a complete reversal of earlier expansionist programs but rather a greater reliance upon mutually profitable arrangements. Despite the generally unfavorable turn of policy, the extreme expansionists were not driven from the field. They adapted their arguments to account for the failure to realize earlier grandiose expectations, emphasized new methods, and called for greater commitment.<sup>10</sup>

There were to be repeated statements of the extreme expansionist position long after the tide of opinion had begun to change. One such expression come from a *colon* paper of 1908:

Why are we letting such an opportunity pass to develop at one time our commerce and industry? Because fear of failure has paralyzed the will of timid souls, because the penetration of south China has detractors who point out that neighboring provinces are not the most fertile or commercial of the Chinese empire and are not suitable for indefinite development as is the valley of the Yangtze.

This is true, but it must not be forgotten that the area was depopulated and ravaged by the T'ai P'ing rebellion and is now slowly recovering. Opening new communications would certainly hasten the economic recovery of the area.<sup>11</sup>

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9. AOM B11 (37), carton 34, Military Attaché, Peking, 1/06/08.

10. See Jeffrey G. Barlow, "Viet-nam and the Chinese Revolution of 1911," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1973), pp. 301-304.

11. *La Rappel* (Paris), "L'Avenir de L'Indochine," 6/17/08.

Although considerably challenged by the trend of opinion, the Forward Policy did not die. French officialdom began to move away from open support, but this movement was by no means unanimous and to contemporaries it did not seem inevitable. Movement at the top was also less meaningful than it might have been because the extremists had never been centered at the formal policy-making level. The most enthusiastic advocates of expansion were rather at the local level, in the army, diplomatic corps, and among the civilian community in Indochina. These men knew that Indochina had originally been acquired almost despite Paris, by the independent action of men in the field who had not waited for approval but presented Paris with a *fait accompli*. The ideal of these men was not the metropolitan diplomat, but *Le Beau Sabreur* whose cry was *L'AUDACE, L'AUDACE, TOUJOURS L'AUDACE!*

An example of the expansionist hero and his intrigues can be seen in the career of Paul Doumer. The focus of Doumer's attention from his arrival in Indochina in 1897 until his recall was always to be Yunnan. It fell to Doumer to attempt to expand French interests in south China despite increasing opposition from Paris. At the beginning of Doumer's term, the railway from Laokay to Yunnan-fu had not yet been completed. French interests in Yunnan were correspondingly less developed and the concept of Yunnan as a potential treasure-house had not yet been critically examined. France had consulates at Yunnan-fu and at Mengtsh.<sup>12</sup> In June of 1899, Doumer paid his first official visit to his counterpart, the viceroy of Yunnan, then in Yunnan-fu. He left Hanoi with a virtual military expedition and pushing hard, accomplished a nine-day journey in half that time. Upon arrival he demanded that the viceroy mark out an area for a railway-related concession. Irritated at the viceroy's failure to comply immediately, Doumer waited impatiently for three days and then returned to Hanoi.

Doumer left behind M. Guillemoto, the director of public works for Tonkin, who received permission to survey an area outside the city and to begin preparations for French-language schools. Guillemoto had been the director of an 1897 study group in south China. Now attached to Doumer, he shared the ideals of the Forward Party. Several days after Doumer left, there was a riot in Yunnan-fu. Bruguière ties the riot to a disturbance in a local mine, but British consular reports state that it was directed at the Guillemoto mission.<sup>13</sup> Whatever its origins, the entire area was

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12. Map reference, area #3.

13. M. Bruguière, "Le Chemin de Fer du Yunnan," *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, LXXVII (1963), pp. 23-61, 129-163, 252-2788. See also FO 405/89, enclosure in no. 9, "Memorandum by acting consul Jamieson regarding recent developments in Yunnan." 10/01/1899.

convulsed by an anti-French disturbance which spread as far as Mengtsz, where the consulate was pillaged.

The French in Hanoi, led by Doumer, contemplated sending in troops. Doumer's motive was to seize this opportunity, which he himself had created, to extend French influence into Yunnan.<sup>14</sup> His plans did not succeed because the consul at Mengtsz, Dejean de la Bâtie, was an enemy of the Forward Policy and had been reporting on Doumer's actions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Théophile Delcassé.<sup>15</sup>

The strength of the Forward Party is shown by the fact that Doumer successfully made an issue of de la Bâtie's "irresolute" actions and had him recalled. Although Delcassé apparently could not prevent the recall, he did have de la Bâtie awarded the Knight's Cross of the Legion of Honor for his restraint in Mengtsz.<sup>16</sup>

Delcassé dispatched a new and loyal man in hopes of restraining Doumer. But the new consul, M. François, was himself embroiled with Doumer in another incident one year later, in 1900. The atmosphere at the time was one of unrest and alarm. The Boxer uprising was imminent and the French were concerned with the safety of their nationals in both the north and south of China. François arrived in Mengtsz to take up his post. Claiming diplomatic immunity, he tried to take several hundred pieces of baggage through customs. Opening the bags at gunpoint, Chinese authorities discovered fifty-three boxes of military rifles and cartridges, which they confiscated. On June 10, with an escort of 300 Chinese soldiers, François attempted to return to Tonkin but was turned back by a mob which burned the French consulate outside Mengtsz. British reports indicate the facts underlying this incident:

François grossly misrepresented the facts of the case to M. Pichon, the Ambassador to Peking, and the Home Government. Francois and Doumer were working together and I have it on excellent authority that troops would have been sent up to Mengtsz as soon as the last Frenchman had quitted Yunnan. . . . Doumer and François would have been strongly supported by the Military Party and I am convinced that had not the situation in the North turned out to be unexpectedly grave, this

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14. Bruguière, pp. 157-160; FO 405/89, Enclosure in no. 9, "Memorandum."

15. Bruguière, p. 15, and FO 405/100, II, p. 55, Carey to Salisbury, Ssumao, 8/08/1900.

16. *Ibid.*

province would have ere this been the scene of conflict between the French and the Chinese.<sup>17</sup>

After the Boxer rebellion failed to disrupt the status quo in Sino-French relations and the Chinese had demonstrated a surprising resistance to Western military forces, audacious initiatives such as those of Doumer became even more ill-advised in the eyes of Paris. This change in attitude did not deter Doumer, who had not renounced his ambitions. In July of 1901, the now chastened François informed Delcassé that Doumer was planning yet another attempt. Delcassé outlined his fears to the premier, Waldeck-Rousseau:

Any attempt to launch a surprise attack will mean a general rising in Yunnan, a very long and costly expedition, and very probably, complications with England. It would be goodbye to our general freedom of action which it is of greatest importance to maintain for questions and interests which are more important and nearer home. [Last reference is to expansion in Africa.]<sup>18</sup>

Doumer was not removed until March of 1902, not because of the attempts of 1899 and 1900, but because of his plans for 1901. He had also been engaged since 1900 in a deliberate public campaign against Delcassé's refusal to lend support to the expansionist program.<sup>19</sup>

Doumer, although removed from the governor-generalship, was by no means eclipsed. He returned to the Chamber of Deputies, where he continued to be identified with the expansionist lobby, the *Parti Colonial*. In January of 1905, he was elected president of the chamber at the head of the Radicals. A year later he was narrowly defeated by Fallières for the presidency of the Republic.<sup>20</sup> He served with distinction in many other posts before he was shot by a mad Russian in 1932, a year after he was elected president of the Republic. With Doumer's removal in 1902 the Forward Party lost its most ardent and effective champion; however, the party was not destroyed and continued to attempt to expand French colonial interests.

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17. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 238; Christopher Andrew, *Théophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale* (New York, 1968), p. 257.

18. Delcassé to Waldeck-Rousseau, 6/18/01. Cited in Andrew, p. 257.

19. Andrew, p. 257.

20. Georges Bonnefous, *Histoire Politique de la Troisième République*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1965), vol. I, p. 1.

Doumer's replacement as governor-general of Indochina was Jean-Baptiste Paul Beau, former Chef du Cabinet to Delcassé. Beau was in office from October of 1902 to February of 1908, the entire period during which Sun Yat-sen had close relations with the French. The relationship between Paul Beau and the expansionist community in Indochina is ambiguous. Delcassé felt that Beau was a man who could control the extremists, yet there are a number of indications that Beau shared expansionist goals. If he did not himself belong to the Forward Party, he at least refused to take the necessary actions to prevent it from pursuing its program via contact with Sun.

To sum up, by 1902 French official and private circles were divided as to the wisdom of continued expansion of French interests in China. France had a long background of interest in such expansion. Indeed, the French presence in Indochina itself was due in large part to this historical interest. To many Frenchmen, the areas of south China adjoining Tonkin seemed to offer many possibilities of expanding French economic interests and imperial grandeur.

By 1900, however, the French government was slowly turning from an interest in colonial expansion to a preoccupation with European continental problems, notably Franco-German relations. Although the shift was evident as early as 1900, there were to be important centers of resistance to the change, and support for French colonialism in Asia continued to be both vocal and influential. One such center of pro-colonial attitudes was to be found in Vietnam. There, in the absence of strong leadership from Paris, there existed a community of interest. Elements of the bureaucracy, the army, and local economic interests—referred to collectively as the Forward Party—were willing to take offensive action to extend their control from Tonkin into China. Paul Doumer led this group until his audacity precipitated his removal in 1902. Paul Beau was sent out in the hope that he could control the extreme expansionists.

## VI

# Sun Yat-sen and the French

Sun Yat-sen and the French expansionist community found each other useful tools to pursue their individual aspirations. Sun had ties with the French at two levels: with official circles in Paris, Hanoi and Peking; and with the private expansionist community in Tonkin. The relationship with the first group was prior to October of 1906, with the second after Sun was actually present in Vietnam in 1907.

Sun's first contacts with the French occurred in 1900. Historians have been aware that he visited Vietnam at that time, but information as to the purpose of his visit has been lacking. Chinese sources are equally unaware of Sun's meetings with French representatives, although Teng Mu-han does state that Sun's ties to the French pre-dated the better documented 1902 trip to Hanoi.<sup>1</sup> French sources present a full explanation of the 1900 meetings. In early June, Sun called upon M. Harmond, French Minister to Tokyo, and requested a letter of introduction to the governor-general in Indochina. Harmond reported the contact to Delcassé, stating that he feared Sun had Japanese support. He had warned Doumer to be careful lest Sun begin to use Japanese officers and engineers in south China. He passed Sun on to Doumer, without a formal letter, stating to Paris: "Without encouraging him, it seemed to me to be only advantageous to help him get in touch with M. Doumer, so that he will have a complete account of his activities."<sup>2</sup>

Sun arrived in Saigon on June 21, 1900. Doumer left no record of the discussion, and there are but two short messages from Doumer to the Ministry of the Colonies which indicate the nature of the contact. Sun himself was silent about the meeting, as he was to be about most aspects of his ties to the French. At the time Doumer was presumably preparing for the Yunnan affair of September 1900, and Sun was heavily involved with the planning for the Waichow rising of October. The meeting was then probably not central to the immediate plans of either Sun or Doumer. Sun was

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1. See Shelley Ch'eng, "The T'ung Meng Hui: Its Organization, Leadership and Finances, 1905-1912" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1962).

2. AOM, Indochina, B11 (36), carton 33, French Minister in Tokyo to MAE, July 1900.

perhaps trying to assess the French attitude in the event of success at Waichow.

In his messages to the Ministry, Doumer treats the affair lightly and seems to have been unimpressed by Sun:

Despite the intelligence received about him, not only do his ideas and his projects not merit any encouragement, but he does not seem to be of serious character.

In response to a request for fuller information, Doumer replied:

I was in Tonkin when Sun passed through Saigon. I received him there, giving him some vague words of sympathy, stating that France, who had the greatest of interests in the Far East, desired to see China in peace without revolution and without disorders. Sun appears to me to have few ties with the powerful secret societies or influential men and his actions will consequently be very limited.<sup>3</sup>

Some aspects of the above statements are contradicted by later events. Although it is possible that Doumer did make the above remarks to Sun, we are aware that his avowed principles did not prevent his later campaigns to acquire Yunnan. It is probable that Sun and Doumer had a somewhat more substantive discussion than Doumer indicated. Certainly there must have been something about Sun that Doumer found interesting, for the next contact, in 1902, was a result of his initiative. In that year, Sun had repeated invitations from Doumer, via the French Minister in Tokyo, to come to Hanoi for another meeting.<sup>4</sup> Sun was very busy with other plans, however, and a meeting was not arranged until the winter of 1902. It was agreed that Sun, using as a pretext the Hanoi Exposition (November 1902-January 1903), would meet with Doumer at that time.

After the arrangements were made, Doumer was recalled. He had arranged for Sun to be met, however, and Sun had repeated meetings with M. Hardouin, Chef du Cabinet of the Doumer administration. We are fortunate in possessing an account of the meetings, found in one of the many memoirs transcribed by KMT historians from oral statements of participants in the early risings.

3. *Ibid.*, 10/27/1900.

4. KFCS, p. 35; KFNP, p. 419.

One such participant, anonymous in the document, speaks of an interview which Sun had with Doumer "five or six years" before the Chen-nan kuan rising of December 1907. The document refers to the 1902 meeting with Hardouin, in the mistaken belief, shared by many Chinese sources, that Sun met with the governor-general himself.<sup>5</sup> We can assume that the purported transcript of the discussion between Sun and the Frenchman is not completely accurate, but the meeting did deal with the general issues facing Sun and the French at the time.

The French were particularly concerned with the "roving braves" of the frontier. They presented the French with several problems. As the armed force for the opium-smuggling caravans which crossed into Tonkin from the poppy fields of Yunnan, they were instrumental to the smuggling industry which was severely damaging the valuable French opium-sales monopoly. As local bandits, the frontier brigands were frequently forced over the border to avoid pursuing Ch'ing troops. In Tonkin, they followed their usual practices of robbery and intimidation until they could return to their strongholds in China. French sources repeatedly chronicle such incidents. The French did not announce that the border was pacified until 1910, and in 1902, brigandage was still an acute problem.

Sun's primary concern was the need for French aid, first in facilitating communications with potential rebels, and later in securing and distributing munitions. A *quid pro quo* was arrived at in 1902: Sun would have access to the border region and would in turn undertake to keep the "roving braves" from troubling Tonkin.

In late February 1902, Beau, now in Hanoi as Doumer's replacement, reported to the Ministry of the Colonies on Sun's meetings with Hardouin. One of these reports offers additional information:

Sun Yat-sen is himself in Hanoi, he was here in 1900 but I can find no trace in the files of the attitude taken by my predecessor. . . . His arrival this time was preceded by a letter from our Minister to Tokyo, M. Harmon. I did not grant him an interview but the Chief of the Cabinet had discreet ties with him and obtained reports on his

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5. For a slightly shorter version of this document, see *Ke-ming jen-wu chih* (Annals of the revolutionaries), Huang Chi-lu, ed. (Taipei, 1971), vol. V., p. 348. The context of this meeting, Sun's involvements with Doumer rather than with Beau, and the original of the document, all have convinced me that the date given in *Ke-ming jen-wu chih* is incorrect.



projects. . . . He says that the English helped him with the arms for the 1900 rising in Waichow. . . . He [needs?] arms, can get Regular troops, General Sou Kong Pao is ready to defect, Sun will then have Kwangsi and can form a republic in the south. . . . He will ask France to choose officers to train the army, engineers and bureaucrats to be placed at the head of the various public administrations. Sun said this to Hardouin in the course of different interviews. . . . He is potentially powerful. . . . I sidestepped from the first the possibility of authorizing arms and ammunition to cross our territory. Even if the Chinese government, who will certainly be informed, do not make a formal protest, it would be easy for us to run aground our industrial and commercial enterprises, in particular the construction of the Yunnan railways. This policy would be totally contrary to that which we have carried out with the Chinese authorities, and thanks to which a complete transformation has been produced in the rapport between ourselves and the government, and the population of Yunnan. I'll go even further; I have the complete conviction that we have no interest in the dismemberment or dislocation of the Chinese empire. . . . I hope our refusal to close our eyes to the introduction of arms across the frontier will gain us confidence from the Chinese government to aid in further improving relations.

. . .

But, I think it would be impolitic to forbid Sun Indo-china, despite the concern which his intrigues cause me. . . . I am even of the opinion that we must refuse to give him up in case China demands his arrest. We risk giving the play to our adversaries and attracting the irreconcilable hatred of the Secret Societies who could turn against us the activities which they are now deploying to overthrow the Manchus.<sup>6</sup>

Although there are many similarities between the Chinese and French reports of the meetings between Sun and Hardouin, there are also important differences. Beau does not indicate that Sun promised to pacify the roving braves, nor does he indicate what an important concession he had made in permitting Sun access to the frontier. If Hardouin reported in full to Beau, Beau seems to have been careful to exclude at least these two aspects of the discussions.

Beau's message to Paris indicates several areas that were to be

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6. AOM B11 (36), carton 33, Governor-General to Colonies, Hanoi, 2/26/03.

critical in Sun's relationship with the French. One is the stress put upon arms smuggling across the border. This was a crucial issue to all concerned. Sun and the rebels needed the arms, and the Ch'ing had to keep them from getting them if at all possible. The French thus could not permit the movement of guns without risking the gravest consequences. The development of Sun's ties with the French and his later actions in south China demonstrate that he was never to solve the problem of procuring and transporting arms. Another point raised by Beau is the French fear that Sun had close ties with Japan or England, or both, ties which might be used to the detriment of French interests. The ease with which Sun moved among European and Japanese political circles was in part due to imperialist competition and mutual suspicion.

Beau's message reveals several additional points of tension in the relationship between Sun and the French. The primary concern of the French was that support of Sun not damage previously acquired holdings. While Sun might permit the expansion of French interests in south China, so might he also provoke a Chinese reaction which would be costly to those same interests, in particular to the Yunnan Railway.

From his 1902 meeting with Hardouin, Sun had an understanding with the French colonial government in Tonkin which would permit his access to the frontier and its population of dissidents. He knew that the French would resist Ch'ing demands for his extradition and that they would permit some restricted revolutionary activity in their colony. The 1902 trip provides an essential link with Sun's later activities in the frontier region. It is also probable that it was then that Sun established the necessary ties with the military and civilian communities in Indochina which became salient only after his arrival in 1907.

The next apparent relationship between Sun and elements of the French bureaucracy in Indochina occurred in 1906. After his activities in Hanoi in late 1902, Sun attempted to broaden radical contacts in Asia and, in the fall of 1903, he left for the West where he would spend more than a year in Hawaii, the United States and Europe. His main tasks, it appears, were to create or contact supportive radical organizations and to arrange for financing. He also began to develop an expanded relationship with elements of the French metropolitan bureaucracy and political circles. He left Europe in June 1905, stopped en route at Saigon and went on to Japan, arriving in July. It was then that he helped to found the T'ung Meng Hui. He was expelled from Japan in January of 1907. After his expulsion, he was to continue to work from Indochina, but

during 1906 he had significant associations with the French.

The relationship was conducted during 1906 through a newly-created branch of the French intelligence machinery in Asia, the Service des Renseignements, Chine, (henceforth CSR). The CSR was organized at the suggestion of Brissaud-Desmillets, the military attaché in Peking. The attaché requested additional funds to permit more attention to the development of the Chinese military. The Minister of Foreign Affairs concurred but, as the legation was forbidden to engage in espionage, ordered the new group placed under the French Corps of Occupation. The officer in charge was to report directly to the head of the legation. The Minister of War concurred with the Quai's suggestion, and the service was created in late March, 1905. The infant organization was immediately charged with an additional mission by the Direction des Troupes Coloniales, a bureau of the Ministry of War:

The Eighth Direction thinks that in order to obtain the most possible profit from the intelligence service, its investigation and works should be done not only on the military power of China in general and on its progress, in case of eventual military operations in the north of China, but also in the particular study of the Chinese provinces adjoining Tonkin, because of possible conflict between our Indochina and south China, which offers but few points in common with north China. The principal points of interest of the new service. . . ought to be—

- 1) The military organization of China, arms, instructions, progress, etc.
- 2) Japanese activities in China, influence on public opinion, and especially on the Chinese army.
- 3) The works and progress of the foreign nations in China, military organizations in the concessions.
- 4) A study of the provinces of the south, their military resources, the views of the governors and Mandarins of these provinces, animated, it is known, with a Separatist spirit; the methods of utilizing these attitudes for developing French influence, precautions to be taken by the French military in Indochina. . . .

We think the new service will be of real utility and we approve and recommend it to you.<sup>7</sup>

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7. EMA, carton 7n1675, Report to the Ministry by the Command of the Colonial Troops, Organization of an Intelligence Service in China, 5/20/05.

The service was further defined in July when the Minister of War, Eugene Etienne, ordered the French Corps of Occupation in China to appoint as head of the agency Captain Boucabeille of the Colonial Infantry. En route to assume his new post, Boucabeille stopped at Hanoi to outline the subsequent ties between the CSR and Hanoi.<sup>8</sup> There he had interviews with the Commander in Chief of the French army in Indochina and the Secretary General of the Colonies, M. Broni. Broni had been interim governor after Doumer, before Beau arrived, and was possibly involved in the Sun-Hardouin talks. In 1905, Broni was again acting Governor when Beau was in Paris.

As Broni was aware that the CSR was going to make studies relevant to the defense of Tonkin, he offered to subsidize the officer who would be charged with that aspect of the CSR's missions. Upon arrival in Peking, Boucabeille submitted the offer to the Commander of the French Corps of Occupation. The Commander agreed and appointed a man recommended by Boucabeille, Brevet-Captaine Claudel, also of the Colonial Infantry. Claudel was told to take orders from Hanoi and to make his reports there on matters which seemed relevant to the defense of the colony.<sup>9</sup>

Several aspects of the very rapid evolution of the CSR between March 1905, when the attaché proposed it, and October, when Boucabeille arrived, are especially noteworthy. As originally conceived, the CSR was to be a minor extension of the organization headed by the military attaché, a member of the legation staff under the command of the Minister to Peking. After this beginning, the organization underwent major changes, both in form and in mission.

The group's original mission was to direct its attention to the Chinese army, primarily in the north. The Direction des Troupes Coloniales greatly enlarged this mission by adding the responsibilities reproduced above. The fourth of the "principal points of interest" represents a major departure from the original conception, and it was this aspect of the mission which would become the primary focus of the CSR, permitting a close and quasi-legitimate relationship with Sun Yat-sen which would be managed not from Peking, but from Hanoi.

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8. *Ibid.*, Ministry of War to Commandant of the Occupation Corps in China, Organization of an Intelligence Service in China, 5/20/05.

9. *Ibid.*, Intelligence Service, China, to Ministry of War, "An Account of the Understanding between the Intelligence Service, China, and the Etat-Major of the Troops of Indochina," 11/07/05.

The total effect of the shifts was that the CSR, rather than becoming an organ of the French legation in Peking, the consistent proponent of regularized Sino-French relations, was charged with a mission which required exploration of the possibilities of using Chinese revolutionary groups to expand French interests in the south. These changes also gave the French army in Hanoi and the governor-general's office considerable influence over the new group. It is important to note that most of these shifts were a direct result of the involvement of the Ministry of War, headed by Eugene Etienne, leader of the expansionist lobby, the *Parti Coloniale*.

Boucabeille was to be the primary link with Sun Yat-sen and lost no time getting in touch. According to Boucabeille's official version of the relationship, it began with a contact in Hanoi during late August-early September 1905, when he contacted one of the heads of the Cantonese Congregation in Hanoi, a man named Li. Li passed Boucabeille on to a Chinese who had previously served under him as an intelligence operative during an earlier tour in Tonkin. This man, Ho, told Boucabeille that there was a strong separatist movement in south China which wished to establish a federal republic.

Ho then informed Boucabeille that there was a member of the separatist group in Hong Kong, a man named Ta. Boucabeille wrote Ta and was told to contact another man, Thé, in Japan. Boucabeille wrote and arranged to meet Thé, who was in fact Sun Yat-sen, at Shanghai aboard the French steamer *Caledonia* on October 11.<sup>10</sup> The timing of the meeting is interesting in that Boucabeille met Sun and hinted at the possibility of open French aid even before he had arrived in Peking to meet his commanders and take up his new post. It is evident that Boucabeille felt quite independent of the French legation in Peking.

The Chinese version of the meeting on the *Caledonia* and its origins, essentially that of Sun and other eyewitnesses, differs in important respects from Boucabeille's official version. The Chinese version holds that in 1905, Sun already had a relationship of long-standing with the French, that in the spring of 1905, while in Paris, he had a "close and secret relationship" with the former governor-general, Paul Doumer, and with a second major political figure. The Chinese materials also report that Paris cabled the governor-general to handle the affair and gave Sun a very earnest letter of recommendation.<sup>11</sup> (This letter is almost certainly the letter which was taken in

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10. EMA, carton 7n1676, Intelligence Service, China, to Minister of War, 11/09/05.

11. KFNP, p. 204.

the student incident in Brussels in 1905 and turned over to the Chinese authorities.) When Sun arrived in Japan from Europe where these arrangements were made, he was met by a French representative.

Boucabeille's version of the meeting with Sun was thus no more than a cover story placed in the files to obscure the wider context of the meeting, which had been arranged some time earlier in France via the involvement with Doumer. Additional French sources show that a number of French political figures were involved in the situation.

Kim Munholland states that Boucabeille's decision to contact the separatists was arrived at in Paris before his departure.<sup>12</sup> Munholland also indicates that it is possible that the proposal to create the CSR, after the initial suggestion from the military attaché, may have come "from Boucabeille himself, possibly with the encouragement of someone at the Foreign Ministry."<sup>13</sup> Munholland, working without access to the Chinese materials, interprets the entire affair as the result of Boucabeille's misplaced zeal in trying to create cheaply an effective intelligence service. In Munholland's view, Boucabeille exceeded his instructions, but only in order to use Sun's resources for the mission with which he was charged. According to this interpretation, all later involvements with Sun are to be explained by Boucabeille's desire to use the rebels for the work of the intelligence force. Munholland's thorough and rigorous work in the French archives invests this interpretation with a great deal of plausibility, and that was in fact the defense which Boucabeille and his co-conspirators put up after the tie with Sun was discovered and broken off. Nonetheless, the Chinese sources provide another perspective, and permit us to unravel the machinations involved in the tie between Sun and the French.<sup>14</sup>

The Chinese sources go on to state that after going through a routine with ticket-halves to provide for mutual identification, Sun and Boucabeille talked for eight hours. Sun and the other Chinese present affirm that at the outset Boucabeille announced that he had been sent to contact Sun by the French "*Lu-chün ta-ch'en*," a term

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12. J. Kim Munholland, "The French Connection that Failed: France and Sun Yat-sen, 1900-1908," *Journal of Asian Studies*, (November 1972), 1:82.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

14. I am very much indebted to Kim Munholland for aid and encouragement without which this work could not have been written. This should not be taken to imply his acceptance of my arguments for, as indicated above, there is considerable distance between our two interpretations.

which usually refers to a cabinet-level military official, hence to Eugene Etienne, the Minister of War.<sup>15</sup> Boucabeille then stated that he had been sent to say that the French government approved of the Chinese revolution and wished more information of its development. He asked Sun, "What is your affiliation with the army in the provinces?" Sun gave a general reply and then was told: "If the situation is ripe, the French government will immediately give aid." Sun replied that the revolutionary groups did not yet have a firm grasp of the situation and asked the Frenchman to detail officers to help with the organization in the provinces.<sup>16</sup>

Boucabeille reported a slightly different version of the initial interview in his communications to the Minister of War, stating that the interview had gone like this:

It is my mission to document for the Ministry of War the methods for a defense of Indochina against aggression. I am aware that you follow a separatist program for a southern state. If you demonstrate to me that your party is powerful, it is possible that my government may take a certain interest in your efforts—this is only a personal hypothesis—you have a network of agents, put them at my disposal. He accepted and his agents will answer our questions.<sup>17</sup>

Whether or not Boucabeille did present himself as the emissary of a French government on the verge of an open commitment to the revolution as the Chinese documents state, he clearly indicated the possibility of such aid. After this first meeting, Sun and Boucabeille engaged in a lengthy correspondence, of which unfortunately only a remnant survives.

Boucabeille immediately arranged for liaison officers to accompany Sun into the south of China. The first man chose, as recommended by Boucabeille, was Captain Claudel. Claudel was charged with the task agreed upon by Boucabeille and Acting Governor-General Broni. He was told to pick up a Chinese guide in Hong Kong, Li Chung-shih, one of Sun's group of supporters. The two went together throughout the Kwangtung-Kwangsi region bordering Tonkin. At the same time Sun sent Liao Chung-k'ai to Peking to

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15. KFCS, p. 35; KFNP, p. 205.

16. KFNP, pp. 204-205.

17. EMA, carton 7n1675, Intelligence Service, China, to Minister of War, 11/09/05.

translate into French Chinese papers which carried news of radical actions.<sup>18</sup> The second officer appointed, Brevet-Captaine Vaudescal, left for the Yangtze provinces in December of 1905, in the company of Hu I-sheng, cousin of Hu Han-min.

The Chinese and French sources offer a full view of the nature of the tours conducted by the French officers and Sun's men. Hu I-sheng and Vaudescal moved among revolutionary sympathizers, particularly radical New Army elements. In Nanking they met with Sun's primary New Army ally, Chao Sheng. Chao's men hosted a large party for Vaudescal and Hu, where the Frenchman proclaimed: "I have lived in Peking for a long time and I have never believed that your country had this kind of soldier, and I hope that you will be successful before long."<sup>19</sup> From the Nanking area the group then went to Hankow, thence to Hunan-Hupeh, back to Nanch'ang and eventually to Hong Kong where they rested for ten days. The first tour, that of Li and Claudel through the south, had also ended by this date, January 31, 1906. After Vaudescal rested, aware that Huang Hsing was in the area, Hu I-sheng and he went to Kweilin. There they moved among radicals from Ts'ai O's New Army units. The Frenchman was particularly pleased with the prospects for revolution in that area.<sup>20</sup>

French reports continue to reflect the dual mission of Boucaille: to establish intelligence units and to scout out the nature and extent of Sun's support. The two goals are evident in this report by Vaudescal from Hankow:

Have made contact with the society at Nanking, saw the Chief and several members. They appear numerous and committed. I explained that which you wish without making any promises for the future. I have obtained a formal promise of intelligence reports as complete and varied as we may wish. Most members of the society are Mandarins, Officers, professors or students. No merchants, no common people.<sup>21</sup>

As the reports from the touring officers began coming in, Boucaille began lobbying in favor of Sun and his plans to take advantage of the conditions of unrest in the frontier provinces. This

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18. KFCS, p. 35.

19. KFNP, p. 210.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

21. EMA, carton 7n1676, "Du Captain Vaudescal, Hankow."



began a debate within the various levels of the French government, which lasted for some months, over the validity of Boucabeille's optimistic view of Sun. Boucabeille expounded the nature of Sun's coalitions in the south, describing it as composed primarily of Triads, Ko-lao hui and Big Knife society members, leavened by many gentry members, officers, students and roving braves. He argued that Sun himself felt confident of success if he obtained French support in the form of money, guns, and ammunition. Boucabeille saw some difficulties in Sun's plans, but was in agreement on the bright possibilities for success.<sup>22</sup>

Those who opposed support stressed the possibility of Sun's movement leading to a generalized anti-foreign outbreak. Boucabeille argued for Sun's modernity and the discipline of his forces, but he had to do so in the face of a very real upsurge in Chinese anti-foreignism in the winter and spring of 1906. Washington and London anxiously discussed the possibility of a new Boxer-type outbreak.<sup>23</sup>

Sun and Boucabeille's major foe in the debate was the latter's putative superior, Eugene Bapst, French Minister to Peking. Bapst hit hard on the possible consequences of support for Sun: "The Secret Societies, especially those in the South, are more and more anti-foreign. Japanese influence is strong, giving them organization and coordination. They are both anti-dynastic and anti-foreign."<sup>24</sup>

Boucabeille made every effort in support of Sun, even informing him of the nature of the debate and transmitting his rebuttals. He also emphasized the widespread support which Sun enjoyed in Paris, naming several prominent politicians and the many advantages which would accrue to France should Sun prove victorious. Bapst and the pro-Ch'ing group replied with more criticism, arguing that Sun's influence over the revolutionaries was weak and declining if not nonexistent, and that he did not merit serious consideration. The French Minister also minimized the dangers facing the Manchus, calling its opponents "undisciplined scouts and lost children."<sup>25</sup>

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22. EMA carton 7n1676, Intelligence Service, China, to Ministry of War, Monthly Report, 1/05/06.

23. FO 405/165, Further Correspondence, Jan-March, 1906, no. 90, p. 118. Sir M. Durand to Sir Edward Grey, Washington, 2/16/06.

24. MAE, Internal Affairs, China, VIII, French Minister, Peking to MAE, 2/19/06.

25. The debate is covered in EMA, carton 7n1676, Intelligence Service, China, to Ministry of War, 5/10/06; AOM B11 (36), French Minister, Peking, to MAE, 6/13/07; MAE, Internal Affairs, China, X, Peking to MAE, 1/24/07.

Sun's need for French support at this time was acute. The offensive planned for 1906-07 was the culmination of several years of planning. Both Sun and his French military advisors felt that chances were extremely good, providing that French help could be secured. However, the Ch'ing were increasingly aware of Sun's plans, and were beginning to take effective countermeasures.

Boucabeille was not alone in his support. Although the sources of additional support are not clear, other elements of the army and bureaucracy also favored open support of Sun. One argument advanced by these unnamed additional supporters was that Sun's military forces would be very useful in the event of a French struggle in the frontier with a third power—China, or Japan, or both. These possibilities tantalized the French military, but Sun lost this point to his opponents as well. Although there were those who sided with Boucabeille, the current of opinion in Tonkin ran against them. The French army there felt that Sun's secret society levies were too anti-foreign, too undisciplined, and too prone to pillage to be reliable. In the event of war, French military men felt Sun's forces more to be feared than to be relied upon.<sup>26</sup>

The coalition which opposed Sun from Peking had an additional ally in the person of the military attaché, Brissaud-Desmillets, who had originally proposed the CSR. Brissaud-Desmillets considered himself to be the defender of the Peking group against the schemes of Captain Boucabeille and the "Colonials," whom he knew to be behind the entire affair.<sup>27</sup> In an exchange with Brissaud-Desmillets, as well as in the wider policy debate, Boucabeille's consistent communications with Étienne reveal the existence of a close relationship between the captain and his minister.

In the midst of the above debates, Boucabeille proceeded with this dual mission. In June of 1906, a Captain Ozil was sent to the Hunan-Hupeh region, specifically charged with inquiring into the strength of Sun's movement there. While Ozil and Sun's men were in Wuhan, they attended a meeting of the Jih-chih hui, a group of radical New Army soldiers who were to be involved in the later Wuchang rising. This meeting was to be an important element in the eventual discontinuance of the CSR. In the words of one Chinese report, "When O-chi-lo (Ozil) arrived in Wuchang, the Jih-chih hui members, many of whom were New Army troopers, welcomed him. O-chi-lo preached revolution and when the meeting

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26. EMA, carton 7n1669, Situation in Kwangsi, 12/23/05.

27. EMA, carton 7n1675, Peking, 12/12/05.

was concluded, a picture was taken."<sup>28</sup> The picture was to turn up a year later. In the French report of this later incident:

A Chinese named Hieu has been arrested and interrogated as a revolutionary. The gravest charge against him is that of having ties with a foreigner last July at Wuch'ang, at a conference at the Hall of the American Church Mission. One of the missionaries, Reverend Gilman, had a photo and asked me if I recognized him. He was at the table at the conference with Hieu. I said that I didn't, but I did: Capitaine Ozil of the Boucabeille mission. The Chinese have his Chinese name, O-gi-lo, and will not be slow to discover his identity.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, by the time the above report was written, the Chinese authorities had been investigating the entire affair for almost a year. A report of the Wuchang meeting had gone immediately to the viceroy, Chang Chih-tung, who secured the assistance of an anonymous Englishman from the Custom's Service. The man gained Ozil's confidence and stole notebooks containing sketchy accounts of his travels. The ensuing Ch'ing investigations, extending out from the search for Hieu, dealt the revolutionary coalition in south China a serious blow.<sup>30</sup> The announcements of intended major government reforms also began to weaken Sun's attraction for the gentry in the south.

Despite the counter-blows struck by the Chinese government and the mounting opposition to him within French circles, Sun continued to prepare for the intended major offensive. The chief obstacle was still the lack of arms. Some time before September, Sun had begun dealing with a French merchant in Hanoi to purchase a large stock of surplus French military rifles. The merchant applied to the governor-general's office for the necessary permit, claiming that the arms had been ordered by the Chinese government. This ruse would have permitted him not only to sell the rifles but, probably, to deliver them to Sun's forces in south China.

Broni, still acting governor-general, asked for documentary proof of the order. The merchant, M. Lachal, replied that he could not comply without the order of his principal, the Chinese government. His suspicions aroused, Broni queried Bapst in Peking. Bapst

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28. KFNP, p. 213.

29. EMA, carton 7n1675, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Ministry of War, Regarding an Intelligence Service in China, 5/07/07.

30. KFNP, p. 214.

asked Brissaud-Desmaillets to investigate, which he did by simply reporting the arms order to the Chinese government. The government replied that neither the central government nor any viceroyalty had placed such an order. The Chinese Minister of War informed Bapst:

It was the work of Sun Yat-sen, who has announced a rising for the Ninth Moon [October 18]. This response [Bapst continues] coincided with a telegram from the French Consul at Hong Kong which said that Sun had sent Triads to Kwangsi and that they were ordering large quantities of arms in Hong Kong and in Singapore.<sup>31</sup>

The arms purchase affair put an abrupt end to the debate in Paris as to the wisdom of supporting Sun Yat-sen. He had now attempted to violate the prohibition against moving arms across the border, gotten the French directly and publicly implicated in his plotting, and created considerable consternation in Peking.

The Chinese government simultaneously involved the CSR in the entire controversy by revealing the results of its investigations into the Ozil affair in Wuchang. The Chinese also produced letters (allegedly intercepted in the mails but possibly Ozil's purloined notes) tying the CSR to Sun. Bapst defended the Boucabeille mission, arguing that the officers had merely been traveling in the interior as ordered, but offered as a gesture of good faith to discontinue the program. He contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which informed the Ministry of War, and on October 17, 1906, the CSR was dissolved.<sup>32</sup>

Paris acquiesced readily in the discontinuance of the CSR because momentous changes had also occurred there, quite independently of the affair in China and Tonkin, which were to deprive Sun of his high-level French support. The Tonkin arms purchase attempt had in fact been considerably more complex than either the Chinese or the French in Peking had realized. The attempt had involved direct support from someone in the governor-general's office in Hanoi who had ties back to Eugene Etienne in Paris. Teng Mu-han discussed the issue in an unpublished memoir:

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31. MAE, Internal Affairs, China, X, French Consul Hankow to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1/14/07.

32. EMA, carton 7n1675, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ministry of War, 10/15/06; Ministry of War to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10/17/06; Ministry of War to Director of Colonial Troops, 11/19/06.

While Boucabeille was in China pursuing the revolution, the governor-general of Annam suddenly called in Saigon party member Li and said that he had been told by his government to inform him that there would soon be available 50,000 stands of arms and that we should be prepared to receive them. But, before too long, the French cabinet changed and the new Cabinet didn't approve, and Boucabeille was recalled.<sup>33</sup>

Sun Yat-sen also linked the sudden decline in his fortunes with a change in the French Cabinet.<sup>34</sup>

Sun and Teng Mu-han were right. On October 19, the Sarrien Cabinet dissolved itself and was replaced by the Clemenceau Cabinet on the 25th. Many members of the Sarrien Cabinet made the transition into the Clemenceau Cabinet. One did not: Eugene Etienne, Minister of War, and the single most consistent and powerful supporter of French colonial expansion. Etienne was the leader of the expansionist lobby, the *Parti Coloniale*, and in 1901 had founded the Comité de L'Asie Française, a related organization whose ultimate purpose "was to make provision for the partition of China and the organization of Indochina."<sup>35</sup> There had been a series of legislative elections during August and September, and Clemenceau had been traveling widely, presumably preparing his re-emergence as Premier.<sup>36</sup> Sarrien announced on October 19 that he was stepping down for reasons of health, a decision which he had arrived at on the 7th, ten days before the CSR was discontinued. It was thus obvious to political insiders that Sarrien would soon be replaced, and almost certainly by Clemenceau.

It was also obvious that Etienne would not be in the new cabinet. Although Clemenceau and Etienne were not bitter enemies, Clemenceau was the chief supporter of the Continental policy and an ardent foe of Germany. He thus held colonial affairs to be much less important than European ones. Clemenceau would also have been absolutely opposed to dangerous initiatives in China which could have disrupted the Franco-English understanding so vital to the continental balance of power.

Although the events of September and October in Hanoi and Peking were important, the meaningful changes which would most

33. *Chüan-chi*, p. 23R.

34. KFNP, p. 214; KFCS, p. 35.

35. Henri Brunswick, *French Colonialism, 1871-1914* (London, 1964), p. 117.

36. *Le Temps*, *Le Figaro*, (Paris), August to November, 1906.

drastically alter Sun's ties to the French took place in Paris. Without Etienne's support for Boucaille, and without his patronage of expansionists in the governor-general's office in Vietnam,<sup>37</sup> such as the official who offered the guns to the rebels via the merchant M. Laschal, the entire effort in support of Sun simply collapsed. Without Etienne in place to exploit a successful rising in the south or perhaps to cover up a spectacular failure, the whole project became too dangerous. The eclipse of Etienne created a new situation which permitted the anti-colonial group in Peking and Tonkin to follow their inclinations and clean up the CSR without endangering their careers.

Except for Eugene Etienne, the exact nature of the group who supported Sun in France is frustratingly elusive, but all evidence suggests that it was sizeable and powerful. The Quai d'Orsay observed in 1910 that the two centers of Sun's power in France were in Paris and l'Havre. One was the center of the political system, the other a major port with strong ties to Indochina and French economic interest there.<sup>38</sup> The aspirations of Sun and French supporters were moving counter to political trends in France. Even ardent French colonialists were placing more emphasis upon Africa and less upon Asia.<sup>39</sup> Tensions between France and Germany were increasing, too, and this further vitiated support for foreign adventures.

The fall of Eugene Etienne is a fitting symbol of the changes which occurred in the French political climate. Etienne was the protégé of, and successor to, Jules Ferry, the major proponent of French expansionist policy in Indochina. Clemenceau had earlier hurled Ferry from power, and it was Clemenceau who saw Germany as the primary, almost exclusive concern of French foreign policy. When Clemenceau removed Etienne, as he had removed Ferry, Etienne's mentor, French politics came full circle. The time of the adventuresome exponent of the French colonial empire had passed.

Sun's plans for the rising of October 1907 have not been given adequate attention by historians. Granting much exaggeration by Sun's French supporters and Sun's deliberate attempt to impress

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37. There were changes in the military command structure in Hanoi on October 19, very probably related to the Boucaille affair. See *Le Temps* (Paris), October 19, 1906.

38. MAE, Internal Affairs, China, no. 203, Intelligence of the Chinese Revolutionaries, 8/26/1910.

39. French trade with Indochina had been moving against the Metropolis for some time, and in 1906, exports to Indochina had been exceeded by imports from there for the first time since 1893. Brunschwig, p. 193.

them, it is nonetheless clear that Sun was in touch with a very large coalition of diverse elements who would have supported a major attempt on the Ch'ing presence in south China. Had Sun's French supporters been more successful, he would have had the 50,000 guns involved in the October arms attempt, and perhaps much more substantial aid and advice. Given the long period of disorder in the south, Sun had a better chance of success in 1906 than he was to have until the revolution itself broke out in 1911.

That Sun did not succeed in gaining direct French assistance should not obscure for us the implications of those ties. Sun had promised enormous future concessions in pursuit of that assistance, and his goal was a state which would have been no better than a French puppet. Although Sun's French supporters did not maintain their power and status, Sun's hope for success depended upon just that power and status. Had Sun—and his supporters—succeeded, he would have been dealing with the most strongly expansionist elements of French society, men like Etienne and Doumer, with new prestige and power and at the head of a French government bent upon new concessions in China.

Sun's principal revolutionary strategy for a separatist southern regime, pursued since at least 1900, was becoming obsolete by 1906. Ch'ing promises of reforms were gaining temporary support of the central government from the southern gentry, and massive executions were removing the active opposition. The students were becoming increasingly anti-foreign. Sun's program, based on southern separatism and foreign support, was less and less relevant to these changing political conditions. There were still elements in France and Asia who were willing to gamble on his success, however. During 1907 and 1908, he was to continue his search for a southern base area.

## VII

# Revolution in the China-Indochina Frontier, 1907-1908

In March of 1907, after having been expelled from Japan, Sun and a small entourage arrived in Saigon. Sun established a command post in Hanoi and organized a series of risings in the frontier during 1907 and 1908. These risings contributed to Sun's claim to the leadership of the revolution and are thus an important aspect of his career. Our purpose here, however, is not to carry the implications of the risings forward, but rather backward—to place them in the context of Sun's earlier plans and his ties to the French. Neither will we be interested in the details of the risings (there are several adequate treatments),<sup>1</sup> but rather with the political context.

Upon arrival in Saigon, Sun and Hu Han-min began to reestablish ties with the local radical community. There they dealt with Tseng Hsi-chou, a compradore in the Bank of France.<sup>2</sup> After moving to Hanoi, Sun requested and received a large contribution from Tseng. Tseng's ties to the Bank of France and the close interest of the French banking community in Sun's activities suggests the possibility that the money came not from Tseng himself, but from the expansionist community.

Sun then sent a message to Europe, to Chang Ching-chiang, whom, he said, he had met on board ship en route to Europe in 1906. At that time Chang supposedly promised financial support in the future and arranged a code Sun could use to request specific amounts. Sun quickly received two contributions from Tseng totaling \$60,000.<sup>3</sup> Sun's story is quite implausible. If he did let an entire year pass before using a source of funds in which, according to Hu Han-min, he had complete confidence, this would appear to be the one example of such restraint in his entire career.

Chang Ching-chiang was a long-term resident of France, where he had been a member of the Ch'ing ambassador's commercial

1. Shelley Ch'eng, "The T'ung Meng Hui: Its Organization, Leadership and Finances, 1905-1912," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1962).

2. Hu Han-min, *Nan-yang yü Chung-kuo ke-ming*, KMTA, 002.39, First Series, p. 2.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 3.



retinue. In that capacity he found it easy to import Chinese artifacts and *objets d'art*. He soon had a very wealthy French clientele. He became a member of the Chinese anarchist circle, which edited the journal *New Century*. In 1908 he tried to found a large Sino-French bank, based upon 75 percent Chinese and 25 percent French funding.<sup>4</sup> In that effort he presumably traded upon prior contacts with French political and economic figures among his clientele. Chang thus had ties with the Court, with the revolutionary left, and with French financial circles.

The evidence is circumstantial. But the conditions under which he met Sun (after Sun had established ties with Doumer and French expansionists), and his own ties to French financial circles, all suggest that Chang was perhaps a conduit for French funds. There is no incontrovertible evidence that Sun was indeed receiving French funds. He had, however, just been attacked in Japan for misuse of funds. As a result, he had become more careful in his financial dealings. It is certain that the French must have passed him at least token, if not substantial, amounts of money. It would seem probable that Sun was concealing these contributions and that Tseng Hsi-chou and Chang Ching-chiang "laundered" expansionist contributions.

Upon arriving in Vietnam, Sun also resumed contact with two of the major power-brokers of the Sino-vietnamese frontier, Wang Ho-shun and Huang Ming-t'ang. The two were to become Sun's major field commanders.<sup>5</sup> Huang and Wang have often been presented as two in the series of men who were supposedly transformed into ardent nationalists through their ties to Sun Yat-sen.<sup>6</sup> The truth is more complex. Wang and Huang were local Triad chieftains whose activities in the frontier went back to the Black Flags of Liu Yung-fu. They were leaders of roving braves and opium smugglers, representing traditionalistic local autonomy and anarchistic economic and political practices. The relationship between them and Sun was one of mutual advantage. They offered him a skilled paramilitary force, while he offered them not so much a persuasive modern ideology or the opportunity to labor for a new China as the opportunity to increase their personal gain, and to resist the increasingly effective Ch'ing incursions into their power base. Perhaps most importantly, Sun offered them a chance for a steady

4. *Ke-ming jen-wu chih*, IV, p. 209.

5. See Jeffrey G. Barlow, "Viet-nam and the Chinese Revolution of 1911," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1973), p. 372.

6. Feng Tzu-yu, *Ke-ming i-shih*, II, p. 212.

supply of the ultimate determinant of power in the frontier—modern weapons.<sup>7</sup>

Sun's activities in the frontier during the latter part of 1907 and 1908 also make it clear that in addition to acquiring the funds of Tseng and Chang and the forces of Wang and Huang, he began a relationship with the local French expansionist community, the Forward Party. The details of the contact are not clear, but probably represent a continuation of earlier relationships formed in 1900, 1902 and 1906, augmented perhaps by other introductions achieved in Europe through Doumer.

Several of the risings with which Sun had some minimal involvement in 1907 are of little interest to this analysis, as the plans for them pre-date his arrival in Vietnam. These risings, the Ch'ao-chou and Huang Kang risings in Kwangtung, were planned and led by a local young Triad chieftain, Hsu Hsueh-ch'iu.<sup>8</sup> Sun's later references to the series of "revolutionary defects" and his careful numbering of them have obscured many of the realities of those risings. Many were virtually independent of any advance preparations by Sun and involved him hardly at all, like the two mentioned above.

Sun's treatment of the risings also seems to imply that each was as important as any of the others, and that each was a discrete event unrelated to any of the others. In fact, he viewed them as repeated attempts to spark a regional rising with the immediate goal of securing the revolutionary base area. Several of the efforts had also initially been planned as one coordinated operation in 1906. As that proved impossible, due to the French retreat, Sun ordered the individual risings as circumstances dictated, taking advantage of new opportunities as well as the old plans.

The first of the frontier actions with which Sun was directly involved was that at Fang-ch'eng in September 1907.<sup>9</sup> This seems to have been a spontaneous affair, not planned by Sun. The disturbance began with local opposition to an increased tax on sugar production intended to raise money for the Court's reform program. The residents of the Ch'in-chou district of Kwangtung, adjoining the Kwangsi-Tonkin border, made petitions to the magistrate, but were dispersed by troops in the spring of 1907.<sup>10</sup> The local people began to

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7. See Hu Han-min's assessment of the two men in *Nay-yang*, Second series, p. 3.

8. For an extended analysis of these two risings, see Barlow, Chapters II, IV.

9. See map

10. Huang Chen-yu, *Hua-ch'iao yü Chung-kuo ke-ming* (The Overseas Chinese and the revolution of 1911) (Taipei, 1963), p. 120.

organize resistance and sent envoys to Sun in Hanoi.

Sun prepared to act. His first step was to contact local military leaders recently posted by the Court in the disturbed area. One of these men was Chao Sheng, the New-Army commander who had played host to Hu I-sheng and Captain Vaudeschal in Nanking in December 1906. Hu I-sheng went to see Chao Sheng, who was now commanding two battalions of New Army soldiers. Huang Hsing was deputed to contact Chao's commander, Kuo Jen-chang, who led two thousand men of the old-style Provincial Defense Forces.<sup>11</sup>

Sun simultaneously began arranging for arms. Sun's supporters in Japan were already in possession of a number of weapons, purchased with money raised by Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and contributed by Japanese industrialists.<sup>12</sup> In Japan, Chang Ping-lin, a bitter enemy, who had earlier accused him of misappropriation of funds, pronounced the weapons outmoded and dangerous. This exacerbated the quarrel between Sun and other elements of the T'ung Meng Hui in Japan.<sup>13</sup> These arms were ultimately denied the rebels at Fang-ch'eng because of the incompetence, or perhaps dishonesty, of the Triad leader Hsu Hsueh-ch'iu. The weapons, including a number of ancient two-handed Samurai swords, were eventually returned to Japan hidden under a load of coal. The open quarrel over the value of the weapons, the bungled attempt to deliver them and their ignominious return damaged Sun's reputation with his formerly generous Japanese supporters. It seems to have been Sun's last opportunity for securing large-scale Japanese assistance until after 1911.<sup>14</sup>

While the Japanese affair was unraveling, Sun was also arranging for retired French army officers to instruct his men in the use of modern weapons.<sup>15</sup> Although these men did not come to the attention of either Chinese or French authorities, they probably represented expansionist elements within the army and may have actually been on active duty, as was the French captain at the later Chen-nan-kuan rising. There is evidence that these officers were recruited by the French consul at Mengtsz, Raphael Reau.<sup>16</sup>

11. Hu Han-min, First Series, p. 5.

12. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 225, Ministry of the Colonies to MAE, 12/09/07.

13. See Barlow, pp. 212-217.

14. See Marius Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen* (Stanford, 1970), pp. 126-127.

15. Huang Chen-wu, p. 122.

16. Lo Hsiang-lin, *Kuo-fu Yü Ou-mei chih hao-yu* (The Kuo-fu and European-American friendship) (Taipei, 1951), p. 120.

After months of preparations, Sun's forces, led by the bandit leader Wang Ho-shun, struck at Fang-ch'eng. It was here that the magistrate and nineteen others were massacred. This attack was to be the preliminary to one upon the large city of Ch'in-chou where Kuo Jen-chang was stationed. Kuo, however, refused to rise as he had agreed. Not knowing Kuo's attitude, Chao Sheng feared to act.<sup>17</sup> The rebels dispersed. Sun's cadres went to Hanoi, and the local men either accompanied them or returned home.

Fang-ch'eng was the third rising within four months with which Sun's name had been connected, although it was truly the only one with which he had direct involvement. The Ch'ing authorities were alarmed. Reports in the Chinese press charged that some rebels had assembled in French-held areas and that arms had entered from Tonkin.<sup>18</sup> The charges were correct in that some members of the Chinese community in Vietnam had participated in the rising.

The Fang-ch'eng rising had initially been added to a much more elaborate plan calling for simultaneous attacks upon the three major passes between Tonkin and Kwangsi; Chen-nan-kuan, Shui-k'ou and P'ing-hsiang.<sup>19</sup> The fact that the target of the combined operation was Kwangsi, and the scale of the plans, raises the possibility that they had been set for 1906 but postponed. The relative sophistication of the plans and the attention paid to transportation and communication lines also suggest that they were made with professional French advice. Later events also indicate that the operation was tied to French railway interests. The last station on the projected Hanoi-Kweilin road was in Tonkin, several miles from the pass at Chen-nan-kuan.<sup>20</sup> The combined operation against the passes was enlarged to include the fortuitous opportunity presented by the unrest in the Fang-ch'eng area. Ultimately only that attack could be launched, because the Lung-chou *tao-t'ai*, Chuang Wen-k'uan, was informed of the attempt to be made upon the passes. This was done by Sun's man Kuan Jan-p'u, who mistakenly believed that Chuang could be bought or otherwise persuaded to join the conspiracy. Chuang, however, informed the Court, and two subverted local officials necessary to the attack upon the passes were executed.<sup>21</sup>

After the furor around Ch'in-chou died down, Sun began planning once again for the combined operation against the passes. In

17. Hu Han-min, First Series, p. 5.

18. TFTC, Kuang-hsu 33, 10th-12th Months, no. 10.

19. See map, areas 1, 2, 3.

20. Chün-tu Hsüeh, *Huang Hsing and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 66.

21. Huang Chen-wu, p. 128.

essence he was still following the plans of 1906, hoping to attain his immediate goal of a base area in the frontier despite the great changes wrought by the Court's counter-attacks and the loss of formal French support. Of the three passes, the most important was Chen-nan-kuan. It consisted of several artillery emplacements on the two opposing sides of the pass, and a garrison of several hundred whose commander was presumed to be in the radical camp. When the plans for the combined operation appeared to be beyond Sun's limited resources, he decided to concentrate on Chen-nan-kuan.

Wang Ho-shun was initially placed in charge. An important segment of the forces for the attack was local, led by a sinicized *t'u-ssu*, Li Yu-ch'ing. Li and Wang were competitors, however, and Li would not follow Wang.<sup>22</sup> Wang was replaced by another bandit leader, Huang Ming-t'ang. This was Huang's first major responsibility for Sun, and he was to remain an important figure, one of the Min-chün (People's Army) leaders who descended upon Canton in 1912.<sup>23</sup>

On December 1, 1907, three columns led by Huang, Li and a third local leader, Ho Wu, converged upon the fortresses. The resistance was very light due to the previous subversion of much of the garrison. Upon hearing that the emplacements had been taken, Sun and a party left Hanoi for the site. Sun's group included Hu Han-min, Huang Hsing, and several others, as well as a French captain of artillery said in most sources to have been retired.<sup>24</sup> Sun's party was met by a group of local men at the railhead, Langson, and then hiked uphill for five hours, by lantern-light, before reaching the forts.

By morning's light, several of the fundamental assumptions for the operation proved to be incorrect. Loyal Ch'ing troopers still occupied a distant redoubt and could direct rifle fire into the artillery emplacements. The conspirators had planned to arm themselves from the fort's arsenals, but only some inadequate muskets were to be found. Of the Krupp guns seized by the rebels, only one could be fired and it had no range-finder, although the Frenchman did fire it, inflicting casualties. In effect, the expedition was all but unarmed.

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22. *Chüan-chi*, p. 18.

23. See Edward J.M. Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution, The Case of Kwangtung, 1895-1913* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 238-239.

24. Huang Chen-wu, p. 130. Hu Han-min's account, which must be considered primary, as he was present on the expedition, does not claim the officer was retired. This detail was evidently added later, to minimize the implications of the Frenchman's presence.

Sun reluctantly agreed to return to Hanoi to arrange for resupply.<sup>25</sup>

In Hanoi, Sun opened discussions with a French bank, possibly the Bank of France, via the good offices of the comprador Tseng, or the Banque d'Annam with which he was later involved. The bank agreed to a loan, contingent upon the occupation of the city of Lung-chou as a demonstration for rebel viability.<sup>26</sup> That city was not only the closest sizeable town to the rebel-held pass, but also the logical place for the next stop on the proposed Kwangsi railway after Langson. The discussions proved useless because a Ch'ing counter-attack was led by Lu Jung-t'ing who advanced in good order under effective artillery cover (using an electric searchlight) and routed the rebel holding force in a few hours.<sup>27</sup>

The rising at Chen-nan-kuan offers an opportunity to inquire further into the nature of Sun's French support during 1907 and 1908. In 1906 he had lost the covert support of the CSR and its backers because of the French government's desire to support the status quo in China and because of a corresponding fear of the anti-foreign tendencies of his own forces. These same factors were at work in 1907 and 1908 but the expansionists in Tonkin, the front line of French colonialism in Asia, and those who would reap the immediate benefits of further advances were much more reluctant to drop Sun. The French artillery captain at Chen-nan kuan represents one element of the Forward Party, die-hards within the army who had earlier worked with Boucabeille in support of Sun.<sup>28</sup>

The attitude of the French local government in Tonkin toward this incident is ambiguous. The Quai d'Orsay was alarmed by reports of the officer's participation—he had in fact killed Chinese soldiers—but the Quai's alarm subsided as it became evident that the Chinese government was either uninformed or did not intend to create an incident.<sup>29</sup> When queried by Paris for further information, Tonkin replied that the man could not be punished because he had since resigned his commission and gone to work for a French mining company on the frontier.<sup>30</sup>

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25. Hu Han-min, First Series, pp. 6-8.

26. *Ch'ian-chi*, 31 ff.

27. TFTC, Kuang-hsu 34, 1st-3rd Months, First *Ch'i*.

28. FO 405/183, LXIII, no. 70, p. 89, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 7/31/08. This account states that the man who, according to French reports, was on active duty, was also leading a file of six Annamite Scouts. This detail cannot be found in any other materials.

29. AOM, B11 (37) carton 34, Governor-General to Colonies, 2/12/08.

30. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 200, Colonies to Foreign Minister, 5/22/08.

While Sun had important friends in Tonkin, he also had some dangerous enemies. One such enemy was the French consul at Lung-chou, Dr. Pelofi. Pelofi had begun reporting in November, not only to Hanoi where he knew Sun had allies, but also to Canton where the French bureaucracy was very much pro-Ch'ing, that rebel agents were recruiting support in both Tonkin and around Lung-chou. Pelofi's sources were quite good. He correctly named Wang Ho-shun and Ho Wu as among those involved.<sup>31</sup> The fact that Pelofi indicated that P'ing-hsiang was to be the target in November indicates that he was receiving information regarding the attempt by Kuan Jen-p'u to subvert local officials. Pelofi was a close personal friend of the Lung-chou *tao-t'ai*, Chuang Wen-k'uan. Pelofi's intelligence continued to be accurate: he warned Chuang in late November that an attack upon Chen-nan kuan was imminent. Although it is possible that Pelofi's sources were Chinese, it seems far more likely that he had contacts with French supporters of Sun.

Supported by Pelofi's intelligence, the Ch'ing repeatedly charged that French authorities were conniving to support Sun, both before and after the attacks on Chen-nan kuan. Prince Ch'ing of the Wai Wu Pu listed for the Quai the exact areas in Tonkin where the rebels had formed, as well as the names of many of the small-unit commanders.<sup>32</sup> The Court also knew that the rebels fleeing from Chen-nan kuan into Tonkin had first been arrested by the French authorities and turned over to the Cantonese Congregation, and were deported only after the most strenuous Chinese protests.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the most serious charge raised by the Ch'ing was that many of the rebels involved had been recruited from coolies employed by French railways.<sup>34</sup> Again the charges were correct. After Sun's forces were driven out of the fortresses, they had buried their arms in China as ordered and then began to filter back into Tonkin. One group of sixty was arrested because it was a violation of French colonial law to travel in such numbers. Most of these men proved to be former coolies from the Yunnan railway.<sup>35</sup> Earlier,

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31. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 225, Colonies to Foreign Affairs, 11/14/07.

32. *Ibid.*, Chinese *Wai Wu Pu* to Foreign Affairs, 12/17/07.

33. TFTC, Kuang-hsu 34, 1st-3rd Months, First *ch'i*, and FO 4-5/183, LXIII, no. 79, p. 89, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 7/31/08. The British were very interested in Sun's ties to the French, but unfortunately for them and for the historical record, their consulate in Hanoi was closed from April 1907 to January 1908.

34. Charge appears in TFTC, Kuang-hsu 34, 7th-9th Months, Seventh *ch'i*, and was conveyed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in early 1908.

35. AOM B11 (37), carton 34, Governor-General to Colonies, 2/12/08.

in August 1907, another group of fifty had been arrested in Tonkin, en route to Kwangsi, and they too were coolies from the Yunnan railway.<sup>36</sup> It is also noteworthy that many of the Chinese captured while fleeing from subsequent defeats in 1907 and 1908 were given jobs as coolies in French mines or on the railways.<sup>37</sup>

As the coolies were said to have been recruited in Yunnan, the French queried their consul at Mengtsh, Raphael Reau. Reau replied that of the more than one thousand coolies working for the rail company, only some sixty were involved. As this was the exact number already known to have been involved, one wonders how thorough Reau's investigation truly was. As Kim Munholland indicates, there is some evidence which suggests that Reau was involved with Bouca-beille.<sup>38</sup> Reau was involved with Doumer and Sun in Europe in 1905 when the plans were laid for Sun's subsequent involvement with French expansionists.<sup>39</sup> Reau also had formal interviews with Sun in 1903 and again in 1905.<sup>40</sup>

There is additional evidence that French high authorities in Hanoi bestowed their blessings on the attack at Chen-nan kuan. After leaving the fortresses, Sun had arranged for a limited number of small arms to be transported to the holding force, but French border police stopped the shipment. They soon received orders from Hanoi to let it pass, but the rebels had meanwhile been defeated.<sup>41</sup>

Although the French had refused to grant earlier and repeated Ch'ing requests for Sun's extradition or deportation, the pressure generated by the Chen-nan kuan affair was impossible to resist. In January 1908, Governor-General Beau informed the Quai d'Orsay that Sun had been "discovered" in Hanoi and would be sent to Singapore by the first boat.<sup>42</sup> The decision to deport Sun was triggered by the activities and attitudes of Dr. Pelofi. Pelofi informed Hanoi that Sun had been involved in the Chen-nan kuan rising and relayed a request from the Lung-chou *tao-t'ai* that he be investigated.<sup>43</sup> Since Pelofi was not only an enemy of the expansionist position but knew quite a bit about its activities, Hanoi had no choice but either to

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36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ch'iao-Yüeh tang-shih*, p. 11; MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 200, Beau to Colonies, 2/12/08.

38. Munholland, p. 82.

39. Lo Hsiang-lin, p. 120.

40. Munholland, *ibid.*

41. Shelley Ch'eng, p. 235.

42. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 200, Governor-General to Foreign Affairs, 1/16/08.

43. Teng Mu-han, p. 19; KFCC, letter of 1909, section 6, p. 4.



acknowledge and defend Sun, or to deport him. In an interview with Sun, the French, apparently led by Governor-General Beau himself, informed Sun, "There is no alternative, we have no recourse but to tell you to leave."<sup>44</sup>

The French order was limited to Sun himself; the other members of his entourage were permitted to remain and continued to have contact with French authorities and members of the Forward Party. Before Sun departed in March 1908, he laid plans with Hu Han-min and Huang Hsing for continued action in the frontier. The group decided to concentrate once again on the Ch'in-chou region of Kwangtung, the site of repeated earlier attempts. The decision was based on the continued unrest in the area, and existing ties with Ch'ing military leaders like Chao Sheng and Kuo Jen-chang and with the leaders of the the tax rebellion who were still working with Sun.

Preparations for the new rising included purchasing a number of bombs and pistols from a French merchant in Hanoi. The munitions were moved to Haiphong by compradores on the Hanoi-Haiphong steamship line who used company facilities to ship them to the Kwangtung border. Huang Hsing created two units of fighters, one composed of earlier participants in the risings, and one of more than a hundred members of the Chinese community in Vietnam who had not yet been blooded. The former group was relatively well-armed—each had a rifle—but the latter carried only pistols, the price of which was rising in Hanoi because of the increased demand created by the repeated military actions in the frontier.

Huang's expedition crossed the frontier into Kwangtung on March 27, 1908. The French police at the border made no attempt to prevent them from forming up or crossing, but rather "applauded and welcomed" them.<sup>45</sup> For more than a month the group moved about the Ch'in-chou region under the banner of the "Chinese People's Army, South Route, Commander Huang."<sup>46</sup> They fought constant small skirmishes but had relative freedom of movement due to an uneasy truce with Kuo Jen-chang who was the Ch'ing commander in the area. The rebels were joined by peasant volunteers and were for some time superior to any government forces which they encountered. At a battle at Ma-tu shan they

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44. Hu Han-min, First Series, 9. Hu also observes that police involvement, which then required that the matter be handled through official channels, was the main precipitating factor. Teng Mu-han indicates that Pelofi aided the Ch'ing in pressuring Hanoi. *Chüan-chi*, p. 31.

45. *Chüan-chi*, p. 31.

46. *Ibid.*

captured two Ch'ing officers, four hundred rifles and abundant ammunition.

Success did not last. At some point they reluctantly (perhaps unknowingly) skirmished with one of Kuo's units, killing a battalion commander and ending the truce.<sup>47</sup> Government forces began to concentrate and fight more aggressively, ammunition ran low, and the peasant converts deserted. Huang Hsing returned to Hanoi and the rising had failed.

The Ch'in-chou effort, like earlier ones in the frontier, had been a part of a more sophisticated plan which had broken down. The original blueprint had included a simultaneous rising at Ho-k'ou in Yunnan.<sup>48</sup> Various delays in arranging local support had delayed the rising so that it actually began weeks after Huang Hsing had crossed into Kwangtung but before he could return to Hanoi.

Ho-k'ou, like Chen-nan kuan, was a particularly strategic border crossing between south China and Vietnam.<sup>49</sup> The militant students of the *Yunnan Journal* regarded it a major defense against French aggression and condemned the fact that the government had let both fortifications and morale crumble until the soldiery there lived "like beggars in a grass hut."<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, by Ch'ing standards, it was an important installation and had a garrison of several thousand. It adjoined the French town of Laokay, separated by a narrow iron bridge over the Red River. Laokay was a station on the still uncompleted Hanoi-to-Yunnan railway, construction of which was then stalled at Mengtsz where Raphael Reau was both consul and the major administrator on the construction project.

The railway was a great advantage to Sun's forces as it provided for rapid communication between the intended fronts in Kwangtung and Yunnan. The railway also assured Sun of substantial French support. The construction company, the Société de construction des Chemins de fer du Younan was then in great difficulty. The line had not paid off as had been hoped and was nearing the end of its capital. This placed in jeopardy not only the company, but also the politicians who had supported it. The chief instigator of the railway, and the man who had secured its initial financing, was Paul Doumer. Concern for the future of the company thus united pro-colonial groups in Paris and Tonkin, both of which had a considerable stake in the

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47. Hsüeh Chün-tu, p. 69.

48. KFCS, p. 36; *Chüan-chi*, p. 32 ff; Hu Han-min, Second Series, p. 2.

49. Appendix, III, no. 1.

50. *Yunnan tsa-chih*, no. 1, p. 103, "A Letter." For a description of Ch'ing arms there, see Des Forges, pp. 86-91.

line's success. In April 1908, the line was on the verge of failure. It did in fact collapse after the unsuccessful attempt on Ho-k'ou and was not refunded for several years. The Forward Party was thus prepared to be overt and aggressive in assisting Sun's group in any project which promised to aid the railway.

A success at Ho-k'ou would have saved the railway. The major concern of the company was to drive further into the Chinese interior, with Szechuan as the ultimate goal, in the belief that the rich vein of commerce which they had sought for years lay always just ahead of their tracks. Had Sun's forces been able, at a minimum, to control the Chinese territory covered by the line in 1908 and thus protect the line from Ch'ing retaliation, the situation would have been no worse than the status quo. Had the rebels advanced as far as Yunnan-fu, this would have made available a much wealthier commercial area and a jump-off point for further advances. The actual seizure of a base area in all or part of south China would have provided enormous advantages for the railway and mining companies.

The major liability of ambitious and extended planning was that word of rebel intentions was sure to leak and, Ho-k'ou was not exception. The *tu-pan*, Wang Chen-pang, was aware that his subordinates were plotting. He had the garrison reinforced, forcing the conspirators to act prematurely. The result was that only a portion of the subverted units actually rose.<sup>51</sup>

The *tu-pan* was able to take up good defensive positions and held out for more than twenty-four hours after the rising began on April 29. A French merchant tried to negotiate the *tu-pan*'s surrender, but the man chose to die fighting. Many of the Ch'ing units in the area declared their support of the rebels, or their neutrality, and what had begun as an uncertain conspiracy became a revolutionary army of several thousand trained and armed soldiers.

The initial rebel attack was led by Huang Ming-t'ang, seconded by Kuan Jen-p'u and a local Ko-lao hui leader, Chang Te-ch'ing.<sup>52</sup> On May 1st, after the worst of the fighting was over, Huang Hsing replaced Huang Ming-t'ang and made a ceremonial crossing from Laokay into Ho-k'ou mounted on horseback and carrying a rebel standard. From Ho-k'ou, the rebels fanned out in three columns. Huang Hsing intended to push up the railway and take Mengtsz first, then Yunnan-fu. The garrison was known to be sympathetic, there

51. *Chüan-chi*, p. 32.

52. Hu Han-min, Second Series, p. 3.

was a large armory and the city was important to the French. The Yunnan Railway Company had assured the rebels that once they took Mengtsz and the last portion of the line was safe from Ch'ing retaliation, they could then use the line to move troops and supplies to the front.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the Banque d'Annam had also indicated that once Mengtsz fell, it would meet the rebels' military expenses.

This situation was much the best to face Sun and his supporters at any time from 1900 until 1912. Success seemed imminent. An easy march up the railway against light resistance would gain control over modern transportation and communication, an arsenal of three thousand modern rifles, a provincial capitol and unlimited foreign support. Huang Hsing thus prepared to lead Huang Ming-t'ang's brigands forward. Huang Ming-t'ang would not move, maintaining the "provisions" were inadequate.<sup>54</sup> Huang's background, taken together with Sun Yat-sen's own frantic efforts to raise additional funds in Southeast Asia, makes it clear that the "provisions" which Huang had in mind were in fact a considerable cash advance.<sup>55</sup> Huang Hsing cajoled and otherwise persuaded, but without soldiers of his own he was helpless. He demanded troops from Huang Ming-t'ang and was given a unit of one hundred men with which he set out for Mengtsz. He had marched less than a mile when the men sat down and, upon being ordered forward, responded by firing in the air. Huang Hsing returned to Hanoi for a case of automatic pistols and some loyal *hua-ch'iao*. While returning to the front he was stopped by a French policeman who believed him to be the dreaded *Bête-jaune*, a Japanese spy. Trying to reassure the policeman of his ethnicity by speaking Cantonese, Huang, a Hunanese with a very heavy accent, only increased the man's suspicions, and was arrested and ultimately deported.<sup>56</sup>

The Court had initially been slow to take alarm at the rising, but by May 4 had assembled a dependable army of five thousand men.<sup>57</sup> Within three weeks the Ch'ing forces had recovered Ho-k'ou, and Sun Yat-sen had to record his eighth defeat. Sun and the cadres around him understood the lessons of the failure at Ho-k'ou. It was evident that a lack of ideological commitment, of a "revolutionary transformation," meant that the troops were poorly motivated and easily disheartened.<sup>58</sup> It was also clear that, despite an initial

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53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*

55. For Sun's activities, see KFCS, p. 36.

56. Hu Han-min, Second Series, p. 4.

57. SSTC, *Kuang-hsu*, Summer, 00025, 00037, 00041, 00054, 00017.

58. *Ke-ming wen-hsien*, p. 396.

response, the mutineers had failed to fully support the rising but had left the task of expanding the initial victory to Sun's paramilitary forces who, more mercenaries than rebels, would not fight without pay.

Although the Ho-k'ou revolt was over, its repercussions were to linger for some time. The Manchu court issued a series of protests concerning French involvement. The major charge was that the French had provided a sanctuary for the rebels both before and after the attack. Although the Chinese government exaggerated the numbers of men involved and the flagrancy of the French assistance, the charges were essentially correct. The Ch'ing also charged that the rebel groups had been known to be forming in Tonkin for some months, and that the French had ignored repeated requests to take action. The French government issued no denials nor rebuttals to this charge.<sup>59</sup>

The Court also declared that Frenchmen had been active on the rebel side. Reau and the French merchant who had tried to negotiate the *tu-pan's* surrender were named, as well as unspecified French officers who were said to have given military aid. The French admitted the truth of these charges, but replied that it was beyond the powers of the democratic French government to keep private citizens from consorting with whomever they wished.<sup>60</sup>

The charges against Reau were bound up with accusations that the Yunnan railway had in some way been involved, that the rebels had taken French trains to the front, and had been resupplied by rail. There was also a rumor, endorsed by the local *tao-t'ai* who pledged his head as guarantee, that the rebels had been promised and were expecting a trainload of munitions.<sup>61</sup> It is evident that both Paris and Hanoi did indeed suspect that Reau had been quite actively involved but, in order to maintain a solid front against the Chinese government, resolutely denied even the possibility. After the affair had cooled, it was decided that Reau had perhaps been guilty of minor indiscretions.<sup>62</sup>

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59. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 238, Prince Ch'ing of Wai Wu Pu to French Minister in Peking, 5/06/08; Chinese Minister in Paris to Foreign Affairs, 5/09/08; MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 200, Governor-General to Colonies, 5/15/08; FO 405/182, LXII, Jan.-June, 1908, no. 160, p. 285, Carlisle to Grey, 5/18/08.

60. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 238, French Minister Peking, to Wai Wu Pu.

61. *Ibid.*, Prince Ch'ing to French Minister to Peking, 5/06/08.

62. AOM/B11 (37), Bapst, Peking, to Pichon, 7/10/08.

Sun's involvement with the Yunnan railway company and the French bank provide some basis for the last series of charges. It is probable that the rebels did use at least the scheduled trains to Ho-k'ou on a small scale. And the promise of aid contingent upon the taking of Mengtsh makes it likely that there was indeed a car or two of munitions waiting on a siding in Tonkin for that city to fall.

Underlying the charges raised by the Court was the awareness that Tonkin had long served as a sanctuary for Sun, and the certainty that there was a powerful group of Frenchmen who were assisting the rebels. The Chinese were particularly incensed by the ability of the insurgents to slip back into Tonkin to avoid pursuit and later to resume their attempts upon south China. The sanctuary made it impossible to suppress the rebels and rendered the frontier vulnerable to additional filibusters.

The French made a series of counter-claims. The French government laid the entire rising to the misgovernment of the notoriously anti-French Yun-kwei viceroy, Hsi-liang. Their attitude was that Hsi-liang's hatred was the real origin of the claims rather than any French culpability.<sup>63</sup>

This French position was greatly strengthened by an incident on June 3rd. A French Lieutenant, Wiegand, was on patrol along the border about thirty miles northeast of Laokay when he observed a running battle between rebels and Ch'ing forces. He observed the battle from the Tonkin side for some time, and when the rebels crossed into French territory he arrested them. When the Ch'ing troops came up, he informed their officer that the rebels were in the custody of the French government. The Chinese officer shot him dead. In addition to Wiegand, the Chinese troops killed several rebels and six Vietnamese scouts.<sup>64</sup> The French government pictured the event as a direct result of the "systematic anti-French campaign" of Hsi-liang.

The French eventually received partial satisfaction for many of the claims, including punishment of the Ch'ing officers and soldiers and compensation for the families of the French forces killed in the Wiegand incident. The Wiegand incident increased sentiment in favor of the revolutionaries. Many Frenchmen contrasted the

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63. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 238, French Minister, Peking, to Prince Ch'ing, 6/13/08; see also Des Forges, p. 125.

64. *Le Courrier d'Haiphong* (Haiphong, Indochina), 6/13/08; the reports of British Consul Carlisle in Hanoi are very detailed here. See FO 405/183, LXII, July-December, 18, no. 8, p. 4. Initial French report is MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 200, Laokay, 6/05/08.

law-abiding attitude of the rebels in promptly submitting to internment with the murderous response of the Ch'ing troopers.<sup>65</sup>

Sun, from the beginning of his relationship with the French, had understood that his forces must in no manner threaten the security of Tonkin. He had impressed upon his men the necessity of burying their arms whenever possible before crossing into Tonkin.<sup>66</sup> To the local brigands this must have seemed not only an onerous and dangerous task but one which held out the possibility of losing their valuable weapons. It was only a question of time until an incident occurred.

On June 21 or 22 a group of rebel remnants from the Ho-k'ou operation crossed in Tonkin en route to the safer area of Kwangsi.<sup>67</sup> These men were not Vietnamese *hua-ch'iao* but hardened denizens of the frontier, roving braves who had frequently clashed with French troops as they ran opium or weapons into Tonkin. They were spotted and taken prisoner by a superior Franco-Annamite force. As the group slept in the jungle that evening, some comrades came up and fired into the French force. Captain Fleury, Lieutenant Delatre, two French sergeants, and a number of Vietnamese scouts were killed and the survivors routed. As in the Wiegand incident, the dead were decapitated and otherwise mutilated, but because the putatively modern rebels were involved, French shock was much greater.<sup>68</sup> In August, rebels murdered a Vietnamese woman and her two children for betraying their presence to a French police post.<sup>69</sup>

The response to the Fleury-Delatre incident was swift and effective. Aware that European troops, including the elite Foreign Legion, were helpless in the jungles where the rebels were literally at home, the French offered eight dollars for every Chinese head brought in by the local *Man* tribesmen. Within the next several months the bounty was paid more than one hundred and fifty times.<sup>70</sup>

French local opinion in general did not discriminate between the Wiegand and Fleury-Delatre shootings, seeing in both the perfidy

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65. See *L'Opinion* (Saigon), "Un grave incident sur la Frontier du Yunnan," 6/05/08.

66. FO 405/183, LXVIII, no. 70, Jordan to Grey, Peking, Interview with Li Yau-heng, 7/31/08.

67. *Ch'uan-chi*, p. 34.

68. See reports in *La Presse Coloniale* (Paris), "Courrier d'Indochine," 9/10/08.

69. MAE, Foreign Affairs, China, no. 200, Governor-General to Colonies, 5/15/08.

70. FO 405/183, LXIII, no. 63, p. 79, Carlisle to Grey, Hanoi, 7/31/08.

and hostility of the yellow race.<sup>71</sup> Many also linked the incidents to the attempted poisoning of the Hanoi garrison by anti-French Vietnamese later that summer.<sup>72</sup> The killings and the following series of Vietnamese anti-French actions suddenly made the French aware of their precarious position in Asia. The Ho-k'ou defeat and the shootings of June 1908 were the last provocation to the French. The remainder of Sun's forces were deported. More than six hundred were expelled, most of them to Singapore, where the French bargained with British colonial authorities for their admittance. By 1907, even the most venal or adventuresome elements of the Forward Party were aware that support for Chinese revolutionaries was a two-edged sword. Although China was an attractive area for future advances of French interests, the peace and security of Indochina had to be primary. Not even the most ardent colonial could gamble with that security, for the lives of the entire community were potentially at stake, as well as a very productive economic system.

The shift of opinion against Sun was made easier by his own repeated failures to gain a meaningful foothold in south China. His fulsome promises of future concessions were meaningless if the south China base area could not be attained. During 1907 and 1908, despite continuous unrest in the area, adequate financing and an abundance of French support, Sun and his forces were unable to take and hold Chinese territory. They were finally expelled as not only dangerous, but worse, as useless.

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71. AOM, Indochine, a 82, carton 28 bis.

72. *L'Eclair*, (Paris), 8/14/08; *La Libre Parole*, (Paris), 8/21/08.



## VIII

# Conclusion

The relationship between Sun Yat-sen and the French expansionists raises a number of questions about his later career, and about his status as the preeminent Chinese nationalist of the early twentieth century. The immediate issue would seem to be the continuity between Sun's tactics and strategy as described here—anti-Manchism, southern separatism, and reliance upon foreign assistance—and his approach after 1908. Many have believed that the actions following those in the frontier—the New Army revolts of 1910 and 1911—demonstrate an important shift in his strategy. This shift, it is sometimes argued, was away from primary reliance upon secret-society and brigand forces to a reliance upon the modern New Army.<sup>1</sup> It might, therefore, be argued that 1908 marks a significant point in his development and that he thereafter adopted a much more modern and ultimately more nationalist approach.

There is some merit in this argument, although many ambiguities remain which must be clarified before the argument can be accepted. A satisfactory analysis of those ambiguities would require an extended treatment beyond the limitations of this monograph. Here we can do no more than raise a few caveats. It is true that the plans for the 1910 and 1911 Canton risings called for assistance from New Army forces; but so had the earlier Fang-ch'eng rising and, via the same intermediary, the New Army leader, Chao Sheng. The 1910 effort seems, upon close examination, to have been related as much to local conflicts as to national politics, and the 1911 rising did not secure the participation of an appreciable number of soldiers. The latter rising differed from earlier attempts in that it was better planned and did involve the participation of many T'ung Meng Hui cadres. The immediate goals of both efforts were identical to the earlier risings, that is to seize Canton, and with it a base area from which to seek foreign recognition and the open or tacit support of adjoining provinces.

Moreover, the decision to rely upon the New Army seems to have been taken only in part out of a consideration for their higher

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1. Harold Z. Schriffen, "The Enigma of Sun Yat-sen," in Mary Wright, ed., *China in Revolution* (New Haven, 1968).

political consciousness, but also out of an awareness of their military superiority to the bandit forces.<sup>2</sup> Even granting that this was a substantial departure at the tactical level, the primary factor in the switch may have been the virtual accident that Chao Sheng, a close supporter, was also a New Army officer. Chao's argument in favor of reliance on the New Army may have been not that much different from Hsu Hsueh-ch'iu's local ties in the Chin-chou area and those of Huang Ming-t'ang and Wang Ho-shun in the frontier, all being primarily an attempt to take advantage of favorable local conditions.

Other important continuities between Sun's approach prior to and after 1908 can be seen in his election as provisional president in December 1911. Sun was assumed to be able to raise important amounts of foreign moneys, he was personally acquainted with many foreign leaders, and he could claim leadership of numerous enclaves of Overseas Chinese. All of these attributes were instrumental in his activities during the earlier period. Also, to the degree that there was a single living symbol of the revolution, it was Sun, who had been working actively and tirelessly for more than a decade for the revolution. That much of that activity had been in concert with potential enemies was much less important than that he had acted when others had not.

If Sun's activities during the period prior to 1908 had many happy consequences for him, there were also many less fortunate results. Most of these liabilities flowed from his concept of the revolution as a two-stage process; "destruction" followed by "construction." The fundamental assumption of this concept was that the two stages were largely separable. Sun was incorrect, for the ideology he devised to attain power created serious obstacles to reaching his ultimate goal, the institutionalization of the Three People's Principles, granting that the Principles were his goal. Of his instrumental approaches, racial anti-Manchuism and southern separatism proved to be most limiting.

The major shortcoming of southern separatism was that it offered few possibilities for exploitation in the period after 1911. Sun did not expect to be faced with the problems of governing the entire country until much later. Instead, he planned to head a long-term separatist regime in which southern regionalism would have been a positive integrative factor. Still, we are left to wonder at the methods which he expected to use to move from separatism to unity. In the period after 1911, Sun was ill-prepared to lead the entire

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2. Hu Han-min, *Nan-yang yü Chung-kuo ke-ming* (Southeast Asia and the Chinese Revolution), KMTA 002/39, Second Series, p. 6.

country. Many of the troops under his command were imbued with chauvinistic southern values and viewed the remaining task of the revolution as the conquest of the north by the south. Northern fears of southern domination were also extreme and account in part for the difficulties encountered in achieving national unity. None of this can be said to have been Sun's sole responsibility—he did not invent nor impose southern separatism, he merely used it. His political sin was one of omission, a failure to develop and use national appeals to transcend pre-existing parochial values.

The anti-Manchuism on which Sun chose to rely in his campaigns in the south was also to be a liability in the period after 1911. Anti-Manchuism and its counterpart, Manchu anti-Han appeals, were responsible for several massacres in the initial period of the fighting after the Wuhan rising, and threatened for a time to provoke foreign intervention.<sup>3</sup>

Sun's reputation as a Han chauvinist reduced his attraction to more moderate and enlightened elements of the Chinese polity, such as gentry and merchant groups, who saw him as a crude and backward leader of undesirable elements. His failure to gain the support of these groups contributed greatly to his political difficulties in Canton and Nanking after 1912.

Sun's anti-Manchuism and southern separatism relate directly to his reliance on the secret society and Triad-bandit forces of the Sino-Vietnamese frontier. In 1911 and 1912 these "People's Army" forces came down from the hills into Canton, led by Huang Ming-t'ang and Wang Ho-shun. They proved to be extremely corrupt and undisciplined and indulged in orgies of violence against conservative supporters of the Pao Huang Hui. Sun was in part responsible for this, as he had stressed the culpability of Han traitors who refused to follow racial anti-Manchu appeals. The result was that Sun's military forces became not only a threat to the stability and security of Canton, but an embarrassment to the revolution. Some of them were forcibly demobilized, others had to be forced out of the city by the New Army, leaving Sun without a military arm.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the ultimate indication of the limitations of Sun's approach to the revolution in the frontier prior to 1908 was that, of the southern provinces in which he had been active, not one could

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3. FO 405/205, LXIX, no. 265, p. 239. Government of India to Marquess of Crewe; PO 228/1809, To and From Yunnan-fu, "Report on the Revolution in the Province of Yunnan," O-Brian-Butter.

4. See Edward J.M. Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 238-9.

be considered to be in unqualified support of him. These provinces fell quickly into the hands of groups which were not aligned with Sun or were no more than opportunistically committed to his values. For this situation, Sun himself was in large part responsible. His reliance upon racial anti-Manchuism and local and regional chauvinism, and his failure to develop consistent organizations and modern ideological appeals, all bore fruit in 1912. Despite the many years which Sun spent working for the revolution in the frontier, he made no real contribution to stability there, or to reunification, nor to his own political fortunes once the immediate goals of the rebels had been achieved.

Sun's reliance on foreign support was so integral to his revolutionary acts before 1908 that it is hard to single out individual consequences of that reliance. Certainly the major consequence was that a search for foreign support made it impossible for him to use anti-imperialism in a systematic manner. Sun was aware of the possibilities presented by anti-imperialism, and in Vietnam found himself in the midst of a burgeoning anti-imperialist movement actively seeking Chinese aid.

The years from 1907 to 1909 were marked by constant strife between the Vietnamese and their French overlords. An important aspect of that struggle was the assumption that the causes of the French domination lay at least in part in racial differences. An anti-White pan-Asianism would have thus struck a strong response, not only in Vietnam, but in the Philippines and Japan, and would have been more consistent with racist premises than Sun's own more limited anti-Manchuism.

A more limited link to Vietnamese anti-colonialism in the frontier would also have been possible. By 1909, the Vietnamese partisan leader De Tham was again in open conflict with the French and seeking Chinese aid. The leader of Vietnamese radical intellectuals, Phan Boi Chau, was also interested in Chinese assistance and was himself receptive to racial arguments.<sup>5</sup> Contacts between Vietnamese and Chinese radicals were in fact quite frequent. In Sun's circumstances, they could have easily been effected in Japan, where he shared Japanese supporters with the Vietnamese, or in Vietnam via the large mixed-blood Sino-Vietnamese community.

In relying on French support, Sun precluded ties with radical Vietnamese. To have established such ties would have required a far different revolutionary style. He could not have operated openly in

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5. David Marr, *Vietnamese Anti-colonialism, 1885-1925* (Berkeley, 1971), p. 119.

Vietnam. Had he wished to remain there, he would have had to live the harried existence of partisan leaders like De Tham and Huang Ming-t'ang. Ultimately whether pan-Asian appeals or a form of Sino-Vietnamese radical cooperation would have been more productive than reliance upon French support can be no more than a topic for speculation. Our purpose is not to second-guess Sun, but to point out the inherent limitation of the approach which he chose.

Sun's willingness to work so closely with French expansionists seems incongruous, both in terms of his own later status as the leader of Chinese nationalists, and in terms of the markedly anti-imperialist orientation of most Chinese, radical or reformist, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sun's reliance upon foreigners can, however, be explained. The most direct explanation is that suggested above: In the political context of the frontier, French assistance provided an entree into an environment which seemed the most fertile ground for revolution in all of China.

The exigencies of the moment still seem an inadequate justification for the assiduity with which Sun sought aid, not hesitating to deal with the most expansionist elements in French society and being willing to make far-reaching concessions. The final explanation for Sun's strange alliance lies in his attitude toward imperialism. He continually perceived the danger to China as primarily a physical one, that China would lose her client-states or be divided. In discussing the Western threat, he most often used the then current metaphor of "slicing the melon."<sup>6</sup> Sun saw the solution to this peril in the destruction of the Manchus, after which Chinese would be sufficiently committed to their state to make a physical intervention impossible. He was no doubt correct, but he failed to see a comparable threat to Chinese sovereignty in foreign financial domination. Sun saw extensive foreign support, and the grant of privileges which it implied, not as a threat but as an advantage, one which he continually sought.<sup>7</sup> It is something of a measure of Sun's isolation from the political and intellectual concerns of his countrymen that he was not more apprehensive about indirect foreign domination, for by 1907 it had become a greater fear to his countrymen than a fear of overt intervention.<sup>8</sup>

6. See KFCS, Letter to Su Han-chung, p. 399.

7. For examples of Sun's efforts to secure foreign assistance after 1911, and his disappointment when foreign governments did not prove philanthropic at the expense of their own interests, see Lyon Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen: His Life and Its Meaning* (Stanford, 1968), p. 230; Shao Chuan Leng and Norman D. Palmer, *Sun Yat-sen and Communism* (New York, 1960), pp. 45-47; Bernard Martin, *Strange Vigour: A Life of Sun Yat-sen* (London, 1944), pp. 193-198.

8. See Harold Z. Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 238-239, for a discussion of Sun's basically pro-Western psychological set.

Sun's proclivity to invite Western aid was due not only to a basic pro-Western psychological orientation and an insensitivity to the dangers of financial imperialism, but also to a very weak grasp of basic economics. His continual flirtation with simplistic economic approaches to China's developmental problems, from his early interest in the single-tax movement to his later grandiose schemes for instant progress via railway construction, indicate this naiveté. One glimpse of Sun's lack of knowledge in this area comes from the memoirs of Huang San-te, an American Hung Society leader who accompanied Sun on several of his fund-raising tours in the United States. When the two were touring the Washington mint in August 1904, Sun was delighted with the huge currency presses, seeing in them an immediate solution to both his and China's financial problems. The horrified Huang San-te then had to explain the necessity for bullion backing before money could be printed and accepted.<sup>9</sup> Sun's weak understanding of national and international economics thus contributed to his willingness to accept foreign economic assistance because he much underestimated the influence which would accrue to the donor nation, and the difficulty of eradicating that influence.

Sun's proclivity to seek aid from even China's enemies testifies, as does so much of his career, to his place midway between traditional China and the modern West. Past interpretations of Sun written by his political heirs, seeking to make him China's undeniably preeminent modern leader, have continually emphasized his modernity. Later, more objective accounts have also been primarily interested in the manner in which Sun and other revolutionaries diverged from traditional Chinese patterns, because they have been directed at the larger problem of how and why it was that China began to enter from the modern era.<sup>10</sup> In this account of Sun's revolutionary activities in the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, we have often been interested in phenomena more familiar to China's past, such as racial anti-Manchuism, local chauvinism, self-serving secret societies and mercenary roving braves, and avaricious European expansionists.

Paradoxically, Sun's antagonist, the Manchu government, was trying in its own way to modernize China, to eradicate opium, to

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9. Huang San-te, *Hung-men ke-ming shih* (A revolutionary history of the Hung society), Ms., (1936), KMTA, 10/07/14.

10. For an illuminating discussion of many of the questions discussed above, and for an excellent discussion of the general problems of the historiography of the 1911 revolution, see Joseph W. Esherick, "1911, A Review," *Modern China*, Vol. 2, no. 2, (April 1976), pp. 141-183.

develop the military so as to ward off the foreigner, and to consolidate central control through rationalized fiscal administration and improvements in transportation and communication. Such attempts at modernization were costly, however, both financially, and in the opposition they generated in Chinese society. Before 1911, Sun capitalized on this resistance to Court-sponsored modernization as much or more than on Chinese desires to achieve a modern unitary state. Sun, then, was neither the national messiah which his heirs and supporters have proclaimed, nor the self-centered cynic which his detractors have often seen. Sun Yat-sen was rather a product of his era, a man uneasily balanced between the old and the new, between East and West, just as China was herself.

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