

## 11.3 ZOU RONG ON REVOLUTION, 1903

Zou Rong (1885–1905) grew up in a well-to-do merchant's family in Sichuan. He resisted pressures to prepare for the imperial examinations

and at an early age took part in political activities in local schools that twice resulted in his dismissal.

In the fall of 1902, Zou registered for classes at Japan's Dobun Shoin, a preparatory school for Chinese and Korean students desirous of pursuing studies in Japanese universities or specialized schools. During this year abroad, he read Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, Carlyle's *French Revolution*, some Herbert Spencer, and other sociopolitical works. In Japan, Zou became acquainted with members of Sun Yat-sen's *Xingzhonghui* (Revive China Association) and other revolutionary expatriates; he often spoke out against the Manchu regime. In 1903, he returned to China, carrying the manuscript of *The Revolutionary Army* (*Geming jun*) in his valise. The book was published in Shanghai in May 1903 and became an immediate success. It was the most widely circulated revolutionary pamphlet of its time; tens of thousands of copies were reprinted and circulated in China and in overseas communities.

Zou Rong was arrested by the police of the International Settlement in Shanghai soon after the publication of his tract and died in prison, at the age of 21, in April 1905. In later years, he was regarded as a revolutionary martyr and was honored by both the Guomindang and the Communist Party.

## ON REVOLUTION

Revolution is a universal rule of evolution. Revolution is a universal principle of the world. Revolution is the essence of a transitional period of struggle for survival. Revolution follows nature and corresponds to the nature of man. Revolution eliminates what is corrupt and holds on to what is good. Revolution is to advance from savagery to civilization. Revolution is to eradicate slavery and become the master. . . . I have heard that the English Revolution of 1688, the American Revolution of 1775, and the French Revolution of 1870 were all revolutions that followed nature and corresponded to the nature of man. They were all revolutions designed to eliminate what was corrupt and hold on to what is good and to advance from savagery to civilization. They were all revolutions to eradicate slavery and become the master. The individual was sacrificed to save the world; the nobility was sacrificed to benefit the common people and to allow everyone to enjoy the happiness of equality and freedom.

## THE YANGZHOU AND JIADING MASSACRES

Before I finished reading the *Yangzhou shiriji* [Diary of ten days at Yangzhou] and the *Jiading tuchengji* [The massacre of the city of Jiading], I began crying spontaneously. Let me say these words to my fellow countrymen: Do the ten days of Yangzhou and the three massacres of Jiading represent the entire picture

of how the Manchu bandits slaughtered the Han people in a prefecture and a county? The accounts in these two books merely mention two cases. Just imagine, at that time they unleashed their army to burn and loot and also issued their hair-cutting decree; wherever the horsemen of the Manchu bandits struck, the massacres and looting must have been ten times worse than in these two places. If the infamous cases of Yangzhou and Jiading occurred, there must have been thousands of other Yangzhous and Jiadings. Whenever I think of this, my heart is moved:

On the second day of the month, it is said that the Qing army established new officials and clerks in the prefectures and counties and then set up signboards to calm the people and prevent them from panicking. They also instructed the monks in all of the temples to burn the piles of corpses. There were also a number of women hiding in the temples and some of them died of fear or hunger. If the register for the corpses burned is consulted, it can be seen that in eight days more than eight hundred bodies were destroyed. No count was made of those who threw themselves into wells or rivers or hung themselves.

Let me inform my countrymen: When the Manchu bandits came through the passes into China, weren't the people they slaughtered our ancestral grandfathers and their uncles and brothers? Were not the women raped by the Manchu bandits the wives, daughters, and sisters of our ancestral grandfathers? The *Book of Rites* says: "One must not share the same heaven with the murderer of one's father and brothers." Even a small child knows this! Therefore, when a son cannot take revenge for his murdered father or brother, he must pass this responsibility to his own son, and his own son should pass it to his son and onward to future generations. Thus, a forebear's feud is, in fact, the feud of one's own father and elder brothers. If one does not avenge the feud of his father and elder brothers but, rather, serves those who are the object of the feud while talking about filial piety and brotherly love day in and day out, I cannot understand where filial piety and brotherly love are to be found. If the spirits of our ancestors exist, they certainly cannot lie still in the underworld.

#### ON REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION

If there is to be great construction, there must be destruction. For great destruction, there must first be construction. This has been an immutable and fixed principle through the ages. The revolution we are carrying on today is a revolution to destroy in order to permit construction. However, to implement destruction we should be able to construct. This was put very well by the great hero of Italian nation-building, Mazzini, who said: "Revolution and education must be carried out together." Before all of you, my countrymen, I cry out: Revolutionary education! Moreover, there must be education before the revolution and education after the revolution. . . .

#### CHINESE TRAITORS

Zeng Guofan, Zuo Zongtang, and Li Hongzhang were posthumously honored as Dukes Wenzheng, Wenxiang, and Wenzhong by the emperor of the great Qing dynasty. They were revered by the worthies of their time as the three heroes of the Restoration. Their ennoblement and appointment as ministers was envied by mediocre and vulgar people. They were endlessly worshipped and held up as models by later examination scholars. But I have heard that the German Prime Minister Bismarck scolded Li Hongzhang saying: "We Europeans see merit in the pacification of alien races. I have never heard of claiming merit for the slaughter of one's own people." Oh! How I wish I could raise Zeng and Zuo from the underworld to hear these words. How I wish I could bring back all the Chinese traitors who lived before Zeng and Zuo to hear this. How I wish I could bring together all future Chinese traitors, from those officials with full authority to the petty officials and clerks, to hear this. Zeng, Zuo, and Li all claimed that they were well-read and could be compared to the sages of the past. And yet, they mercilessly slaughtered their countrymen and served as the most loyal and submissive slaves of the Manchus. . . . There is no one to compare them to. They were even worse than Li Zicheng and Zhang Zianzhong. Li and Zhang were responsible for murdering their own people and helped bring about the Manchus' conquest of China. But Li and Zhang were not learned and they were also forced to do as they did by the corrupt politics of the Ming. I can still forgive them. Zeng, Zuo, and Li were clearly aware that they belonged to the Han race. They slaughtered their own people to win noble titles for their wives and sons and permitted the Manchus to master China for a second time. I can think of no excuse that will allow me to forgive them.

#### ON REVOLUTIONARY INDEPENDENCE

I am a young person with little learning or refinement. I cannot really discuss the great significance of revolutionary independence but, timidly and with trepidation, I have conscientiously tried to copy the meaning of American revolutionary independence. Prostrating myself before my most respected and beloved four hundred million exalted Han Chinese countrymen, I list the following proposals for your consideration and action:

1. China belongs to the Chinese. Our countrymen should all recognize that this is the China of the Han race.
2. We will not permit any alien race to tamper with the slightest right of our China.
3. All responsibility to obey the Manchus is abolished.
4. Let us overthrow the barbaric government established by the Manchu people in Beijing [Peking].

5. Drive out Manchus who live in China or kill them to take revenge.
6. Kill the emperor set up by the Manchus in order to assure that in perpetuity there will never be another despotic monarch.
7. Oppose foreigners and Chinese who interfere with our Chinese revolutionary independence.
8. Set up a central government as the central mechanism for the entire country.
9. Divide the country into provinces and cast votes to elect a general provincial representative. From the general provincial representatives of all provinces cast votes to elect a provisional president as representative of the entire nation. Also select a vice-president. Various prefectures and counties will also elect legislators.
10. Everyone in the country, male or female, will be a citizen.
11. All men in the country will have an obligation to perform military service.
12. Everyone will have an obligation to pay national taxes.
13. All people should be loyal to the newly founded nation.
14. All citizens of the nation, male or female, will be equal and there will be no distinction between high and low, noble and base.
15. Everyone will have inalienable natural rights.
16. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are all heaven-bestowed rights.
17. Such freedoms as the freedom of speech, thought, and publication cannot be violated.
18. Everyone's individual rights should be protected. The establishment of the government should occur through public agreement and the government will fully employ its power to protect the rights of the people.
19. Whenever the government violates the rights of the people, the people should be able to make a revolution to overthrow the old government in order to satisfy their hopes for peace and happiness. When the people have attained peace and happiness, they should be able through public discussion to rearrange rights and set up a new government. That is also a right that the people should possess.

#### THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ESTABLISHED AFTER THE REVOLUTION

When revolutionary independence is accomplished, people will not be satisfied if there is still the bitterness of a despotic system. This is the reason we must change the national polity of the past.

1. The government will be named the Republic of China.
2. The Republic of China will be a free and independent nation.

3. This free and independent nation should enjoy equal rights with other great nations in international affairs like the declaration of war, peace negotiations, signing treaties, commercial agreements, and all necessary affairs of state.
4. The constitution will be modeled on the American constitution and will conform to China's situation.
5. Laws for self-governance should all follow American laws for self-governance.
6. Any matter involving the whole populace or an individual, diplomatic negotiations, and the domestic division of government should all follow the American model.