

MA Thesis

THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY IN *SHENBAO*:

CHANGING ATTITUDES



Name: R. L. Suttie

MA Asian Studies – Leiden University

Thesis supervisor: H.G.D.G. De Weerdt

r.l.suttie@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Student number: 1616307

Date of submission: 1st of July, 2021

Word count: 12,857

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INTRODUCTION

Press and journalism in China have always been a lively topic of academic discussion, and understandably so. In our modern day and age of the internet, ‘China’ and ‘press’ have often been mentioned in the same breath as ‘censorship’. As author Xiantao Zhang has pointed out, even though the citizens of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) have suffered from a “lack of public knowledge” due to state-controlled media, there is more to do than only to “blame the Communist Party”.¹ China, in fact, has a rich history of journalism. Whereas the monopoly of the *Imperial Gazette*, a newspaper by the Qing court, could be regarded as a form of censored news, free press also coexisted².

With regards to the many detrimental effects that Western imperialism had on the world, especially on China, free press seems to have been one of its more positive legacies. The importance of free press, which is a concept from the era of enlightenment, is explained in detail by Barbara Mittler: newspapers in its primary form have a way of shaping public opinion, which can be an invincible force for any body of power. Mittler also emphasizes that it is not clear whether a newspaper was “a motor or a mirror of reality”.³ Newspapers are not strictly objective, as any medium. Is press even powerful at all?

Another concept deriving from the era of enlightenment is the Social Contract Theory, a complex theory that in its simplest form meant that the people and their government are formed together as a society, according to an invisible contract.⁴ Social Contract Theory, among other concepts within political philosophy such as republicanism and democracy had eventually made its way to China as well. This eventually snowballed into the fall of the Qing dynasty, the abolition of monarchy in its entirety, and the consequent founding of a republic with democratic ideals.

¹ Zhang Xiantao, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press : The Influence of the Protestant Missionary Press in Late Qing China*, Routledge Media, Culture and Social Change in Asia Series ;10, New York: Routledge, 2007, 2.

² Harris, Lane J. *The Peking Gazette : A Reader in Nineteenth-century Chinese History*. 2018.

³ Mittler, Barbara. *A Newspaper for China? : Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872-1912*, Harvard East Asian Monographs ; 226 840295545. Cambridge, MA [etc.]: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004, 1-39.

⁴ “social contract,” Encyclopedia Britannica Online, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/social-contract/68440>

This period, the late Qing dynasty and the early years of the Republic of China (ROC), was most of all a period of great change. A combination of internal and external developments had eventually brought China to a point where it sought to change its Social Contract, and embrace democratic republicanism in favor of the Heavenly Mandate, a concept that in meaning has some overlap with the western ‘divine right’, that was traditionally attributed, or not, to the emperor of China.

Amidst this rapidly changing environment, there was one newspaper, founded by an English business man, Ernest Major, that stood out as a newspaper specifically made to suite the tastes of its Shanghainese readership. Barbara Mittler coined it “a newspaper for China”, as suggested by the title of her book. This newspaper was, of course, *Shenbao*. Other newspapers like *Shenbao*, took advantage off the fact that they were founded in areas that were under the jurisdiction of other powers, such as Britain, France and the US, making them essentially censor-free newspapers. *Shenbao* was, however, one of the most, if not *the* most popular newspaper of its time, specifically because it was made only to be bought and read by the Chinese themselves.⁵ Eventually *Shenbao* earned a reputation to the Shanghainese as a very reputable source of news that many relied on, which makes it an excellent primary source to research. This success story is evident from Mittler’s *A Newspaper for China*, but there were not many other metrics that I could find to support this.

The concept of the newspaper, manifested as *Shenbao*, and the concept of the changing of the Social Contract, in the form of the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 and the consequent abolition of monarchy in China, form a doublet that I will research in this thesis. We see in *Shenbao* a change in tone around the decade before the Xinhai Revolution, which raises some questions. What elements go into the different discourses around the fall of the monarchy in *Shenbao*? Specifically, what influenced *Shenbao*’s discourse on the monarchy in relation to its readership? Therefore, the research question of this thesis is: *In what ways did Shenbao change their attitude, through its discourse, towards the fall of the monarchy, and, how did this relate to the public opinion of its readership in that process?*

⁵ Zhang, *Modern Chinese Press*, 8-9.

In this case, I wish not to include a hypothesis, which could cloud whatever result I will find. With this topic, instead, there are many variables, and a hypothesis would only cloud that, which should principally be an clear exposition and discussion of the results of the analysis in its historic context.

Moreover, I must clarify that I regard *Shenbao* as free press, specifically because of its popularity and target audience as well as its de facto independence from state censorship, most importantly during the period that I will consider for this thesis. Another important factor in considering *Shenbao* as free and independent press, is its distinctiveness among newspapers of the time, in that *Shenbao* put a considerable amount of importance into the editorial, and the opinion of the editorial. This is reminiscent of Western free press, and plays an important part in the image of *Shenbao*, something that is key to this thesis: *Shenbao* is unique in its integration of the editorial⁶.

⁶ Mittler, *A Newspaper for China*, p. 55.

METHODOLOGY

There is a specific way that I wish to take on the abovementioned research question and come to a satisfactory conclusion. For this purpose, the greatest portion of my research will be the analysis of a selection of articles from *Shenbao* itself, which are available online in their original form in late Classical Chinese. There are as of yet no translations available. This means that I must choose a set of articles that are relevant to the fall of the monarchy, and translate the relevant parts into English. Relevant translated parts will be cited throughout this thesis.

To follow a structure, I chose three important categories of subjects within the discourse about the fall of the monarchy. The three categories are:

1. **Important figures and thinkers that influenced the fall of the dynasty and forming of the new Republic of China.** These include figures such as Sun Yat-sen, Kang Youwei, and Liang Qichao. These thinkers were vital in the movement for change. Even if some didn't initially wish for the abolishment of the monarchy, like Liang Qichao, they did play an important role in the forming of the movement that did eventually did seek to abolish the monarchy.
2. **The revolution and its ideologies.** These topics include revolution, democracy, constitution, and other more abstract topics and how they are discussed by *Shenbao*. I include this category since, outside the important thinkers and the exact happenings of the revolution, new ideas that were mainly Western, were imported to reform the way that China would be managed without an Emperor. Analyzing this discourse for *Shenbao* will help answer my research question
3. **Important moments that form the timeline of the revolution.** These include the Wuchang Uprising, the Xinhai Revolution, and the Edict of Abdication. These moments and how they were reported in *Shenbao*, form an equally important part of the discourse that is necessary to answer the research question. Essentially, how historical events are framed influences the public opinion of the readership.

These categories are largely based upon keywords I used to find certain articles of the newspaper in the online database.⁷ These categories make sense for the following reasons: the revolution would have never happened if it were not for the important thinkers, ideologies and historical events that came to shape the future of China of that time. Dividing these three categories would in turn create problems on its own. These are namely the fact that I have limited time to translate a lot of material from the primary source, as well as the fact that I did not want to create subcategories for no apparent reason.

Concerning the translation, it seemed most true to the primary source if I translate the parts from the *Shenbao* that I want to use myself. Firstly, there are no translated databases online. Secondly, even though I have never translated professionally, I have been trained in translating Classical Chinese. Moreover, the written language in *Shenbao* was inherently meant to be easily understandable. Finally, this is a perfect way to create new content for future research. Therefore, I encourage anyone to use, revise or critique the translated parts that I have produced for this thesis.

Finally, it is important for my method of research that I will analyze two points of time with each relatable subject. For instance, in the category of ‘important figures’, I will analyze the way that *Shenbao* discusses them, not only before the change of attitude, but also after. It is expected to find that these thinkers will be discussed in a pejorative tone before, and in a positive tone after, but that is not completely what I plan to discuss in this thesis. Instead, I want to look at how the specific implications and nuances are handled between these timeframes. On what identities of the readership does *Shenbao* rely to make its points? Can we discover an overarching theme, regardless of the two timeframes?

⁷ *Shen Bao 1872-1949*, Shanghai Shi: Shen Bao She, 1872.
<http://shunbao.egreenapple.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/WEB/INDEX.html>

CHAPTER 1

THE IMPORTANT THINKERS OF THE REVOLUTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will analyze the discourse of *Shenbao* with regards to the specific category of important thinkers of the revolution. As mentioned before, the reason why it is necessary to research this category, is because the important thinkers of the revolution were key to its success. The movement against the monarchy would have looked very different, were it not for their influence. The most influential thinker of that time is undoubtedly Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who, to this day, is seen as the forefather of both the ROC and the PRC. It is his Three Principles of the People, of which the exact meanings are still contested and debated, that helped create an identity for China that stood beyond the unifying arms of the monarchy. The most important aspect of this was Chinese nationalism. It is this change of thought, inspired by nationalists like Sun Yat-sen, that still forms the opinion of current citizens of the PRC, even though 1949 is still viewed as more important⁸.

Sun Yat-sen, however was not the only important thinker of its time. Among these were also Kang Youwei (1858-1927), a well-known reformer, and Liang Qichao (1873-1929), who was a journalist. Both men were known for actively endorsing a constitutional monarchy. It is true that this is in itself not a threat to the existence of the monarchy, since none of these two endorsed the abolition of the monarchy. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao both worked together with the Guangxu Emperor (reign: 1875-1908)⁹ to launch the Hundred Days' Reform, which in essence was an effort to reform China in such a way that it emulated the Japanese constitutional monarchy after the Meiji restoration. However, it did not last. The Empress Dowager Cixi and a group of conservative elites (1835-1908) took over, put the Guangxu Emperor on house arrest, and executed many of the reformists that worked on it.¹⁰ Kang

⁸ Mitter, Rana, "1911: The Unanchored Chinese Revolution." *The China Quarterly* (London) 208, no. 208 (2011): 1009-020.

⁹ This time stamp is slightly misleading, since Guangxu's period of reign was repeatedly taken over by his aunt, Empress Dowager Cixi. After his house arrest in 1898, he was factually powerless until he died ten years later.

¹⁰ Jia, Xiaoye, "Kang Youwei's Propaganda Adjustments after the Hundred Days Reform, 1898-1900." *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 14, no. 1 (2020): 48-65.

Youwei and Liang Qichao fled to Japan and eventually did return to China after the Xinhai revolution. Proponents of a constitutional monarchy clearly warranted an equal treatment to those who supported abolition of the monarchy.

Because Sun Yat-sen did not become as prominent as he did eventually, *Shenbao* did not report on him as much, a relatively unknown rebel from the south, as they did with others, who were more high-profile, such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. Instead, these two men were mentioned a lot more than Sun Yat-sen before the Xinhai Revolution, so much so that it would be almost pointless to make a distinction for him in this category.

Additionally, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao are very often mentioned together, even though a different argument can be made for Kang Youwei, since he seems to be the greatest figurative eyesore from the point of view of the anti-revolutionaries, even though reform and revolution are separate things. However, even though all three of these important figures have later had a great impact on the newly established ROC, there is not exactly enough material to be found on each of them individually after the Xinhai Revolution, which would complicate any analysis on an individual level.

Instead, for my analysis before and after the Xinhai Revolution, I will group these three thinkers together. This will make a sounder contribution. Moreover, since all three of these men came from Southern China, a point is also to be made about the prejudice that came with that. As I will show, this is very apparent from the way that they are discussed in *Shenbao*.

1.2 *The Important Thinkers Before*

On the 29th of April, in the year of 1900, an article was published in *Shenbao* named “除惡務盡” (*chú'è-wùjìn*), ‘eradicate all evil’, by an “interviewer and friend from Nanchang”¹¹, who was probably an affiliate or journalist of the newspaper at the time. Immediately in the first sentence, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao are named:

逆犯康有為梁啟超罪惡滔天神人共憤。

T: The traitors Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao are guilty of monstrous sins, and God¹² and men altogether hate them.

The author is, as expected, using a very negative language here. It is clear to read that both men are viewed as traitorous, even though they did not initially support an abolition of the monarchy in its entirety. This sends a clear message to readers of *Shenbao*, namely that it should be unthinkable to support the ‘traitors’.

欽奉上諭飭各省督撫懸賞緝拿漏網，至今實為普天恨事。

T: The Imperial edict from the Emperor himself orders the governors-general of the various provinces to offer a reward for the arrest of the escaped criminals, who are currently a matter for universal resentment.

It is clear from this sentence, that the message of the author, and thereby the message of *Shenbao*, is not only to paint the Revolutionaries essentially as criminals, but also as universally hated. Kang Youwei’s *Datongshu* (also translated as *The Great Unity*), from 1902 onwards was to become one his most influential works. In this book, Kang clearly envisions a utopia, where one could interpret a dream of the abolition of boundaries, as coined by Peter Zarrow¹³, even though Kang Youwei would describe himself as a scholar and a sage. From Zarrow’s complex description of Kang Youwei’s identity and

¹¹ “南昌訪事友人云:”

¹²“神” is a word generally used for deities, whether this was believed to be one god, or a pantheon of Taoist immortals. For this reason I chose the word ‘God’.

¹³ Zarrow, Peter Gue, *Abolishing Boundaries: Global Utopias in the Formation of Modern Chinese Political Thought, 1880-1940*, SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture, 2021, chapter 2.

image, he was clearly an utopianist, most of all. Zarrow argues that this personal philosophy of Kang Youwei was not to be separated from his political career, which explains his reputation as a radical politician, and subsequently why *Shenbao* was not positive about him.

In a different article from *Shenbao*, from an earlier date, the 27th of October 1898 and written by an anonymous author, a month after the end of the aforementioned Hundred Days' Reform, only Kang Youwei is mentioned. This is strange, since both Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao had worked together with the Guangxu Emperor on the reforms. In this article, the Empress Dowager Cixi, is described as the victim of Kang Youwei's rebellious plot. She is described as suffering great losses, benevolent, lonely and, perhaps most importantly, virtuous. This is gravely different from the negative light in which Kang Youwei is effectively compared to the Empress Dowager. In comparison to the descriptor 'virtuous' (孝 *xiào*), with which she is described, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and effectively anyone from the south who did not support the orthodox and conservative cause of the elite, were described as follows:

我孔子教我廣東人不幸有此，無父、無君、無人理之。

T: Our Confucius has taught us that the Cantonese unfortunately have this (characteristic), they have no father, no lord, no one to manage them.

This characteristic of the Cantonese could just as well have been described as unfilial. Not having a ruler, as was the case in the time of Confucius, when the South of China was not yet part of dynastic China, is put on equal footing as promoting a constitutional monarchy. Every deviation from an absolute monarchy is described as deeply unfilial in the Confucian worldview of hierarchy, and therefore unpatriotic and traitorous. This message from *Shenbao*, therefore not only warned against those who promoted a constitutional monarchy, but also warned against the Cantonese, which does raise the question whether a discrimination against Cantonese had an influence in the appeal to the readership of *Shenbao*. It does appear so from this article, since Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, but also Sun Yat-sen were all from this area.

Regional discrimination in China is to this day a known problem, to the extent that the CCP acknowledges it as an official problem¹⁴, even if that exists mainly in a rural-urban relationship. Today, it is also a known trait of many Shanghainese to hold a prejudice against migrant workers.¹⁵ There is no reason to doubt that in a time, when migrant workers came from Guangdong to Shanghai, there was also prejudice against the Cantonese, which *Shenbao* could use to their advantage in their process of vilification. In fact, even though regional prejudice is not the explicit subject in Steven Miles' *The Sea of Learning*, he clearly implies that many people north of Jiangnan¹⁶ did hold a prejudice against the Cantonese. In this book about the identities that shaped the Cantonese literati in the 19th century, specifically in relation to the *Xuehaitang*¹⁷ Academy, Miles begins with an anecdote of a Cantonese scholar who came to Beijing to take a specific high-ranking examination. This scholar was able to answer a question of another examinee but was shocked to hear that that other examinee did not expect someone from the Canton region to be able to read any classical text¹⁸, as if classical literacy was a shibboleth of the dynasty's more metropolitan regions, a view that *Shenbao* seems to share.

¹⁴ This concept is called regionalism, or “地方主义” (*dìfāngzhǔyì*)

¹⁵ Zhang, Zhongjiang, “学者:《潜伏》涉嫌丑化上海人 中国该立法反歧视”, *China News*, May 18, 2005
<http://www.chinanews.com/cul/news/2009/05-18/1696467.shtml>

¹⁶ Jiangnan is an area that lies directly south of the Yangtze river, and is often considered to be the divide between the South and the North of China.

¹⁷ The *Xuehaitang* (lit.: Sea of Learning Hall) was a rather unique academy in Guangzhou

¹⁸ Miles, Steven B, *The Sea of Learning: Mobility and Identity in Nineteenth-century Guangzhou*, Harvard East Asian Monographs; 269 840295545, Cambridge, Mass [etc.]: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006.

1.3 *The Important Thinkers After*

As mentioned earlier, in this section, the three aforementioned important thinkers will be discussed together. The first example of discourse on the movement for abdication comes from an article called “退位呼聲日高一日” (*tuìwèi hūshēng rì gāo yí rì*), ‘the call for abdication rises day by day’, by an unknown author, from May 4th, 1916. In specific contrast to the previous example from before the Xinhai Revolution, this article says the following:

南方對於退位之請且更加堅決。

T: Towards the demand of abdication, the South is more resolute.

Instead of resorting to a form of regional discrimination, this article refers to the movement more neutrally. The rest of the article in *Shenbao* mentions a ‘Southern Army’ (南軍), which might be a different army than the infamous Beiyang Army that was led by Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), probably the National Protection Army, which was founded in Yunnan. Yuan Shikai, just three years after the fall of the monarchy, crowned himself emperor of a new dynasty, which at this moment in time was a deeply unpopular move for a nation that had already successfully gone through a revolution to overthrow the Qing dynasty. Without support of the Beiyang Army, which was effectively inherited from before the fall of the monarchy, and which had Yuan Shikai as its commander, Yuan had no option but to abdicate and restore the Republic of China on the 22nd of March of 1916, just two months before this article was published in *Shenbao*.¹⁹

Effectively the abdication that is mentioned in this article is not the abdication of a monarch, but the stepping down of Yuan Shikai, who still held office as Prime Minister. His Vice Prime Minister was Li Yuanhong (1864-1928), who is also mentioned in the article. Li would eventually assume the office after Yuan Shikai steps down. Even though this article does not discuss the abdication of the monarch, an argument is still to be made about the resistance of the Chinese people against someone who betrayed the movement that abolished the monarchy in the first place. Yuan Shikai as early as 1914

¹⁹ Weale, B.L. Putnam, *The Fight for the Republic in China*, New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917, chapter 4.

shut down Sun Yat-sen and his KMT party, and Sun Yat-sen opposed Yuan Shikai's march towards totalitarian power.²⁰

Again, according to the aforementioned sentence from the article, resistance against monarchy from the South was the most pronounced. However, this time, there is no point made about the lack of filial piety or any other form of inferiority. In this next sentence, *Shenbao* is in clear favor of Yuan Shikai stepping down, and even attributes anti-monarchy sentiments to other parts of China:

據稱項城退位已成為全國一致之希望。

T: Allegedly, the abdication of Yuan Shikai has become the wish of the entire nation.

In another article by an unknown author, “清皇族之哭聲” (*Qíng huángzú zhī kūshēng*), ‘the cry of the Qing royal family’, published on the 5th of January, 1912, just after the foundation of the new ROC, *Shenbao* calls on the Revolutionary Party of Sun Yat-sen to dismiss the calls of the cabinet ministers of Yuan Shikai, who represented the former Qing court in their plea not to abolish the monarchy entirely:

請，盲裁奪以定大計臣等奉職無狀，政策不能取信於民撫哀慚懼，罔知所措不勝憂惶待命之至。

T: Please, blindly considering and deciding ministers and such positions is insolent, and the policy cannot be trusted by the people to soothe their inner shame and fear, not knowing what action to take as they await orders very anxiously.

On first sight, it seems that this specific sentence does not discuss any of the three thinkers, at least not explicitly. However, it is important to consider that, even though the rest of the article is neutral in its report of the meeting with the royal family, *Shenbao* is arguing for the case of the revolutionary side of the political question. There was no such thing as a true democracy at this time, power fell mainly to local gentry class and the intellectual elite, changing the power structure into a form of elitism. Nevertheless, this thesis is not about democracy itself, but the transformation of a political system from

²⁰ Spence, Jonathan, *The Search for Modern China*, 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999, 277-283.

an absolute monarchy into something else, and how *Shenbao* discusses the opposition to the orthodox dynastic rule, especially its thinkers and their influence. In that sense, *Shenbao*, with this sentence, certainly amplifies the influence of those thinkers, especially of Sun Yat-sen. This is furthermore underscored by the general sentiment at the time, that Yuan Shikai was, perhaps more than any other important figure at the time, extremely sympathetic to the royal family, both before the fall of the monarchy, as well as afterwards²¹.

²¹ Lary, Diana, *China's Republic*, New Approaches to Asian History, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 47.

1.4 *The Important Thinkers Summarized*

To summarize the findings of this chapter, we can state the following things: before *Shenbao* had changed its discourse around the Xinhai Revolution, the discourse surrounding the important thinkers of the revolution, Sun Yat-sen, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, had the goal of vilification. This was in one example done by relying on preconceived notions of superiority by the Shanghainese readership towards the South. The way this was done was by appealing to the idea that the South was unfilial and rebellious by nature. By doing this, all three of the aforementioned thinkers could be grouped together. In another example, the process of vilification was achieved by giving the readership the idea that the important thinkers were universally hated by almost all Chinese. For this vilification process to succeed, it would not matter that Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were principally in favor of the survival of the monarchy in the form of a constitutional monarchy. They were by *Shenbao* considered to be radicals. For Sun Yat-sen, who was in favor of a more radical approach, the vilification process was therefore perhaps stronger.

For the readers, this meant that they were told the important thinkers behind the movement were in effect not even worth taking into consideration. *Shenbao* speaks to a readership that was politically conservative and reactionary to those figures that became more influential by the day. This is different for the timeframe after the Xinhai Revolution.

After the Xinhai Revolution, *Shenbao* appeals to, what could almost be considered a completely different readership that perhaps cares more about the unity of China, a readership that could be described as more progressive. This readership is not afraid of the “radical” thinkers anymore, but perhaps more afraid of the idea of China being in chaos (亂, *luan*)²² and on the verge of a total war. *Shenbao* achieves this by dropping the appeal to the previously mentioned preconceived notions of superiority. Instead, although stating that more resistance towards monarchy comes from the South, *Shenbao* also acknowledges that the majority of the Chinese do stand behind Sun Yat-sen and additionally also behind Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, giving the South a voice. This means that

²² Lary, *China's Republic*, p. 45

Shenbao legitimizes them for its readership, which goes beyond taking them into consideration. In one example, *Shenbao* calls upon Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Party to dismiss the "cries" of the royal family, which actively solidifies the idea that *Shenbao* has changed from arguing against the important thinkers of the abolitionist movement, to endorsing them and legitimizing them.

As mentioned before, this does not necessarily mean that *Shenbao*'s readership is now not politically conservative, but simply that the thinkers behind the Xinhai Revolution are now legitimized and perhaps the best new solution to the state China had gotten.

CHAPTER 2

IDEOLOGIES OF REVOLUTION

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will analyze the discourse of *Shenbao* with regards to the specific category of the ideologies that were important for the revolution, with specific regards to those ideologies that were imported from Western political discourse. These ideas include democracy, constitution, republicanism, and revolution. How did *Shenbao* report on these abstract matters before the Xinhai Revolution and after? What does this mean for the readership? Does *Shenbao* rely on certain aspects of the identity of its readership to get across a negative framing of these imported ideologies? How is this different after the Xinhai-revolution? Those are the questions that will be answered in this chapter. To do this I will discuss the following points.

Relating to the concept of changing the Social Contract, which I have discussed earlier, one of the most important ideas is the redistribution of power into the hands of those who are chosen to represent the people (民, *mín*). “Democracy” is the word that was used to describe this idea, but democracy is a term vague enough in itself. This was the case for the Chinese too in the time around the Xinhai Revolution. Eventually it would conventionally be translated as 民主主義 (*mínzhǔ zhǔyì*), which would literally mean ‘the ideology of management/rule by the people’. Before that, there were a few different translations, most notably 德模克拉西 (*démókèlāxī*), which is a phonetic imitation of the English “democracy”. This only adds to the idea that, for the Chinese, this was an extremely foreign concept at the time of its importation into China during the late Qing dynasty.

Another important idea is the idea of setting up a constitution, a central body of law that would dictate the basic rights of the people and the leaders’ limitations of power. The constitution can be seen as a literal representation of the social contract, and in the case of China was eventually written up in March of 1912 and led by Sun Yat-sen himself. This constitution was called the “Provisional

Constitution of the Republic of China” (中華民國臨時約法, *Zhōnghuá Mínguó línshí yuēfǎ*). In this case, the word 約法 (*yuēfǎ*) meant that it was a temporary, or provisional, body of laws. This constitution mainly meant that the power lied mainly with the parliament, and not with one central figure, even though Yuan Shikai would briefly succeed in garnering that power to himself. It was not until 1931, that this constitution was changed by Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), meaning that for this thesis, the most important version of a constitution for China after the Xinhai Revolution was the first Provisional Constitution of 1912.

The concept of revolution is never really discussed as such. Those groups of people who fought against the dynastic rule of the Manchu dynasty were by those in favor of its supremacy called words such as “rebels”, or criminals, as seen in the previous chapter. These people would be designated as “revolutionary”. Those groups of people who eventually still favored the Manchu dynasty’s supremacy were called words such as “fence-sitters” and are designated as “anti-revolutionary”. In this sense, the Revolution is discussed by *Shenbao* not entirely as a concept, but the constituents that formed the movement that is the Xinhai Revolution, and its opposition. In the previous chapter, the discourse of *Shenbao* about the important thinkers is already analyzed. However, an argument is still to be made about the other groups of people that constituted the Xinhai Revolution as well as its opposition. For this reason, the idea of “revolution” will also be discussed in this thesis.

Lastly, the concept of republicanism is not mentioned as such either, a single concept and word, certainly not before the Xinhai Revolution. However, after the Xinhai Revolution there are parts in some articles of *Shenbao*, where the ideals of the republic are discussed, often in the same light as constitutionalism, and especially relating to diplomacy. This can be considered as an ideological point. The role of the republic in a new world order, as well as the social contract in the shape of a republic, are abstract concepts by themselves, and should be treated as such. Nationalism, however different and influential it was, will be grouped together with republicanism since the Republic was a new national entity. For the purposes of this thesis, they are inseparable.

2.2 *The Ideologies Before*

In this section I will analyze the way that *Shenbao* discusses ideological concepts before the Xinhai Revolution happened. The first concept will be democracy. For this specific concept, finding material was not hard, since democracy is one of the fundamentals of the important ideologies of people like Sun Yat-sen. As is to be expected, *Shenbao*'s discourse about democracy and its value for society is quite negative. Consider the following section from an article by an unknown author from the 6th of May, 1901, named “民權辨” (*mínquán biàn*), ‘The Democratic Rights Debate’, about ten whole years before the Xinhai Revolution, in the time of the Boxer Rebellion, which started in 1899, and is usually said to have terminated with the Boxer Protocol of the 7th of September, 1901.

所謂君主者，如歐之俄羅斯，其權皆操之自上、不須由議員核定從違。

T: Concerning what is called a monarch, like that of Russia in Europe, their power is supreme, and does not need to be checked and ratified by members of any parliament that either obeys or disobeys.

At the time of the article, the Boxer Protocol has not happened yet. In this sentence, *Shenbao* is endorsing the political system of the Russian Empire. *Shenbao* first asserts that an absolute monarchy (君主, *jūnzǔ*) is more efficient, before it will demonstrate why a democracy is less efficient and redundant. This does bring to mind the fact that *Shenbao* names something they call 君與民共主之國 (*jūn yǔ mǐn gòngzhǔ zhī guó*), which means something along the lines of “a country where the monarch and people rule together”, and places this concept not between “monarchy” and “democracy” but after both of those terms. This shows that *Shenbao* considers what is essentially a constitutional monarchy, not in between the two types of power distributions but perhaps just “as bad” as robust democracy without a monarch. What follows is their framing of the pragmatics behind, what is from their point of view, a full-fledged democracy.

此外，民主，如美利堅、如法蘭西、如墨西哥、如巴西、如秘魯、如智利君民共主、如英吉利、如德意志、如意大利、如奧大利亞、如荷蘭、如比利時、如西班牙，凡星羅棋布於歐美二洲，中者一切設施例由政府下之上議院、上議院下之下議院、下議院以為可，則上之上議院、上議院亦以為可。然後，上之政府抉擇施行在議員。雖有核議之權而或行或不行，仍由君主或伯理璽天德主宰。

T: Furthermore, concerning democracies, such as the United States of America, France, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, and the Constitutional Monarchies of Chile, England, Germany, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, which are all scattered across the American and European Continents, within these states, all facilities are ruled first by the Upper House under the Federal Government, then by the Lower House under the Upper House, then the Lower House approves it, and it moves to the Upper House, then the Upper House approves it again. Then, the Federal Government chooses and implements it in the legislative assembly. Even though they have the right to debate whether they want to do it or not, still they are governed by a monarch, or president.

From this section, we can see a few misunderstandings about the European democratic systems of government. By law, in most of the countries that are named, the power of the president or king, in any case, is not absolute, and not as centralized as the Qing court system was. Even the Qing court could not be considered a perfect absolute monarchy, after the Qianlong reign era (1733-1796) of the Qing-dynasty revealed weaknesses in what was considered to be an extremely well centralized empire²³. This crumbling of power only grew worse and worse through the reigns of the following emperor, at last culminating in the reign of the Empress Dowager Cixi, who was at this time, not actually the ‘Emperor’.

Moreover, *Shenbao* goes into lengths to make a democracy stand out as an especially inefficient system of governance. Compare this section to the previous section, where clearly *Shenbao* can capture the ‘simplicity’ of absolute monarchism. Admittedly, for a readership that had never heard or been in

²³ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 110-116.

touch with any form of Western politics, it is easy for *Shenbao* to make use of this lack of awareness. In that sense, we could say that *Shenbao* relied on the relative novelty of these ideologies.

For the discourse on the ideology behind setting up a constitution, we should consider the following sentence of the same article in *Shenbao*. In this part, again, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao are mentioned. However, this time, they are discussed within a specific abstract framework, namely the debate around democracy and constitutionalism. As I have demonstrated earlier, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were both proponents of constitutionalism.

王法所必誅獨，奈何大逆不道之康有為、梁啟超諸人，一則曰君民平權，再則曰人人有自主之權。遂致邪說流行遍於湘粵少年。血氣未定一經煽惑爭思、逞其詭譎囂，然議祖制而鄙王章。嗟乎嗟乎我國家二百數十年厚澤深仁培植士類何圖養成此謬戾狂悖陰賊險狠之徒，投畀遠方豺虎當，亦不食其肉矣。

T: The law of the land must punish independence, how will people like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao commit the worst offence, who on the one hand would say the that the monarch and people have equal rights, and on the other hand that people have their own autonomy. This then led to heretic ideas to become popular among the young people in Hunan and Guangdong. Their courage and vigour is undefined, as they incite controversy and flaunt their treacherous clamouring. Nevertheless they comment on the system passed down by the ancestors of the emperor, and show disdain to the order of the monarch. They sigh and lament this country of mine that for about 200-odd years of sincerity and benevolence had cultivated many scholars. Why would one wish to support such mad, perverse, arrogant, unreasonable and shady thieves. If you would throw them far away, not even the dhole²⁴ and tiger would eat them.

²⁴ A dhole is a species of wild dog native to South East Asia. The dhole and tiger together can mean beasts in general, but are also used to indicate the lowest caliber of criminals. Effectively, *Shenbao* is saying that not even the worst criminals would want them: they are worse than the worst.

Monarchical constitutionalism, as seen in the previous chapter and endorsed by both Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, it is framed as something equally “perverse” as non-monarchical constitutionalism. *Shenbao* appeals to the readerships preconceived notion of absurdity that China needs to return to the former glory of the Qing dynasty. *Shenbao* does this by relying on the idea that China had prospered fine without it, having already cultivated many scholars over the course a few hundred years, and that anyone who criticized it were unreasonable. This is almost a direct argument for conservatism, and so we can conclude that for the vilification process of anti-constitutionalism, *Shenbao* seems to rely on the conservative nature in the identity of their readership.

This critique on constitutionalism, and frankly as well as republicanism, -two subjects that I feel comfortable enough to group together now, based on the evidence- is in direct lines with the popularity of the Boxer movement that was rampant in this time. Surprisingly, an article by Sam Wong suggests that, according to the writings of Kuang Qizhao the Boxer movement was not a sign of “a retrograde kind of conservatism, but an entirely rational decision based on the actual experiences of late Qing observers of the 19th century American democracy”²⁵. A return to Confucianism through education is what was often said to have been the core principle of many conservative Chinese. In this sense, *Shenbao* relied on a “rational decision” in their campaign against the introduction of democracy, of which the American system was their greatest example. This example was arguably not a good example, as Wong continues to demonstrate, with democratic acts such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In general other civil rights issues in the United States that would not be fixed adequately through democratic efforts would certainly attest to this decision.

²⁵ Wong, Sam, and Wong, Brian, "Chinese Perceptions of American Democracy: Late Qing Observers and Their Experiences with the Chinese Exclusion Act," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 27, no. 4 (2020): p. 315.

2.3 *The Ideologies After*

In this section I will analyze the way that *Shenbao* discusses the previously mentioned subjects, but after the Xinhai Revolution, and how they relied on a different aspect of the identity of their readership than before. Considered firstly a specific article, published in *Shenbao* on the 21st of February 1912, which lays out the entire Imperial Edict that marked the abdication of the Qing Court, making them effectively a purely symbolic phenomenon. The edict does not contain much matter that would be considered opinionated enough. However, there are a few points to made about the fact that *Shenbao* had fully ceased its vilification process of democracy. In this edict, we read scattered bits about the election of certain officials, in a rather casual manner, signaling the normalization of the ideology of democracy. In a certain part under the edict, *Shenbao* even conveys a message from then elected interim president of the ROC, Sun Yat-sen, to Yuan Shikai, who had bargained for the position of President with his larger military power.

為一共和國民於願已非常滿足，無如時勢未來形格勢禁。致公未得，即遂共和進行之願。文實尸位至今幸清帝遜位民國確立，維持北方各部統一。

T: This morning, for the interest of the whole republic, the people are very satisfied in their wishes, but with the way things are going, we seem to be in an unfavorable situation. If the public had not yet obtained it, now we will fulfill the wish to advance with the Republic. The Qing Emperor that has to this day actually neglected its duties, has renounced its throne, and thus the Republic of China was established, and to maintain it, every part of Northern China must be in unity.

Having in mind that Sun Yat-sen had mainly democratic ideals in mind for the Republic of China, and seeing it coming to fruition day by day, he still seems unhappy about something. This has to do with the fact that for the sake of the mere existence of the Republic with those ideals, the abdication of the royal family from having power was a necessary first step, for which he had to promise Yuan Shikai that Yuan instead would become the president, even though Sun Yat-sen was elected in the first place. The abdication and revolution would not have happened without the military backing of Yuan, and forsaking

democracy for the sake of the Republic must have been a sore in the eyes of Sun Yat-sen. This tone does not resonate throughout the whole article, signaling that he had a positive outlook, even though he did not assume his democratically elected position. In an earlier sentence in this paragraph, Sun writes:

貽羞負國民委託之重，自慚受任無狀。日夜希冀推賢，讓能苟得如公者舉而自代其締造國民幸。

T: The burden that the people have entrusted in me, I humbly carry, and I feel ashamed to accept this position [of the presidency] without merit. I hope day and night to promote others who are more worthy, so that those who can live up to the public's expectations, will themselves be in place to create fortune for the people of the land.

Earlier, Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance would rather have seen Yuan Shikai take office in Nanjing. However, Yuan quickly claimed that he was needed in the North, to unify the divided factions after the fall of the centralized Qing government. This is the reason why Sun mentioned the North of China in the previous fragment. *Shenbao*, including this letter from Sun Yat-sen, with this slightly bittersweet tone, signifies that its readership most notably is invested in Sun Yat-sen's experience, rather than that of Yuan Shikai. This solidifies Sun Yat-sen's early reputation as a parent to guide Chinese people, later earning him his nickname of 國父 (*Guófū*), meaning 'father of the nation'²⁶. Sun Yat-sen is arguably implied to be the personification of democracy, at least as early as the date in which this edict is posted in *Shenbao*.

Concerning the concept of constitutionalism in *Shenbao* after the Xinhai Revolution, an important way this was discussed was through the lens of diplomacy. In that sense, this next article in *Shenbao* sheds light on the way the Republic was seen on the world scale. The article is also published on February 21st of 1912, the same day as the previous article, and is titled “外交上之共和觀” (*wàijiāo-shàng zhī gònghéguān*), ‘The Republican view on diplomacy’, by an unknown author. It is a fairly direct article, reporting in, what seems to be, an objective manner. However, similar to the previous article, an

²⁶ Du, Yue, "Sun Yat-sen as Guofu: Competition over Nationalist Party Orthodoxy in the Second Sino-Japanese War," *Modern China* 45, no. 2 (2019): 201-35.

argument is to be made about its implications for its readership. *Shenbao* essentially brings forth several questions about the specific identity that the Republic will attribute to themselves on the internal scale.

In terms of foreign relations, China has seen a tumultuous fifty years of being subjected to many unfair treaties at the hands of Western imperialism²⁷, leading to its name ‘the Century of Humiliation’, (百年國恥, *báinián guóchǐ*). In this time, the most common conviction on the nature of the international sphere was that there were imperialist powers that subjugated other nations, a Darwinian view of diplomacy. This is a conviction that is apparent from *Shenbao*’s article. Consider the following example:

須質問者厥有數端：（一）虛君共和是否經全體國民之同意贊成？（一）中國共和後戰爭能否永止？（一）各國以前與中國所訂之各項條約是否繼續、有效？（一）各國在中國境內享受之權利是否仍？

T: Those who feel the need for further interrogation have several points: Does the Republic without its monarchy enjoy the approval of the whole constituency of China? Can the wars that have started after the foundation of the Republic of China permanently stop? Will the various intermittent treaties previously settled with China be effective? Will the privileges enjoyed by several countries within Chinese territory be maintained?

This victimhood, still an important aspect in Chinese political discourse to this day²⁸, that is apparent from these questions, rightful or not, play into the readership of *Shenbao*. In this article, *Shenbao* is merely raising some points that in all probability are considered by its readers. *Shenbao* is arguably appealing to the concept of victimhood in its discussion about diplomacy, attributing this sense of victimhood into the republican identity, or at least into the debate thereof.

²⁷ Wang, Jianlang, *Unequal Treaties and China (2-volume Set)*, Vol. 1. Honolulu, HI: Enrich Professional Publishing, 2015.

²⁸ Renwick, Neil, and Cao, Qing, "China's Political Discourse towards the 21st Century: Victimhood, Identity, and Political Power," *East Asia (Piscataway, N.J.)* 17, no. 4 (1999): 111-43.

2.4 *The Ideologies Summarized*

To summarize the findings of this chapter, we can state the following things: before *Shenbao* had changed its discourse around the Xinhai Revolution, the discourse surrounding the ideologies that constitute the remaking of the social construct, was heavily in favor of absolute monarchism, and vilified the concepts of democracy, constitutionalism, and republicanism. In the case of democracy, *Shenbao* relied on the novelty of the importation of such Western concepts, and framed democratic processes as inefficient, and still dependent on the monarch or president, even though in many cases, these individuals only enjoyed shared power, and China's power showed signs of decentralization as well. Arguably, though, this point of view is logical considering the conceived inadequacies of the American democratic system.

This told us that this antidemocratic viewpoint of *Shenbao* is not the result of conservatism, but rather a caution towards what they be considered imperialist philosophies. These viewpoints were subsequently used to further vilify concepts such as republicanism and constitutionalism through Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. In this frame, it did not matter if they endorsed full abolition of the monarchy, or a constitutional monarchy: they were in the cautionary viewpoint of *Shenbao* considered perverse and the worst of the worst. The most important aspect was the sense of victimhood towards Western imperialism.

The way that *Shenbao* discusses these same concepts after the Xinhai Revolution relied yet again on that same sense of victimhood, but now with acceptance of ideologies such as democracy, republicanism, and constitutionalism. *Shenbao* achieved this, in one example, by relying on the idea that the individual of Sun Yat-sen would eventually take on a fatherly role and guide China from its position of victimhood. This is furthermore supported by *Shenbao*'s distancing from Yuan Shikai, who would come to symbolize the peril of conservatism, and acceptance of China's new progresses, namely democracy and republicanism.

CHAPTER 3

IMPORTANT MOMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION

3.1 *Introduction*

This chapter will be slightly different than the previous chapters. The problem with specific happenings, and how they are reported in newspapers, is that they generally tend to be forgotten, and only brought up when they relate to something novel that is currently important enough to be reported. Furthermore, there lies a paradox in the fact that *Shenbao* did not foresee the future and would not be able to report on for example, the Xinhai Revolution, before it had even happened. Instead, while still following the comparison along the lines of the Xinhai Revolution as the point in time that *Shenbao* changed its general attitude, what *will* be compared is *Shenbao*'s discourse on specific important moments in the timeline of the Revolution. The important moments will each have their own subchapter. The specific moments in time that I will discuss are the Wuchang Uprising, The Xinhai Revolution, and the Edict of Abdication that we have seen in the previous chapter.

With this comes the fact that *Shenbao* did not change in the span of a single day but rather had *slowly* aligned its political affiliation in the ten years before the Xinhai Revolution. This is also the reason why I include articles that are published either before 1901 or after 1912, except for some articles that I will use in this chapter. The Wuchang Uprising happened in October of 1911 but will still be discussed and considered to be affiliated along *Shenbao*'s later more liberal pro-constitutional orientation.

Incidentally, the Xinhai Revolution also did not happen in the span of a single day. Therefore, the picking of a single article reporting on the entire Revolution would be rather difficult. Instead, however, I will demonstrate *Shenbao*'s discourse on the Xinhai Revolution using an example of a short poem-like article posted on the very last day of the Qing Dynasty's existence. This text is sufficient to be able to analyze *Shenbao*'s discourse.

The Edict of Abdication is something that we have discussed already, but in the light of the ideologies of constitutionalism and republicanism. However, in this chapter there will be more emphasis on *Shenbao*'s discourse on the Edict itself. In the analysis of this lengthy article in *Shenbao*, there are other elements that can help us come to a satisfactory conclusion on the reporting of important events in *Shenbao*.

Then, in what way will the comparison be made along the frame of time? Considering that aspects of the movement towards the Xinhai Revolution are in previous chapters already discussed, I will mostly attempt to link the analyses of this chapter with conclusions that have been made in the previous chapter. As those chapters discuss different aspects of the fall of the monarchy entirely, it gives us the knowledge of the types of identities that *Shenbao* appealed to, both in its more liberal period, as well as in its more conservative period. In the light of Barbara Mittler's book about the multiple identities that formed the readership of *Shenbao*, the time frame of this chapter will run along *Shenbao*'s point of no return: in this period's most important moment, how did *Shenbao* appeal to its readership, and what identities were key?

3.2 *The Wuchang Uprising*

On the 13th of October 1911, *Shenbao* published a report on the recent happenings in Wuchang (now Wuchang District of Wuhan), an uprising by the Tongmenghui, the name of the combined society of Revolutionaries, that had been founded only five years earlier and was led by Sun Yat-sen.²⁹ This Tongmenghui would later become the core foundation of the KMT. The Uprising, that had begun only three days earlier and accidentally, is seen as the start of the Xinhai Revolution and the Tongmenghui was successful in its battle against Qing troops, perhaps because of the culmination of several factors that weakened the Qing's power in its territories already³⁰. Consider these two paragraphs from the aforementioned article, titled “譯電” (*yì diàn*), ‘Telegram decoded’³¹:

- ⊙ 武昌仍在戰鬥。惟目下，大都從事搜尋滿人。革黨領袖已頒發告示其主要之欵以驅逐滿人為宗旨。革黨政府擔任保護外人及各國租界，違者論死。昨，傳張彪死信尚不確實。中國砲艇現正豫備戰事。

(文匯報二十日漢口電)

T: Wuchang is still fighting. Today, they are for the most part searching for Manchus. The leader of the Revolutionaries have already notified that its main purpose is to expel the Manchus. The Revolutionary government serves to protect foreigners and the concessions of various countries, and violators will be tried and executed. Yesterday, Zhang Biao's dead letter was transmitted but esteemed untrue. Chinese gunboats are currently prepared for warfare.

²⁹ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 258-263.

³⁰ Brophy, David, Garnaut, Anthony, and Tighe, Justin, "Introduction: The Xinhai Revolution and Inner Asia," *Inner Asia (White Horse Press)* 14, no. 2 (2012): 319-22.

³¹ The setup of this article follows a few telegrams that together are supposed to form the report in *Shenbao*.

- ⊙ 革黨已發新紙幣，從前通行之紙幣漢口華界不復通用。革黨自今晨起自管理一中國國家銀行。瑞督仍在砲艦，張彪現居日本租界。協統黎元洪現充革命軍領袖指揮武昌軍隊。

(文匯報二十一日漢口電)

T: The Revolutionaries have already issued new banknotes, and the former banknotes are no longer in use in Hankou³². The Revolutionaries have since this morning also started to run their own Chinese National Bank. Viceroy Rui (1863-1915) is still on the gunboats, and Zhang Biao is currently residing in the Japanese concession. Commander Li Yuanhong now serves as the leader of the Revolutionary Army, directing the troops from Wuchang.

With the emphasis that *Shenbao* puts on reporting on the achievements of the Revolutionary Army, it sends a message that their readership perhaps wishes to stay up to date with the Revolutionary Army and its progress, effectively seeming to root for them, rather than the Qing court. They are furthermore legitimized by reporting on the use of a new currency by the Revolutionaries, as seen in the second paragraph.

What's more, the article explicitly demonstrates that its readership was also interested in the safety of foreigners. Under the circumstances of a common disdain for foreigners, it is not logical to assume that *Shenbao*'s readership was concerned about foreigners in their borders. A more logical assumption would be that *Shenbao* is including this, mainly to legitimize the Revolutionaries as an upcoming sovereign power that could be capable of diplomacy. In a previously discussed article of *Shenbao*, it is mentioned that the readership hoped that the new Republic would be able to handle diplomacy, perhaps better than the Qing court, who had previously relied on the concept of “天下” (*tiānxià*), or “All Under Heaven”. For the readership of *Shenbao*, it would unsurprisingly be important

³² Hankou was one of the larger cities near Wuchang, which is a part of modern day Wuhan.

to report on the perceptual security of the future Republic, something the Republic of China would arguably also have great difficulty with³³.

Another important point is the anti-Manchu sentiment that appears from the telegram. *Shenbao* effectively participates in the racial divide of Han Chinese against the Manchu oppressors, something Brophy et al. calls 'paradoxical' with the ROC's wish to also unite all the people that lived in within the Qing borders³⁴. This anti-Manchu sentiment however, at this point in history, was more important to the Revolutionaries. "Overthrow now, unite later" is definitely promulgated by *Shenbao* with this article.

³³ Ogden, Chris, "A Normalized Dragon: Constructing China's Security Identity," *Pacific Focus* 28, no. 2 (2013): 243-68.

³⁴ Brophy et al., *The Xinhai Revolution and Inner Asia*, p. 320.

3.3 *The Xinhai Revolution*

The 31st of December 1911, is considered the last day of the Qing Dynasty's existence, before the ROC would be announced on the Gregorian New Year. On that last day, *Shenbao* published a strongly opinionated, short, poem-like article, titled “新十可恨” (*xīn shí kěhèn*), ‘The Ten New Awfuls’, by Yang Jianhua³⁵. As the Wuchang Uprising signaled the start of the Xinhai Revolution, I would argue that this date can effectively symbolize the end of the Xinhai Revolution, whereupon the following subchapter will continue with the Edict of Abdication as a symbolization of the completion of the movement to change the Social Contract and do away with the orthodox monarchism of Imperial China.

沽名釣譽之偽志士可恨。

咬文嚼字之老學究可恨。

尋花問柳之登徒子可恨。

賣國借債之狗官場可恨。

保守豚尾之騎牆派可恨。

口啣紙烟之冷血動物可恨。

反對民主之猿內閣可恨。

贊成滿清之辜鴻銘可恨。

一毛不拔之守財虜可恨。

冒充民軍之土光蛋可恨。

³⁵ I attempted to look up who this person was, but there were no results.

T: The new ten awfuls.

The pseudo-aspirants who fish for fame and reputation are awful.

The pedant scholars who pay excessive attention to wording are awful.

Lechers who are dallying with prostitutes are awful.

The officialdom of dogs who betray the country by borrowing money are awful.

The conservative pigtailed who are fence-sitting are awful.

The cold-blooded animals that hold cigarettes in their mouths are awful.

The cabinet of apes against democracy is awful.

Gu Hongming who favors the Manchu dynasty is awful.

The enemy hoarder who guards the treasure but doesn't spend a single penny is awful.

The local paupers pretending to be the army of the people are awful.

Firstly, among other perceived detrimental groups in Chinese society, the author also mentions those who are against democracy. If we compare this to Sun Yat-sen's personification of the nation's parental figure, it makes sense to allude that he acts as the symbol of democracy, as we have previously discussed. Where *Shenbao* in the past would have been exactly that group of people it is now arguing against, this time, it is the 'cabinet of apes' that is against democracy, signaling that anti-democracy was now less widespread.

At this time, Yuan Shikai was leading the provisional cabinet, leading me to believe that *Shenbao* is arguing against Yuan. This is supported by the fact that Yuan was more sympathetic towards the royal family. Another person that is mentioned, Gu Hongming (1857-1928), was active in Shanghai, which in itself is something *Shenbao*'s Shanghainese readership could connect with. He was a translator

of Confucian classics and was a fervent supporter of the monarchy³⁶. For *Shenbao*, he definitely fits into this list of awfuls.

Secondly, the undertone of this article is a familiar one of victimhood and national humiliation. The only difference seems to be the fact *Shenbao* now argues that it's not the Revolutionaries who are the problem, but the abovementioned list of 'awfuls'. This signifies that this national humiliation and the desire to put an end to it play a much more important role in the identity of the readership.

Lastly, a point is to be made about the racial cast-away of the Manchus. We have witnessed in the first chapter another form of racial discrimination, namely that of the Cantonese. These two situations are vastly different, but there seems to be the same designating of a scapegoat in Chinese society. The cast-away of the Manchu dynasty still forms an important part of political discourse and national identity, both for the PRC and the CCP to this day. The Xinhai Revolution can be seen as a racial restoration of the Han ethnicity. To do this, it was necessary for *Shenbao* to include the Cantonese in this same Han ethnic category, but a scapegoat effectively remains non the less³⁷.

³⁶ Du, Chunmei, *Gu Hongming's Eccentric Chinese Odyssey*, Encounters with Asia, 2019.

³⁷ Leibold, James, "Xinhai Remembered: From Han Racial Revolution to Great Revival of the Chinese Nation," *Asian Ethnicity* 15, no. 1 (2014): 1-20.

3.4 *The Edict of Abdication*

As mentioned previously, the edict of abdication can be viewed as the completion of the movement to abolish the orthodox monarchy of China. In chapter 2, we have already seen an excerpt of a letter from Sun Yat-sen to Yuan Shikai. In my opinion however, there is more to that article that we can use to make a conclusion about the duality of *Shenbao*'s past and present, at the time of the abolishment of the monarchy, essentially reshaping the Social Contract.

What is remarkable to say the least, is the Edicts' attention to details when it comes to the (fair) treatment of the royal family after its abdication. These points range from the protection of the royal family after its abolishment, to the conservation of the salaries of the Eight Banners, and even the finishing of the royal tombs. This must be the result of Yuan Shikai's efforts on behalf of the royal family. This is not something explicitly opinionated by *Shenbao*. However, if we look back at other articles of *Shenbao*, where we can clearly see anti-Manchu sentiment, as well as a certain hope that the royal family would be abolished in its entirety, we can conclude that the edict has a bittersweet aftertaste, not only for *Shenbao*, but also its readership.

Then, at this time, the military in the north was altogether discombobulated, and *Shenbao*, among others, expressed a desire for stability. Even if power had now shifted from the royal family to a parliament, it still eventually fell into the hands of Yuan Shikai, or other oligarchs. The article mentions the continuing disarray of Northern China, and the worries over the dividedness of the Northern armies. It was exactly Yuan Shikai, who was supposed to unify the North. This frustration is best expressed explicitly in this short line:

今日之計惟有由南京政府將北方各省及各軍隊妥籌接收。

T: Today's plan is most importantly for the Nanjing government to take the northern provinces, and to seize each of the armed forces properly.

We can safely assume that *Shenbao* greatly appeals to the public's desire for a more stable state, even though the battle against the orthodox monarchy has arguably been won by the Revolutionaries. This previously mentioned two-edged situation that the Republic of China has found itself in, on the one hand the successful abolishment of the monarchy, and on the other hand the chaos and dependency on people like Yuan Shikai, stands out from *Shenbao*. This raises the question, whether the remaking of the Social Contract was successful for *Shenbao*'s readership. It certainly did in terms of reforming Chinese politics on the ideological spectrum, but not the practicalities that kept the Republic of China in its position of national humiliation.

3.5 Overarching Themes

Corresponding to the narrative of Mittler's *A Newspaper for China*, especially in her final conclusion and reflection³⁸, instead of a collection of "facts", as she puts it, *Shenbao* should be seen as one body of literature. Instead of treating *Shenbao* as an all-powerful medium, she argues that *Shenbao* "did not push the bandwagon or even steer it once it was underway", a metaphor she attributes to *The Power of Press*, by T. S. Matthews³⁹. This metaphor and narrative is essential for understanding the results of this thesis, and subsequently answering the established research question.

If we follow this line of thought, *Shenbao* does not change the identities of its Chinese readership, but instead builds on the existing and diverse identities of this readership, both before the fall of the monarchy as well as after. In this duality, there are separate themes that seem to play a role in each timeframe. This can range from preconceived notions of superiority against the Cantonese, to the scapegoating of the Manchus, or the importance of the Qing dynasty's power in an orthodox Confucian worldview, or the alienation of Yuan Shikai from the Republic of China, or even the realization that the South of China *was* important. These all perfectly resonate with separate identities throughout *Shenbao*'s reporting. There is however a single, overarching theme that seems to resonate through *Shenbao*'s change of attitude before 1911.

This overarching theme appeals to the Chinese identity of national humiliation, or the desire to save the nation. In this process, different sides have been called out and vilified, but consistently, they are all vilified for roughly the same reason, namely their perceived 'betrayal' of the Chinese people in their national humiliation. For the Chinese identities of this time, the Boxer Uprising was but a single example that shows the aversion against a perceived attack on the Chinese from the outside imperialist world.

To cope with this, it meant that they Chinese had to resist western ideologies that were preached by a handful of revolutionary thinkers, but at the time of the Xinhai Revolution, it meant trusting the movement that wished to reshape the Social Contract. In all of this, *Shenbao* is only "riding on the

³⁸ Mittler, *A Newspaper for China*, 409-421.

³⁹ Casty, Alan. *Mass Media and Mass Man*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

bandwagon”, mirroring not its own changing attitudes, but arguably the changing attitudes of the Chinese, at least in Shanghai, and their internal struggle to deal with the changing world, an internal struggle that still forms the current interpretation of the CCP⁴⁰. With that realization, we can sufficiently answer the research question of this thesis.

⁴⁰ Kaufman, Alison Adcock, "The "Century of Humiliation," Then and Now: Chinese Perceptions of the International Order," *Pacific Focus* 25, no. 1 (2010): 1-33.

CONCLUSION

The research question of this thesis is: In what ways did *Shenbao* change their attitude, through its discourse, towards the fall of the monarchy, and how did this relate to the public opinion of its readership in that process? With the results of the analysis of excerpts from *Shenbao* and the use of Mittler's narrative of the press being a mirror with regards to societal change, we can answer this research question in the following way:

In the first and second chapter, there were specific elements in *Shenbao*'s discourse, that would appeal to the identities of its readership. Around 1901, this meant a cautious way of thinking about any important ideologies, whether they were the ideologies themselves or the important thinkers that popularized them in China. This cautious way of thinking was not illogical given the historic circumstances. Around 1912, this had changed. Instead, now these imported ideologies and their important thinkers, had been popularized, and the movement had swept the nation. For *Shenbao*, this meant that they had to do exactly what their readership had done: trust in a new solution. This solution meant the acceptance of Sun Yat-sen as a parental guide and admitting that the Qing court had been a burden to China's progress. This also meant the resistance to Yuan Shikai's attempt to re-introduce orthodoxy to the Chinese state by reinstating the monarchy, testifying that anti-monarchical sentiment was at a point of no return.

Then, in chapter three, it became clear from *Shenbao*'s discourse on the events of the Xinhai Revolution, that there was an overarching element to the identity of *Shenbao*'s readership, both before and after the Revolution. This element was the experience of national humiliation. Before the fall of the monarchy, this was done by appealing to the desire to restore the glory of the Qing dynasty. However, as soon as the Xinhai Revolution had commenced, *Shenbao* had diverted to anti-Manchu sentiments, the desire to eliminate chaos (*luan*), and doing whatever was necessary to abolish the monarchy, even if that meant allowing power to fall in the hands of the likes of Yuan Shikai and other oligarchs. In this, *Shenbao* reflects the humiliation and subsequent internal reflection of its readers, acting as a mirror to the complex process of the Chinese to make sense of the rapidly changing world around them, and its rampant imperialism.

Again, essential to this understanding of *Shenbao*'s discourse on China's reshaping of the Social Contract to come out of the national humiliation, was Mittler's use of the metaphor of the bandwagon. The press is not something that has immense power to change the public opinion, but instead testifies to the idea that press functions as a mirror to the experiences and identities of its readership. What makes *Shenbao* unique in this, is the influence of the editorial. Perhaps this unique trait to capture public opinion so well, is what made *Shenbao* so successful in the first place, ever sympathetic to its readership. To conclude with a rather pedantic metaphor, *Shenbao* acts as a reticent friend to its readers, a friend that listens to problems, and would not talk back, but instead offers solace and understanding. Can the same be said today?

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