

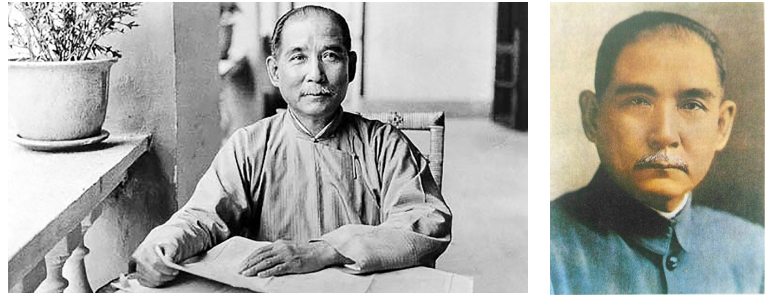
Sun Yixian: The Founder of Modern China

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'Only when imperialism is eliminated can there be peace for mankind. To achieve this goal, we should first rejuvenate Chinese nationalism and restore China's position as a sovereign state.'

Background

- Born 1866, **Guangzhou**, peasant family.
- Confucian primary education but Western secondary and tertiary education: Hawaii and Hong Kong.



Influences

- Anti-Qing traditions ... **Taiping** and other peasant rebellions.

Revolutionary career

- **Revive China Society** (1894) '*Overthrow the Manchus, restore China to the Chinese, establish a republican government.*'
- Fund raising and support through émigré communities: Europe, USA, Australia, Japan ... Chinese students.
- **Tongmenghui**, 'Revolutionary Alliance' (1905). Significant and influential unification of the anti-Qing revolutionary movement.
- Ideological direction: **Sanminzhuyi** – 'Three Principles of the People.'
- The Tongmenghui had 10 000 members by 1906; organisational contacts in many Chinese provinces; funding from Chinese communities overseas.
- Nine major uprisings between 1906 and 1911 ... none successful. **John King Fairbank**: Sun '*certainly deserves A for Effort.*'
- Sun Yixian and the Tongmenghui popularised the idea that an anti-Qing revolution was central for China's modernisation.
- No direct role in the **Xinhai Revolution**, but in recognizing his considerable prestige Sun was provincial president of the Republic 1 January to 14 February 1912 ...
- **Edwin Moise**: '*The final collapse of the Qing Dynasty was to a considerable extent inspired by a revolutionary from Guangdong named Sun Yixian.*'

Nationalist Revolution

- **Minister of Railways** ... an important and busy job!
- Reorganisation of the Tongmenghui into the **Guomindang** (August 1912) – National People's Party.
- Song Jiaoren and January 1913 parliamentary elections.
- **Yuan Shikai 1913-15**: Song Jiaoren assassinated, GMD banned, dismissal of provincial and national parliaments, amendment of constitution, 21 Demands.
- Sun Yixian forced into hiding and exile.
- **Warlord rule 1916-23** and Sun's Guangzhou 'government'. Reliance on Warlord support and challenges with factionalism.
- **Comintern**. Meeting with Maring and Joffe August 1922 ... January 1923 Sun-Joffe Declaration: '*national independence*' and '*national unity*'.
- The first **United Front**: Alliance with CCP, reorganisation of GMD structures and founding of **Nationalist Revolutionary Army** (Galan and Borodin.)
- Fell ill while in Beijing for new government talks (Dec. 1924) and died of liver cancer **11 March 1925**.
- Heir to Nationalist leadership and revolution Wang Jingwei and Liao Zhongkai? Hu Hanmin? Jiang Jieshi?
- Continued importance for both Guomindang and CCP – '*the founder of modern China*'.

Three Principles of the People: Sun Yixian



Nationalism

The domination of foreign powers in China must come to an end, and the Manchu ousted from power. The Han Chinese should rule themselves.

The principle of nationalism was summed up by the slogan, 'China is the China of the Chinese' – a clear statement of anti-Qing feeling.

Democracy



China should become a republic, with a popularly elected president and parliament. Sun hoped to model his future government on Western judicial, executive and legislative traditions, but the system would also include Chinese-style examinations for appointments to the civil service.

As China had little experience with modern political institutions, democracy was to be implemented in three stages:

- 1) Three years of military dictatorship to ensure political and social stability;
- 2) A tutelage period of six years during which democratic procedures would be explained and trialled;
- 3) After nine years the military government would be disbanded, a new constitution drawn up and popular elections held.

Sun believed this 'guided' introduction of republican democracy would enable a true sense of nationalism and citizenship to be fostered amongst the Chinese. He felt the Chinese were 'a heap of loose sand' lacking the patriotic values that bind a nation together.



People's Livelihood

This principle broadly spoke of improving the welfare of China's working people.

People's Livelihood was understood by Sun to mean more regulated ownership of agricultural land, strong state influence in industry and a single, fairer tax system.

Often described as a form of socialism, People's Livelihood was somewhat vague. Sun once described it as 'socialism, it is communism, it is Utopianism.'⁵¹ During one of his lectures in 1924 Sun spoke of his great respect for the ideas of Karl Marx but suggested that his methods were not applicable to China.