

Chinese Nationalism

The Kuomintang: Selected Historical Documents, 1894-1969, edited by Milton J. T. Shieh, *Jamaica, N.Y.: St. John's University Press, 1970. xxii + 434 pp. \$10.00.*

THIS COLLECTION of documents covering the last 76 years is the first of its kind ever published in English. Its importance is best explained by the unique position of the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party, in modern Chinese history, dating back to the founding at Honolulu in 1894 of the *Hsing-chung Hui*, or Regenerate China Society, by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, father of the Chinese Republic. Mr. Shieh's book comes as an important addition to the hitherto very meagre literature in Western languages concerning the *Hsing-chung Hui* and its successor the Kuomintang. To students of recent Chinese history, and especially of modern Chinese politics, these documents afford an invaluable source of primary research material.

This compilation also represents an initial effort to restore some balance to the historiography of modern China. There has been a proliferation of books—monographs, general surveys, documentary collections, and so on—relating to China after 1949, so that many non-Chinese readers seem to have been led into believing that Kuomintang regime was no more than an interlude, and an unfortunate one, in the transition of China from the downfall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 to the supposedly inevitable Communist triumph in 1949. The era of Kuomintang rule on mainland China has been lightly and sweepingly dismissed as a failure by many Western specialists, who have instead concentrated on the more “relevant” subject of Communist China and have produced a wide range of works of varying quality. So far as the West is concerned there has been almost a void in seri-

ous studies of the thirty years of nation-building effort under Kuomintang leadership on the mainland and of the Party's continued leadership today on Taiwan. Obviously, this inadequacy needs to be corrected in the interest of a balanced view of twentieth century Chinese history. There have been of late, however, encouraging signs that some historians and specialists in related fields are beginning to give more attention to pre-Communist China.

The documents in this collection—including manifestos, messages, policy statements, programs and platforms—tell us much about the twists and turns of the difficult course of history in twentieth century China. The awesome burden assumed by the Kuomintang, as the ruling party born of the revolution led by Dr. Sun, and the efforts made during those long and difficult years to cope with the various national crises and dangers from within and without are brought to light here without editorial commentary aimed at either magnifying or minimizing their significance. The selection of the documents has been on the whole judicious; of the fifty-four here included, the first eight deal with the predecessors of the Kuomintang from 1894 to 1912; the next nineteen deal with the rôle of the Kuomintang in the formative years of the Chinese Republic up to the breach with the Communists in 1927; nine deal with the period from the establishment of the Nationalist Government in Nanking in 1928 and through the war years until 1945; eighteen deal with the Kuomintang in Taiwan, from the Party reform in 1950 to the Tenth National Congress in 1969.

A systematic study of the history of the Kuomintang is greatly facilitated by the inclusion in this volume, in chronological order, of the significant documents of the last ten National Congresses, spanning forty-five years. These manifestos and policy platforms contain many persistent themes on nation-building based on Dr. Sun's teachings that the passage of time has not made obsolete. Of great convenience to interested students are the documentary

sources prior to the First National Congress, hitherto either unavailable in English or scattered through various works. Also in this collection are the texts of statements enunciating policies that have had a decisive bearing on the course of modern Chinese history, such as the Sun-Joffe statement of 1923 on the admission of Communists into the Kuomintang, and the Kuomintang's statement of general principles promulgated in 1928 on the subject of political tutelage. The manifesto and program adopted at the Extraordinary National Congress of April 1938, provide a full exposition of China's stand in resisting Japanese aggression. The Principles on the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement, adopted in December 1966, are significant as a response to the Cultural Revolution launched earlier that year by the Maoists on the mainland.

Conspicuously missing, however, is any document pertaining to the period 1945-1950. Here Mr. Shieh's selection skips from the Party Platform of the Sixth National Congress in May 1945, to the Party Reform of July 1950. The year 1945 was for China a time of national hope, as the war against Japan was nearing its end, while the year 1950 was a time of gloomy prospect, when the Kuomintang, driven from the mainland, tried to rectify its own weaknesses by heeding the bitter lessons of its recent defeat. Between the two documents just mentioned, China had undergone a traumatic experience, from postwar rejoicing to civil-war and finally to Communist victory on the mainland. The absence of any significant document in reference to this period is indicative of the magnitude of the difficulties then faced by the Kuomintang.

The Party Constitution, the most important document of all, is included in the appendixes. This basic law of the Kuomintang has been revised eight times between 1926 and 1969. It would have been better if the actual changes made in the Constitution after each revision were shown. Better still, the original version of the Con-

stitution, as adopted at the First National Congress in January 1924, might have been included so that an interested reader might observe the growth of the party between then and now.

Aside from the main body of fifty-four documents, this volume has several added features. An extended introduction provides a survey of the Party's history keyed to the documents that follow. The reader, of course, need not agree with the author's interpretation at every point, but the introduction does furnish a convenient framework that gives the reader of the documents a sense of their continuity. A thirty-four page chronology of the Kuomintang, listing all major events of the period 1894-1969, is a useful reference aid. An annotated glossary, containing 150 entries ranging from important personalities to such terms as "New Life Movement" and "Land-to-the-tiller," is another feature particularly helpful to Western readers. The appendixes also include organizational charts, dates of National Congresses and Plenums, and rosters of current Central Committee and Central Advisory Committee members of the Kuomintang.

Reviewed by TA-LING LEE