

# 1 *Duma, yuan, and beyond*

## Conceptualizing parliaments and parliamentarism in and after the Russian and Qing Empires

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### Introduction

In the early twentieth century, the Russian and Qing Empires, together with other Eurasian polities, became part of the global constitutional transformations,<sup>1</sup> which included the introduction of new institutions – the State Duma (*Gosudarstvennaia дума*, 1905/1906) in the former and the Political Consultative Council (*Zizhengyuan* 資政院, 1907/1910) in the latter. Some hundred years later, the State Duma in Russia and the Legislative Yuan (*Lifayuan* 立法院) in Taiwan were generally accepted as vernacular variations of the globalized institution of an elected legislature,<sup>2</sup> that is, a parliament. At the time when the two imperial parliamentary bodies were introduced, their names pointed to the etatist rather than popular connotations of the new institutions. Furthermore, the State Duma and the *Zizhengyuan* were often explicitly distinguished from the Western parliament, even though the latter as a generalized notion was undoubtedly the main point of reference during the attempted imperial modernizations. Seeking to expand the current debate on the conceptual history of parliamentarism by including non-European histories,<sup>3</sup> this chapter charts the genealogies of the two terms – *duma* and *yuan* – and positions them in the discussions of parliamentarism during the modernizations of the Russian and Qing Empires and during the postimperial settlements.

The parliamentary concepts and institutions in the Eurasian empires had a different history from that of their Western counterparts. The attention given to foreign experiences with parliamentarism during the imperial modernizations and the explicit aim of strengthening the imperial states, which were perceived as lagging behind their Western or previously modernized counterparts, may be seen as key aspects. In the case of the Russian and Qing Empires, the successful experience of inter alia political modernization of Japan was especially important. In both cases, the elite understandings of parliamentarism were state-centered. Even though they did not necessarily prevail, like in the case of the State Duma, the imperial elites sought to create not an institution of dissensus, that is, a parliament in the Western sense of the word,<sup>4</sup> but a new institution for receiving local

information and managing the populace, along a bureaucratic rationalizing logic. In the Russian Empire, the Tsarist administration feared a constituent State Duma, rushing with the adoption of the Fundamental Laws before the assembly's convocation. In the Qing Empire, the *Zizhengyuan*, itself a provisional precursor of a parliament, was also supposed to operate on the basis of the previously adopted legislation.

Another key difference between most Eurasian empires (for instance, Russian, Qing, and Ottoman) and Western states, which often had empires of their own, was the representation of dependent groups or territories in the parliamentary bodies of the former. In the practical implementation of parliamentary ideas in the Russian and Qing Empires in the early twentieth century, the non-Russian and non-Chinese constituencies were included in the State Duma and the *Zizhengyuan*. The very creation of these institutions, which were interpreted as imperial (pre)parliaments, undermines the idea of a unidirectional transition from empires to nation-states. Furthermore, some sub-imperial parliamentary institutions, such as the Kuban Cossack Rada (see Oleksandr Polianichev's Chapter 6 in this volume) or the planned Siberian Regional Duma, were explicitly connected to the projects of imperial modernization and reconfiguration, rather than its disintegration. Not just the imperial elites but also many oppositional intellectuals, coming from diverse backgrounds, often foregrounded the benefits of parliamentarism for the state rather than the people, which may be seen as a manifestation of their state-centered imperial nationalism. Indeed, the two concepts, *duma* and *yuan*, also had ethno-nationalist meanings. Russian conservatives, for instance, attempted to reinterpret the *duma* as a Russian national parliament, while Sun Yat-sen conceptualized the Legislative Yuan as a specifically Chinese political institution.

The two concepts must be understood in their respective dynamics. The two major schools in the history of concepts – the German *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history) and the Cambridge School of intellectual history – have helped to distinguish between temporal and relational aspects of these dynamics. Whereas Reinhart Koselleck, representing the former, focused on the temporal implications and changes in meanings, Quentin Skinner of the latter stressed that contextualized texts should be understood as political actions in the authors' pursuit of specific objectives rather than mere reflections.<sup>5</sup> The idea of the imperial situation, which can be defined as the “unstable balance in a composite society” with “conditional, fluid, and situational” social boundaries and, hence, social categories, have helped grasp the Russian and Qing contexts as themselves being dynamic.<sup>6</sup>

The chapter studies *duma* and *yuan* in the context of the concrete imperial situations and the respective conceptual histories and political mythologies, that is, myths and their interpretations connected to these terms. The main sources for the study are the writings of Russian and Chinese politicians and intellectuals. Although the trajectories of the two terms were different, the conceptual language initially developed through the reception of Western institutions in both cases. In both cases, however, this reception was critical, and the ultimate use of vernacular (rather than directly borrowed) terms demonstrates that the adoption

of a seemingly global form of organizing authority<sup>7</sup> entailed its significant transformations along the logic of the Russian and Qing bureaucratic approaches to governance.

### Concepts in the Russian imperial context

The terminology that was later used for parliamentary institutions developed on the territory of the future Russian Empire through reflection on both domestic and foreign institutions. The experience of the Grand Duchy of Muscovy proved especially important, but that of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania established an early reference point of a Western parliamentary history for the Muscovite and Russian elites and intellectuals.

The term *duma* (“council”), together with *veche* (“gathering” or “council”) and *sobor* (“gathering” or “assembly”), was used in early East Slavic texts dating to the twelfth century. *Duma* initially denoted the process of the princes of Rus’ taking advice from the senior members of their retinues.<sup>8</sup> In the first half of the sixteenth century, the Boyar Duma (*boiarskaia дума*, “the council of lords”) developed into a key institution in Muscovy. During the infancy of Ivan IV, the Boyar Duma was in fact the main governing body.<sup>9</sup> *Veche*s, community assemblies, had survived until the early modern period only in Novgorod and Pskov, but there too they disappeared with (or soon after) the annexation of the two polities to Muscovy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, respectively.<sup>10</sup> The term *sobor* was mainly used for ecclesiastical assemblies. Although in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were several nonexclusively ecclesiastical *sobors*, it was only *duma* which functioned as a coherent institution at the time. Furthermore, later authors (inaccurately) used the term *duma* when speaking about the larger assemblies, which were called *sobor* or *sovet* (“council”) in the historical sources (see Chapter 4 by Ivan Sablin and Kuzma Kukushkin in this volume).

During the Oprichnina, the period of political violence in the second half of the sixteenth century, there were Boyar Dumas in both *zemshchina* (“the land”) and *oprichnina* (“the external part”) – the two parts into which Ivan IV nominally divided the Tsardom of Russia. Furthermore, the Tsar himself formally remained in charge only of *oprichnina*, which made the *Zemskaiia дума* (“the Council of the Land”) the nominal head of *zemshchina*. Although its members also suffered from persecutions of the Oprichnina, the *Zemskaiia дума* participated in foreign-policy decision-making as a consultative body. In *oprichnina* the *duma* became more socially diverse with the rise of the *duma* gentry (*dumnye dvoriane*), a bureaucratic social group, which developed in the chancellery (*prikaz*) system and counterbalanced the boyars.<sup>11</sup> All this made the *duma* strongly associated with the bureaucratic centralization of Muscovy.

The Grand Duchy of Muscovy, however, was not the only major state formation in the European part of the future Russian Empire. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which, according to some sources, included Rus’ and Samogitia into its official name, also left a prominent conceptual legacy.<sup>12</sup> In the Grand Duchy of

Lithuania (by the sixteenth century) and in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795), the supreme authority belonged to the *sejm* (“gathering” or “assembly”). In the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the General Sejm (*Sejm walny*) included the Senate (*Senat*) of nobility and the Ambassadorial Chamber (*Izba poselska*) of regional representatives as its two chambers, as well as the King. This made it a vernacular version of the “King in Parliament.” By 1573 the nobility had institutionalized the notion of an elected monarch, with the decision being made at an electoral *sejm*.<sup>13</sup> Muscovy borrowed the concepts of *sejm* and *rada* (“council”), the council of lords which since the late fifteenth century limited the ruler’s authority, from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.<sup>14</sup> Andrei Mikhailovich Kurbskii, a former courtier of Ivan IV and at the time his fierce opponent, used the term *rada* to describe the advisory council during the early years of Ivan IV’s rule in his book *A Story of the Grand Duke of Muscovy*, which he wrote in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.<sup>15</sup>

The Tatar polities on much of the territory of the future Russian Empire in the early modern period and the legacies of the Mongol Empire did not seem to influence the concepts pertaining to assemblies.<sup>16</sup> Tatar institutions in Muscovite texts were described with Russian terms. The diplomatic documents of the 1550s, related to the relations with the Nogai Horde, for instance, mentioned a *duma* under the latter’s ruler. Similarly, according to a 1568 intelligence document, the Crimean Khan had a *duma* of his own.<sup>17</sup>

The Russian elites were aware of the contemporary early modern assemblies in Europe. The manuscripts, which were read to the Tsars and the boyars in the seventeenth century and were collectively known as the “News Columns” (*Vesti-Kuranty*), frequently mentioned them. In 1620, *Vesti-Kuranty* described the Portuguese Cortes, the assembly of the estates, as a *sejm* (rendered in Russian as *soim* and *seim*). The word *sejm* was also used for an assembly in Hungary in 1622 and for the assemblies in Lubeck and Mecklenburg in 1627. The same 1620 *Vesti-Kuranty*, however, discussed another assembly in Hungary as *zemskoe sobranie* (“assembly of the land”), which meant that terminology was not standardized. Other manuscripts used vernacular and loan terms in different combinations. A 1626 letter rendered the Dutch States General as *staty* but called the English Parliament *zemskaiia soim* (“the *sejm* of the land”). During the detailed discussion of the conflict between the English King Charles I and the Parliament, the 1627–1628 *Vesti-Kuranty* called the Parliament *sejm*; when translating the speech of George Villiers, the First Duke of Buckingham, it used both *sobor* and *sejm* and called the members of Parliament *dumnye* (“those of the *duma*”).<sup>18</sup> The use of multiple terms when speaking about the Parliament may imply its understanding as a foreign institution (*sejm*), which had no equivalent in Russia, but at the same time it may point to its interpretation as a “bureaucratic” body comparable to that of the *duma*.

The world parliament (*parlament*) was first used in *Vesti-Kuranty* (in the translated correspondence of English merchants discussing the English Civil War) in 1646 to describe the English Parliament.<sup>19</sup> Historically, the use of the word parliament in Russian coincided with the direct relations between the Tsar’s envoy and

the Parliament in 1645–1646.<sup>20</sup> The term parliament became continuously used for the English Parliament but was also mentioned in relation to an institution in France in 1649, probably the Estates General rather than a court (for which the word *parlement* had been used in France).<sup>21</sup>

The early modern centralization of the Russian administration did not eliminate the particularistic approaches to governance in the Tsardom's peripheries. The Mongolic term *khural* ("assembly"), which was used in the Mongol Empire, for instance, returned into the Russian political language with the Buryat and Kalmyk Buddhists who used it for their religious ceremonies. The expansion to the Black Sea region contributed to the continued use of the word *rada*. The Zaporozhian Cossacks, who originally organized according to egalitarian principles, used the word *rada*, together with *kolo* ("circle"), for the assemblies which elected their leader (*hetman*) and made other decisions.<sup>22</sup> The Sich Council (*Sichova Rada*) became the supreme governing body in the Zaporozhian Sich between the Russian, Polish–Lithuanian, and Ottoman imperial polities.<sup>23</sup> In 1654, the Pereyaslav Rada, which convened on the initiative of Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, pledged the Cossacks' allegiance to the Russian Tsar, but the Zaporozhian Sich remained an autonomous polity until the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

In the empire's center, Peter I replaced the *duma* with a new advisory body, the Senate (*Senat*), in 1711. *Duma*, however, returned to Russian political discourse later the same century as part of Catherine II's efforts to further centralize the state. In the process of bureaucratic standardization, Catherine II abolished some of the autonomous polities, such as the Kalmyk Khanate and the Zaporozhian Sich, in the 1770s, establishing a unified system of provinces. The 1785 Charter to the Towns introduced standardized urban self-government bodies, the municipal *dumas*, which were elected by the triennial assemblies of prosperous urban dwellers.<sup>25</sup>

The debates on political modernization became especially prominent in the Russian Empire after the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783) and the French Revolution (1789–1799). Alexander I approved the first modern constitution on the territory of the Russian Empire, in the newly annexed Kingdom of Poland, in 1815. The Polish Constitution established an elected legislature, the bicameral State Sejm, although the Russian Tsar (as the Polish King) remained the supreme authority.<sup>26</sup>

The proposals to establish a parliament in the empire as a whole used the terms *duma* and *sejm*. The bureaucrat Mikhail Mikhailovich Speranskii suggested establishing the legislative State Duma and further *dumas* at different levels of self-government in 1809.<sup>27</sup> The intentions of Speranskii's project had long been debated. Some viewed it as an attempt to limit autocracy, while others considered his State Duma a bureaucratic institution, tasked with rationalizing the autocratic government.<sup>28</sup> In 1820, Nikolai Nikolaevich Novosil'tsev, the Russian official in charge of the Kingdom of Poland at the time, used *sejm* and *duma* interchangeably for the parliament which he proposed.<sup>29</sup>

Although Speranskii's and Novosil'tsev's projects were rejected, the Sejm of the Kingdom of Poland (abolished in 1832) and the Diet of the Grand Duchy of

Finland (Finland was annexed in 1809) can be seen as proto-parliamentary institutions of the Russian Empire. Furthermore, Speranskii used the term *duma* in his reform of indigenous self-government in Siberia in 1822, establishing the Steppe Duma as a council of clan elites for the Buryat-Mongols and other groups.<sup>30</sup> A system of local self-government, which was reminiscent of that proposed by Speranskii, was introduced by Alexander II in 1864, but the new assemblies were called *zemskoe* (*zemstvo*, “local” or “rural”) *sobranie* (“assembly”) instead of *duma*. Soon after that, in 1870, however, municipal *dumas* were turned from executive councils into larger assemblies, which appealed to Speranskii’s project conceptually.<sup>31</sup>

Premodern and early modern terms informed the debates among intellectuals in the nineteenth century. In his *The History of the Russian State* (1818–1829), Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin, who was the main authority on Russian history in the first half of the nineteenth century, stressed that the Boyar Duma was an advisory body under the Tsar and became important in the centralization, and hence improvement, of the Russian state.<sup>32</sup> The much more liberal historian Vasilii Osipovich Kliuchevskii, active in the late Russian Empire, supported such an interpretation of the Boyar Duma. He stressed that in the seventeenth century giving advice to the Tsar was not the political right of its members but their loyal duty.<sup>33</sup>

Karamzin used the term *zemskaiia дума* not for the Boyar Duma in *zemshchina* but for the multiple larger early modern assemblies, which were called *sobor* and *sovet* in the historical sources. Thanks to Karamzin’s use of the term, *duma* was the name for a parliament, which a number of oppositional intellectuals proposed or demanded over the nineteenth century. Very few, however, claimed that parliamentary institutions existed in Russia prior to 1905. Most of those who did saw *veche* and *sobor* (or *zemskii sobor*) but not *duma* as comparable to European parliaments, although some continued to use the term *zemskaiia дума* when speaking about *sobors*. Whereas liberals and socialists viewed the nonequivalence of Russian institutions to Western parliaments as a sign of Russia lagging behind Europe, Slavophiles and conservative intellectuals argued that *duma* and *sobor* were not and should not be equivalents of Western parliaments, foregrounding the supposed consensus between the Tsar and his subjects at such assemblies in the past and, possibly, in the future. Those who favored the establishment of a popular assembly, even when dismissing its equivalence to a parliament, foregrounded the need to improve the state machinery and, in the case of Slavophiles and conservatives, to establish direct communication between the Tsar and the people. More radical intellectuals insisted on the need for a constituent assembly (*uchreditel’noe sobranie*), sometimes calling such an institution *zemskii sobor* (see Chapter 4 by Sablin and Kukushkin in this volume).

Discussing parliamentarism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Russian intellectuals often used the term *narodnoe predstavitel’stvo* (“popular representation”) when talking about the parliament in an abstract sense. Boris Nikolaevich Chicherin, who arguably authored the first theoretical work on parliamentarism in Russian, summarized the liberal understanding of parliamentarism

as a consequence of the demand for freedom, which swept the peoples of Western Europe after the French Revolution, implying a natural yet repeatedly challenged progress.<sup>34</sup> In the early twentieth century, the term *parlament* was also used extensively in the debates both on representative government in general and on its concrete forms in the Russian Empire.<sup>35</sup>

### Concepts in the Qing imperial context

Although in East Asia the use of parliamentary terminology was even more driven by contact and observation of foreign practices, the concepts which pertained to parliamentarism were also vernacularized and positioned within the historical and mythologized context of the empire. Increased contacts with European countries as well as the United States in the nineteenth century necessitated the creation of a vocabulary to describe concepts and institutions specific to those places.<sup>36</sup> Chinese-language books describing the countries of the world, including their respective political institutions, began to mushroom from the 1830s. The most well-known of these works, Wei Yuan's 魏源 *Illustrated Treatise on the Countries of the Seas* (*Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖志), first published in 1843 in the wake of the First Opium War (1839–1842) between the Qing and British Empires, compiled excerpts from a large number of other works and was seminal for the formation of the mental world map of Chinese intellectuals in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The encyclopedia showed two possible strategies of coping with the challenge of explaining parliamentary institutions to a Chinese readership. On the one hand, it quoted extensively from the US American missionary Elijah Coleman Bridgman's 1838 *Sketch of the United States of America* (*Meilige Heshengguo zhilüe* 美理哥合省國志略), which translated the US American House of Representatives as "Elected Department for Deliberation" (*xuanyichu* 選議處),<sup>37</sup> and the Senate as "Chamber for Deliberation of Matters" (*yishige* 議事閣). On the other hand, the *Haiguo tuzhi* is also well-known for its treatment of the English Parliament under the phonetic transcription *Baliman* 巴厘滿.<sup>38</sup> As a matter of fact, the encyclopedia employed a whole set of transcriptions for the parliamentary institutions of the United Kingdom, United States, and France: *Ganwen Haosi* 甘文好司 ("House of Commons"); *Lü Haosi* 律好司 ("House of Lords"); *Gun'elishi* 袞額裏士 ("Congress"); *Libolixian Haosi* 裏勃裏先好司 ("House of Representatives"); *Xiye* 西業 ("Senate"); *Zhanma'afu* 占馬阿富 ("Chambre" [des députés]).<sup>39</sup>

Whether mid-nineteenth-century East Asian intellectuals used newly coined words or phonetically transcribed the English- and French-language terms, their renditions mostly appealed to preexisting East Asian notions of governance, as these institutions got rendered as bureaucratic institutions. In the case of transcriptions, the *Haiguo tuzhi* and others specified the meaning of the unheard-of term by adding the general Chinese word for an administrative office. The "Parliament," thus was actually a "Parliamentary office" (*Baliman yamen* 巴厘滿衙門),<sup>40</sup> and the Congress was the "Congress office" (*Gun'elishi yamen* 袞額裏士衙門).<sup>41</sup> The

*Haiguo tuzhi* also offered the clearest example of this understanding of parliaments as bureaucratic organs in its description of the French parliament: “For administrative matters, [France] established one *Chambre* office with 430 officials staffed by every district, just like in the example of the English House of Commons.”<sup>42</sup>

In the more frequent case of new coinages such as “chamber for deliberation of matters,” Chinese – as well as Japanese<sup>43</sup> – writers mostly attached suffixes which referred to types of buildings and, by extension, to bureaucratic offices in the Chinese and Japanese government systems. The by far prevailing suffix, *yuan* 院, originally denoted a courtyard, and later became “a common final element in agency names, impossible to render consistently in English: Office, Bureau, Court, Academy, Institute, etc.”<sup>44</sup> From the late nineteenth century, it not only came to be employed as the general term to denote parliaments (*yi yuan*/Jap. *giin* 議院 – “court of deliberation”) and as a suffix in the name of various parliamentary institutions such as the late Qing “Political Consultative Council” (*Zizhengyuan* 資政院) and the legislative branch (“Legislative Yuan”) of the Republic of China (*Lifayuan* 立法院). Actually, it came to be the suffix for *all* branches of government of the Republic of China. Although using certain signifiers in a translation does not necessarily pre-define how the understanding of a term evolves later, Kuei Hung-chen 桂宏誠 rightly points out that the understanding of parliamentarism as seen in the first texts about foreign parliaments set the basis for a bureaucratic understanding of parliaments which prevailed throughout the Qing Empire.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, there is also another, less bureaucratic and more national-stately<sup>46</sup> notion which gained general currency: that of an assembly (*hui* 會). Throughout Imperial China, a deliberative assembly (*huiyi* 會議) of court officials used to be convened in order to deliberate about policies and make recommendations to the Emperor, and the term *hui* 會 was also used as equivalent for the Mongol *khural*.<sup>47</sup> In its modern parliamentary sense, it reappeared in 1837 and 1838 in Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff’s *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* (*Dong-xi-yang kao meiyue tongji zhuan* 東西洋考每月統紀傳), which referred to the English Parliament as the “public assembly for the administration of the state” (*guozheng gonghui* 國政公會), the “public assembly of the state” (*guojia gonghui* 國家公會 and *guogonghui* 國公會), or simply the “state assembly” (*guohui* 國會).<sup>48</sup> This last form stuck. In the literature it was used, for instance, in the seminal 1864 Chinese translation of Henry Wheaton’s *Elements of International Law*.<sup>49</sup> Later, it became the name of the Japanese Imperial Diet (jap. pronunciation *kokkai*), the National Assembly of the Republic of China, and eventually the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea (kor. *kukhoe*).

Whereas works such as the *Haiguo tuzhi* or Karl Gützlaff’s magazine merely described foreign parliaments and other foreign political concepts, sooner or later East Asian intellectuals were bound to discuss them in light of their own political realities. In Japan, intellectuals were vigorously debating possible reforms to the Tokugawa-led *bakumatsu* government even before the “Meiji Restoration” of 1868 (see Yuri Kono’s Chapter 2 in this volume). In China, it took less than a decade until, in the mid-1870s, the first intellectuals began to discuss not only the



adoption of European technology, but also the adaptation of Western statecraft as a means to counter the country's political and economic decline and to strengthen it against external threats.

Indeed, parliamentarism was the first such concept to be seriously discussed for the Qing Empire, nearly two decades earlier than the closely related "constitutionalism."<sup>50</sup> From the beginning, this happened with reference to Japan. For example, an editorial of the Shanghai newspaper *Shenbao* 申報 published on June 17, 1874, can be taken as indicative of the public debates on parliamentarism that would be held in the last decades of the Qing. According to the paper, parliaments facilitated the communication between "high" (*shang* 上) and "low" (*xia* 下). Yet, they needed well-informed representatives who could "be above the people" (*ju min shang* 居民上), something which was lacking in the Qing Empire. If the development of parliamentary institutions in Europe and America had been gradual, the paper implied, it needed to be even more so in the Qing Empire.<sup>51</sup>

The newspaper-led debate of the 1870s was gradually taken up by men-of-letters.<sup>52</sup> The tropes set in the *Shenbao* in the 1870s continued to pervade in discourse, but given such events as the Sino-French War of 1884–1885, an increasing number of intellectuals began to downplay the aspect of gradualism and instead maintained that the Qing Empire needed a parliamentary institution not in some distant future after gradual preparation, but here and now. As the proposal for such an institution had to be justified in light of the ruling ideology, they argued that, from ancient times, it had been a Confucian ideal that officials be well-informed about the concerns of the populace. Zhang Zimu 張自牧, for example, argued in 1884 that parliaments were a source of the political strength of a nation and that the "West preserved the idea from [Chinese] antiquity" whereby the concerns of the people were brought to the attention of the officialdom.<sup>53</sup>

One of the contributors to the *Shenbao*, Zheng Guanying, began to publish his book *Easy Words* (*Yiyan* 易言) in 1871, wherein he painted the international scene of the time as a re-edition of the ancient Chinese Warring States period (475–221 BC). In the subsequent editions of the book as well as in the successor book *Words of Warning in Prosperous Times* (*Shengshi weiyán* 盛世危言), first published in 1894, Zheng developed his position that the Qing Empire should adopt modern instruments of statehood in order to survive in a Warring States like cut-throat competition, with parliamentarism being one of the main elements in strengthening the Qing Empire's competitiveness. Zheng devoted a section of his book to the bicameral parliamentary system found in the "Western countries," which, he argued, ensured concord between government and the people, as well as the quality of political measures.<sup>54</sup>

For long-standing political traditions to be radically changed in a short period of time, references to foreign examples alone did not suffice to make arguments in favor of – or against – reforms. Rather, until the fall of the empire, the notion of parliamentarism was also analyzed in view of one's own tradition. This was even more important in a culture which valued its own classics and ancestors as much as China. Scholarship has pointed out that the recourse to the venerable classics was used to legitimize modern phenomena from railroads to political

institutions.<sup>55</sup> But this was not the only use: as was pointed out at the time, the connection between the classics and modern phenomena was also made to protect the classics at a time when their authority stood under heavy attack.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, it should also not be forgotten that the classics were also used in conservative arguments against new institutions.<sup>57</sup>

Zheng Guanying had no unified approach to possible ancient Chinese equivalents of parliamentarism. In his chapter on parliaments, he raised the question whether parliamentarians would not be the same as the Court Gentlemen of Consultations (*yilang* 議郎), who had existed in the Han state (206 BC–AD 220), or the same as the censors and remonstrators of later periods, but denied the question and argued that the parliament was a different institution which would avoid China's traditional vices.<sup>58</sup> Yet, in the revised 1895 edition of his book, Zheng added a chapter in which he made a reference to a Han-time practice of "local selection," of which the actual historical meaning is obscure. Zheng placed strong emphasis on the point that it was imperative to revive this institution, framing his chapter with references to it at the beginning and at the end.<sup>59</sup> At any rate, Zheng's views about possible Chinese parliamentary precedents did not affect his opinion about why the introduction of a parliament was imperative and which he had laid down in his parliamentary chapter. It is representative of a large portion of late Qing arguments in favor of a parliament:

Hence, if we want to implement public international law, nothing is more important than strengthening the country's clout; if we want to strengthen the country's clout, nothing is more important than conquering the people's hearts; if we want to conquer the people's hearts, nothing is more important than letting the concerns of the lower [part of society] flow; if we want to let the concerns of the lower [part of society] flow, nothing is more important than establishing a parliament.<sup>60</sup>

## Imperial modernizations

Like elsewhere in the nineteenth and twentieth century, parliamentarism and constitutionalism were frequently discussed in Eurasia in the context of political modernization. The Japanese and the Ottoman Empires (see Ellinor Morack's Chapter 7 in this volume) introduced constitutions and parliaments in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although in the latter constitutionalism was suspended, the success of political modernization of Japan, which supposedly led to its military prowess and turned it into a colonial power, affected the Qing and Russian Empires directly – in the Sino–Japanese (1894–1895) and the Russo–Japanese (1904–1905) Wars – and contributed to the discussions of political reforms in the Qing Empire and a revolution in the Russian Empire.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the debates on parliamentarism in the Qing Empire stayed within intellectual circles. Although memorials referring to the establishment were presented to the throne, the government did not take up the topic, and it was not even included in the abortive Hundred Days' Reform

promulgated in the summer of 1898. The negative evaluation is shown by the diary of Li Jiaju 李家駒, an official who was accompanying the Qing minister to Tokyo in order to study the Japanese education system, and who later would become one of the main figures of the constitutional reforms. In 1899, however, the balance of the Meiji reforms contained in his diary still emphasized the convening of a parliament as one of its main drawbacks, as opposed to the modernization of the military and the revitalization of the education system.<sup>61</sup>

In Russia, the so-called zemstvo constitutionalists and other liberal groups of nobility and intellectuals reinvigorated the discussions of introducing a parliament in the 1890s. After the demise of the conservative Alexander III, his son, Nicholas II, was asked to convene a parliament in 1895. Nicholas II, however, rejected the idea, pledging to defend autocracy. As noted by an oppositional politician several years later, that very same year the fatal decision of expanding to East Asia was made as if to counterbalance the dreams of liberalizing the empire.<sup>62</sup>

Ten years later, however, in the wake of the disastrous war with Japan and the Revolution of 1905–1907, Nicholas II conceded. Although Nicholas II was inclined to support an irregular consultative *zemskii sobor*, the governmental commission, which was created on the initiative of Minister of Internal Affairs Aleksandr Grigor'evich Bulygin in 1905, suggested a permanent assembly. Sergei Efimovich Kryzhanovskii of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was the main advocate of introducing the Duma.<sup>63</sup> Its name, the State Duma, was taken up from Speranskii's project, which was referenced directly during the official discussions of the new institution at the closed Peterhof Conference chaired by the Tsar. Some participants of the conference once again deemed the gathering of local information and the communication between the Tsar and his subjects the main objective of the Duma. The historian Kliuchevskii, one of the few liberal voices at the Peterhof Conference, located the Duma in the history of popular representation in Russia, which he traced to the *zemskii sobors*, and stressed the need to base legislation on the will of the majority of the people, hence attempting to define the Duma as a parliament. Although most of the ruling elite did not see the Duma as a parliament and rejected the very idea of limiting autocracy, Nicholas II's attempt to "de-modernize" the proposed institution by calling it a *Gosudareva* ("of the autocrat") rather than *Gosudarstvennaia* ("of the state") *duma* was shut down at the Peterhof Conference.<sup>64</sup>

Although initially it was designed as a consultative body, the establishment of the legislative State Duma (on October 17, 1905, in the so-called October Manifesto) and the adoption of the new Fundamental State Laws of the Russian Empire (on April 23, 1906) seemed to make Russia a constitutional state. In 1907, Vladimir Matveevich Gessen and Boris Emmanuilovich Nol'de, two prominent liberal legal scholars, listed Russia, together with Persia and Montenegro, as a new constitutional state in their comprehensive collection of contemporary constitutions. Articulating a popular progressive view, they claimed that the failures of the Russo–Japanese War unmasked the inefficiency of bureaucratic autocracy, spreading the critical attitudes to the *ancien régime* beyond intellectual circles and transforming them into a broad liberation movement across the whole country.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, before and especially during the Revolution of 1905–1907, the inefficiency of the Russian state played a key role in the broader debates on democracy, which contrasted the public and the bureaucracy. The liberal program included not only parliamentarization but also decentralization of the empire, with the introduction of *zemstvo* and municipal self-government on the basis of universal suffrage. As argued by Gessen, since bureaucracy lacked information on particular affairs, it could not govern them effectively and needed to be substituted by local and professional self-organization.<sup>66</sup> The same logic applied to the parliament. Articulating a widespread opinion, the Tomsk liberal newspaper *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* celebrated the October Manifesto as the liberation of the people from “the tutelage of bureaucracy.” According to the newspaper, the Russian Empire had become a constitutional state and “joined the family of modern civilized states as an equal,” and in such a state the population had supreme authority. At the same time, *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* voiced a popular liberal argument in favor of gradual political change.<sup>67</sup>

Few contemporary observers, however, viewed the Duma (1906–1917) as a parliament equal to its Western counterparts. It occupied a subordinate position to the State Council, which was reformed from a bureaucratic advisory council into a partly appointed upper chamber (for a similar conservative take on parliamentarism, see Bruce Grover’s Chapter 3 in this volume), and did not control the cabinet, which contributed to the term “sham constitutionalism” being applied to the new Russian regime.<sup>68</sup> The non-universal, indirect, and unequal elections were further limited with the dissolution of the Second Duma on June 3, 1907. Nol'de nevertheless stressed that the Russian Empire could be called a constitutional state and deemed the State Duma the first normally functioning parliament in Russia, implying the country’s connection to Western constitutional modernity.<sup>69</sup>

Liberal intellectuals made gradualist arguments about the situation. Sergei Andreevich Kotliarevskii, a historian, legal scholar, and one of the founding members of the liberal Constitutional Democratic (KD) Party, favored “democratic parliamentarism,” but the notion of political evolution and Russia’s inferiority compared to the West helped him justify the existence of the “Prussian regime” of a non-answerable cabinet as a transitional stage. Despite his skepticism of the Duma’s “parliamentarism,” he urged Russia’s progressives to set parliamentarism (rather than radical republicanism) as their ultimate goal.<sup>70</sup> In practical terms this translated into the KD program of constitutional monarchy featuring a potent universally elected “popular representation.”<sup>71</sup>

Even after the Duma was made legislative, conservative opponents of parliamentarism remained vocal. Vasilii Vasil'evich Rozanov, a conservative philosopher, refused to admit that a “constitution” and a “parliament” were introduced in Russia, maintaining that the Duma was a product of Russian history, produced by the Russian soul, enthusiasm, patience, and work, and not a “foreign novelty.” Although Rozanov acknowledged that the Russian people also moved to liberation like elsewhere, this movement was parallel to those of the others. For Rozanov, however, it did not have the same direction. For him, the Duma did not mimic Western institutions and was not a place for representing difference.

Rozanov called for the unity of Russia's political groups there, which would mitigate the splits in the Russian society.<sup>72</sup>

Although it did not become a potent parliament, the State Duma proved to be a key site of imperial nation-making, both in the sense of imagining the larger inclusive political community of the empire and the smaller communities (based on ethnicity, religion, region, social estate, and class) in the composite space of the empire.<sup>73</sup> As argued by Alexander Semyonov, the State Duma was a microcosm of empire not because it ostensibly represented the national or ethno-confessional distinctions but because the parliament itself was based on uneven or multidimensional heterogeneity. The elections, albeit restrictive and representative of just a fraction of the overall population, were based on several principles, which alternately referenced territorial, social estate, ethno-national, and confessional markers or combinations of them. This owed to the differentiating and individuating approach of the government to imperial space. In the Duma itself it resulted in the articulation of multiple and overlapping categories, with some having been politicized before and with others being operationalized only in the imperial parliament. There were multiple caucuses (with overlapping memberships) based on ethnicity (for instance, Poles), religion (Muslims), social estate (Cossacks), and region (Siberians) in addition to the party factions. There was also a caucus of Autonomists which united nationalist and regionalist advocates of decentralization.<sup>74</sup> A popular print of the First Duma accentuated the diversity of the deputies by placing Muslim and peasant deputies at the foreground of the composition (see Figure 1.1).

Despite their criticism of the Duma, liberal and moderate socialist and nationalist thinkers generally supported parliamentarism. The KDs included parliamentarism, as the answerability of the cabinet to the parliament's majority, into their program in 1905. The other two largest oppositional parties – the Party of Socialists Revolutionaries (SR) and the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (SD) – supported the slogan of democratic republic. The SRs also included the slogan of revolutionary dictatorship of proletariat, if it became necessary, into their draft program in 1905 but ultimately dropped it in favor of democratic republic ruled by the people through their elected representatives and referendum.<sup>75</sup>

Left and right radicals, by contrast, questioned the very necessity of a parliament. The former rejected parliaments as part of class exploitation and oppressive state machinery and called for direct rule of the toilers to represent an alternative democratic modernity. The prominent anarchist writer Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin rejected the idea of dividing the struggle into two steps – a political coup and economic reforms ostensibly to be implemented by a Russian parliament. For him, the struggle against autocracy and capital was to be simultaneous, and any parliament was a deal between the parties of the past and those of the future and hence would never introduce revolutionary measures. Arguing that Russia was unique and opposing parliamentary gradualism, Kropotkin maintained that the Russian people had a historic chance to take the power into their own hands and surpass the stages which the West went through.<sup>76</sup>

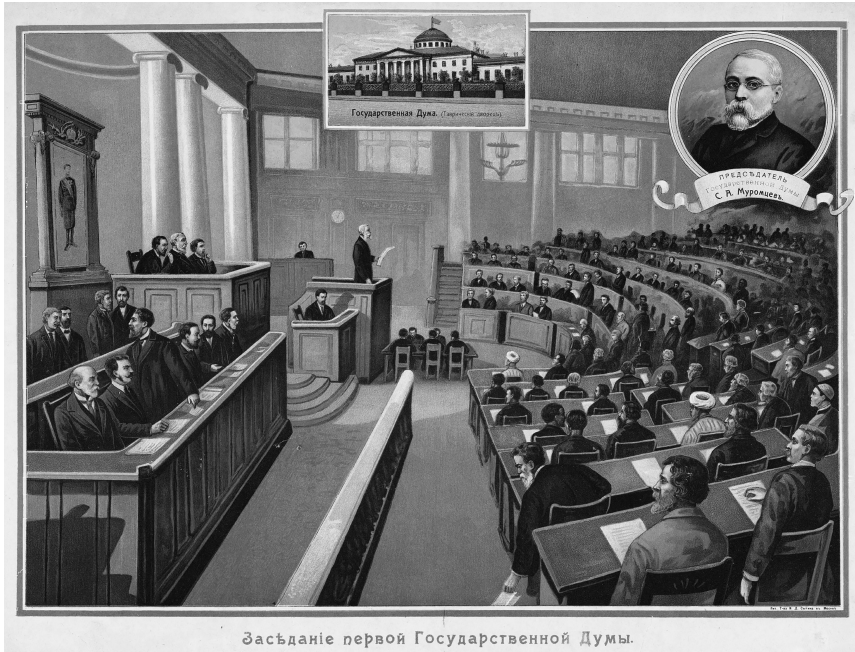


Figure 1.1 Zasedanie pervoi Gosudarstvennoi dumy [The session of the First State Duma]. Moscow: Lit. T-va I. D. Sytina, [1906]. The text at the top reads “State Duma. (Tauride Palace).” The text at the top right corner reads “Chairman of the State Duma S. A. Muromtsev.”

For the far right, the threat to the “greatness” of the state was intertwined with the supposed threats to the ethnic Russians. Rozanov’s aspiration for unity in the State Duma was shattered by the oppositional majorities of the first two Dumas, which triggered their dissolution. Anticipating the convocation of the Third Duma, based on the limited electoral law, Rozanov expected the new Duma to finally become one of the “state” and not one of the “society,” rejecting thereby the liberal notion of societal self-organization. Rozanov expressed hope that the Duma would be a “national Russian” representation and personally attacked the SD deputies from the Caucasus. What progressives and non-Russian nationalists saw as the non-Russians finally gaining a voice through the Duma, for Rozanov was a clear indication that the Russian state and the ethnic Russians (who in practice made up some 44.3 percent of the imperial population in terms of language but legally also included the 17.8 percent speaking Ukrainian and 4.7 percent speaking Belarusian, becoming thereby a majority)<sup>77</sup> could become marginalized, as he claimed that the “grey-haired old Rus’,” embodied by the people of “serious positions and professions,” had to listen to the “nonsense” of the deputies from the Caucasus.<sup>78</sup> Some right radicals even saw the roots of Russian parliamentarism in a Jewish conspiracy.<sup>79</sup>

Whereas the defeat against Japan in 1895 did not seem to boost government interest in parliamentarism in the Qing Empire, subsequent events did. The Boxer War of 1900–1901 and the Russo–Japanese War led the Qing government to agree to political reforms. The aforementioned Li Jiaju thoroughly changed his opinion on this matter, coming to act first as the Qing constitutional commissioner to Japan in 1908, and eventually as one of the Imperially appointed drafters of the final constitution in 1911. However, subscribing to a gradualist policy, the government maintained that a full bicameral parliament (*yiyuan*) could only be convened after a thorough reform of the state, as delegates were not expected to legislate from scratch, but instead to deliberate policy matters on the basis of an already existent body of laws.<sup>80</sup> The gradualist approach was not only the one recommended by a large part of foreign observers, but it was also reinforced by the Qing government’s perception of Russia, where the speedy adoption of a constitution and the convening of the First Duma in 1906 did not do much to mitigate the crisis through which the country was going.<sup>81</sup>

Following this principle, the government promised in 1906 to study the adoption of constitutional government and foresaw the creation of a proto-parliamentary body, the Political Consultative Council (*Zizhengyuan* 資政院), as a place to “broadly collect public speech” (*bocai qunyan* 博采羣言).<sup>82</sup> In the following years, the government followed through, setting up the *Zizhengyuan* as well as deliberative assemblies at lower administrative levels, called “offices for consultation and deliberation” (*zhiyi ju* 諮議局) at provincial level and “deliberative assemblies” (*yishihui* 議事會) at lower levels. As the official documents issued by the government at the time made clear, the lower provincial assemblies should be a basis for the Political Consultative Council, serving as a talent pool for it (*wei Zizhengyuan chucai zhi jie* 爲資政院儲材之階) and as gathering points of public opinion (*caiqu yulun zhi suo* 採取輿論之所).<sup>83</sup> These local assemblies were not to be treated as national parliaments, but were confined to a consultative role.<sup>84</sup> They were, however, parliamentary “forerunners” (*xiansheng* 先聲)<sup>85</sup> which should be transformed into provincial legislative organs after the convening of the National Assembly.<sup>86</sup>

For the government, such parliamentary assemblies were thus mainly meant as consultative bodies that should bring the concerns of the people to the government. Equally, it was hoped that they would foster national cohesion by bringing those governing and those governed closer together. This was true even for vast parts of the empire which were deemed unfit to participate in the new system, that is, the large non-Han regions of Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet. The new parliamentary system presupposed “the existence of a pool of educated Han gentry outside the bureaucracy – a milieu conspicuously lacking” there.<sup>87</sup> Hence, no provincial assemblies were established in Mongolia and Tibet, and the one for Xinjiang never assembled. Yet, by giving elites of these regions, particularly from Mongolia, special group representation by Imperial appointment to the Political Consultative Council, the Qing tried to parliamentarize their traditional method of creating loyalty by conferring aristocratic privileges.<sup>88</sup>

The government’s slow approach to parliamentarism met with increasing impatience on the part of a public which, to a large extent, although by far not

exclusively, had come to see constitutionalism as a panacea for the Qing Empire's ills, and called for a much faster pace of reforms. A large number of people signed petitions calling for the "speedy convening of a parliament" (*su kai guohui* 速開國會), including Li Jiaju himself. But even the mere "right to express proposals" (*jianyan zhi quan* 建言之權)<sup>89</sup> had a tremendous impact on late Qing politics. As the provincial assemblies were allowed to memorialize to the Political Consultative Council, they had a communication channel to the Emperor and were less dependent on the governor.<sup>90</sup> When the provincial assemblies were convened in 1909 and the Political Consultative Council in 1910, the local elites represented in them made extensive use of their "right to speak." Using the assemblies as platforms, they severely pressured the court, which became one of the immediate causes of its demise in 1911/1912.<sup>91</sup>

### Postimperial settlements

The logic and contradictions of imperial parliamentarism persisted during the post-imperial settlements. On the one hand, there were attempts to constitute inclusionary Russian and Chinese postimperial civic nations, which would include not only the titular groups but also other groups of the former empire. Both the projected Russian federative republic and the Chinese Republic of "Five Races under One Union" were to have inclusionary parliaments. At the same time, the discussions of parliamentarism also continued as part of particularistic, exclusionary national projects, and the use of vernacular terminology very much reflected that.

The events at the turn of 1911 to 1912 – that is the Xinhai Revolution and the replacement of the Qing Empire by the Republic of China – meant an at least nominal transition from monarchical to popular sovereignty. Prima vista, the founding constitutional texts of the Republic of China seem to reveal this momentous shift of focus. While Article 1 of the Imperial Outline of a Constitution, adapted from the Japanese Constitution of 1889, had declared that the Empire was to be governed by the Emperor in "one dynastic line for ages eternal."<sup>92</sup> Article 2 of the Republic's first Provisional Constitution, promulgated on March 11, 1912, declared that "the sovereignty of the Republic of China is vested in the entirety of the nation."<sup>93</sup>

The establishment of the republic was accompanied by a rough exercise in a more democratic form of government. In theory, the political structure laid down in the Provisional Constitution as well as in the *Law on the Organization of the National Assembly* of August 10, 1912, conferred a paramount importance to the bicameral National Assembly (*Guomin yihui* 國民議會, short *Guohui* 國會): next to its attribution of passing legislation, it was also entrusted with drafting a permanent constitution for the Republic, and furthermore it elected the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister as the head of the Cabinet.<sup>94</sup>

The election to the National Assembly at the turn of 1912–1913 was not only the first one to be ever held in China at a national level, but also drew from a massively enlarged basis of voters of more than 40 million people.<sup>95</sup> Whereas suffrage for the 1909 provincial elections had stood at 0.39 percent of the population,<sup>96</sup>



it had increased to more than 10 percent of China's population of roughly 400 million inhabitants in 1912. Next to letting much broader sections of society participate in the political process, it also continued and deepened the shy attempts of the Qing Empire at parliamentarization of the imperial situation. While the Qing had merely integrated the vast non-Han regions of the Empire into the upcoming parliamentary system via upper-house indication, the Republic insisted on having these regions represented in the lower house as well.

However, at the same time, these elements of democratization and increased participation of the masses in politics, as well as of greater national integration, also had clear limits both in the political realities and in the intellectual debates of the time. As to the integration of the non-Han regions into the new National Assembly, the 1912–1913 elections faced numerous difficulties and delays in Xinjiang<sup>97</sup> and could not be carried out in Tibet and Outer Mongolia, which had separated themselves from the Republic of China. Tibetan and Outer Mongolian seats were filled from loyal Mongol and Tibetan communities in Beijing. Combined with the fact that the sparse population of these regions required overproportional delegate quotas, this led to the perception that the Republic was actually granting ethnic, not territorial, representation to Tibetans and Mongols, and to corresponding frictions with the officially sanctioned ideology of ethnic equality.<sup>98</sup>

The parliamentarization of the Chinese post-empire was celebrated by Russian socialists as a marker of global progress, even though they viewed parliamentarism not as a goal but merely as a means of achieving socialism. Commenting on the Xinhai Revolution and the developments in the Republic of China in 1912, Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, celebrated the awakening of the “four hundred million backward Asians” to political life and stressed the importance of the convocation of the Chinese parliament – “the first parliament in a former despotic country.”<sup>99</sup> Returning to the issue in 1913, Lenin called the Chinese parliament “the first parliament of a great Asian country” and praised Sun Yat-sen's 孫逸仙 Guomindang for bringing the broad masses of Chinese peasants into politics, which he described as “a great factor of progress of Asia and progress of humanity.”<sup>100</sup>

In the chaotic struggles of the early Republic, the elected National Assembly did not last for long. By November 1913, President Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 effectively replaced the National Assembly with two other assemblies – a “Political Assembly” (*Zhengzhi huiyi* 政治會議, see Figure 1.2) and a “Constituent Assembly” (*Yuefa huiyi* 約法會議, see Figure 1.3). In 1914, Yuan officially disbanded the National Assembly and had another provisional constitution approved.<sup>101</sup> This Constitution, which provided for an extraordinarily strong position of the President, foresaw the establishment of a bicameral national assembly – styled “Legislative Yuan” (*Lifayuan* 立法院) – and of a presidential Privy Council (*Canzhengyuan* 參政院; see Egas Moniz Bandeira's Chapter 5 in this volume). Proposed by the Japanese constitutional advisor Ariga Nagao 有賀長雄 as the equivalent to the Japanese Privy Council (*Sūmitsuin* 樞密院), only the latter institution convened at the time. Consisting of 50–70 delegates personally selected by Yuan, it was immediately decried as an instrument of Yuan's monarchic ambitions and megalomania. While these accusations are not false, they do not depict the whole story, for Yuan's



Figure 1.2 Zhengzhi huiyi quanti sheying [Group photo of the Political Assembly].  
*Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 11, no. 2 (Minguo 3 [1914]).

constitutional design conformed to the recommendations given to him by advisors such as Ariga Nagao and Frank Johnson Goodnow. Hence, these institutions also reflected a current of contemporary constitutional scholarship which accorded a powerful position to the head of the executive, regardless of whether he be an emperor or a president.<sup>102</sup>

Yuan's *Canzhengyuan* was disbanded after his death in 1916, while the original National Assembly convened again. A new National Assembly, elected in 1918,<sup>103</sup> functioned comparatively smoothly for two years before it was disbanded again. By that time, the Beijing government had already lost control over much of the country and China was experiencing the beginning of a decade full of civil war and warlordism.<sup>104</sup> The Beijing government's parliament, while strong in theory, was subject to maneuverings by political strongmen. The old National Assembly was convened again, but its widespread corruption contributed to the disillusionment with parliamentarism and constitutional politics as such.<sup>105</sup> When the Guomindang troops conquered Beijing in June 1928, effectively ending the Warlord Era, "China's experiment with parliamentary politics was over."<sup>106</sup>

The parliamentarization of the Russian postimperial space followed a somewhat similar trajectory of initial success and quick demise. It was the Duma which



Figure 1.3 Yuefa huiyi quanti sheying [Group photo of the Constituent Assembly].  
*Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 11, no. 2 (Minguo 3 [1914]).

formed the Provisional Government during the Revolution of 1917, while a universally elected omnipotent parliament – the All-Russian Constituent Assembly – was supposed to resolve the Russian imperial crisis, which inter alia manifested in the disastrous First World War (1914–1918). At the same time, parallel to the institutions of the Provisional Government and the new zemstvo and municipal authorities, which were reformed on the basis of universal suffrage, the soviets (“councils”) reemerged (after their brief appearance in the Revolution of 1905–1907) as the bodies of class self-government. Although this situation was frequently interpreted as “dual power,” some socialists and liberals in fact viewed the soviets as “legislative chambers of deputies” and the Petrograd Soviet as “a surrogate people’s *duma*,” which replaced the State Council in a two-house parliament of new Russia.<sup>107</sup>

The ideas of gradualism and what can be called “parliamentary tutelage,” however, were still articulated by some Russian liberals. In his pre-revolutionary work, which was published and discussed in 1917, Gessen rejected the notion of popular sovereignty. For him, the people were the source of legislative authority in a representative republic but were not seen as capable of exercising it due to the lack of a deliberate unity of wills. Legislative authority was exercised by the parliament on behalf of the people and in its interests, but the election of deputies was not a delegation of legislative competence, since the people did not

have it in the first place. A citizen was a voter and not a lawmaker who adopted legislation through his or her representatives. According to Gessen, the parliament received its competence from the constitution and not from the people, but elections were still needed for the will of the parliament to correspond to popular interests. Gessen concluded that popular representation implied the incapacity of the people. In his view, a parliament was not and could not be a cliché of the popular masses; it organized and created the general will, turning the anarchy of circulating opinions into one.<sup>108</sup>

Moderate socialists did not share such a view on popular representation, with Mark Veniaminovich Vishniak, a legal scholar and a member of the SR Party, insisting that according to the idea of democracy (*narodopravstvo*), as initially formulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, only the people were the source of public opinion, that is, of the will directed at the common good. A parliament, according to Vishniak, was only a secondary institution articulating but not creating popular will,<sup>109</sup> which very much corresponded to Georg Jellinek's interpretation of the people as the primary body and the parliament as the secondary body.<sup>110</sup>

Liberals and moderate socialists hence agreed that Russia needed a parliament, which could be uni- or bicameral. A possible second chamber, as discussed by a committee under the Provisional Government, could reflect decentralization and include the representatives of autonomous territories and local self-government bodies, as well as the representatives of the most important "organized social and cultural forces of the country," such as representatives of trade and industry, cooperatives, trade unions, and academic institutions.<sup>111</sup>

The establishment of a Bolshevik–Left SR government, supposedly legitimized by the soviets, on October 25–26, 1917, however, reflected the growing popularity of leftist anti-parliamentarism. The new government allowed the convocation of the Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918, but since the two radical parties did not have a majority there and did not find the assembly's support, they disbanded it the very next day. With the expulsion of the Left SRs from the Soviet government, the Bolsheviks established a one-party autocracy. Indeed, they introduced a sham federation but opted for a complete and explicit opposition to parliamentarism in favor of an exclusionary class government.<sup>112</sup> The Soviet non-parliamentary system, however, was formally abandoned in 1936 with the adoption of the new Soviet Constitution, which introduced a Soviet "parliament" – the Supreme Soviet (*Verkhovnyi sovet*) of two chambers<sup>113</sup> (see Olga Velikanova's Chapter 8 in this volume).

China experienced a similar departure from Western-style parliamentarism, yet following a different logic. In spite of the optimistic attempts at amplifying suffrage in 1912, the same republicans who had attacked the Qing for installing sham constitutionalism and for not adopting a constitution soon enough came to subscribe to similar positions, that is, that a full constitution could not be adopted at once, but only after a sufficiently long preparatory phase. Sun Yat-sen, who had been the first President of the Republic in 1912 and led the so-called Constitutional Protection Movement against the Beijing-based Beiyang 北洋 government from 1917, came to conceptualize such a gradualist thinking in his 1924 "Outline of

National Construction” (*Jianguo dagang* 建國大綱). Therein, he foresaw development in three stages, from a military government (*junzheng* 軍政) to a government of “tutelage for the people” (*xunzheng* 訓政) to, eventually, “constitutional government” (*xianzheng* 憲政).<sup>114</sup> A popularly elected Legislative Yuan was only foreseen for the last phase, and thus still away from a fractured China that was still considered to be in the first phase of military government. Effectively, thus, the parliament became the coronation rather than the main agent of the nation-building process of the Chinese Republic, not unlike it had been for the Qing Empire.

According to official ideology, the unification of most of China under the Guomindang in 1928 marked the transition from military government to the era of “tutelage,” which was to be exerted by the Guomindang. The subsequent revision of the Organic Law of the National Government of October 4, 1928, adopted Sun’s five-branch system of government and introduced the Legislative Yuan together with four other *yuan*s. The new legislative body was only one element in the legislative process, since the adoption of a law required the joint countersignature of the presidents of all five *yuan*s. The next revision of the Organic Law (November 24, 1930) elevated its status a bit by requiring only the President of the National Government to countersign law bills.<sup>115</sup> However, the members of the Legislative Yuan continued to be unelected, being appointed instead by the National Government. In 1931, the Guomindang convoked a constituent assembly – called People’s Convention (*Guomin huiyi* 國民會議). Most of its delegates represented the territorial subdivisions of the Republic as well as overseas communities, but were elected by a number of legally registered organizations at the local level, giving the Guomindang the power to directly or indirectly control the Convention.<sup>116</sup> The Provisional Constitution of the Political Tutelage Period, adopted by the People’s Convention in May 1931, consolidated the system laid out in the organic laws and the place of the Legislative Yuan in it. Hence, in the era of Guomindang-controlled “tutelage,” the party dominated both the establishment as well as the functioning of these institutions, and the Legislative Yuan remained a bureaucratic body.<sup>117</sup> The result was a one-party regime similar to that in Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the 1931 Provisional Constitution can be seen as an early constitutional formalization of a one-party regime.

After the end of the Second World War, the Republic of China officially transitioned from “tutelage” to “constitutional” government, promulgating a new constitution in 1947 and convening the first popularly elected Legislative Yuan in 1948. Yet, China was amid a civil war which eventually forced the Guomindang-led government to flee to Taiwan. While the victorious Communist Party established its own one-party regime, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference – China’s main parliamentary institution from 1949 to 1954 – sought to integrate other political currents and to create some continuity to the Republic (see Henrike Rudolph’s Chapter 9 in this volume).

The postimperial settlements witnessed a number of further vernacular parliamentary developments, which followed the particularistic national projects after the two empires. The newly established sovereign Polish and Lithuanian republics, for instance, called their parliaments *sejm*. Many polities, however, did not

succeed in retaining their autonomous or independent status. Here the examples of Ukrainian and Mongolian parliamentary formations were especially illustrative of the use of the concepts which had been relevant for larger imperial spaces before in political nation-building.

Diverse Ukrainian nationalists were among several postimperial groups which used the concept of *rada*. As a national institution, it emerged in the context of the Habsburg Empire during the Revolution of 1848–1849, when the Supreme Ruthenian Council (*Holovna Rus'ka Rada*) was formed.<sup>118</sup> Mikhaïlo Hrushevs'kyi, a prominent Ukrainian historian and politician, contributed to the integration of the Cossack past, and hence its institutions, into a coherent narrative of democratic Ukraine.<sup>119</sup> During the crisis of the Habsburg and Russian Empires, *radas* were being formed in both. On March 4, 1917, the Ukrainian Central Rada (*Ukrains'ka Tsentral'na Rada*) was formed in Kyiv as the governing body of the anticipated Ukrainian autonomy in postimperial Russia. Although the body consisted of nominees rather than popularly elected deputies, it was occasionally called a parliament – and after its constitutionalization, the Ukrainian polity was supposed to have a universally elected one.<sup>120</sup> The Ukrainian Central Rada, chaired by Hrushevs'kyi, proclaimed the formation of the Ukrainian People's Republic in November 1917, following the Bolshevik–Left SR coup in Petrograd and in anticipation of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly. When the latter was disbanded, the Ukrainian Central Rada declared Ukraine's independence in January 1918. The Ukrainian National Rada (*Ukrains'ka Natsional'na Rada*) became the supreme legislative body of the self-proclaimed independent Western Ukrainian People's Republic on the former Habsburg territory in October 1918.<sup>121</sup> *Radas* as governing bodies were also formed by Kuban Cossack, Belarusian, and regional Ukrainian groups (for instance, in the Russian Far East).<sup>122</sup>

Mongolic-speaking politicians and intellectuals of the Russian and Qing Empires participated in constitutionalizing Outer Mongolia. There, the term *khural* was used for the new institutions. Following the declaration of independence in 1911, which in 1915 was internationally recognized as mere autonomy within the Republic of China, the Bogd Khan ordered the establishment of a bicameral consultative assembly – the State Khural (*Ulus-un khural*). The Bogd Khan's decree on the establishment of the State Khural referred to the experience of the “powerful, rich, and cultured” states of the world, which had general assemblies of representatives, and stressed the need for deliberation and consideration of different opinions when resolving challenging and important issues.<sup>123</sup> The fact that both chambers of the State Khural were appointed, while all decisions were to be approved by the Bogd Khan, led Pavel Dudin to conclude that the regime remained an absolute theocratic monarchy.<sup>124</sup>

The Buryat intellectual Tsyben Zhamtsarano participated in the debates on parliamentarism in Outer Mongolia. In his *Ulus-un erke* (“Power of the State”), Zhamtsarano presented a comparative study of political systems. He paid special attention to parliaments, their structures, and elections, as well as the relations between central and local authorities in most states, dominions (such as Australia and New Zealand), and parts of states (such as Finland or the states of

the German Empire) with constitutions, probably using an available collection in Russian. Zhamsarano used the word *khural* for parliaments. He interpreted their emergence from a progressive standpoint, explaining that the authorities had to adapt to changing times and gather representatives to establish *khurals* “to discuss problems, benefits, interests, income and expenditure, and many other matters” of the respective countries, as well as “to make laws to foster and rule the people.” He continued, “Thus established, state *khurals* proved to be beneficial in many respects, therefore making the state more powerful. [People] definitely understood that and nowadays most of sixty big and small countries have state *khurals*.”<sup>125</sup>

Whereas the Ukrainian *radas* and the first Mongolian State Khural ceased to exist as institutions in the 1910s, the concepts were integrated into the Soviet imperial formation, which extensively used non-Russian nationalisms. Even though the Ukrainian Central Rada was the enemy of the Soviet government in Ukraine, the translation of soviet into Ukrainian as *rada* practically appropriated the term for the Bolsheviks. Indeed, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (*Ukrains'ka Sotsiialistychna Radians'ka Respublika*), which was formed in 1919 as a nominally independent state, became one of the USSR's constituent republics in December 1922. In 1921, the Mongolian People's Government, which proclaimed Mongolia's independence with Soviet support, established the Provisional State Khural as a consultative body.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the assembly which constituted the Mongolian People's Republic after Bogd Khan's demise in 1924 was called the First Great Khural. It adopted the first Constitution of Mongolia, establishing the Great Khural as a constitutional parliamentary body.<sup>127</sup> Both the *radas* and the *khurals* in the Soviet empire, however, were nominal bodies, fully subordinate to the Ukrainian and Mongolian ruling parties, themselves accountable to the Bolshevik Party.

## Conclusion

*Duma* and *yuan* emerged as signifiers of Russian and Qing/Chinese legislatures in a contested conceptual landscape, with multiple alternative terms being used by the proponents and opponents of parliamentarism. They did not, however, unequivocally point to the establishment of parliaments in the two contexts. Although the Western system was largely perceived as universal, there was a critical reception of Western models rather than their simple “import,” and suggestions that the Eurasian empires were not yet ready for such popular participation as in Western Europe and America were frequent in the discussions among Eurasian intellectuals. Some intellectuals, and especially the imperial elites, foregrounded the state-centeredness of the new institutions which were supposed to rationalize and facilitate governance of the populace rather than shift the source of sovereignty to it, which often had bureaucratic connotations.

In both cases, parliamentarism did not seem to help preserve the Russian and Qing Empires. Furthermore, after their collapse, pluralistic parliaments were established only for brief moments, giving way to nominal representative institutions

under dominant political parties – the Bolsheviks and the Guomindang, respectively. It was the parties which were supposed to be at the core of political and other modernization. Even though the one-party regimes were formalized, the new elites still viewed parliaments, albeit nominal, as important markers of a modern state.

## Notes

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- 49 Henry Wheaton [Huidun 惠頓], *Wanguo gongfa* 萬國公法, trans. William Alexander Parsons Martin [Ding Weiliang 丁韪良] (Beijing: Chongshiguan, Tongzhi 3 [1864]), *passim*.
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- 52 On the *Shenbao* debates, see Rudolf G. Wagner, “The Free Flow of Communication between High and Low: The Shenbao as Platform for Yangwu Discussions on Political Reform 1872–1895,” *T’oung Pao* 104, no. 1–2 (2018): 116–188. On the continuation of the debates by literati, see Onogawa Hidemi 小野川秀美, *Shinmatsu seiji shisō kenkyū* 清末政治思想研究 (Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1984), 52–85; and Lloyd Eastman, “Political Reformism in China before the Sino-Japanese War,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 27, no. 4 (1968): 695–710.
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- 67 *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, October 27, 1905: 2.
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