

# The 1911 Revolution

## A. Causes

### 1. Internal decay of the Qing government

#### a. administrative inefficiency

- few Manzu emperors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were capable rulers
- as a result, corruption remained unchecked; inefficient administration still existed; and low morale of the troops was also easy to be found
- so, many Chinese lost the confidence in the ability of the Manzu to rule China

#### b. repeatedly military defeats

- several foreign defeats and heavy indemnities made China economic hardship
- e.g. i/ defeat in the First Anglo-Chinese War (1842)  
ii/ defeat in the Second Anglo-Chinese War (1860)  
iii/ defeat in the Sino-French War (1885)  
iv/ defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (1895)  
v/ defeat in the Eight- Power-Expedition (1901)
- all these showed the weaknesses of the Qing Court and the Manzu was unable to save China
- people's livelihood was deeply affected
- they lost confidence in Manzu rule

### 2. The role of Cixi

#### a. Obstacle to reform

- Cixi opposed reforms blindly, thus this led to the failure of the Self-strengthening Movement and the Hundred Days' Reform, thus people thought that only revolution could save China

#### b. Cixi's blind reaction to the West

- the Boxer Uprising was a good example
- her attitude made people lose confidence in the ability of the Manzu to govern. So people gave their support to the revolutionaries

#### c. The Late Qing Reform

- Cixi was not sincere in the reform because she only wanted to make use of it pacify the Chinese and centralize power, so thus to prolong the Qing rule
- thus, the Late Qing Reform only served to speed up the collapse of the dynasty

#### d. Maladministration under Cixi

- under her, corruption was unchecked and she set a bad example for the officials
- e.g. she used part of the funds for the self-strengthening Movement to build her Summer Palace

3. Political decentralization

- a. provincialism or regionalism has been started since the Taiping Rebellion because the provincial leaders organized and financed the local armies, such as Li Hong-zhang's Huai army and Zeng Guofan's Hunan army
- b. thus, the local armies were only loyal to these provincial leaders
- c. regionalism developed continually as viewed from Yuan Shikai's Beiyang New Army
- d. With the support of local army, provincial leaders became more decentralized
- e. so, when the 1911 revolution broke out, many provincial leaders declared their independence
- f. and thus, the 1911 Chinese Revolution could succeed within a short period of time

4. Effects of the Late Qing Reform

- a. the reform was insincere, it disappointed many Chinese who were ready to overthrow the Qing Dynasty
- b. the Reform itself weakened the dynastic rule:

<b>Reform</b>	<b>Bad effects on the dynasty</b>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. sent students abroad especially Japan               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. made them easy to meet with the western ideas which was always reactionary, such as nationalism and liberalism</li> <li>b. Japan was China's revolutionary centre, so the intellectuals could be easily contact with the revolutionaries, such as Sun Yixian and Huang Xing</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. abolished civil service examination               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. western knowledge and subjects were introduced</li> <li>b. the intellectuals became more critical</li> <li>c. it was danger to dynastic rule because the court could not use the education to control the mind of people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New Army was founded under the leadership of Yuan Shikai:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the new army was only loyal to Yuan</li> <li>b. although the new army was trained on western model, they did not obey the court</li> <li>c. so when the revolution broke out, the court armies could not meet the enemies</li> <li>d. even the revolutionary needed the help of Yuan in overthrowing the Qing Dynasty</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Constitutional Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the provincial and national assmblies could not have real power</li> <li>2. the procrastination of Cixi to set up a parliament in China made many Chinese disappointed</li> <li>3. the Royal Cabinet was under the Manzu control</li> <li>4. so, the Chinese realized that the political reform was to strengthen the Manzu rule only</li> </ul>

## 5. Natural Disasters

- a) China was constantly affected by floods and droughts  
e.g. Hunan, Shandong, Hubei, Guangxi, Changjiang Valley and Yellow River
- b) but relief work was not properly carried out and people suffered from hunger
- c) Many people then joined the revolutionaries

## 6. Western impact

- a) China has signed series of unequal treaties with the Westerners, as a result:
  - they had harmful effects on China's industrial developments and the level of unemployment remained high because foreigners could build factories in China and the foreign goods competed with local goods
  - people then put the blame on the government for the failure to resist foreign aggression

## 7. Sun Yixian's contribution to the revolution

- early activities:
  - Nov, 1894 - set up Xingzhonghui in Honolulu, aimed at expelling the Manchu and restoring Chinese rule
  - Oct, 1895, - started the first uprising in Guangzhou but failed, Sun then went to H.K., Japan, Honolulu and London to promote revolutionary ideas and he formulated his political ideas during this period and raised the fund
  - London Kidnap : when Sun went to London, he was kidnapped by some Manchu and was imprisoned in the Chinese legation, he was saved by his former teacher, Dr. Cantlie. Sun then stayed in Europe for 2 years, developed his Three People's Principles

### a) Developing and spreading revolutionary ideologies

#### i/ he founded the Three People's Principles:

- Sun was influenced by Lincoln and Henry George (Lincoln: Government of , by and for the people)
- the Principles were: Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism
- They were first made public in 1897
- They became the principles of Tongmenghui

#### ii/ Without the principles, the revolutionaries could not have a clear guidelines and objectives for their activities

### b) Founding anti-Manchu societies

- i/ Sun established the first anti-Manchu society: Xingzhonghui (1894)
- ii/ meanwhile, there were too many anti-Manchu societies, but there was no unity among them, which led to the failure of uprisings
- iii/ Knowing the importance of unity among all these societies, Sun formed Tongmenghui in 1905 in Tokyo, combining the strength of all anti-Manchu societies together
- iv/ From then onwards, a united and well-organized anti-Manchu society was founded, which made the revolutionary activities more effective

- v/ Tongmenghui Manifesto:
  - expelling the Tartars
  - restoring the Chinese rule
  - establishing the Republic
  - equalization of landownership
- vi/ How to achieve the above aims: (*by 3 stages*)
  - military government for 3 years (1<sup>st</sup> stage)
  - to last for 6 years during this period, the military government would give away its power to the people (2<sup>nd</sup> stage)
  - after 9 years, the military government would be replaced by a constitutional government (3<sup>rd</sup> stage)

c) Enlisting popular support

- i/ Knowing the financial support was very important, Dr.Sun turned to the overseas Chinese because they had economic power
- ii/ Without military support, uprisings were difficult to succeed, so Dr.Sun also tried to win the support of New Army
- iii/ in order to promote the nationalist idea to overthrow Manzu, Dr. Sun needed the support of intellectuals, especially the returned students because they were trained with western learning and their nationalist feeling ran higher than those of native Chinese
- iv/ So, Dr.Sun traveled through Japan, Southeast Asia, the United States Europe to:
  - raise funds for revolutionary movement
  - enlist support among the overseas Chinese
- v/ Dr. Sun even published newspaper (*Min pao*) to spread his revolutionary ideas

d) Organizing anti-Manzu uprisings

- i/ Dr. Sun organized 8 uprisings within the period from 1907 to 1911
- ii/ But all these attempts were fail
- iii/ The most tragic one was Yellow Flowers Hill Revolt in Guangzhou (April, 1911)
- iv/ although failed, the revolutionaries learnt the lessons:
  - it would be better to have support from the army, so the revolutionaries decided to infiltrate the New Army stationed at the 3 cities of Wuhan because it was at the centre of China, which would be available to the revolutionaries
  - the revolutionary activities should be shifted from the coastal areas to central China. Capturing the Changjiang Valley meant the cutting the dynasty into 2 parts

8. The Railway Problem (the immediate cause)

- a) railway building was carried out by provincial authorities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- b) by the Late Qing Reform, the Qing court decided to nationalize the railway lines because:
  - to control local authorities
  - to gain revenue

- c) this was strongly opposed by the provincial authorities especially in Sichuan because the gentry, landowners and merchants had invested a lot of money in building the proposed Huguang Railway
- d) at Sichuan, the dispute gave birth to Railway Protection Societies, and led to the Qingdu Massacre. This quickly led to nation-wide anger and revolts
- e) the government decided to suppress this by force, such policy of oppression intensified the anti-Manzu feeling

## ***B. The Course***

### 1. The Wuchang Revolt (*Double-Tenth Revolution*)

- a) an uprising was planned on 16 Oct., 1911
- b) on 9 Oct., 1911, a bomb was exploded accidentally at Hankou in the Russian settlement. A name list of revolutionaries, which included the names of soldiers and officers was discovered
- c) to save themselves, the officers carried out the uprising earlier
- d) thus, an uprising took place in Wuchang on 10 Oct., 1911
- e) Though the Double Tenth Revolution was unplanned and disorganized, it succeeded.
- f) This was due to the flight of the Governor-General, Suicheng and his military commander Zhang Biao
- g) Meanwhile, Sun was not in China, he was in the U.S.
- h) It was Li Yuanhong, the assistant commander of the New Army, led the revolution

### 2. Recall of Yuan Shikai

- a) after the Double Tenth Revolution, 15 provinces declared independence, except some in the north
- b) the Qing court decided to recall Yuan Shikai to suppress the revolution because of his military power
- c) but Yuan Shikai did not suppress the revolution as he wanted to take full advantage of the situation

### 3. The founding of the Republic

- a) 25, Dec., 1911, Sun returned to China, he was chosen by the representatives from the independent provinces as provisional president
- b) LI Yuanhong was chosen as provisional vice-president
- c) 1 Jan., 1912, the Republic was set up at Nanjing
- d) Later, Sun negotiated with Yuan Shikai that he could bring about the abdication of Puyi
- e) 12, Feb., 1912, the Manzu Emperor abdicated so the Qing Dynasty came to an end
- f) Yuan Shikai then became the Provisional President of the Republic. Yuan was inaugurated in Beijing because he had power in Beijing and Beijing became the capital of China

## ***C. Significance***

### 1. End to the dynastic system

- a) the revolution ended the Manzu dynasty
- b) it also meant that it ended the long-lasting dynastic system which existed for more than 2000 years
- c) a new form of government , republic replaced the old; it was a milestone in Chinese history

2. End to the alien rule
  - a) ending the Manzu dynasty meant the end of alien rule
  - b) since 1644, China was under the Manzu rule; but after 1911 revolution, it was the Chinese who led the revolution to overthrow the alien rule and thus recover the Chinese rule
  
3. The failure of democracy
  - a) real democracy could not be established although there was a republican government
  - b) little attention was paid to the national reconstruction politically
  - c) Later, Dr. Sun even gave concession to Yuan who ignored the constitution, became the dictator and even tried to restore the monarchy
  - d) it was a government totally controlled by Yuan Shikai
  - e) a government “of the people, by the people and for the people” had not been set up after the overthrow of the dynasty
  
4. The lack of social improvement, China still remained weak
  - a) Great emphasis was paid to the overthrowing of the Manzu Dynasty
  - b) Little attention was paid to the improvement of people’s livelihood
  - c) there was no any social reform to improve people’s living
  - d) so, China still remained weak
  
5. Increased foreign aggression
  - a) although Manzu Dynasty was overthrown, unequal treaties signed with the foreign powers still existed
  - b) Owing to the ambition of Yuan, China once again accepted the Twenty-One Demands presented by Japan
  - c) It proved that the foreign aggression has not yet been solved

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