THE CHINESE REVOLUTION OF 1911

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OVERVIEW

• The Chinese Revolution of 1911 or Xinhai Revolution ended Chinese imperial rule and established the Republic of China. The citizens of the Qing dynasty revolted against and overthrew the imperial government and established the republic.
TIMELINE

1840 First Opium War

1851 Taiping Rebellion

1856-1860 Second Opium War

1898 Empress Cixi tries to stop reforms

1900 Boxer Rebellion

1911 Wuchang Uprising

1911-1912 Xinhai Revolution

1912 Abdication of last Qing emperor

1913 Republicans establish Nationalist Party

1915 Yuan Shikai declares himself emperor

1916 Yuan Shikai dies

1928 Nationalist Party unites China
EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE REVOLUTION

• Opium Wars
  – Opened China to Western influences
  – Weakened the reputation of the dynasty
  – Caused social unrest within the dynasty

• Boxer Rebellion
  – Movement against missionaries and foreign presence
  – Further weakened dynasty

• Taiping Rebellion
  – Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (Christian group) fought Manchu government
  – Further weakened Chinese reputation and influence
EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE REVOLUTION (CONTINUED)

- 1898
- Empress Cixi and her faction tried to stop reforms by getting rid of rebels (kicking them out of China) after Taiping Rebellion (led by Hong Xiuquan).
- Nephew imprisoned in Forbidden City.
SECRET SOCIETIES

- Examples: the Triads, the Society of Elders and Brothers, Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists.
- Failed due to lack of coordination/resources.
- Showed weakness of the dynasty and unrest amongst the citizens.
INCREASING SOCIAL UNREST

• New reforms that failed to ease social unrest
  – Scholar-gentry sons wanted Western-educated leaders who wanted reforms for China.
  – End of civil examinations based on Confucianism
  – Foundation of New Army (organized and equipped along Western lines)
• Became involved with more secret societies
• Foreign presence led to mass protests
CHINESE REVOLUTION OF 1911

• Young rebels chopped off their ponytails (called “queues”) as an act of defiance.
• Secret society uprisings, mutinies, and student demonstrations.
• Wuchang Uprising
  – Began after an accidental bomb explosion in Hankou, Hubei province
  – Revolutionaries realized that the government officials investigating the explosion would soon track them down, so they seized Wuhan on October 10 (official start of revolution)
CHINESE REVOLUTION OF 1911

• Revolutions quickly spread throughout China.
• A cease fire was called in December because foreign powers were worried about trade, then a provisional government was established and Sun Yat-Sen was elected president.
• After cease fire, the Abdication of Puyi on February 12, 1912 marked the end of rebellion.
END OF QING DYNASTY

• Feb 1912.
• Puyi, the 6 year old emperor, was deposed.
• Puyi retained his imperial title, but had no power.
• Provincial lords wanted to establish a republican government.
• China had to find a new leader.
• A republic was established.
• Regional warlords, a student alliance, middle-class politicians, and secret societies all wanted to rule China.
• In the end, Sun Yat-Sen was elected to be the first president of the Republic of China.
SUN YAT-SEN

• Inspiring revolutionary, advocate for rebellion.
• Western-educated, middle class politician.
• Three People’s Principles: nationalism, democracy, and “people’s livelihood”.
• Led the Revolutionary Alliance (Tongmeng Hui).
SUN YAT-SEN

- His party organized revolutions before 1911, but all had been suppressed.
- Was elected to be president of the republic.
- Gave up presidency for Yuan Shikai in 1912.
- After Yuan Shikai’s death, it took Sun Yat-Sen’s party, now called Guomindang (Nationalist Party of China), several years to regain enough power to unite China.
YUAN SHIKAI

• Wanted to take Qing throne and create a new dynasty.
• Led a group of warlords.
• Negotiated the abdication of Puyi.
• Tried to become emperor even after Revolutionary Alliance tried to remove him from power.
• Declared himself emperor as China was slipping into warlordism.
• Died 1916.
Japan’s Involvement

• Japan took German territory in China.
• Gave Yuan’s government Twenty One Demands.
• Yuan neither accepted nor rejected them.
• In 1916, Yuan was forced to resign.
SOURCES


