

History Revolutions: China Teach Yourself Series

Topic 3: Trigger factors that contributed to the revolution

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SAMPLE

Trigger factors that contributed to the revolution

Revolutions are the great disjuncture of modern times and mark deliberate attempts at new directions. They share the common aim of breaking with the past by destroying the regimes and societies that engender them and embarking on a program of political and social transformation. As processes of dramatically accelerated social change, revolutions have a profound impact on the country in which they occur, as well as important international repercussions.

As revolutions involve destruction and construction, dispossession and liberation, they polarise society and unleash civil war and counter-revolution, making survival and consolidation of the revolution the principal concern of the revolutionary state. In defence of the revolution, under attack from within and without, revolutionary governments often deploy armed forces and institute policies of terror and repression. The process of revolution concludes when a point of stability has been reached and a viable revolutionary settlement made.

How to use this resource

This topic relates to Area of Study 1 of the Chinese Revolution between 1912 and 1949. Outcome 1, shown below, details what students are expected to expertly know in the development of the revolution. This outcome will need to be demonstrated by students in School Assessed Coursework tasks and in the History Revolutions end-of-year examination.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the causes of revolution, and evaluate the contribution of significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on knowledge and related skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Importantly, you should use your text book and a variety of other sources to answer the questions in this topic. Your answers should be extensive, using the number of lines provided as a guide to respond. Within your responses you should include key evidence within your explanation. This will give you some of the skills you will need to complete the History Revolutions end-of-year examination and School Assessed Coursework tasks which require, for the most part, precision in extended written responses.

The sample responses that are provided at the end of the topic questions are not unique. They are deliberately quite general in order to cover a wider variety of information that students may produce during the course of their investigation. You should not look to the sample answers to judge yourself in a right or wrong type of context but use them to give a guide to your understanding of the concepts explored.

Economic factors that contributed to the Revolution

As it appears in Units 3 & 4

You should use these questions to gain an understanding of the economic factors that contributed to the development of the Revolution in China. You should obtain an understanding as to how these economic factors contributed to the downfall of the Nationalist regime by 1949.

The Nationalist regime had various issues with the management of the Chinese economy after 1927. This not only left the Nationalists economically weak but also caused resentment amongst Chinese who had traditionally supported the regime. Added to this, the economy provided a weight around the neck of the old regime, something that revolutionary groups like the Communists did not have to manage before they came to power.

Problems with the economy should not be looked upon in isolation but viewed in conjunction with key events, movements, ideas and revolutionary leaders and how their interaction led to the development of the revolution both in the short term and the long term.

Review Questions

1.
 - a. How did economic factors contribute to the demise of the rulers prior to 1927 in China?

b. How did economic factors contribute to the demise of the Nationalist regime in China between 1927 and 1934?

SAMPLE

Solutions to Review Questions

1.

a.

- The Boxer protocol was the treaty signed and imposed on the Qing in response to their support for the failed Boxer Uprising. It imposed economic and political sanctions on the Qing.
- The Qing were forced to pay reparations of 340 million taels and which put huge economic pressure on the government which was already struggling to deal with a weak economy.
- The Qing was left economically bankrupt. This meant they were unable to fund modernisation programs effectively such as that of modernising the armed forces to eventually fight off the foreigners.
- The Railways in China were built and owed by foreign companies, which were a constant source of contention amongst Chinese society. The Qing had little if any determination on how it was used and by whom. Most importantly, the Qing gained no revenue from the railway system.
- The Recovery was an attempt at first by local investors to buy back the railways from foreigners and then by the Qing government to nationalise the railways.
- The Qing needed to acquire large loans from foreign banks to nationalise the railways in the recovery scheme.
- The Qing officially nationalised the railways on the 9th May 1911 but in affect had only acquired very large loans from foreigners in order to pay the foreigners. The railways would remain in the ownership of the foreigners until the loan was paid off.
- These economic problems were not effectively dealt with by the Yuan government or Warlord rulers prior to 1927.

b.

- The Nationalists failed to deal with many of the economic issues left to them by previous regimes (see above)
- The economy of China was weak. The Nationalists found it difficult to manage the economy in a period where they had to deal with invasion by the Japanese, pursuit of the Communists, internal corruption and the continuation of foreign concessions. The Nationalists attempted to print money to alleviate economic difficulties but this only created a hyperinflation crisis and this created resentment amongst the middle-classes, which was the base of Nationalist support. Many previous supporters of the Nationalist regime lost faith in the regime based on this inability to protect the economy.

2.

- Foreign concession areas were areas within China, usually in cities and ports, that foreign powers ceded for themselves. In these areas foreign laws would override Chinese law. This was done in order for foreign powers to have total control of trade and access to Chinese raw materials. The Qing was unable to resist this foreign imposition on Chinese territory.

- They were usually created as punishment for something the Qing had done in an attempt to overthrow the foreigners and was a point of great humiliation for the Chinese

3.

- Chiang was a popular leader up to 1928, due to his association with Sun Yat-sen, the father of revolution. He was a popular military leader who was respected by his troops and was responsible for modernising the Guomindang armed forces.
- Chiang was anti-communist which made him popular amongst the middle-class and the right wing of the Guomindang. Sun Yat-sen's *three principles of the people* was an ideology that appealed to ordinary Chinese. The warlords really didn't follow or implement ideology that meant that Chiang was able to appeal to the masses through ideas by 1928.
- China was fragmented during the warlord era which presented a situation where he was able to defeat the warlords militarily one by one as they were not allied. Chiang also did deals with warlord commanders in exchange for them to keep some hold on power in regional areas under a new Nationalist government.

4.

- Chiang and Sun were related through marriage. Chiang was married to Sun's sister in-law Soong Meiling. This gave Chiang a large amount of credibility. Prior to this, Chiang had established himself as a trusted ally of Sun and saved him from a serious assassination attempt. Sun trusted Chiang to run the Huangpu Military Academy, which was the basis for the training of a modern Guomindang military, which would take on the warlords in with the First United Front by 1928.

5.

- The Japanese invaded Manchuria on the 18th of September 1931. The Nationalists were far inferior to the Japanese forces so appealed to the League of Nations for assistance.
- On 18th February 1932 Japan declared Manchuria's independence from China renaming it Manchukuo.
- Last Qing Emperor Pu Yi was appointed as head of the puppet state. By 1933 with the League of Nations condemned Japan but fell short of constructively getting involved, Chiang Kai-shek signed an agreement recognising Japanese rights in Manchuria.
- By 1937, the Japanese had also ceded several northern provinces including Shandong and Hubei.
- On the 7th July 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China after an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge on the outskirts of Beijing. The Japanese quickly took control of most of the eastern seaboard of China. Their advance was devastating for the Chinese population as major cities of Shanghai and Beijing fell. The Nationalist capital of Nanjing fell with the deaths of an estimated 300,000 civilians.
- The Japanese set up a puppet government in the occupied territories under the leadership of former Guomindang power seeker Wang Jing-wei.
- The Nationalists, who had entered into a Second United Front with the Communists, moved inland and set up a new political capital at Chongqing. The status quo would continue until the sudden surrender of the Japanese after the atomic bombing of Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.