

The 1911 revolution: china

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



The 1911 Revolution was a revolution that overthrew China's last imperial dynasty - the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China. The revolution ceased with the abdication of Puyi, marking the end of 2,000 years of imperial rule and the beginning of China's republic epoch with Sun Yatsen, as the first president of the new republic. The revolution in many ways developed China, such as ending Imperial rule; however some Historians believe the revolution did not develop China, as China did not become the democratic nation that Sun saw as "vital", in order to develop China politically.

The 1911 revolution developed China in many ways, bringing down the Manchu Dynasty was most important. This end to 2,000 years of Imperial rule was most significant, as it was the Manchu's, who were seen as the roadblock to reform and the development of China. Throughout Chinese history, old dynasties had been overthrown or replaced by new dynasties. However the 1911 revolution was the first to cause the downfall of a monarchy entirely and attempt to extend the ideas of democracy and human rights throughout China, this had never been done so before.

Secondly, the 1911 Revolution made positive contributions to the establishment of the Chinese national community. Once the Qing Dynasty collapsed, the revolutionaries embraced the equality of all ethnic groups, emphasised the removal of obstacles among different ethnic groups and promoted ethnic harmony. Sun Y made clear in the "Declaration of Provisional President," "The essential foundation of a state is its people. Integrating the territories inhabited by the Han, Manchu, Mongolians, Hui and Tibetans into one state is to unify the Han, Manchu, Mongolians, Hui and

<https://assignbuster.com/the-1911-revolution-china/>

Tibetans into one nation. This is the union of nation.” – Keay . There were no concepts in China’s previous feudal dynasties that were of such a great significance to the development of the Chinese nation. The greater recognition of equality and the acceptance of the diverse cultures in Chinese society, clearly showed the Chinese society was becoming more liberal, broad minded and more experimental, which can be seen in later events such as the 4th May Movement.

However many Historians claim that the 1911 Revolution did not develop China. Indeed, the reforms set in place by the new government were not nearly as “ sweeping as the revolutionary rhetoric had intended” as Fenby claims. This is true, as many of Sun Yatsen’s radical ideas were not accepted, the most important idea that wasn’t implemented was the transformation to a democratic society and a representative government , which Sun “ saw as vital if China was to modernise and join with the western powers” as Lynch claims. This shows the Revolution didn’t develop China, because a dictator remained, Yuan Shikai, who was leading a weak and disunified republic, very similar to that of the Qing dynasty. The transition to democracy was seen by many historians such as Mackerras and Lynch to be the key feature to judge whether China had developed as a country or not, however the failure to implement democracy into China was seen as a major failure of the revolution by Historians all across the political spectrum.

Secondly, the majority of the revolutionaries and the protestors committed themselves to the overthrow of the Manchu’s and the theorists of the republic, paid attention to the more critical issue of tackling the socio-

economic problems facing the Chinese people and the 1911 Revolution failed to tackle this. China, consequently remained backward and the Chinese people faced economic hardship. Despite the success of overthrowing the Manchu's , China was still unable to resist foreign aggression. For instance the unequal treaties still existed, in addition the forced acceptance of the Twenty-One Demand (1915) presented by Japan further highlighted the unsolved problem. Indeed the 1911 revolution did not develop China, as China still remained an international joke and failed to strengthen international relations with the Western world , which was crucial , in order for China to advance economically and politically to benefit its people.

Thirdly, the revolution did little to unite the country. China lacked any essence of a strong central government. The central government and the constant factions within , weakened the government and consequently they could not maintain a strong and loyal enough army to compel central authority on the provinces. This lead China to become divided, with the government failing to govern the north of the country, this division lead to the grow of warlordism. Too many historians including Lynch, the Warlord era brought “ terror to the local people”, this is evident with the example of Zhang who brought his way to power in the Shandong province by “ splitting lemons”, this lack of political stability showed China was still backward even after the Revolution of 1911.

In conclusion the 1911 Revolution did not develop China, as the revolutionary and radical ideas of Sun were not followed such as the failure to implement democracy, in addition the geographical size of China needed

a powerful central figure to move China forward into the modern era, however the revolution did not provide this, the revolution provided a “ weak republic” as Lynch claims and the failure to implement the reforms of Sun meant the western powers still did not recognise China as a place of democracy and political stability.