HEAVEN SHATTERED:
The Beiyang Government
1912

HAMUN 44 Background Guide

(The Revolution War in China) No. 2. The Battle of the Su-Ping Gate at Nanking.
A BRUTALLY BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINA

Chinese history can be defined through the dynastic cycle - a process through which a ruler gains the Mandate of Heaven - similar perhaps to the Divine Right of European kings - and founds a new dynasty, uniting the nation of China and overseeing a period of prosperity, population growth, and peace. However, years of prosperity and success breed a culture of decadence and corruption among the Emperor’s court, leaving the ruler unprepared for natural disaster and political upheaval. The incompetence of the Emperor and the chaos caused by disasters eventually lead to the collapse of the dynasty, causing a massive civil war between local warlords until one ruler manages to unite the warring states, thus reclaiming the Mandate of Heaven and restarting the cycle.

Qin Shihuangdi is traditionally considered the first ruler to unite the warring states of China in 220 BCE, founding the turbulent and short-lived Qin dynasty, which began on a process of massive infrastructure projects that would be improved upon by later dynasties. Shihuangdi also oversaw the creation of the imperial bureaucracy, which helped start the process of standardization of writing, measurement, and other commercial ventures. After the death of Qin Shihuangdi, however, the dynasty succumbed to court squabbles and popular revolts - losing the Mandate of Heaven to Liu Bang, who would found the Han Dynasty and proclaim himself Emperor Gaozu in 202 BCE.

The Han dynasty proved to be a golden age for China - ruling for nearly four centuries. The Han era was essential in the development of the centralization of the Chinese state. The old system of warlords paying tribute to the emperor was gradually replaced by central rule and powerless figurehead regional nobility. National minting of coins, the enshrinement of Confucianism as the official state
religion, and numerous technological innovations (such as paper) were all achievements of the Han era.

However, peasant revolts in the second century CE greatly weakened the already-weak Han state, leading to its inevitable loss of the Mandate of Heaven and collapse. The next few centuries saw a revolving door of kingdoms compete for control of all of China, until the success of the Tang Dynasty to do so in the 7th century, proving to be a second golden age of Chinese culture and power. The Tang rulers expanded China’s political control into central Asia, controlling Silk Road trade into Europe, greatly reformined the imperial bureaucracy, and oversaw the development of Chinese fine and literary arts. The bureaucracy, now complete with civil service exams, created a third class of Chinese society - peasants, nobility, and now scholar-gentry – which would continue to be a powerful force in Chinese political life. The Tang dynasty also oversaw the rise and decline of Buddhism in China. The Tang eventually collapsed in the early 10th century to, once again, peasant revolts caused by poor economic conditions.

In their place rose the Song Dynasty, whose reign lasted until 1279. The Song Dynasty saw the growth of Chinese technological innovations - gunpowder weaponry, canal locks, moveable printing type – as well as massive population growth caused by stability and the cultivation of a second, fast-ripening cultivar of
rice. This enormous growth in population led to China’s increased strength as an economic powerhouse, but also presented an administrative challenge for the Dragon Throne: how can you govern the most populous nation in history thus far? The Song emperors decided to increase their reliance on the bureaucracy, which saw the scholar-gentry becoming much greater in size, taking over local governance, and being subject to meritocratic civil-service exams. The Song, however, fell in the 13th century as the Mongol Empire conquered it under the command of Kublai Khan, establishing the Yuan Dynasty.

For decades, the Yuan emperors balanced their Mongolian heritage with the distinctly Chinese character of the empire they ruled. For example, they had dictated that Buddhism had become the state religion, established an ethnicity-based class, as well as attempted to reform the bureaucracy once again - this time trying to remove the meritocratic exams. However, the Yuan Dynasty’s balancing act eventually failed – too Sinicized for their old allies, the Central Asian Mongol khanates, too foreign for their Chinese subjects – and their reign of corruption and ethnic tensions faltered as generally lawlessness plagued the country, along with famine and economic ruin. By the 1360s, the Mongols were expelled from China as the Ming restored native Chinese rule to the Dragon Throne.

The Ming Dynasty ruled over China for nearly three hundred years and established a ruthlessly efficient and orderly bureaucracy, the Three Departments (Secretariat, State Affairs, and Chancellery) and Six Ministries (Personnel, Revenue, Rites, War, Justice, and Public Works) system. The bureaucratic system recalled upon the old Confucian meritocratic civil service examinations and restored many of the older Chinese customs that were thrown out during the Yuan period. Over the Ming period, maritime trade with European powers greatly
increased, and China’s economy continued to grow thanks to massive demand for Chinese goods by foreigners. However, monetary reforms in the Ming empire depended on the inflow of silver in exchange for those exports, and massive deflation resulted when silver imports stopped. This deflation spiraled into disaster for the Ming emperors in the mid 17th century when disease, natural disaster, and crop failure struck the country, and eventually the dynasty succumbed to peasant revolts and eventually foreign invaders in the form of the Manchu took control of China as the Qing dynasty.

The Manchu clans which had conquered China originated in what is now totally coincidentally called Manchuria, the area in the northeastern part of modern China (called the “Three Northwestern Provinces” by the Manchu administration). The Manchu worked with both Mongol nomads in the north of the old Ming empire as well as with disaffected ethnic Chinese who had joined their forces. Although most of the highest ranks of Qing government and military administration were Manchus, most of the middle and lower bureaucracy remained from Ming rule. By the time of the height of Qing rule, under the Kangxi Emperor in the late 17th century and early 18th century, the empire expanded to meet the borders of modern-day China as well as Mongolia, the Korean peninsula, and parts of far eastern Russia. The Qing Army was, unlike those of previous dynasties, permanently standing. While this generally kept the peace within the heartlands of China, it meant enormous strain on the country’s economic resources, as well as mean that the outer territories of China were left undefended from conflict or invasion. Thus, the Kangxi Emperor looked far to the past and brought back the system of regional warlords with relative autonomy.
and responsibility for defense of hinterlands. However, the prosperity and peace of the Kangxi era would not last.

THE LATE QING STATE

By the 19th century, the Qing Empire was ripe for decline and upheaval. Enormous population growth meant that China grew from about 150 million at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty to around 300 million in the late 18th century, and then onwards to 430 million in 1850. This massive growth meant that China’s food production was strained. While previous eras of growth were complemented by innovations in agriculture – whether new irrigation technologies, newer strains of rice, or new crops resulting from the Columbian Exchange – but the growth of the later Qing era instead saw diminishing returns from farming regions. Additionally, population growth also meant rural areas became even more crowded.

This population growth and rural overcrowding led to an increase in urbanization and in artisan industry – the Qing Empire continued to grow as an export powerhouse, by sheer force of quantity. And of course, an export economy depended greatly on foreign trade, which let to growth, both literally and in importance, of the city of Canton (now known as Guangzhou) in the south of China, along the Pearl River. In addition to artisan goods, Canton was a massive shipping port for silks and tea, which was of great interest for
European powers. However, the Chinese populace had little demand for European goods, either out of lack of need or purchasing power. There was one good that Europeans could provide the Chinese, just like in Ming times: silver. However, silver was a much more limited and valuable resource that Europeans were willing to trade away. In order to prevent the aggregation of European silver in China, the British East India Company decided to undertake the strategy of trading opium – an extremely addictive opiate narcotic – in order to recover their lost silver.

Of course, the Chinese administration was not very grateful for the ever-increasing presence of opium within their borders; reluctant to work with the same British merchants who were importing opium into China and legalize and tax opium, the Emperor decided instead to outright prohibit all trade of the addictive substance into the country. Incensed by this action, the British declared war on the Qing, and easily dispatched the weakened empire, in the war that has come to be known as the First Opium War. The superior navy of the British had defeated the Chinese and enforced the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, the first real step in the decline of the Empire. The Qing had to cede the
island of Hong Kong to the British and open five ports for trade, as well as indemnities for confiscated opium. Ironically, the Treaty of Nanking did nothing to resolve the legal status of the drug.

Other nations followed in Britain's footsteps in signing these so-called unequal treaties with the Qing Empire - the United States, Russia, France, Portugal, Japan – forcing the Chinese to give them access to treaty ports. These ports – Canton, Amoy, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai – would give imperial powers much more influence over Chinese policy. Despite these treaties, the opium trade continued to grow, mostly through informal agreements and Chinese authorities being bribed to turn the other way. In short, the Qing failed to curb the importation of opium yet also managed to give up control of their most important ports.

The second important step in the overarching decline of the Qing was the Taiping Rebellion, a massive civil that destabilized the country for nearly fifteen years beginning in 1850. The Taiping were a major religious movement formed in the first half of the 19th century integrating some aspects of Chinese traditional beliefs and Christianity led by Hong Xiuquan, a man who believed himself to be the brother of Jesus Christ. While the details of the Taiping ideology are not so important, they sought to implement a revolutionary change in Chinese society: the destruction of the class system, equality (but rigid separateness) between the sexes, and reforming the civil service exams to reflect biblical beliefs rather than Confucian ones. The war between the Taiping “Heavenly Kingdom” (which was centred in south-eastern China around the city of Nanking) and the Qing forces broke into an all-out total war; estimates put civilian casualties of the civil war at 20 to 30 million. The massive loss of life, as well as destruction of China’s
infrastructure meant that the Qing, although victorious against the Taiping, were severely weakened – this seems like a common occurrence in the late Qing era.

Following this destructive war, the Qing seemed to be more aware of their weakness in comparison to European powers. The Second Opium War occurred concurrently with the Taiping rebellion. Predictably, the Chinese failed against the combined forces of the British and French. In 1858, the Qing were forced to sign the Treaty of Tianjin, which finally accomplished the goal of legalizing opium – as well as opening eleven more treaty ports and permitting Christian missionaries.

The last few decades of the 19th century were disaster after disaster for the Qing. From 1861 onwards, the Qing were officially ruled by a succession of young emperors, the Tongzhi and Guangxu Emperors. However, all real power rested with the widows of the Xianfeng Emperor, the Empresses Dowager Cian and Cixi. The two Empresses initially shared power, until Cixi installed the Guangxu Emperor as the ruler of China and assumed full control of the empire.

During her reign, disastrous events such as the Tianjin massacre, where French Catholic priests and nuns were murdered, continued to harm the Qing government’s reputation overseas – foreign powers grew increasingly skeptical of the Qing administration’s ability or desire to uphold their interests. Later, in a second Treaty of Tianjin, the Qing officially gave up Indochina to France. Qing-Japanese relations continued to sour into the 1890s over the issue of Korea, officially a vassal of China but an attractive target for the first step for Japanese imperialism, culminating in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894. Japan, having adapted much more readily and successfully to European technology than the Qing, rather easily defeated their adversaries. The loss of Korea as a vassal state was a major
psychological loss for the Chinese population and marked the beginning of the very rapid decline in the final fifteen years of the Qing Empire.

By 1899, the horrendous mismanagement of the Cixi administration, continued international embarrassments and defeats, and the continued presence of European influence – in the form of both colonial administrations and Christian missionaries – led to a boiling point in anti-European and nationalist sentiment within the Chinese Empire. The movement, nicknamed the Boxers by European as many of its members were practitioners of kung fu (then known in Europe as “Chinese boxing”), formulated themselves on the ideas of possession by supernatural forces into invulnerability in fighting, as well as prophesying that millions of divine soldiers will come to their assistance in ridding China of Europeans – once again, an attempt of justifying the Mandate of Heaven’s assistance in the dynastic cycle and influence within current events. The Boxer movement wasn’t monolithic, however, as regional branches concerned themselves with different issues, with some choosing to focus on restoring political strength to the Qing against foreign imperialists, while other believed a return to traditional Confucian virtues and principle was more important.

The Boxer movement was initially unorganized as well, and disjointed attacks on missionaries were common, like the 1897 Juye Incident, in which two German missionaries were killed by a Boxer-associated gang. Typically, these attacks resulted in diplomatic and military retaliation by Europeans. A German fleet occupied the coastal city of Jiaozhou in northern China, which was then conceded by the Chinese to be under full control of Germany. Other European powers and Japan also demanded their own concessions – an upgraded form of the treaty ports forced on China half a century earlier – and the Chinese had no
choice but to comply. This, of course, greatly angered many living within China, and only increased sympathy and support for the Boxer movement. At this moment, it seemed that the Qing were willingly signing away their power to greedy foreign powers hungry to carve up the Chinese empire, and that the Boxers were the only forces willing and capable to defend China from utter destruction.

The violence of the very late 1890s broke out into complete war in 1900, when thousands of Boxers attacked the International Legation within Beijing. Europeans scrambled to assemble their forces and rebuff the attacking Boxers. The Boxer threat united the foreign powers present within China - the British, French, Americans, Italians, Russians, Austro-Hungarians, Germans, and Japanese – who worked together, under “humanitarian” pretenses to invade and defeat the Boxers. Like the Taiping Rebellion, the Boxer Rebellion came at a great human, and especially civilian, cost, with tens of thousands of Chinese Christians massacred by the Boxers and thousands of Chinese civilians accused of being Boxers or Boxer sympathizers killed by the 50,000 foreign troops in the Eight-Nation Alliance army. The foreigners, following the occupation of the entire city of Beijing, engaged in looting across the city, including the Forbidden City, which resulted in thousands of Chinese cultural artifacts being stolen and shipped to Europe. At the end of the war in 1901, the Alliance imposed upon China the Boxer Protocol, another majorly unfavorable treaty that placed the blame for the Boxers’ actions solely on the Qing government. The primary punishment imposed on the Qing was a massive war reparation of nearly 18,000 tons of silver, worth at the time over $330 million (or, over $9.5 billion in today’s money), to be distributed between the various
occupying powers in China. Additionally, China was forbidden to import any arms or materials for arms manufacturing, the execution, imprisonment, or deportation of known Boxers and government officials sympathetic to the Boxer movement, and permission for foreign powers to station troops in their respective concessions.

In a desperate attempt to save the Qing state, Empress Dowager Cixi sought to implement some form of modernizing reform of the central administration. She sought suggestions for reform from the governors of the provinces. These “New Policies” resulted in the creation of a (very rudimentary) national education system and the abolition of the civil service examination (which would be replaced by Westernized equivalents for collegiate degrees). Yuan Shikai, who had risen to prominence when he (as the Governor of the province of Shandong) and the governors of 8 other provinces in southeastern China refused to obey the orders of their superiors in declaring war on the foreign powers during the Boxer war (forming the Mutual Protection of Southeast China), continued to rise in power and influence as he held considerable sway with the Empress Dowager. The
military was also reformed, adopting Western-style organization and tactics and abandoning the Banner and Green Standard armies that had been employed since the inception of Qing control of China. This *New Army* was ideally constructed of well-trained young men and fiercely loyal to the government; in reality, the New Army consisted mostly of washed-up former Green Standard Army soldiers as well as poor peasants and local militias, with little loyalty to the throne. Even so, this was seen as a threat to the power of local governors, who attempted to sabotage the Army through economic means - so much so that the government only had 20 division of the planned 36 battle-ready in 1911.

However, the death of the Guangxu Emperor and the Empress Dowager Cixi in late 1908 continued to accelerate the death of the Qing state; as the Guangxu Emperor was childless, his two-year-old nephew Pu-yi was selected as the next Emperor, with the Xuantong Emperor’s, as he was called, father, the Prince Chun, serving as his regent. The Prince Chun reluctantly complied with many of the reforms of the past five years, including major reforms within the central administration, which saw preparations for a semi-constitutional system, the establishment of new military administration offices separate from military command offices, and the creation of new administrative offices such as Education, Police, Trade, postal services, and Justice. The Qing dynasty had even gone so far as to create a system of (mostly figurehead) legislative assemblies and modern courts. Voting rights were incredibly strict; the only potential voters were male and either wealthy, well-educated, or a public servants or teachers. The assembly was only to discuss suggestions for reforms, changes to taxations, revisions to local statutes, and resolutions to lower-level local disputes. The National Assembly was constituted by 100 royal appointees and 100 elected
representatives (elected by provincial assemblies and not by the general electorate.) The National Assembly had similar responsibilities to provincial assemblies – resolving provincial disputes, addressing taxation and budget, and revising national laws.

The Prince Chun’s challenges continued to grow; as the central administration underwent reforms, fewer and fewer Manchus dominated the administration. The growing presence of ethnic Chinese within the central as well as provincial government meant that resentment and tensions between the imperial house and the government grew. These last-ditch efforts to save the power of the Qing dynasty were just that: last-ditch effort that were unsuccessful at saving the government from collapse.

The Prince Chun, however, didn’t help the survival of Qing either. In 1910, the National Assembly passed reforms that, among other things, demanded the creation of a cabinet with ministers that were responsible to the Assembly. These reforms were refused by the imperial government, and the reforms stopped dead in their tracks. Many believed that successful reform would only result from the violent overthrow of the government – in fact, it was the government’s refusal to cooperate with the Assembly that united the various, previously competing factions of the radical revolutionary democrats. Uprising throughout the country finally convinced the Prince Chun and the rest of the Qing court that accepting the reforms of 1910 is their only real option – it would continue their descent into powerlessness, but it would also maintain their legitimacy as the rulers of China. In 1911, the Prince Chun accepted the demand of the Assembly and proclaimed the cabinet in May. Much to the dismay of the Assembly, the cabinet was composed nearly entirely of ethnic Manchu, and
the imperial family constituted a majority of the cabinet’s members. Yikuang, the Prince Qing and a member of the imperial family, was proclaimed the Prime Minister; of the thirteen appointed ministers in the cabinet, nine were Manchu, seven were members of the Aisin clan (the imperial house), and only four were ethnic Chinese. This disparity only helped justify the beliefs of the revolutionaries that the imperial family was still loyal to the Manchu and was ultimately anti-Chinese in its goals; even moderates such as Yuan Shikai disapproved.

Ultimately, it was the appointment of the so-called Imperial Cabinet and their actions regarding railroads that was the final act of the Qing Dynasty. The cabinet moved to nationalize local railways in a revenue-raising scheme: still having to finance the indemnities from the Boxer rebellion, the Qing administration tried to sell the rights to those nationalized railways to foreign banks and using the revenue from those sales to repay international debts. Predictably, this action only caused further anger among local authorities, who have continually become more and more welcome to the idea of revolution.

**THE XINHAI REVOLUTION**

The Railway Protection Movement was formed in reaction to the nationalization of the railways; the movement had adherents throughout China
but was most prevalent in more rural areas – areas where railroads were constructed rather recently and using local funds. Ultimately, the RPM wished to open up political discussion in the country – to implement true democracy, not just limited constitutionalism – all stemming from an initial disagreement of the balance of power between central and provincial government. In the summer of 1911, the province of Sichuan became embroiled in protest – a popular movement associated with the RPM and led by the local assembly and the gentry. The movement in Sichuan sought to strengthen the position of the provincial government opposed to the central government. The fact that the government nationalized without the consent of the National Assembly. In mid-September, the entire province was in chaos, prompting the Qing to move troop from Hubei to restore order in Sichuan. The movement of troops, however, triggered an uprising in Hubei as well – this one led by peasants and incredibly destructive to local infrastructure.

With two provinces now in flames, the revolutionaries saw an opportunity to strike and proclaim a true republic. Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, was to be the epicenter of the anti-Qing revolution; in Wuchang, the city centre of Wuhan, the revolutionaries organized on the night of October 9th, 1911, when they were discovered by government forces. The revolution seemed to be over before it began, but the revolutionaries were rescued by some revolution-minded troops who had mutinied and seized the local arsenal. This company of troops, in the span of an afternoon, grew to over four thousand, and by the morning of October 11th, the Qing could no longer claim they had command over the Wuchang district. The Xinhai Revolution had begun.
Within the next two months, fifteen provinces had declared their independence from Qing rule, with most following the same pattern of New Army soldiers being sympathetic to the revolution and disenchanted with the empire. Within four months, the Prince Chun was forced by Yuan Shikai to step down as regent and replaced by the Empress Dowager Longyu, who was then, alongside the Xuantong Emperor, forced to abdicate: the Qing Dynasty, after nearly 280 years, was over. And even more dramatically: two thousand years of monarchy in China had been extinguished.

A REPUBLIC, IF YOU CAN KEEP IT

It’s February 15th, 1912. The Qing dynasty is no more – but who will rule China now? The governors of the various provinces and revolutionary leaders prove to be serious contenders, but each can only claim to control at most a single province (or not even that!). Currently, the position of President of the Republic of China sits empty. After all, what even are the powers of the President? The writing of a constitution is one of the National Assembly’s first tasks.

While the newly-established Republic of China provided a massive upheaval in political terms, life for the average Chinese remained relatively unchanged. The period of the early Republic of China saw little change in economic output or outcomes from that of the late Qing dynasty. 75% of the population lived in rural areas and engaged in agricultural practices; the industrial sector of China is still small compared to the output and employment of artisans. For a modern economy, competitive with those of Europe, the U.S., and Japan, massive increases in industrialization and urbanization are necessary. What the best path
forward - direct government investment, foreign investment, or a laissez-faire approach - is unknown, but a choice will have to be made.

Foreign affairs are an incredibly touchy subject – the scars of the Boxer war, as well as the indemnities left to pay, still sting. But isolationism doesn’t seem like an adequate solution. 92 cities exist as “treaty ports” – hotbeds of cultural exchange, foreign presence, as well as potential locations for outbursts of violence. The Japanese outright own Port Arthur, the British Weihaiwei and Hong Kong, the Germans Jiaozhou, and the French Guangzhouwan – but their influence extends much deeper into Chinese territory. Balancing relations between these four powers, as well as the Russian Empire and the United States, is crucial for the survival of a Chinese state.

The spectre of monarchy will undeniably continue to haunt China – but how much of the old societal structure shall be kept? The end of the Qing signified the end of Manchu rule, but how will ethnic minorities – Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan, and Huí (Chinese Muslims), as well as Chinese Christians – be treated? Shall the class system that had served China for millennia be respected or thrown to the wind?

While secret societies, or hui, such as the White Lotus, are long gone, the threats of insurrection, whether originating from unhappy peasants, ambitious warlords, or conniving bureaucrats, are ever-present. The new Republic needs to be able to, first, appease these competing factions, and, second, put down any potential rebellions if it wants to have any legitimacy as the ruling government of China,
both at home and abroad. If you’d like to join the White Lotus Society, send Crisis a note saying, “the White Lotus shall bloom sanguine, my brothers!”

Now, China stands at a crossroads. Four hundred million souls look to you to fulfill the ideals of the Xinhai Revolution and to bring peace, stability, and prosperity to China once more. After all, if you can’t, Heaven must not smile on you.
OUR MAJOR PLAYERS:

Cai E – The Yunnan Clique

Well educated in the arts of politics and war, Cai E first joined the effort to overthrow the Qing Dynasty at the young age of 18. After this insurrection’s failure led to a brief period of exile in Japan, Cai returned to China and rose in the ranks of the military in Guangxi. He did not lose his rebellious, anti-Qing streak and joined the revolutionary secret society known as the Tongmenghui. In 1910, Cai transferred to Yunnan, where, upon the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution a year later, Cai seized power.

With control over the mountainous southern province of Yunnan, Cai controls one of the regions in China richest in natural resources, particularly metals like aluminum and lead. He is known for his support for democracy and his opposition to the ambitions of autocratic figures, although he has earned the friendship of Yang Zengxin as well.

Chen Duxiu – The Communists

Born to a wealthy family in the eastern province of Anhui, Chen Duxiu was educated in the Confucian tradition by his grandfather after his father died. After several years of study in China, Chen received a scholarship to study in Japan, where he first became influenced by socialism. As the Qing Dynasty began to decline in its later years, Chen became a powerful voice decrying the Qing government. It was in this capacity that Chen saw the beginning of the Xinhai Revolution.

One of the foremost political thinkers in all of China, Chen represents the growing strength of left-wing ideologies across the land. This ideology carries with it an opposition to oppression and autocracy. While communism is not yet completely in vogue, continued economic strife may make the rural peasantry and urban workers more open to supporting such an ideology.
Chen Jitang – The Guangdong Army

Chen Jitang rose from the ranks of the common soldiery to both a high military rank as well as control over the province of Guangdong, revolutionizing the province and developing it into one of China’s most productive. His military might has been considerable, with control over hundreds of thousands of troops at points in his career.

Cunning and defensive-minded, Chen holds control over the province of Guangdong, home to the city of Guangzhou. The province has a large population and a prosperous economy, stemming largely from Chen’s development-minded influence.

Duan Qirui – The Anhui Clique

Duan Qirui was born to a military family in Anhui and became a highly skilled artilleryman, even coming to the attention of Yuan Shikai himself. Duan served with distinction in putting down the Boxer Rebellion, growing closer to Yuan in the process and even marrying Yuan’s niece. After the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution, Duan initially supported the loyalist forces, but his loyalty to Yuan Shikai proved overwhelming and he sided with the latter.

Duan’s province of Anhui is fairly populous and contains the noted city of Hefei. Duan also has a sizable degree of political control outside of Anhui stemming from his connections to Yuan Shikai. Although he is indeed loyal to Yuan, he has his own ambitions.

Feng Guozhang – The Zhili Clique

Feng Guozhang was born to humble beginnings in the province of Zhili: his family couldn’t afford his education and, according to legend, Feng was forced to play the violin in shady theatres to make ends meet. After deciding to join the army, Feng steadily rose in the ranks and made key connections, including with Yuan Shikai
himself. After the Xinhai Revolution began, Feng’s loyalty to Yuan Shikai proved decisive.

Feng holds control over the province of Zhili, also known as Hebei, located north of the Yellow River. His connections to Yuan provide him with an ambitious figure seeking his support.

**Feng Yuxiang – The Northwest Army**

Getting his start as a soldier at the tender age of 11, Feng Yuxiang is a military man through and through, using a part of his salary to help out fellow soldiers that were worse off. Eventually, he joined the Beiyang Army of Yuan Shikai. He joined the revolution as soon as it began.

The Northwest Army, or Guominjun, is small but spirited. The Northwest Army maintained ideological unity as well as physical unity. Very welcoming to Western traditions, they were devout Chinese Christians, nationalists, and socialists. They share Sun Yat-sen’s beliefs for a united China and are sympathetic to working with him.

**Li Yuanhong – The Progressive Party**

The son of a Taiping Rebellion veteran, Li Yuanhong is a well-respected military leader. He supported the Railway Protection Movement and speaks fluent English. For these reasons, he was forced at gunpoint to assume a leadership role in the rebellion, which granted the mutineers valuable political credo.

Li currently controls Hubei province, the economic heart of central China. Despite being a leader of the rebel army, he is revered as a talented and effective leader by supporters of Sun and Yuan. However, he is more concerned with his own well-being and safety than any broader political ambition.
Liang Qichao – The Research Clique

Liang Qichao is a true prodigy -- he’s been writing thousand-word essays since he was nine, and he passed his first civil service exam at 11, although his unorthodox ideas about democracy and constitutional monarchy blocked him from reaching a high-level degree. He is an ally of Yuan, but not to a fault, and supports strong civic institutions like a free press and political parties. Liang has supported democratic reforms longer than almost anyone else around and enjoys considerable influence with the more liberal and educated factions despite being closely affiliated with Yuan.

Liang Shiyi – The Communications Clique

Liang was a powerful official in the Qing government, heading up the railway ministry, and later took control of the bureau of communications. An ally of Yuan Shikai, he worked with Yuan as the Xinhai Revolution took place and continued with his connections from his previous position to continue being a major power broker in the early republic.

The Communications Clique was birthed out of the Ministry of Post and Communications. Unlike many of the other cliques, the Communications Clique controlled no territory, but was instead a group of powerful bureaucrats, businessmen, and skilled workers who controlled that Ministry. One of the largest sources of revenue for the government, the Ministry of Post and Communications, and thus the Clique, are crucial to the success of the new Republic.

Lu Yung-ting – The Guangxi Clique

A peasant by birth, Lu Yung-ting rose in prominence through his military service and through participation in some less respectable means. Through the early revolutionary period, in the mid-nineteen-aughts, Lu served the Qing government by suppressing revolutionary uprisings in the province of Guangxi, commanding a rather impressive army of several thousand.
During the Xinhai Revolution, the province of Guangxi declared independence, but then found itself without a governor. Sensing an opportunity, Lu took control during this power vacuum. Guangxi known as the “wild province,” for its mountainous terrain and frontier position.

Ma Qi – The Ma Family

The Ma family are hui, or Chinese Muslims, and rule the rural, expansive northwestern province of Qinghai as their personal fiefdom. Ma Qi’s imposing stature and strength served him well when he helped fight against the invading Eight-Nation Alliance during the Boxer Rebellion. A skilled fighter and administrator, Ma Qi is also a cautious character who can sense shifts in political tides rather quickly. While the Muslims of Qinghai were hesitant to declare independence during the Xinhai Revolution, Ma’s force of character convinced them to recognize the Republic as their overlords. Qinghai, however, is a poor and desolate province, with little industry and few cities.

Shanqi, the Prince Su – The Royalist Party

The short-tempered Prince Su, born into the Aisin Gioro clan that ruled China, was always more staunchly opposed to reform and republicanism than his cousin, the Guangxu Emperor. In 1911, he was appointed the Minister of Internal Affairs in the Imperial Cabinet but was quickly forced to step down when the cabinet, and the monarchy itself, was dissolved. He greatly disagreed with the Empress Dowager Longyu’s decision to abdicate the monarchy and would instead seek to restore the Qing back to its glory. The Royalist Party is still popular amongst ethnic Manchus in the North, as well as more limited support amongst monarchists throughout the rest of China. However, the Prince Su cannot claim any territory of his own beyond some palaces still
controlled by the Imperial Family, and a contingent of old Imperial Guards still swear their loyalty to the Aisin Gioro.

**Sun Yat-sen – The Nationalist Party (Kuomintang)**

Dr. Sun Yat-sen is a renaissance man: he’s a doctor, a calligrapher, philosopher, and diplomat, and speaks Chinese, English, and Japanese. Having studied in Hawai‘i and lived in Japan and Singapore, he’s long believed in the necessity to drive out the Manchu and to restore ethnic Chinese rule in China. This devotion to the revolution and republican principles has earned him the respect of man as the “Father of the Revolution.” However, some say Sun isn’t cut out to be leadership material. The Kuomintang formed out of the Tongmenghui, a revolutionary movement that led the Xinhai Revolution. Now both a political movement and an army, the Kuomintang is devoted to the principles of Sun, although some within its ranks believe that the establishment of a strong and unified central government precedes the creation of a true republic. Highly skeptical of Yuan Shikai, the Kuomintang operates mostly of the province of Guangdong but can call upon support throughout the Chinese heartland.

**Tang Hualong – The Discussions Clique**

Tang Hualong is a worldly man, having studied in Japan, and was a prominent advocate for reform during both the Qing and Republic periods. Tang is an ally of Liang Qichao but might have some disagreements on specific policy. Ultimately, Tang believes the pen is mightier than the sword. The Discussions Clique is more cautious regarding Yuan Shikai, believing him to perhaps harbor some anti-democratic sentiment. Instead, this Clique wants to continue the expansion of suffrage to more of China’s citizenry and make government more open and accessible. Tang also supports closer relations with foreign powers, particularly the democracy of the United States.
Yan Xishan – The Shanxi Clique

The son of a banking family, Yan Xishan was loyal to his province of Shanxi. Having studied in Japan, he believed that China must also modernize like Japan has in order to survive. He generally believed in Sun Yat-sen’s ideology but believed that modernization’s primary goal was to protect China’s fundamental culture: Confucian principles. Yan was also highly skeptical of Yuan Shikai’s ambitions. Shanxi, being geographically isolated from Beijing by mountains, is an incredibly impoverished province. Yan believes that, by Westernizing, the province can improve its status and power and protect itself from rival warlords.

Yang Sen – The Sichuan Clique

A Taoist adherent and believer in mysticism, Yang Sen is also a fierce commander of troops. Despite his roughness and rugged rural individualism, Yang also is an ally of the Kuomintang.

Sichuan is considered to have a unique culture to that of the Chinese heartland near the Huang He river, and thus has always had more autonomy than interior provinces, but with less power on the national stage as well. The Sichuan clique also doesn’t have complete control over the province – other warlords also claim territory and fight for control. This makes Sichuan one of the most chaotic regions in the country.

Yang Zengxin – The Xinjiang Clique

An ethnic Chinese, Yang Zengxin has many friends in the hui community of Xinjiang. Yang is a tried and tested soldier and administrator, ruthlessly cutting off the power of local leaders during his stint as an administrator in Xinjiang during the very last years of Qing rule. When the Qing governor of the province abandoned his post during the Xinhai Revolution, Yang assumed control of the province and defeated the revolutionaries.
Xinjiang province is located in far northwestern China, far away from the government in Beijing. Yang’s well-run Clique keeps ethnic tensions at bay, and the Clique is generally less revolutionary and more conservative and monarchist than other cliques. Yang is a friend of Cai E, Yuan Shikai, and the Ma family.

Yin Chang – The Beiyang Army

Born into Manchu lower nobility, Yin Chang studied military science in Germany. A brilliant commander, Yin was appointed minister of war during the late Qing period – it’s said that he escorted the Guangxu Emperor and the Empress Dowager Cixi to safety during the Boxer Rebellion and the Alliance’s invasion of Beijing. Later, he was commanded to quell the rebellion in Hubei, but then recalled back to Beijing. Once the revolution overthrew the Qing, Yin found himself under the command of Yuan Shikai. However, Yin isn’t committed to monarchism or republicanism; rather, a career soldier, he respects whoever rules in Beijing.

The Beiyang Army is the new model army of the Qing and Republican China; armed with western weapons, tactics, and organization, it’s one of the most powerful armies operating in China. At this moment, it listens to Yin Chang and Yuan Shikai, though its loyalties may too change as the wind changes.

Yuan Shikai

One of the most influential and interesting figures of his time, Yuan Shikai rose from a minor family in Henan. Although he failed to become a civil servant (twice!), Yuan found his calling in the Army. After years of service and by allying himself with the Empress Dowager Cixi, Yuan was promoted to Governor of Shandong. Taking a stance of neutrality during the Boxer Rebellion, Yuan and other governors formed a Mutual Protection pact to keep the peace. While he was disliked and dismissed by the Prince Chun after Cixi’s death, Yuan kept in contact with his allies. He then became the final Prime Minister of the Qing empire, but instead of remaining fiercely loyal to the throne, he placed his personal ambitions first and oversaw the
abdication of Puyi and his Regent, the Empress Dowager Longyu, as well as negotiations with the revolutionaries. Not committed to any real ideology but his own personal ambitions, Yuan Shikai also commands a strong base of support among the Republic’s army and the province of Shandong, of which he used to be governor.

Zhang Zuolin – The Fengtian Clique

A hunter and military man, Zhang Zuolin is a complicated figure. Illiterate, Zhang was employed by Manchu governors during the Xinhai Revolution to crush rebels, but, once he believed that the revolution would succeed in overthrowing the Qing, switched sides after some convincing from his new friend Yuan Shikai. However, Zhang still harbors strong anti-republican beliefs, and some of his confidants believe he may even support restoring the Qing to the throne. The Fengtian Clique, led by Zhang, control most of the province of Manchuria in northeast China. The Clique receives a great deal of support from Japan, both economically and militarily. Sworn enemies of the Zhili clique, the Fengtian Clique is one of the strongest in China.