

The Republic of China was formed when the Qing Dynasty fell in 1912. The republic had ended a very long reign of imperial rule. [Sun Yat-sen](#) was the leader of the opposition that led several civil unrests to unseat the Qing Dynasty from ruling China. The imperial rule was weak and unable to unite the country because of weak policies, corruption, and several foreign invasions. Several provinces declared independence from the Qing Dynasty and on January 1, 1912 elected Sun Yatsen as the first Provisional President of China. However he was unable to get enough support from other provinces and the military under the strong leadership of military general Yuan Shikai. To prevent civil war, Sun Yatsen turned over the presidency to Yuan Shikai.

Yuan Shikai



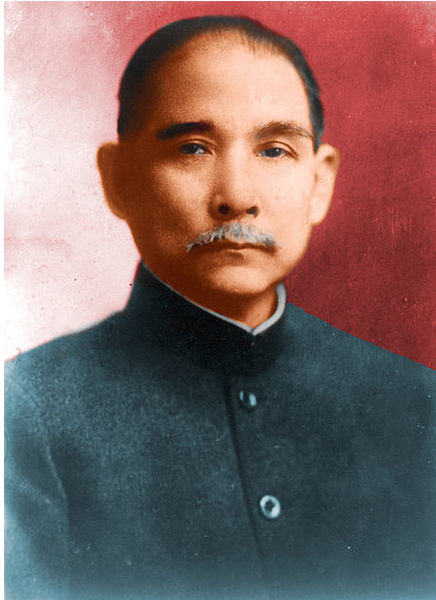
Yuan Shikai

Yuan Shikai was a strong leader but was corrupt. He abused his power and eventually dismantled the parliament to make him the most powerful man in the country. He ordered several killings of those who opposed his rule. He wanted to become the new emperor of China but several provinces opposed him and declared independence from him. Opposition groups united and formed the National Protection Army that revolted against his rule. Several generals of Yuan Shikai were not happy about his coronation as emperor so they did not resist the uprising of the rebels. This led to the fall of Yuan Shikai's rule as he stepped down from power on March 22, 1916. He died several months later.

The Leaders After Yuan Shikai's Leave

After the fall of Yuan Shikai's rule, several regional warlords fought one another to control the government. Most provinces did not recognize the new president Li Yuanhong's government. Then during World War 1, the country was divided as leaders did not agree with China joining the war.

Duan Qirui, the Chinese premier wanted to join the Allies to gain funds to support his army but Li Yuanhong did not want to support the war. Duan's army was able to defeat Li's forces, and he became the most powerful man in China. He dissolved the parliament and joined the Allies in fighting Germany. The government helped the Allies and sent workers and materials to fight the [Central Powers](#). After the war, the German colony of Shandong was not given back to China and instead was given to Japan. This led to several uprisings in China. The whole country was divided and Japan slowly gained lands. Students condemned Japan's imperialism and the weak Chinese Republic. Students demonstrated on May 4, 1919 which became the [May Fourth Movement](#).



Sun Yatsen

Sun Yatsen reemerged and had the support of the southern provinces. [Kuomintang](#) also resurfaced and rivaled the government in Beijing. Sun tried to unite the country and asked for support from Western countries for funds and aids. He was declined so he turned to ask the support of Soviet Union.

Soviet Union wanted to have ties with China because they are against Western imperialism. Although China is still divided on Sun's government and the newly formed [Chinese Communist Party](#) (CCP), both were supported by the Soviet leadership. [Chiang Kai-shek](#), one of Sun's leaders was sent to Moscow for several months of military and political training. He returned to China and became Sun's successor. During this time, parts of China were still under foreign rule and also under the powers of warlords. Chiang's army fought them trying to unify China. The Kuomintang party was slowly being divided and the Communist Party gained strength. The CCP was able to establish its forces in Wuhan and an anti-communist government was based in Nanjing. In mid-1927 the CCP was driven off by Wuhan and the Kuomintang party of Chiang regained the control of the whole of China. Chiang became the most powerful man in China and his government was recognized internationally. Several reforms and policies were implemented by the government to improve the country. This was known as the Nanjing Decade which gained positive record in economy and development of democracy.

Resisting the Japanese

Japan was becoming a regional power during this time and was looking for resources to support its economy, growing population, and powerful military. Japan began invading China. During this time the government of Chiang was focusing in fighting off resistance from the CCP so they were not able to concentrate on the Japanese invaders. Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped by Zhang Xueliang to force an alliance with the Communist Party as the condition for his release. China fought Japan using the forces of Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Japan which had superior weapons and forces was able to slowly gain ground against the Chinese. Nanjing fell in December 1937. A puppet government was set-up and they continued fighting Chiang's forces. The alliance of Kuomintang and Communist party slowly deteriorated because of principle differences and distrusts. They separated with each other and fought on areas that were not controlled by the Japanese. The Kuomintang was supported by the Allies and the [Communist Party supported by Soviet Union](#). The Kuomintang was unable to defeat the forces of Japan while the Communists were slowly gaining ground against the forces of Japan. This made the Communist Party popular to the people of China.

The Dispute Between Kuomintang and the Communist Party

After the War when Japan was defeated, control of power in China was still disputed by the Kuomintang and Communist Party. The United States supported Kuomintang while Soviet Union was behind the CCP. The people of China were favoring the CCP because of the Republic of China's failure to improve the lives of the people. Corruption was very rampant and political and economic problems continued to hamper the country's growth. The fighting between the CPP's forces and Kuomintang continued. The United States supported only by aiding weapons but no combat forces. The Communist Party continued to gain ground against their enemy. The undisciplined forces of Kuomintang were continuously defeated by Communist's Red Army. The government lost Nanjing then moved to Guangzhou, then lost once again and moved to Chongqing, then to Chengdu, then Xichang and lastly to Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek and his troops fled to Taiwan. On October 1, 1949, the Communist Party formed the People's Republic of China.