

35 Minutes.

China's reform and revolution in the early 20th century

Study Sources A and B.

SOURCE A

The following extract is adapted from the interview on Yuan Shikai by New York Times in 1908, in which Yuan shared his views on China's reform.

Our internal management system must undergo fundamental reform, but it is easier said than done since it involves completely changing or even scrapping some aspects of the current system that has existed for many centuries with many intertwined factors. In terms of public support, I feel certain that if we have enough time and opportunities, we will be able to achieve most goals of our reform no matter what.

What needs to be reformed most right now is our financial, monetary and legal systems. Only when these systems are fixed will the Great Qing recover its full exercise of sovereignty, and only when the country fully reclaims its sovereignty will it bring back normalcy in economic and political aspects. Any of the three reforms is closely related to the other two.

SOURCE B

The following extract is adapted from Sun Yat-sen's speech to Chinese Americans in 1910.

What is revolution a must for China now? It is because China is now occupied by the Manchus, and the Manchu rule is so corrupt that China is in an extremely dangerous situation and will very soon become miserably divided. Only through revolution can the country be saved and recover from the extreme plight.

However, there are these despicable and shameless people who are willingly enslaved. Hoping to rely on the Manchu and aiming to destroy revolution, they put forward evil advocacy by saying 'supporting the monarch can save the country' and 'establishing a Constitution can strengthen the country'. Many of you were confused by them a few years ago, but fortunately you have all awakened now. However, you still have not seen the fundamental problem and thus think the Manchu government is reliable and can be fixed by minor adjustments such as 'promoting education' and 'fostering businesses. You think this is also a way of saving and strengthening the country, but what you do not know is as far as national restoration is concerned, this is a way not to save our own country but to strengthen another race. Besides, the Manchu regime is so corrupt that it is beyond redemption. Similar to a dilapidated hut or a broken boat, it must be difficult to be fixed and should be eliminated and rebuilt.

Nowadays, most of the revolutionary enthusiasts are those in the officialdom or the army who witness various acts of corruption of the Manchu government on a daily basis and understand it is beyond redemption. The reason why Chinese revolution is difficult is not the strength of the Qing government, but our lack of determination. I hope everyone here would be determined to put revolution into practice as soon as possible, so that China could be saved and our fortunes as well as lives could be protected!

- (a) Identify one difficulty of implementing reform in China. Explain your answer with reference to one clue from Source A. (3 marks)
- (b) Infer the purpose of Sun Yat-sen's speech. Explain your answer with reference to Source B. (4 marks)
- (c) If you were an intellectual living in China in 1911, would you support reform or revolution to strengthen China? Explain why you support one but do not support the other, with reference to Sources A and B and using your own knowledge. (8 marks)