As important social processes, revolutions are central to human civilization and social order. Increasingly, the focus in research on revolutions has shifted from the transformation of the state and class structures catalyzed by class-based revolts to the roles played by elites and ideology as the triggering mechanisms. Using China’s 1911 Xinhai Revolution as example, we use the new elites—those who were thoroughly exposed to revolutionary ideologies while studying in Japan—to identify the causal role of ideology in triggering a series of uprisings that culminated in the revolution. We also show that by putting up with the uprisings, the traditional elites who held de facto political power were indispensable to revolutionary success and contributed importantly to the declaration of independence. Private academies established to spread the revolutionary ideologies and various printed materials (newspapers and translated books) represent the pertinent channels through which uprisings were instigated.

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A light lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to cals@allard.ubc.ca.