

Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE)

Key Learning Area: NSS History (Compulsory Part)

TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINA:

MODERNIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION

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Lecture 5

From the Establishment of New Democracy to

the Inauguration of Building Socialism:

A Review of China's Quest for Modernization in the 1950s

Several points about studying PRC history:

1. The PRC as a “paradigm” (Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago Press, 1962))
2. The historian's approach: seeing PRC history from the perspective of continuity and change
3. Periodization of PRC history

1. The establishment of New Democracy新民主主義

1.1 The establishment of the political system

- Basic principle of rule: leadership of the CCP

Leading party organs: National Party Congress 中國共產黨全國代表大會;

CCP Central Committee 中國共產黨中央委員會; Politburo 政治局;

Standing Committee of the Politburo 政治局常務委員會; Party Chairman
黨主席

- Basic organizational principle: “democratic centralism” 「民主集中制」
- Nature of government: “people’s democratic dictatorship” 「人民民主專政」
- System of military rule 軍事管制制度: Six Big Administrative Regions 六大行政區: Northeast (people’s government 人民政府); North China (Central People’s Government 中央人民政府); East China (military administrative committee); Central-South (military administrative committee 軍政委員會); South-West (military administrative committee); North-West (military administrative committee)
- Leading state organ: the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference 中國人民政治協商會議 (政協)
- “Common Programme” 《共同綱領》 (provisional state constitution)
“coalition government” 「聯合政府」 of four classes: founded on a
“worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class”
- Basic strategy of rule: the “united front” 「統一戰線」 strategy of
“simultaneous alliance and struggle” 「既聯合、又鬥爭」

1.2. The formulation of industrial and commercial policy

- Target of attack: the “big capitalists” 「大資產階級」
 1. “bureaucratic capitalists” 「官僚資產階級」
 2. compradors 「買辦資產階級」
 3. foreign capitalists 「外國資產階級」
- Target of “united front”: the “national bourgeoisie” 「民族(中等)資產階級」
Policy:
 1. “Manipulation” 「利用」
 2. “Restriction” 「限制」
 - (1) “Elementary state capitalism” 「初級國家資本主義」
 - (2) “Advanced state capitalism” 「高級國家資本主義」 (“joint state-private enterprises” 「公私合營企業」)

3. “Transformation” 「改造」
 - (1) The “three-antis campaign” 「三反運動」 against corruption 貪污, waste 浪費, and bureaucratism 官僚主義(fall of 1951-summer of 1952)
 - (2) The “five-antis campaign” 「五反運動」 against bribery of government workers 行賄, tax evasion 偷稅漏稅, theft of state property 盜騙國家資財, cheating on government contracts 偷工減料, and stealing of economic information for private industrial and commercial firms 盜竊國家經濟情報 (early 1952-summer 1952)

1.3 The formulation of rural policy (1950-1952)

- The implementation of Land Reform 「土地(地)改(革)」:

The “Agrarian Reform Law” 《中華人民共和國土地改革法》 (June 1950)

The “general line” 「總路線」 of Land Reform: 「依靠貧農、雇農，團結中農，中立富農，有步驟地有分別地消滅封建剝削制度，發展農業生產。」

Stages of Land reform:

1. Sending of “Land Reform work teams” 「土改工作隊」 to the countryside to organize “peasant associations” 「農民協會」
2. Identification of class status
3. Calling of “speak bitterness meetings” 「訴苦大會」
4. Confiscation and redistribution of land, and the issuance of “land certificates” 「土地証」

The consequences of Land Reform:

1. Elimination of the landlord class
2. The nurturing of rural cadres
3. Affirmation of private ownership of land: the rise of a “rich peasant” economy
4. The organization of “mutual aid teams” 「農業互助合作組」

1.4 Economic development in 1949-1953

- Annual rate of growth of industry and agriculture: 24.45%
- Annual rate of growth of industry: 34.80%
- Annual rate of growth of agriculture: 14.10%
- A “mixed economy” 「混合經濟」

1.5 Proclamation of the “general line” 「總路線」 and “general task” 「總任務」 of transition to socialism (December 1953)

- Reasons for deciding on the transition to socialism
- Mao Zedong: 「把社會主義看作是遙遙無期是不對的，但急躁冒進也是不對的。走得太快，『左』了；不走，太右了。要反『左』反右，逐步過渡，最後全部過渡完。」

2. Transition from New Democracy to Socialism

2.1 Changes in the political system

- Abolition of the Six Big Administrative Regions
- Convening of the 1st National People’s Congress (NPC) 第一屆全國人民代表大會 (人大) and passage of the “Constitution of the People’s Republic of China” 《中華人民共和國憲法》

2.2 Major objectives in the period of transition to socialism

- Industrialization (The First Five-Year Plan)
- Establishment of public ownership of the means of production (the cooperativization of agriculture and the socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce)

2.3 The First Five-Year Plan「第一個五年計劃」: a duplication of the Stalinist mode of industrialization (1953-1957)

- Characteristics of strategy:
 1. Allocation of investment resources first to heavy industry, then to light industry, and finally to agriculture
 2. Introduction of the system of “one-man management” 「一長制」 in

factories

3. Placing of emphasis on scientific and technical education
4. Spread of industry to the interior
5. Central planning: “planned economy” 「計劃經濟」

■ Performance:

Annual growth rate of industry and agriculture: 11.75%

Annual growth rate of industry: 19%

Annual growth rate of heavy industry: 25.4%

Annual growth rate of light industry: 12.8%

Annual growth rate of agriculture: 4.5%

■ Problems: disregard of important linkages between industry and agriculture

■ Remedial measures:

1. Introduction of the policy of “unified purchase and marketing” 「統購統銷」政策
2. Acceleration of the cooperativization of agriculture 農業合作化
3. Change of investment priority

2.4 Socialist transformation of agriculture: the cooperativization of agriculture

■ The plan of “transition by stages” 「逐步過渡」:

1. Organization of non-socialist “mutual aid teams” (MATs) 「農業互助組」
2. Organization of semi-socialist “lower-stage agricultural producers’ cooperatives (APCs)” 「初級農業生產合作社」: “pooling of land as shares” 「土地入股」; “drawing dividends on land shares” 「土地分紅」
3. Organization of socialist “higher-stage agricultural producers’ cooperatives (APCs)” 「高級農業生產合作社」: “from each according to his ability, to each according to his work” 「各盡所能，按勞分配」

■ The course of the cooperativization of agriculture:

1. December 1952: 40% peasants joined MATs
2. December 1953: promulgation of “Decision on the Development of APCs” 〈關於發展農業生產合作社的決議〉
Existing “lower-stage APCs” (experimental): 14,000

Target for autumn 1954: 35,800

3. Spring 1954: 95,000 (over-fulfillment of target)
4. October 1954: new target for spring 1955: 600,000
5. Spring 1955: 670,000 (over-fulfillment of target; 15% peasants joined “lower-stage APCs”)

Deng Zihui 鄧子恢, Chen Yun 陳云, Liu Shaoqi 劉少奇: saw the need to slow down development

Mao Zedong's directive: “halt, shrink, develop” 「停、縮、發」

Deng Zihui's instruction: “halt development; strive for full consolidation” 「停止發展、全力鞏固」

6. June 1955: Mao wrote “On the Question of Agricultural Cooperativization” 〈關於農業合作化問題〉; criticism of Deng's “Right deviations” 「右傾」

Effect: appearance of “the high tide of socialism in the Chinese countryside” 「中國農村社會主義高潮」, and of the mentality of “better to err to the ‘left’ than to the right” 「寧『左』勿右」

Mao's estimation: 50% peasants would join “lower-stage APCs” by spring 1958; the remaining 50% would join by the end of 1960

7. October 1955: 1,313,000
8. December 1955: 1,900,000 (60% peasants joined “lower-stage APCs”)
9. March 1956: 88.9% peasants joined “lower-stage APCs”
10. April 1956: some localities started to organize “higher-stage APCs”
11. June 1956: 63.2% peasants joined “higher-stage APCs”
12. December 1956: 87.8% joined “higher-stage APCs”

- Comparing China's and the Soviet Union's experiences in agricultural cooperativization

US.S.R.: mechanization before collectivization

China: collectivization before mechanization

2.5 Socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce

- Aim: transformation of private enterprises into “joint state-private enterprises”
- The process of transformation:

1. 1954-summer 1955: transformation on an enterprise-to-enterprise basis with “big factories leading small factories, advanced factories leading less advanced factories” 「以大廠帶小廠、以先進帶落后」
2. October 1955: CCP recognized the need to speed up transformation, for it would take another 10 years to complete transformation on an enterprise-to-enterprise basis
3. November 1955: CCP endorsed “Transformation by Whole Branches of Industry and Trade” 《全行業公私合營規劃》 and set December 1957 as target date for the completion of transformation
4. December 1955: Peng Zhen 彭真, mayor of Beijing, set December 1956 as target date for the completion of transformation in the capital
5. 10 January 1956: Beijing declared completion of transformation
6. 31 January 1956: 118 cities declared completion of transformation
7. December 1956: all private enterprises in China were transformed into “joint state-private enterprises”

2.6 The 8th Party Congress 中共「八大」(September 1956) and its historical significance

- The 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and its impact on China: Khrushchev and de-Stalinization
- Liu Shaoqi's identification of China's “principal contradiction” 「主要矛盾」 at the 8th Party Congress: 「無產階級同資產階級之間的矛盾已基本上解決。國內的主要矛盾已經不再是工人階級和資產階級的矛盾，而是人民對於建立先進的工業國的要求同落後的農業國的現實之間的矛盾，是人民對於經濟文化迅速發展的需要同當前經濟文化不能滿足人民需要的狀況之間的矛盾。黨和全國人民的主要任務，就是要集中力量發展社會生產力來解決這個矛盾。」

3. The beginning of building socialism (1957-1960)

3.1 From rectifying improper working styles 整風 to struggling against the Rightists 反右 (1956-1957)

- The launching of the “rectification campaign” 「整風運動」
 1. May 1956: Mao raised the slogan of “Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend” 「百花齊放、百家爭鳴」 (the “double hundred” policy 「雙百」方針); asked people to focus criticisms on “subjectivism” 「主觀主義」, “bureaucratism” 「官僚主義」, and “sectarianism” 「宗派主義」
 2. 27 February 1957: Mao delivered speech “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People”〈關於正確處理人民內部矛盾的問題〉; distinguished between two types of contradictions: (1) “contradictions between ourselves and the enemy” 「敵我矛盾」 (antagonistic; to be resolved by class struggle); (2) “contradictions among the people” 「人民內部矛盾」 (non-antagonistic; to be resolved by persuasion, education, criticism and self-criticism)
 3. 12 March 1957: Mao spoke to the Propaganda Department 宣傳部, calling on “all people to express their opinions freely, so that they dare to speak, dare to criticize and dare to debate” 「放手讓大家講意見，使人們敢于說話，敢于批評，敢于爭論。」
 4. 1 May 1957: *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*) 《人民日報》 published “Directive on the Rectification Campaign” 〈關於整風運動的指示〉: 「知無不言，言無不盡，言者無罪，聞者足戒，有則改之，無則加勉。」
 5. “Free airing of views” 「鳴放」: running out of control
 - Zhang Bojun 張伯鈞 (Democratic League 民盟)
 - Luo Longji 羅隆基 (Democratic League 民盟)
 - Peng Wenying 彭文應 (Democratic League 民盟)
 - Chen Renbing 陳仁炳 (Democratic League 民盟)
 - Chu Anping 儲安平 (*Guangming ribao* 《光明日報》)
 - Lin Xiling 林希翎 (People's University 人民大學)
- “Fragrant flowers” 「香花」 became “poisonous weeds” 「毒草」: the unleashing of the “anti-Rightist campaign” 「反右運動」

8 June 1957: *Renmin ribao* published “Why [Did] This [Happen]?”〈這是爲什麼？〉

18 June 1957: NCNA published Mao’s February speech, but adding six criteria of correct criticism

500,000-700,000 people labeled as Rightists 「右派」

- Why did Mao Zedong launch the “anti-Rightist campaign”? Was it a “conspiracy”「陰謀」? Or was it, in Mao’s own words, an “open conspiracy”「陽謀」?
- The historical significance of the “anti-Rightist campaign”
- Reversal of verdict in the early 1980s: post-Mao official assessment of the “anti-Rightist campaign”

3.2 The “Great Leap Forward” 「大躍進」: failure of the Maoist experiment in building socialism (1958-1960)

3.2.1 Aims, strategy, and characteristics

- Aims:
 1. High-speed development
 2. Self-reliance
 3. Elimination of the “three major differences” 「三大差別」 (i.e., differences between town and countryside 城鄉差別, between industry and agriculture 工農差別, between physical and mental labour 體力與腦力勞動的差別)
- Strategy/ Underlying principle

“One horse taking the lead, ten thousand horses galloping ahead” 「一馬當先，萬馬奔騰」

“Theory of active balance” 「積極平衡論」: set 1st target (organize 1st balance) → disrupt 1st balance → set 2nd target (organize 2nd balance) → disrupt 2nd balance → (repeat process over and over again)

“Balance is temporary and relative...imbalance is permanent and absolute...the disruption of balance is a great leap forward
- “Great Leap Forward” in industry

“Walking on two legs” 「兩條腿走路」: simultaneous promotion of: (1) agriculture and industry; (2) light and heavy industries; (3) big and medium and small industries; (4) central and local industries; (5) native (intermediate) and foreign (advanced) technology

“The nationwide iron and steel production campaign” 「全民大煉鋼鐵運動」:
“backyard steel furnaces” 「土高爐」

■ “Great Leap Forward” in agriculture

Campaigns to conserve water, plough deep, improve soil, plant close, kill sparrows, improve farm tools, etc.

The “movement to form ‘people’s communes’” 「人民公社化運動」 (August-December 1958): 740,000 “higher-stage APCs” merged to form 24,000 “people’s communes” (three-level system of ownership: “commune” 「公社」, “production brigade” 「生產大隊」, production team” 「生產隊」); characteristic: “large in size and collective in nature” 「一大二公」

3.2.2 Political struggles in the course of the “Great Leap Forward”

- March-May 1958: formulation and promulgation of the “general line” of “going all out, aiming high, and achieving greater, quicker, better and more economical results in building socialism” 「鼓足干劲，力爭上游，多快好省地建設社會主義的總路線。」

- August 1958: Enlarged Politburo Conference at Beidaihe 北戴河中央政治局擴大會議 passed “Resolution on the Establishment of People’s Communes in the Rural Areas” 《關於在農村建立人民公社問題的決議》
The “five winds” 「五風」 (i.e., the “communist wind” 「共產風」, the “wind of blind guidance in production” 「瞎指揮風」, the “wind of enforcing arbitrary orders” 「強迫命令風」, the “wind of exaggeration” 「浮誇風」, and the “wind of cadres acceding to privileges” 「幹部特殊化風」)

Rise of “egalitarianism” 「平均主義」: “leveling of incomes among constituent units of a commune and indiscriminate requisition of manpower and resources” 「一平二調」

The “Three Red Banners” 「三面紅旗」: “Great Leap Forward”, “general

line”, “people’s communes”

- November 1958-early July 1959: Mao attempted to rectify “Left” 「左」 errors

Encouraged people to learn from the Ming 明 censor Hai Rui 海瑞

Criticized both “Left” and Right deviations: 「有些人太熱了一點」, 「只愛熱」; 「另有一些人愛冷不愛熱」, 是「觀潮派、算帳派」

- July 1959: convening of Lushan Conference 廬山會議

Mao’s assessment of the current situation: “great achievements, many problems, bright future” 「成績偉大, 問題不少, 前途光明」; a matter of “nine fingers and one finger” 「九個指頭與一個指頭的關係」

Peng Dehuai 彭德懷 (defence minister) criticized the “Great Leap Forward” and “people’s communes”: 「人民公社我認為早了些, 高級社的優越性剛剛發揮, 還沒有高度發揮, 就公社化, 而且未經過試驗, 如果試上一年再搞, 就好了。」 「小資產階級的狂熱性, 使我們容易犯『左』的錯誤」

Peng’s supporters: Huang Kecheng 黃克誠 (chief-of-staff of the PLA); Zhou Xiaozhou 周小舟 (1st party secretary of Hunan province); Zhang Wentian 張聞天 (vice-minister of the Foreign Ministry); Khrushchev

- August 1959: 8th Plenum of the 8th CCPC 中共八屆八中全會 accused Peng of “Right opportunism” 「右傾機會主義」: his airing of views was said to be a kind of “activity that has a purpose and is well prepared, well planned and well organized” 「有目的、有準備、有計劃、有組織的活動」
- August-September 1959: Enlarged Meeting of the Central Military Commission 中央軍委擴大會議 accused Peng, Huang, Zhou and Zhang of carrying out a “bourgeois military line” 「資產階級軍事路線」; Foreign Affairs Work Conference 外事工作會議 accused Peng, Huang, Zhou and Zhang of “conspiring with a foreign country [the Soviet Union]” 「裏通外國 (蘇聯)」; Lin Biao 林彪 replaced Peng Dehuai as defence minister
- 1960: Failure and end of the “Great Leap Forward”
“Great Leap Forward” proceeded under the “Left” slogan of “struggling against Right deviation, going all out, and continuing the ‘Great Leap

Forward”” 「反右傾，鼓干勁，繼續大躍進」

Great famine: 15,000,000-30,000,000 deaths

September: CCPCC endorsed “eight-character principle” 「八字方針」 of “readjustment, consolidation, filling out and raising standards” 「調整、鞏固、充實、提高」

November: Zhou Enlai 周恩來 drafted “Urgent Directive Letter on Current Policies for Rural People’s Communes” (“Twelve Articles on People’s Communes”) 《關於農村人民公社當前政策問題的緊急指示信》(《十二條》)