

Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE)

Key Learning Area: NSS History (Compulsory Part)

TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINA:

MODERNIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION

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Alfred H.Y. Lin (Ph.D.)

Honorary Associate Professor, School of Humanities (History), HKU

Lecture 3

**Ten Years of Reconstruction under the Nationalist Government
in Nanjing: Achievements and Failures (1928-1937)**

1. Solving the problem of regime legitimization: the implementation of “political tutelage” 「訓政」 and “reconstruction” 「建設」

1.1 The passing of the “Programme of Political Tutelage” 《訓政綱領》 in October 1928: the end of the period of “military rule” and the beginning of the period of “political tutelage”

- Sun Yat-sen’s theory of the three-stage “national revolution”:
 1. The period of “military rule” 「軍政」時期 and “government under military law” 「軍法之治」
 2. The period of “political tutelage” 「訓政」時期 and “government under a provisional constitution” 「約法之治」
 3. The period of “constitutional rule” 「憲政」時期 and “government under the Constitution” 「憲法之治」

- The meaning of “political tutelage”

1.2 The relationship between “political tutelage” and “reconstruction”

- 「夫革命之有破壞，與革命之有建設，固相因而至、相輔而行者也。今于革命破壞之后，而不開革命建設之始，是無革命之建設矣；既無革命之建設，又安用革命之總統爲？」(Sun Yat-sen, *Fundamentals of National Reconstruction* 《建國方略》)

1.3 Sun Yat-sen’s ideals of “reconstruction”

- *Jianguo fanglue* 《建國方略》 (*Fundamentals of National Reconstruction*, 1917-1919)
- “Guomin zhengfu jianguo dagang” 《國民政府建國大綱》 (“Outline of the National Government’s Plans for National Reconstruction”, 23 January 1924)
 - 「建設之首要在民生。故對於全國人民之衣食住行四大需要，政府當與人民協力，共謀農業之發展，以足民食；共謀織造之發展，以裕民衣；建築大計劃之各式屋舍，以樂民居；修治道路、運河，以利民行。」
 - 「其次爲民權。故對於人民之政治知識能力，政府當訓導之，以行使其選舉權，行使其罷官權，行使其創制權，行使其複決權。」
 - 「其三爲民族。故對於國內之弱小民族，政府當扶植之，使之能自決自治。對於國外之侵略強權，政府當抵禦之；並同時修改各國條約，以恢復我國國際平等、國家獨立。」
- *Sanmin zhuyi* 《三民主義》 (*The Three People’s Principles*, January-August)

2. Ten years of “internal disturbance and external aggression” 「內憂外患」: the predicament that the Nanjing government faced

2.1 Threats from the “new warlords” 「新軍閥」 or “local factions that held power” 「地方實力派」

2.1.1 The persistence of the warlord scenario

- The “new warlords”: Li Zongren 李宗仁 and Bai Chongxi 白崇禧 of Guangxi 廣西 province; Chen Jitang 陳濟棠 of Guangdong 廣東 province; Long Yun 龍雲 of Yunnan 雲南 province; Liu Xiang 劉湘 of Sichuan 四川 province; Sheng Shicai 盛世才 of Xinjiang 新疆 province; Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 of North and Northwest China; Yan Xishan 閻錫山 of Shanxi 山西 province; and Zhang Xueliang 張學良 of Northeast China.
- The National Conference for the Reorganization of Troops and the Discharge of Surplus Personnel 全國編遣會議 (1928)
- The War of the Central Plain 「中原大戰」 and the separatist regime in Beiping 北平 (1930)
- The separatist Guangzhou National Government 「廣州國民政府」 (1931)
- The dissident People’s Revolutionary Government of the Chinese Republic 「中華共和國人民革命政府」 in Fujian 福建 province (1933)

2.1.2 Why do historians regard 1928 as the end date of “the period of warlordism”?

2.1.3 The influence of the “new warlords” on national “reconstruction”

- Local fiscal autonomy
- Main revenue of the central government: customs duty (48.5%); salt tax (22%); commodity tax (12.6%)
- Main expenditures of the central government: military expenses (46%); debts service (34%)

2.1.4 The “new warlords” and local “reconstruction”

- The “new warlords” as “reformist warlords”: Chen Jitang’s “Three-Year Administrative Plan of Guangdong Province” 「廣東省三年施政計劃」; Li Zongren’s and Bai Chongxi’s “Reconstruction Movement of Guangxi Province” 「廣西建設運動」; Yan Xishan’s “Ten-Year Reconstruction Plan of Shanxi Province” 「山西十年建設計劃」; Han Fuyu’s “Rural Reconstruction Movement of Shandong Province” 「山東鄉村建設運動」

2.2 Threats from the CCP

- Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jishi) 蔣介石: China's fixed policy was to "achieve internal peace before resisting the foreign foe" 「先安內後攘外」; the Japanese were only "a minor disease of the skin" 「皮膚小病」, whereas the communists were "a disease in our vital organs" 「心腹之患」

2.3 Threats from Japan

3. Ten years of "reconstruction": review and analysis

3.1 Political aspects

- "The governing of the state by the party"/ "party rule" 「以黨治國」

3.1.1 Party building

- The national congress system 全國代表大會制度: the National Congress of KMT Delegates 國民黨全國代表大會; the Central Executive Committee of the KMT 國民黨中央執行委員會; the Standing Committee of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT 國民黨中央執行委員會常務委員會
- The Central Political Council 中央政治會議 (or Central Political Committee 中央政治委員會)
- The KMT's failure to serve as an instrument of national reintegration
- Factionalism within the KMT

Level 1:

1. Chiang *versus* KMT Right-Wingers 國民黨右派 (Hu Hanmin 胡漢民)
2. Chiang *versus* KMT Left-Wingers 國民黨左派 (Wang Jingwei 汪精衛)
3. Chiang *versus* "local factions that held power" 「地方實力派」

Level 2: factionalism within Chiang's own power structure

1. The CC (Central Club 「中央俱樂部」) Clique CC 系: Chen Guofu 陳果夫 and Chen Lifu 陳立夫
2. The Whampoa (Huangpu) Clique 黃埔系: Dai Li 戴笠 and He Zhonghan 賀衷寒; the "Vigorously-Carry-Out Society" 力行社, "Revolutionary Youth Comrades Association" 革命青年同志會,

“Chinese Revival Society” 中華復興社, “Blue Shirts Society” 藍衣社,
“Iron and Blood Squad” 鐵血團

3. The Political Study Clique 政學系: military men (Huang Fu 黃郛, Zhang Qun 張群, Xiong Shihui 熊式輝); intellectuals (Yang Yongtai 楊永泰, Wang Chonghui 王寵惠); bankers and industrialists (Wu Dingchang 吳鼎昌, Zhang Jiaoao 張嘉璈)

“China’s political arena at the time was a veritable sea of particularistic relationships, from patronage networks to cliques. Those significant political actors that emerged and survived did so because they could swim in it. [Condemning Chiang Kai-shek for playing with factionalism] is the equivalent of condemning the strongest swimmer for swimming! The only alternative Chiang had, after all, was to drown, as many of his fellow political figures in fact did” (Guy Alitto, “Chiang Kai-shek in Western Historiography”, *Proceedings of Conference on Chiang Kai-shek and Modern China*, Vol. 1, Taipei, 1987).

3.1.2 State building at Nanjing

- The “five-*Yuan* system”: separation of power between the Executive *Yuan* 行政院, Legislative *Yuan* 立法院, Judicial *Yuan* 司法院, Examination *Yuan* 考試院, and Control *Yuan* 監察院
- Low level of institutionalization (the rule of man): the case of the Examination *Yuan* (the Examinations Commission 考選委員會, the Ministry of Personnel 銓敘部)

3.1.3 A highly centralized power structure: locating the seat of authority

- The Nanjing government?
- The Central Executive Committee of the KMT (increase of members from 24 in 1924 to 36 in 1926, 71 in 1931, and 119 in 1935)?
- The Central Political Council (Central Political Committee) of the KMT?
- The Central Military Council of the KMT 國民黨中央軍事委員會?
- The “headquarters for bandit-suppression” 剿匪總部?

- A one-man dictatorship (i.e., Chiang Kai-shek's personal dictatorship)

3.2 Economic aspects

3.2.1 Laying the foundation of a modern economic infrastructure

- The establishment of a modern banking system:
 1. The Central Bank of China 中央銀行
 2. The Bank of China 中國銀行
 3. The Bank of Communications 交通銀行
 4. The Farmers' Bank of China 中國農民銀行Private commercial banks: 57 (1927)→138 (1934)→146 (1936)
- The standardization of the currency:
 1. Passage of "The Silver Standard Dollar Coinage Law" 《銀本位鑄造條例》 (March 1933): 0.715 Shanghai tael (*liang* 兩) for 1 silver dollar (*yuan* 元)
 2. Substitution of the foreign exchange standard for the silver standard (November 1935): introduction of a new paper money (*fab* 法幣 *i*)
- The standardization of weights and measures: adoption of the metric system.
- The improvement and development of communication and transportation networks:
 1. Extension of the railway network: 8,000 kilometers (1928)→13,000 kilometers (1936); extension of the Long-Hai Railway 隴海鐵路 to Xian 西安 (1934) and Baoji 寶雞 (1935); completion of the Guangzhou-Hankou Railway 粵漢鐵路(1936)
 2. Extension of the highway network: 1,000 kilometers (1921)→115,703 kilometers (1936)
 3. Development of domestic air services: establishment of the China National Aviation Corporation 中國航空公司(1930), the Eurasia Aviation Corporation 歐亞航空公司(1931), and the Southwest Aviation Corporation 西南航空公司(1933)

4. Extension of post-roads: 400,000 *li* (1921)→584,800 *li* (1936)
5. Extension of long-distant telephone lines: 4,000 kilometers (1925)→52,200 kilometers (1937)

3.2.2 Promoting industry and commerce

- Factors working for the development of industry and commerce in the Nanjing Decade
- Why did people so often label the Nanjing government as a “bourgeois (capitalist) regime” from the 1930s to the 1970s?
- Alternative views in the 1980s:
 1. The Nanjing government as “an autonomous regime” (see Parks Coble, *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986))
 2. The Nanjing government as “a pluralistic regime” (see Richard Bush, *The Politics of Cotton Textiles in Kuomintang China, 1927-1937* (New York: Garland Publications, 1982); Bradley Geisert, *Power and Society: The Kuomintang and Social Elites in Kiangsu Province, China, 1924-1937* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilm International, 1986))
 3. The Nanjing government as “an authoritarian corporatist regime” (see Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, State and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Politics in Shanghai, 1890-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985))
- What was the relationship like between Chiang Kai-shek and the capitalists?

3.2.3 Improving agriculture

- The National Commission for the Promotion of Agriculture 中央農業推廣委員會
- The Central Agricultural Research Bureau 中央農業實驗所
- The National Bureau for the Improvement of Paddy and Wheat Strains 全國稻麥改進所
- The Commission of Rural Rehabilitation 農村復興委員會

- The Conservancy Commission 水利委員會 under the National Economic Council 全國經濟委員會

3.3 Social aspects

3.3.1 Putting in place a modern system of education

3.3.2 Carrying Out the New Life Movement 「新生活運動」

- Regularization and militarization of the daily life of the Chinese people: “Outline of the New Life Movement” 《新生活運動綱要》; “Necessary Knowledge of New Life” 《新生活須知》

3.3.3 The failure of land reform

- The “25% rent discount” 「二五減租」 (Zhejiang 浙江 province)

3.4 The mode of modernization practiced by the Nanjing government

- Top-down
- Capitalistic/ monopoly state capitalism
- Urban-oriented

4. Issues that are worth exploring

4.1 Concerning the effectiveness of “reconstruction” under Nationalist rule

- “The golden decade” (see Paul K.T. Sih (ed.), *The Strenuous Decade: China's Nation-Building Efforts, 1927-1937* (New York, 1970))
- The abortion of the Chinese Revolution (see Lloyd Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974)).

4.2 Concerning the nature of the Nanjing government

- modern
- traditional
- Confucian

- personalistic (the rule of man)
- elitist
- autocratic
- totalitarian
- authoritarian
- a one-party dictatorship
- a one-man dictatorship
- fascist
- militaristic
- capitalist
- autonomous
- pluralistic
- authoritarian corporatist

4.3 Concerning the nature of China's economy and society in 1928-1937

- traditional
- modern
- semi-feudal and semi-colonial
- agrarian
- commercial
- industrial
- labour-intensive
- capital-intensive