CONTENTS

Acknowledgements vi
About the Author vii
Revolutions—An Introduction viii
Spelling of Chinese Terms x

SECTION A: CAUSES OF REVOLUTION

Overview 1
Timeline 2
Chapter 1: The Middle Kingdom (1793–1912) 4

China’s Past, the Land and its People ...

Chinese civilisation 8
Geography 9
Climate 9
Provinces 10
People and language 10

Chinese Culture 11
Confucianism 11
Daoism 12
Buddhism 12

Chinese Society 13
Peasants 13
Townpeople 15
Landlords and officials 15
Women 17
Foot-binding 17
The Mandate of Heaven 18
Rice and fall of the Qing Dynasty 20
Sun Yixian, 1866–1925 24
Revolutionary feminist: Qiu Jin, 1875–1907 28

The Xinhai Revolution 29

The Double Tenth 29
Sun Yixian returns to China 30
The role of Yuan Shikai 30
Pu Yi’s abdication 31

Chapter 1 Review 33

Chapter 2: The Troubled Republic (1912–1927) 34

Yuan Shikai and the Republic of China 36
Song Jiachen and the Guomindang 37
Yuan’s dictatorship 38
Failure of the second revolution 38
Japan’s Twenty-one Demands 39
A new emperor 39
Yuan’s significance 39
Yuan Shikai, 1853–1916 40

The New Culture Movement 44
New ideas and meaning 44

Cai Yuanpei and Beijing University 44
Hu Shi and language innovations 45
Lu Xun and the critique of Confucius 45
Chen Duxiu and New Youth 45
Li Dazhao: Nationalism and Marxism 46
Ding Ling: feminist writer 46
May Fourth Movement 47

May 4th Movement 48

Founding of The Chinese Communist Party 51
Maring and the First CCP Congress 51
The Chinese Communist Party 52
Party debates 52

The United Front 54
Sun Yixian’s Guangzhou government 54
The Sun-Joffe Declaration 55
The benefits of the coalition 56
The Nationalist army 56

The Death of Sun Yixian 57

Consequences for the revolutionary movement 57
Increased support for the CCP 58
The rise of Jiang Jieshi 59

Chapter 2 Review 61

Chapter 2: A Tale of Two China (1926–1937) 62

The Northern Expedition 64
Nationalist Revolutionary Army 64
Victory after victory 65

The White Terror 66
Shanghai’s Green Gang 66
The Shanghai Massacre 66
End of the United Front 67

Northern Expedition continues 68
Jiang Jieshi and the bourgeoisy 70

Community in Crisis 72

The Nanchang Uprising 72
The Autumn Harvest Uprising 72
The Guangzhou Commune 73
Recrification 73

New leadership 73
Further defeats 74

Twenty-eight Bolsheviks 74
Mao’s Laboratory: The Jiangxi Soviet 75

The First All-China Congress 75
The Chinese Soviet Republic 76
Mao’s Red Army 76
Guerrilla tactics 77
Zhu De, 1880–1976 77

The role of peasants 79
Mao loses influence 79
Social change at Jiangxi 80

Mao’s Eastern Purgers 81

The Nanjing Decade 82

Jiang and the Nationalist state 82

Cliques and factions 82
Regional presidencies 83
Financial challenges 84

Modernisation programs 84

Limitations of Jiang’s government 85

The New Life Movement 87

Changing behaviour 88

Jiang and feminism 89

Riang Jieshi, 1887–1975 90

Chapter 3 Review 93

Chapter 4: The Long March (1933–1936) 94

A Forced Retreat 96

Encirclement campaigns 96
Communist losses 97
The March begins 97

A nation on the move 97

Battles, Meetings and Mao 99

The Battle of Xiang River 99

The Zunyi Conference 100
Mao takes charge 100

Zhu Enlai, 1889–1976 102

The Battle of Luding Bridge 103

Yang’s forced march 103

The heroes of Dadao 104
Debates over Luding Bridge 104

Snowy Mountains and High Grasslands 106

The Great Snowy Mountains 106
High Grasslands 107

The End of the Long March 108

The Long March spirit 109

Chapter 4 Review 111

Chapter 5: War and Revolution (1931–1949) 112

Japan Invades Manchuria 114
The Manchurian incident 114
Manchukuo 115
War 115

The Yan’an Way 115

Land and tax reforms 115
Social change 116

Economic change 116

Political change 117

Mao’s Rectification Campaign 118

Purges and struggles 119

Maoist virtues 119

Theory and practice 120

Mao’s allies 120

Growth of the CCP 120

Mao Zedong Thought 121

The Xian Incident and the Second United Front 122

Zhang’s truce with the Red Army 122

The Xian Incident 122

A Second United Front 123

Conflict with Japan 123

The Second Sino-Japanese War 124

Trading space for time 124

The Chinese retreat 124

Japanese atrocities at Nanjing 125

Impact of the War 126

Chongqing and ‘free China’ 126
Corruption and mismanagement 127

The Honan famine 127
Foreign relations in World War II 128
Jiang’s military blunders 128
End of the United Front 130

The CCP and war with Japan 130

The story of Woof Fany 131

The Dixie Mission 131

Hurlay’s failed negotiations 131

Japan surrenders 132

The Chinese Civil War 133

Land and men 133

The People’s Liberation Army 134

Peasants 134

The Nationalists surrender 134

Chapter 5 Review 137

CHINA RISING 3RD EDITION

III
SECTION B: CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLUTION

Index

Overview................................................................. 138
Experiences of Revolution............................................. 140
Timeline................................................................. 142

Chapter 6: The People’s Republic of China (1949–1957)........ 144
The New Order.......................................................... 146
A new political system................................................. 146
National People’s Congress and State Council............... 147
Chinese Communist Party........................................... 147
Military Affairs Committee.......................................... 148
People’s democratic dictatorship................................... 148

Consolidating Communist Power................................. 149
Working with national capitalists................................. 150
New currency................................................................ 150
The role of the army.................................................... 150

The Korean War.......................................................... 151
North Korean ambitions.............................................. 151
North invades South................................................... 151
China joins the war..................................................... 152
Stalemate and ceasefire.............................................. 153
Consequences of the Korean War.............................. 154

Fan Shen and Land Reform.......................................... 155
Agrarian reform law.................................................... 155
Speak Bitterness......................................................... 155
Land reform escalates................................................ 156

Mass Campaigns....................................................... 156
Thought Reform.......................................................... 156
Public denunciations.................................................. 157
Sanfan ..................................................................... 157

Wufen: The Five Anti ................................................... 158
Purges and executions.................................................. 158
Household and workplace registration......................... 158
Class labels................................................................ 158
Speak frankness......................................................... 159

Women’s Rights and Social Campaigns......................... 159
The Marriage Law....................................................... 160
Women and work....................................................... 161
Cleanness drives......................................................... 161
Public health.............................................................. 162
Moscow Conference.................................................... 163

The First Five-Year Plan................................................ 165
Priority industries....................................................... 165
Production quotas...................................................... 165
Loan repayments....................................................... 166
Women and work....................................................... 167
Agricultural stagnation.............................................. 167

Gao Gang and the High Tide of 1955............................ 168
Collectivisation debates.............................................. 168
The Gao Gang affair.................................................... 168
The high tide of collectivisation................................... 169
Nationalisation of industry.......................................... 170
Problems and debates............................................... 170

The Eighth Party Congress............................................ 170
The Hundred Flowers Campaign............................... 172
Initial resistance......................................................... 172
On contradictions...................................................... 173
Blaming and contesting............................................. 174
‘Poisonous weeds’...................................................... 174
The Anti-Rightist campaign....................................... 175
The Hundred Flowers: Historical interpretations........... 176

Chapter 6 Review....................................................... 179

Chapter 7: The Great Leap Forward (1958–1964)........... 180
The Great Leap Forward.............................................. 182
Five-year plans.......................................................... 182
The east prevails over the west wind........................... 182
Seeking truth from facts............................................. 182
The virtue of backwardness....................................... 183
Simultaneous development....................................... 183
Launching the Great Leap Forward......................... 184

People’s Communes................................................... 185
Bigger and more Socialist......................................... 185
From Socialism to Communism................................. 186
Backyard steel production........................................ 187
Communal kitchens................................................... 188

Experiments and Statistics.......................................... 189
Lysenkoism............................................................... 189
The Four Pests campaign.......................................... 189
Manipulating statistics.............................................. 190
Sceptics and deniers.................................................. 191
False surpluses.......................................................... 191

The End of the Great Leap.......................................... 192
The Wuhan Plenum.................................................... 192
President Liu Shaoqi................................................ 193
Fact-finding missions................................................ 193
The Lushan Plenum................................................... 194
Mao silences his critics.............................................. 194
Peng confronts Mao.................................................. 195
Peng Dehuai: 1898–1974............................................ 196
The significance of Lushan....................................... 197

The Three Bad Years Famine...................................... 197
A Mao-made famine.................................................. 198
Consequences of the famine...................................... 198
Was Mao really a monster? Historical interpretations.... 200
Mao’s policy: Culture Historical interpretations........... 201

The Sino-Soviet Split................................................... 202
Rising tensions.......................................................... 202
Nuclear technology................................................... 202
Mao and Khrushchev’s disputes................................. 202
The Soviets withdraw support.................................... 203
Realism and the end of diplomatic relations............... 203

Chapter 7 Review....................................................... 205

Chapter 8: Recovery and Retreat (1961–1965)................ 206
Post-Great Leap Recovery.......................................... 208

Liu Shaoqi ends the Great Leap Forward...................... 208
Save yourself production.......................................... 208
The 7000 Cadres Conference................................. 209
Mao’s warning to corrupt cadres............................... 209
The Socialist Education Movement......................... 210
Corruption and the ‘Ten Points’ directives............... 211
Mao and Liu’s different approaches.......................... 211
Mao’s frustration with the Party......................... 212

Emulation Campaigns.............................................. 212
Lin Biao and the Little Red Book.............................. 212
Learn from the PLA.................................................. 213
Learn from Lei Feng................................................ 213

Art and Politics.......................................................... 216
The rise of Wang Qian............................................. 216
Peng Zhen and Beijing Opera................................. 217
How Rui is dismissed from Office............................ 217
An academic or political matter?.............................. 218
The February Outline Report..................................... 218
Jiang’s Forum on Literature and Art....................... 218
Peng Zhen: 1902–1997.......................................... 219
Jiang Qing: 1914–1991............................................. 220

Eve of the Cultural Revolution................................. 221
The fall of Luo Ruiqing............................................ 221

Chapter 8 Review....................................................... 223

Launching the Cultural Revolution............................ 226
The May 16 Circular.................................................. 226
Understanding the Cultural Revolution..................... 227

The Red Guards......................................................... 228
Nie Yuan’s big-character poster.............................. 228
Student radicalism escalates..................................... 229
Red Guards............................................................... 229
Ritual violence.......................................................... 230
Work teams restore order........................................ 230
Mao’s Good Swim and the Sixteen Points..................... 230
The Good Swim....................................................... 230
The Sixteen Points.................................................... 230
Mao’s big-character poster..................................... 230

Rallies, Ghosts and Monsters..................................... 232
Red guard rallies....................................................... 232
‘Linking up’............................................................... 232
Snake spirits and cow demons................................. 234
Ritual humiliations................................................... 234
Red guard violence................................................... 235
The Chairman and Song Binbin.......................... 235
Assessing the brutality............................................. 236

The Four Olds Campaign.......................................... 236
Social changes......................................................... 239
Cultural destruction............................................... 239

The Cult of Mao......................................................... 240
Everyday life............................................................ 240
Everyday use of Mao quotes................................. 240

New rituals and Mao worship.................................... 241
The eight revolution model oases............................ 242
Seize Power! The January Storm and Fall of Liu Shaoqi...... 244
A new order............................................................. 244
Denunciation of Liu Shaoqi and Wang Guangmei........ 244
Denunciation of Party leaders................................ 245

 Factional infighting................................................... 245
Rebel workers........................................................... 246
The Shangh hai People’s Commune............................. 246
Restoring order......................................................... 247
Worker-Peasant Mao Zedong Thought Teams............. 247
The expulsion of Liu Shaoqi..................................... 248
Liu Shaoqi: 1901–1969........................................... 250

The ‘Victory’ of the Cultural Revolution....................... 252
The Ninth Party Congress.......................................... 252
Consequences of the period...................................... 252

Chapter 9 Review....................................................... 255

Chapter 10: The Last Emperor (1969–1976).................. 256
Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside............ 258
Culture shock............................................................ 258
Reflection and critical thinking................................ 259
May Seventh Schools............................................... 260
Improvements in rural life........................................ 260
‘Barefoot doctors’..................................................... 261
‘Cleansing the class ranks’........................................ 261
The Private Life of Chairman Mao.............................. 262

The Fall of Lin Biao..................................................... 265
Constitutional questions.......................................... 265
The Lushan Plenum................................................... 265
The fall of Chen Boda............................................... 266
The demise of Lin Biao............................................. 266
Project 571.............................................................. 267
The death of Lin Biao............................................... 267
The consequences of Lin’s downfall......................... 267
Peng’s ‘ping diplomacy’ and President Nixon............. 268

Mao’s Last Years....................................................... 270
Wang Hongwen and the return of Deng Xiaoping.......... 271
The Tenth Party Congress, 1973................................ 270
‘Crude Confucius and Lin Biao’............................... 271
Death of Premier Zhou........................................... 271
The rise of Hua Guofeng.......................................... 271
The death of Mao Zedong........................................ 273
The trial of the Gang of Four................................. 273

Chapter 10 Review....................................................... 277

Continuity and Changes in Chinese Society, 1912–1976.... 278
Endnotes..................................................................... 281
Glossary.................................................................... 281
Index........................................................................ 288
REVOLUTIONS—AN INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A REVOLUTION?

The term ‘revolution’ is used widely and often loosely. Consider for example, how advertisers frequently refer to products as ‘revolutionary’ to generate a sense of something being special or beneficial or even necessary. Understanding what a revolution is—and what it is not—is crucial in a study of Revolutions. This is no easy feat as sometimes the term ‘revolution’ is used by different people to mean different things. This is evident when we consider the differences between a revolution and other forms of conflict such as a rebellion, a revolt or a coup, and the ways in which these terms are sometimes randomly assigned to different events.

STUDYING REVOLUTIONS

The study of Revolutions is based on the understanding that revolutions ‘represent a great rupture in time and are a major turning point in the collapse and destruction of an existing political order which results in extensive change to society’. Often revolutions involve a transfer of power from the oppressor to the oppressed, from the privileged to the less privileged. In some instances, a revolution is a response to hierarchical authority and its inequalities, while in others a revolution can be a response to colonial oppression.

Typically, revolutions are driven by strong ideological beliefs about how society should operate. Central to these beliefs are ideas about equality and control, and how a government should balance these. It is important to note that while revolutions are considered primarily political events, there are also significant economic, social and cultural factors that need to be considered. In the context of Revolutions, these are examined through the lens of key historical thinking concepts.

THE CAUSES OF REVOLUTION

The causes of revolution are often complex and overlapping. It can be useful to consider the long-term and short-term causes, and the triggers, of revolution. If you consider the metaphor of a revolution as a fire, the descriptions to the right outline the role of each of these.

The path towards revolution is never a smooth one. Rarely do you see revolutionary tension steadily rise; rather it ebbs and flows as those in power attempt to put an end to discontent (through a combination of repression and reform). This results in periods of escalation and de-escalation of revolutionary beliefs and action. Identifying a series of crisis points in the lead up to revolution can help you more clearly see this process.

Of course, one of the challenges in a study of Revolutions is to evaluate the various factors that cause revolution. How are these factors related? Are some factors more significant than others? To what extent? Does this change over time? Why?

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLUTION

Seizing power is only one of the hurdles a revolutionary party or movement faces. All too often, the belief of further revolution or counter-revolution drives the new government’s decisions and actions. Revolutionary ideals may be compromised. Arguably, the consequences of revolution can be unintended—this study asks you to identify the intended and unintended effects of revolution and evaluate how these impacted different groups of people at the time. You should compare the perspectives of people within and between groups and evaluate the positive and negative consequences of living in the ‘new society’.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

Ultimately, the concepts of cause and consequence are used to understand not just the dynamics of a revolution but also to analyse the extent to which revolution results in change. The rhetoric of revolutionary leaders, parties and movements is often utopian—they promise a better life with greater freedom, less hierarchical control and more equality—but do they deliver? Sometimes the new regime ends up everywhere (or even more) repressive than the regime it supplanted.

In comparing the political, economic and social dimensions of life in the ‘old’ and ‘new’ societies, this course of study invites an appraisal of the changes and continuities a revolution brought to society. What changes were evident? Were they positive or negative? What stayed the same (continued)? Why? Did life change for all groups in society or just for some? How do we know?

SIGNIFICANCE

As you examine the causes and consequences of revolution, and the resultant changes and continuities, Revolutions also asks you to evaluate the relative significance of these. Were some movements, ideas, individuals and events more significant than others? Why/Why not? When assessing significance, consider:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>How many people did it affect?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>How long did it last?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profundity (how profound something is)</td>
<td>What intensity of change did it produce? Deep impact or surface-level change?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The causes of revolution are often complex and overlapping. It can be useful to consider the long-term and short-term causes, and the triggers, of revolution. If you consider the metaphor of a revolution as a fire, the descriptions to the right outline the role of each of these.

The sources of fuel needed to stage a revolution are long-held political, economic and social cultural structures, often based on issues of equality and control. These act to interrupt the status quo—much like chopping down a tree interrupts the ecology of a forest system.

SHORT-TERM CAUSES

Unresolved and growing over time, these structures generate grievances and resentments that metaphorically become the fuel for the revolutionary fire.

TRIGGERS

The spark that ignites a revolution can be planned or unplanned; it can be an event or the actions, or inactions, of an individual or a group. Regardless, the trigger often galvanises revolutionary movements into action. Sometimes that action involves a mass-movement, whilst at others it offers an opportunity that smaller groups can utilise to seize power.

ULTIMATELY, the complexities and moral dilemmas found in the study of revolutions makes for rewarding analysis and evaluation. As a student of revolutions it is your job to grapple with these concepts and construct your own evidence-based historical arguments.

written by Catherine Hart

1. VCAA, VCE History Study Design 2021–2026.

VIII CHINA RISING 3RD EDITION

CHINA RISING 3RD EDITION IX

HTAV • SAMPLE PAGES • ISBN 978-1-922481-06-1 • www.htavshop.com.au
**SECTION B**

**CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLUTION**

- What were the consequences of revolution?
- How did the new regime consolidate its power?
- What were the experiences of those who lived through the revolution?
- To what extent was society changed and revolutionary ideas achieved or compromised?

---

### THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

‘Go all out, aim high, and achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results.’

‘Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend.’

‘If it’s not spicy, it’s not revolutionary!’

‘We will never again be an insulted nation. We have stood up.’

---

### FOUR PESTS

1. Rat
2. Mouse
3. Mosquito
4. Beetle

---

### AVERAGE CHINESE PERSON’S LIFE EXPECTANCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Life Expectancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>35 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>57 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>63 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Steel Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1.31 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>4.48 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Raw Iron Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>5.9 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Electricity Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>7.26 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>19.34 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### 30–40 MILLION DEATHS FROM STARVATION DURING THE THREE BAD YEARS FAMINE

### 1.5 MILLION DEATHS IN THE CLEANSING THE CLASS RANKS CAMPAIGN

---

1. Extract from the VCE History Revolutions Study Design (2022–2026) © VCAA, reproduced by permission.
**Section B: Consequences of Revolution**

### Experiences of Revolution

#### Li Ming, student, May Fourth Movement c. 1919:

‘Down with imperialism! Down with Japan! Down with warlords! Why has the West betrayed China? The Chinese people must somehow find strength and unity. The nation is being sold out and carved up! My hope is for a new way forward through Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy. Mr. Confuso? Bah! Away with him!’

#### Zhang Jun, officer in the Nationalist army, c. 1934:

‘The Generalissimo has got it right. China needs a strong leader and the people need discipline. The Japanese are menacing in the north, but the Communists eat away at us from within. We must be rid of them and unite the nation. Right conduct, clean living, decency and self-respect are what the people need. I urge all patriots to rally behind Jiang Jieshi, the army and the Nationalist government!’

#### Wang Xiyue, intellectual, Anti-Rightist campaign c. 1957:

‘Mao called for “blooming and contending” and I took him at his word. I was nervous at first; the Party has not been kind to intellectuals. But I was wrong. I’ve been branded a Rightist. I’ll probably lose my job. My husband says he’ll “draw a line”. I’m so ashamed. I’ll probably lose my job. My husband says he’ll “draw a line”. I’m so ashamed. The rough boys really beat up our head teacher, which scared me a little, but the world belongs to us now. It’s right to rebel. Not to rebel is revisionism!’

#### Feng Guiying, peasant, Great Famine c. 1960:

‘We’re starving! There’s no grain. It was all wasted or taken away. My husband is dead and my children are dying. We haven’t had anything nutritious to eat for weeks, maybe months. The Commune canteen stopped serving anything besides hot water long ago. My husband scrounged some weeds and corn-husk, but we all got sick from that. And now he’s dead. The children cry but I’m too weak to look for more to eat. My legs have swollen and my teeth are loose. Everyone in the village is starving! So many have died.’

#### Chen Xiaofei, Red Guard, c. June 1966:

‘Chairman Mao is the red sun shining in my heart! Tomorrow my friends and I will go to Tiananmen and be reviewed by the Chairman. I know this will be the greatest day of my life! It’s been great since school finished. Good revolution! Big revolution! In a big way! The tough boys really beat up our head teacher, which scared me a little, but the world belongs to us now. It’s right to rebel. Not to rebel is revisionism!’

### Key People

- Du An Shizhen, soldier in Yuan Shikai’s Beiyang Army, c. 1915:
  - ‘The army made the revolution and the army rules the provinces. How can Sun Yixian’s so-called “people’s party” rule China? The Chinese respect the Women’s Association. I believe in Chairman Mao. He’s the head of our government.’
- John Davies, delegate of the US ‘Dixie Mission’, c. 1944:
  - ‘The Communists sure are tough folks! We could really use them to fight the Japs. They run a tight ship with their government too! The Nationalists really need to pull themselves together or else the Reds will sweep across the country. And trying to get ‘em to work together is darn near impossible. Who knows how this mess will play out!’
- Deng Dongfeng, ‘rebek’ factory worker, c. Jan 1967:
  - ‘The factory cadres used to say, “Do this, do that”; they were really rude and made sure they got the first pick of any special goods sent to the factory. Well not anymore! We’ve exposed all snake spirits and cow demons! It’s the workers who do the talking now. And guess what we say? Those in authority taking the capitalist road must be overthrown! Down with counter-revolutionary revisionists! Seize power! Chairman Mao trusts in the proletariat masses, and it’s by our dashing that victory will be achieved in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution! Ten thousand years of life to Chairman Mao!’
- Feng Xuan, student, Great Leap Forward, c. 1959:
  - ‘Go all-out, aim high, and achieve greater and more economical results in building socialism! This is what I’ve been encouraging. And see the result! The peasants have come together and are building the bridge to communism. The Communist is the leader to Heaven on Earth. The People’s Commune is great! Day and night my brigades smelt steel and send up Sputnik! Nothing can hold back the Chinese people. A bumper harvest is on the way and everyone has everything they need. Why don’t you go to the canteen and eat a nice big bowl of noodles and pork?’

### Discussion Questions

- **ACTIVITY**
  - Consider the perspectives portrayed here, then discuss the following as a class or in small groups:
    - Which person’s experience do you connect or empathise with the most?
    - Identify one or more historically significant events or developments that impacted on each person’s experience.
    - Select the person whose experience most highlights the ways that revolutionary ideas were achieved or compromised.

### Key Themes

- Chinese revolution
- Society and culture
- Politics and government
**SECTION B CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLUTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>20–21 September 1949 People's Political Consultative Conference drafts the preliminary constitution of the PRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1 May 1950 Marriage Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>7 December 1951 Launch of Three-Antis movement (sanfan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>31 March 1954 Gao Gang purged from CCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>30 July 1955 The High Tide begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>30 May 1956 Rally in Beijing celebrates joint state-private ownership of industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>8 October 1955 Mao approves Chinese intervention in the Korean War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1 January 1953 First Five-Year Plan begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1 January 1953 Launch of Two-Antis movement (wufan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>29 April 1958 Founding of first People's Commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1 March 1959 Mao's Good Swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>8 June 1959 End of Hundred Flowers campaign and launch of Anti-Rightist campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>24–27 September 1961 Tenth Plenum issues Sixteen Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>23 August 1962 Mao's speech, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People', invigorates Hundred Flowers campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>23 August 1962 'February Outline Report' on Wu Han issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1 August 1964 Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong made available for PLA use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>3 January 1965 Liu Shaoqi reconfirmed as President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>10 November 1965 Yao Wenyan publishes critical review of Hai Rui Dismissed from Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>13 September 1967 'Criticise Confucius and Lin Biao' campaign launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>9 September 1967 Mao Zedong dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>9 September 1967 ‘Three-day’ revision of anti-Rightist campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1 January 1970 ‘Three-in-one revolutionary committees’ directed to assume authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>14 January 1971 Deng Xiaoping resumes duties as Vice-Premier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>13 September 1971 US table-tennis team visits China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>9 September 1971 Mao Zedong dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>9 September 1971 Fall of Lin Biao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>9 September 1971 Mao Zedong dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>9 September 1971 Hua Guofeng appointed Acting Premier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIMELINE**

- **1950**
  - 1 May 1950: Marriage Law
  - 8 October 1950: Launch of Three-Antis movement (sanfan)
- **1951**
  - 7 December 1951: Launch of Three-Antis movement (sanfan)
- **1952**
  - 31 March 1954: Gao Gang purged from CCP
- **1953**
  - 30 May 1956: Rally in Beijing celebrates joint state-private ownership of industries
  - 30 May 1956: Launch of Two-Antis movement (wufan)
- **1954**
  - 8 June 1959: End of Hundred Flowers campaign and launch of Anti-Rightist campaign
- **1955**
  - 24–27 September 1951: Tenth Plenum issues Sixteen Points
- **1956**
  - 23 August 1962: Mao's speech, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People', invigorates Hundred Flowers campaign
  - 10 November 1965: Yao Wenyan publishes critical review of Hai Rui Dismissed from Office
- **1957**
  - 13 September 1967: 'Criticise Confucius and Lin Biao' campaign launched
- **1958**
  - 9 September 1967: Mao Zedong dies
- **1959**
  - 1 January 1959: Mao's Good Swim
- **1960**
  - 8 June 1959: End of Hundred Flowers campaign and launch of Anti-Rightist campaign
- **1961**
  - 23 August 1962: 'February Outline Report' on Wu Han issue
- **1962**
  - 14 July–16 August 1959: Peng Dehuai branded as 'anti-Party element'. Great Leap Forward reaffirmed at Lushan Plenum
  - 30 September 1959: Khroushchev receives hostile reception during visit to China
- **1963**
  - 8 August 1966: Central Committee releases the Sixteen Points
  - 5 August 1966: Mao puts up 'My First Big Character Poster: Bombard the Headquarters!'
With the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese Communists took on the challenge of bringing stability to a nation torn by decades of war and economic turmoil. Despite this, the early period of the People’s Republic was remarkably successful. In the space of three years the government revived the economy and established a new social and political order. But although they were making improvements, the CCP government was hostile to any dissent. A series of mass campaigns was used to repress people who were seen as socially and politically unreliable.

The CCP adopted a Soviet-style Five-Year Plan in a bid to expand the economy and create a socialist society. This achieved rapid gains in heavy industry, although China’s agricultural sector struggled to keep pace. By the mid-1950s, the CCP faced several challenges. To overcome them, Mao Zedong launched the Hundred Flowers campaign to put the government back on track and ease tensions in Chinese society. However, Mao was shocked by the subsequent outpouring of dissatisfaction, and ultimately turned on those who criticised the Party.

The Anti-Rightist campaign that followed silenced popular dissent, but caused great suffering and setbacks in China’s intellectual circles.

Mao Zedong

‘Democracy is practised within the ranks of the people ... The right to vote belongs only to the people and not to reactionaries. The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, this is the people’s democratic dictatorship.’

KEY QUESTIONS

- How did the Chinese Communist Party respond to its immediate challenges and consolidate its authority?
- What were the key features of China’s political system as the People’s Republic? What were the ideological foundations of the PRC?
- Why did the People’s Republic of China become involved in an international conflict on the Korean peninsula? What were the consequences of the Korean War for China?
- How were mass campaigns used to both consolidate the power of the new regime and achieve its broader revolutionary agenda? How were different social groups impacted by these campaigns?
- What improvements and advancements were made in general health and women’s rights?
- What were the key features of the First Five-Year Plan?
- What were the successes and limitations of the plan?
- What did the Gao Gang Affair reveal about tensions in the CCP leadership? What aspect of Mao’s approach to politics emerged during the affair?
- Why did Mao encourage the Hundred Flowers campaign?
- What were the consequences of the Hundred Flowers campaign?
THE NEW ORDER

Mao Zedong: ‘Our constitution is of a new socialist type, different from any of the bourgeois type.’

A NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM

On 20–21 September 1949, the CCP held a conference in Beijing to draft a constitution to outline the new political order of the People’s Republic of China. The subsequent laws were a clear appeal to national unity. Eight ‘democratic parties’, including the Democratic League and Guomindang Revolutionary Committee, would govern alongside the Communists. Eleven of the twenty-four ministers in the new government were non-Communists. Historian Jonathan Fenby argues that this amounted to ‘window-dressing; the non-Communist politicians were known as ‘flower vases’—there for decoration’. The CCP remained the dominant authority. In 1954, a formal constitution was drawn up and the first National People’s Congress was held. This constitution formally established the processes and structures of government that continue to this day.

KEY EVENTS

1 May 1950—Marriage Law
28 June 1950—Agrarian Reform Law (fanshen)
8 October 1950—Mao approves Chinese intervention in the Korean War
7 December 1951—Launch of Three-Antis movement (sanfan)
1 February 1952—Beginning of Five-Antis movement (wufan)
1 January 1953—First Five-Year Plan begins
31 March 1954—Gao Gang purged from CCP
30 July 1955—The High Tide begins
27 February 1957—Mao’s speech, ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People’, invigorates Hundred Flowers campaign
8 June 1957—End of Hundred Flowers campaign and launch of Anti-Rightist campaign

NATIONAL PEOPLE’S CONGRESS AND STATE COUNCIL

The National People’s Congress (NPC), a parliament of sorts, was the end result of a multi-tiered process:
1. Local assemblies elected county representatives.
2. The county representatives then chose representatives for the provincial level.
3. The provincial body then elected delegates for municipal assemblies.
4. The municipal assemblies then decided who would sit in the NPC.

A Standing Committee presided over matters in the Congress. The NPC elected Mao head of state, or President. The new government, called the State Council, was a cabinet made up of ministers. It was headed by Premier Zhou Enlai, who also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Provincial, county and municipal governments implemented policies at the lower levels.

CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Chinese Communist Party, with Mao as Chairman, provided the core personnel of government and was the real seat of power. Technically, the CCP was not the government, but the Party was interwoven with the state. The CCP had a centralised, hierarchical structure. The Communist National Party Congress, which met irregularly, represented delegates from lower-level Party bodies from across the nation, including:

- six regional committees
- twenty-nine provincial committees
- around 2,900 county and city committees.

The Party Congress—which is not to be confused with the National Congress—voted in a Central Committee that would debate and suggest amendments to major policies.

DID YOU KNOW?

When workers placed the new Communist symbols on the Gate of Heavenly Peace at Tiananmen Square, they put the old Republican emblems in a storeroom. In that storeroom, they found the emblems of China’s dynasties that had also been forgotten in dusty storage.

DID YOU KNOW?

On the eve of the capture of Beijing in 1949, Mao remarked: ‘Today we’re heading into the capital to take the gong-ko [big test]’—highest imperial exam], no wonder everyone is nervous ... All of us have to make the grade.’
Meetings of the Central Committee were called plenums or plenary sessions. The Central Committee also selected the members of the higher-ranking Politburo, which met more regularly and had fewer members.

An elite group of around five men made up the Standing Committee of the Politburo—a powerful and dominant body that guided other members of the Politburo. In the early 1950s, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Chen Yun (Ch’en Yun) and Liu Shaoqi were all members of the Standing Committee. The final Communist organisation was the Secretariat. It was the administrative arm of the Central Committee, and supervised and facilitated communication between higher and lower committees. Deng Xiaoping was the Secretary-General of the Secretariat. All government functions were carried out under close Party direction and major policies originated from the Politburo. 5

MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

In the new government, the military had close ties to the Party and state. The People’s Liberation Army was closely supervised by the Military Affairs Committee (which was under the Politburo). Leading figures in the military, such as Peng Dehuai and Lin Biao, held key positions in both the Party and the government. Historian Rowan Callick highlights the significance of the Party’s relationship to the PLA that continues to this day: ‘It is not the army of the government, or of China more generally, but of the CCP’. 6

PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP

In his 1940 work On New Democracy, Mao spoke of China undergoing revolution in its ‘bourgeois-democratic’ phase in transition to socialism. 1 However, this transitional stage certainly did not require a capitalist liberal democracy. Nor was China a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, like the Soviet Union. After 1949, Mao said that state power, in theory, would be exercised through a ‘people’s democratic dictatorship’ of the four ‘revolutionary classes’:

1. peasantry
2. proletariat (workers)
3. petite-bourgeoisie (lower-middle class; often small business owners)
4. national capitalists (managerial middle class; “loyal industrialists”)

Regardless of class, everyone was guided by the Communist Party. It was a relationship symbolised by the four stars on the flag of the People’s Republic. Mao did not see any contradiction in the idea of a ‘democratic dictatorship’. According to Mao:

Democracy is practised within the ranks of the people... The right to vote belongs only to the people and not to reactionaries. The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is in the people’s democratic dictatorship. 5

In the People’s Republic, the ‘new democratic’ coalition of revolutionary classes upheld a dictatorship over ‘reactionaries’ and ‘bad elements’. As the Party of the proletariat (or working class), the Communists claimed the right to administer and guide the new society to socialism.

CONSOLIDATING COMMUNIST POWER

Mao Zedong: ‘The Chinese revolution is great, but the road after the revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous.’

The first few years of the new regime were guided by practical considerations. The key areas of attention included:

• setting up an effective administration
• maintaining law and order
• reviving the economy 7

Reconstruction and consolidation were pressing concerns, but reliable and effective administrators were hard to find. Although the Communists had governed the Liberated Areas during the Civil War, the 4.5 million members of the CCP made up less than 1 per cent of the Chinese population. 8 Ruling one of the world’s largest and most populous nations was a different prospect to running a soviet community.

At first, civil servants who had served under the Guomindang were encouraged to stay at their posts. They were promised decent salaries and urged to work for a new China. Many accepted the offer. Educated Chinese people living overseas were encouraged to come back and help rebuild the homeland. Many people in the West gave up good careers to contribute to the new society without any understanding of Communist policies or outlook. Many would come to deeply regret this decision. 9
working with national capitalists

To ease their transition to power, the Communists expressed their willingness to use the resources and expertise of ‘national capitalists’—industrialists who were willing to give support to the CCP. Mao hoped to keep the economy stable, and offered China’s small but influential managerial middle class the opportunity to work with the new government. Many were compensated for factories or equipment taken by the Communist authorities.

However, such favourable treatment was not extended to all the urban elite. Some businesspeople were denounced as bureaucratic capitalists if they:

- had worked too closely with the former GMD government
- had collaborated with Japanese authorities
- were suspected of being hostile to the CCP.

The property of these ‘bureaucratic capitalists’ was confiscated by the state. Despite this approach, the Communists tried to retain the managers of most enterprises. For example, one deputy manager at a Beijing factory trembled before the arrival of a CCP official who could have replaced him. Zhou Enlai: ‘The Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they ... tolerate seeing their neighbours invaded by imperialists.’

new currency

Financial stability—which the Nationalist government had been unable to reach—was achieved with commendable speed. In May 1949, a new ‘people’s currency’ was introduced, called the yuan or renminbi.

The government enforced strict control over currency exchange, and decreased the amount of paper money in circulation by nationalising all banks. A simple but effective pay system was introduced, with wages based on the price of five basic items:

- flour
- cotton cloth
- coal
- oil
- rice

Price controls were also brought in, which meant that wages stayed in line with the basic cost of living and were less likely to lead to inflation. Taxes were also reformed and made fairer. This eased financial pressure on people with little money and increased government revenue from 6.5 billion yuan in 1950 to 13.3 billion yuan in 1951.

The rampant inflation of the Nationalist years—which had reached 85,000 per cent in 1949—was brought down to 15 per cent by 1952.

The role of the army

While Communist influence was being applied in urban areas, the military brought remote rural areas under central control. By 1951 the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) had already controlled much of China. The PLA also played a major role in the governance of China during the early 1950s. Political commissars, who continued to carry out propaganda work, were officers in the PLA. Many others with positions in the civilian government also held posts in the army.

Chen Duxiu: ‘The Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they ... tolerate seeing their neighbours invaded by imperialists.’

the korean war

The North Korean and South Korean flags

38th parallel a line of latitude (like the equator) that marks the approximate border between North Korea and South Korea

Before the People’s Republic was even one year old, it was drawn into an international war in Korea. This was a costly conflict at a time when China desperately needed to focus on reconstruction—the war made this task even more difficult. The war would also affect domestic social and political campaigns by heightening fear of spies and ‘counter-revolutionary’ influences. However, the Korean War ultimately showed that the Chinese Communist government was a new force in international politics.

North Korean ambitions

After Japan was defeated in 1945 at the end of World War II, Korea was divided at the 38th parallel. There was a Communist government in the north, under Kim Il-sung, and an American-backed government in the south. Kim hoped to match Mao’s success and unite Korea under Communist rule. The armed forces of the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea were strengthened by Soviet military equipment. Further reassurance to the North Koreans came on 12 January 1950, when US Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced that South Korea and Taiwan were not within the ‘defensive perimeter’ of the United States’ international interests.

In 1949, Kim had raised the possibility of waging war against South Korea and Josef Stalin had largely approved of the idea. However, Stalin had warned Kim: ‘If you should get kicked in the teeth, I shall not lift a finger. You have to ask Mao for all the help.’ Stalin also said that the question of war in Korea must be decided by the Chinese and Korean comrades.

Despite Stalin making it clear that China would have to bail Kim out if he got into trouble, Mao was left out of the negotiations. In May 1950, Kim flew to Beijing and...
told Mao that Stalin approved of his forthcoming campaign. Mao gave his support—although Kim conveniently failed to mention that Stalin would not ‘lift a finger’ in the East. Nor did Kim give Mao a detailed briefing. For his part, Mao did not foresee that Chinese troops would need to fight on the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile, Mao was focused on his own plans. He intended to demobilise PLA troops in the north and use them to invade Taiwan—the island stronghold where Jiang Jieshi and the remnants of the GMD had fled in late 1949.

**NORTH INVADES SOUTH**

On 25 June 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel. Within weeks they had pushed back the South Korean Army and taken almost the entire Korean peninsula. The southern capital, Seoul, fell in just three days. US President Harry Truman was quick to react. He decided that a Communist victory in Korea could not be tolerated and secured the United Nations’ backing for intervention.

On 15 September, the American military and their Western allies under the command of General Douglas MacArthur launched a spectacular counter-offensive. MacArthur’s troops routed the North Koreans, swept past the 38th parallel and captured the northern capital Pyongyang. As they continued their advance towards the Chinese border, Kim Il-sung begged Mao for help.

Mao and his comrades were alarmed. They did not want to see their Communist ally fall to US ‘imperialism’. Nor did they want a hostile government installed in North Korea, which bordered China’s industrial heartland in Manchuria. A hastily convened meeting of the top CCP leaders debated what to do. General Lin Biao and China’s leading economist, Chen Yun, urged caution. The People’s Republic could hardly afford a costly war when economic reconstruction was such a pressing priority. However, Mao, Premier Zhou Enlai and General Zhu De felt that intervention was necessary. Urgent communications were made to the USSR—and Stalin agreed to involve the Soviet air force.

**CHINA JOINS THE WAR**

Earlier, Mao had warned Kim Il-sung: ‘Your enemy is not an easy one. Don’t forget, you are fighting the chief imperialist. Be prepared for the worst.’ Mao barely slept for days as the decision to oppose America was debated. Lin Biao, claimed he was ill and refused to lead the campaign. General Peng Dehuai, a tough, no-nonsense veteran of the Long March, was called in to command the ‘People’s Volunteers’, as the Chinese expeditionary force was named.

Meanwhile, Zhou Enlai warned the Americans to halt their advance. MacArthur ignored the warning, apparently oblivious to the 2 million Chinese troops massing across the Yalu River, which marked the border between China and Korea. At this point, Stalin withdrew his promise of Soviet air support, claiming his forces were not properly prepared. 7 The Chinese now had two choices:

- **continue alone without Soviet air cover**
- **lose face** by withdrawing their offer of support to Kim.

The Chinese decided to honour their commitment to the Korean Communists. On 8 October 1950, Mao officially approved the campaign and on 15 October the People’s Volunteers crossed the Yalu River.

**STALEMATE AND CEASEFIRE**

American reconnaissance failed to determine the strength of Chinese forces in North Korea, and estimated that 10,000 troops had crossed the border. In reality, Peng Dehuai had 350,000 troops ready, with more on the way. Unaware of the true number of Chinese troops, General MacArthur confidently declared that he would ‘get the boys home by Christmas’ and continued to move as quickly as he could towards the Yalu River.

On 25 November, the Chinese slammed 200,000 troops into the US forces and, by sheer weight of numbers, forced them into a headlong retreat south. In seven weeks, North Korea was retaken and, in January, Seoul was recaptured by the Communists. However, the success of the People’s Volunteers came at a huge price as:

- the temperature had dropped to –30°C
- Chinese soldiers suffered greatly from exposure
- inferior firepower and lack of air cover led to an appalling loss of Chinese troops

By the end of the war, 900,000 Chinese soldiers were out of action, missing, wounded or killed. 8 Among the 500,000 deaths was Mao’s oldest son, Anying. The Americans and their allies had 375,000 men out of action, 54,000 of whom had been killed.

By January 1951, UN forces had launched an effective counterattack and fought the Chinese to a bloody stalemate at the 38th parallel. MacArthur wanted to use nuclear weapons against the Chinese. However, this was unacceptable to President Truman, who sacked MacArthur and installed General Matthew Ridgway in his place. An uneasy ceasefire was called in July 1951, although it was not until 27 July 1953 that a formal armistice was signed. Today the North Korea–South Korean border remains heavily guarded and buffered by a demilitarised zone. Tensions still run high and incidents and incursions have killed hundreds of soldiers from both sides.

**DIID YOU KNOW?**

The residents of Seoul suffered terribly during the Korean War. The city was reduced to rubble and changed hands three times. The civilian population fell from 1.5 million to 200,000. General MacArthur said: ‘After I looked at that wreckage and those thousands of women and children and everything, I vomited.’

The residents of Seoul suffered terribly during the Korean War. The city was reduced to rubble and changed hands three times. The civilian population fell from 1.5 million to 200,000. General MacArthur said: ‘After I looked at that wreckage and those thousands of women and children and everything, I vomited.’

Mao did not hear about the death of his son Anying for three months. When Peng Dehuai accidentally let the news slip during a meeting with Mao, the Chairman was visibly shaken and silent for some time. Then he lit a cigarette and said: ‘In revolutionary war, you always pay a price. Anying was one of thousands—who shouldn’t take it as something special just because he was my son. Mao Anying was buried alongside other common soldiers in Korea.’

**DIID YOU KNOW?**

Mao did not hear about the death of his son Anying for three months. When Peng Dehuai accidentally let the news slip during a meeting with Mao, the Chairman was visibly shaken and silent for some time. Then he lit a cigarette and said: ‘In revolutionary war, you always pay a price. Anying was one of thousands—who shouldn’t take it as something special just because he was my son. Mao Anying was buried alongside other common soldiers in Korea.’
CONSEQUENCES OF THE KOREAN WAR

The Korean War had great repercussions for China’s new regime. In 1951, the USA successfully sponsored a UN resolution that declared China to be the aggressor in Korea. An economic embargo was enforced, which set back the economy significantly. The PRC was excluded from the United Nations until the 1970s, and ‘China’ was represented by Jiang’s Republican China (ROC), based in Taiwan.

During the Korean War, America vowed to support Taiwan in the event of any future Communist aggression. This put an end to China’s plans to invade Taiwan from the mainland, and made the People’s Republic more reliant on Soviet support. Meanwhile, land reform and political movements that had been proceeding with moderation, were dramatically intensified. ‘The Chinese were whipped up into a virtual frenzy; with a campaign to ‘Resist America, Aid Korea’. The Chinese press spread rumours of American atrocities, such as the use of germ warfare and the testing of atomic weapons in Nevada on Chinese prisoners of war. In this superheated atmosphere,’ historian Philip Short argues, ‘the campaign to suppress counter-revolutionaries burned white-hot.’

The Korean War cost the People’s Republic dearly, and Mao admitted later that the war was a mistake. ‘100 per cent wrong.’ As well as the huge number of casualties, a vast amount of money was needed to finance the war. In 1952, Mao said: ‘Last year what we spent on the war to resist US aggression and aid Korea more or less equalled our expenditures for national reconstruction.’ Yet the Korean War was also a great boost to Heightened national morale for China.

Agrarian Reform Law

Land reform had long been a focus of the Chinese Communist movement, and many peasants considered it to be the fundamental element of the revolution. With the founding of the People’s Republic, the CCP formalised this ideal into policy through the Agrarian Reform Law of 26 June 1950. Thousands of Party officials were sent out to the countryside to organise nationwide campaigns to redistribute land and denounce landlords. The key principle underpinning this revolution in the villages was fanshen, or ‘turning over’. Work teams of Communist activists established Peasants’ Assemblies that helped to identify the ‘reactionaries’ and ‘counter-revolutionaries’ in their local area. One activist recalled:

A CCP cadre’s account of the land reform campaign


Once the landlords had been identified, meetings were held so that everyone in the village could denounce the landlords. These were called ‘Speak Bitterness’ meetings, and were an opportunity to ‘stand up’ by publicly expressing indignation after years of being mistreated and exploited. The Speak Bitterness meetings were emotionally charged—many people making accusations wept or screamed out in anger, as did the operators.

SPEAK BITTERNESS

After the peasants had ‘spoken bitter’, a People’s Tribunal decided the fate of the ‘counter-revolutionaries’. One activist recalled:

CADRES THEN TRIED TO GET THE PEASANTS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE EXPLOITATIVE LANDLORDS WERE TO BLAME FOR THEIR POVERTY.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many Western Christian missionaries were expelled from China during the Korean War, accused of being ‘spies’.
LAND REFORM ESCALATES

Two factors led to the radical intensification of the land reform mass campaign.

First, once the class struggle and passions of rural people had been unleashed, they were harder to contain than the Communists had anticipated. Fan Shen was based on a moderate approach to dealing with the larger and wealthier landowners, and aimed to protect the more productive farms to ensure that food supplies were not disrupted. However, local People’s Tribunals did not always take this into account, and their bitterness could be excessive. As a peasant named Qiu Quanqiang recalled: ‘The People’s Tribunals were ferocious’.

Second, once the Korean War got underway, fear of counter-revolutionary influences meant that attitudes towards landlords hardened. A wave of executions swept the countryside. It is difficult to determine the exact number of deaths. Although the figure of 1 million is often cited, historian Jasper Becker argues that 2 million to 5 million landlords may have been executed.

Mao lent his full support to the judgements and punishments of the People’s Tribunals. The aim was to destroy the traditional rural order, dominated by the political and social standing of the landlords, so that a socialist order could emerge in its place.

Land reform also brought much support to the new regime. One important aspect was to have the peasants carry out the agrarian reform themselves. Historian Philip Short explains that ‘peasants who killed with their bare hands the landlords who oppressed them were wedded to the new revolutionary order in a way that passive spectators could never be’.

Land reform movement both:
- fulfilled an essential revolutionary ideal for the peasants
- actively involved the peasants in the revolutionary movement.

According to historian Frank Dikötter, the land reforms were ‘a pact sealed in blood between the Party and the poor’. The peasants were now complicit in making the new society—including its expressions of revolutionary violence.

Intellectuals were required to attend mass meetings, where they were put into small groups for intense discussion. Thought Reform involved reading Marxist texts and making lengthy self-criticisms. Part of this process was writing your autobiography—usually with repeated editing. Essentially, this involved admitting to every one of your ‘bourgeois’ habits. As the process went on, intellectuals were called before ‘struggle sessions’ where they reported on their progress and were judged by Communist cadres, their peers and groups of workers or students. Those considered to be insufficiently reformed were sent for ‘re-education’—which meant hard labour in the countryside. Most were subjected to months of self-criticism and ‘struggle’.

PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS

One feature of the Thought Reform movement was highly publicised denunciations of well-known intellectuals. Although the famed language reformer Hu Shi (Hu Shih) lived in Taiwan—where he had been Foreign Affairs Minister under Jiang Jieshi—his followers and his ideas were attacked with menace. In 1933, Liang Shuming (Liang Shu-ming), a member of the Democratic League Party, received a verbal hammering from Mao during a government meeting. When Liang voiced concerns about CCP policies in rural areas, Mao snatched the microphone and snarled: ‘I suppose you think you are very beautiful … but to me you stink’. For the next hour, Mao outlined why intellectuals such as Liang were in need of rectification:

Mao’s criticism of Liang Shuming

There are two ways of killing people: one is to kill with a gun and the other with a pen. The way which is most artfully disguised and draws no blood is to kill with the pen. That is the kind of murderer you are. Liang Shuming is utterly reactionary … What service did you do, Liang Shuming? In all your life, what service have you ever done for the people? Not the slightest, not the least bit.

In 1953, Mao personally initiated a campaign against Communist literary theorist and writer Hu Feng, who had criticised the politicisation of popular culture. Hu was accused of heading an anti-Party conspiracy, arrested, and imprisoned until 1979.

Historian Maurice Meisner argues that the Communists saw their campaign as ‘educational’ rather than vindictive. It was designed to produce ‘correct thoughts’ that would, in turn, bring about correct political and social behaviours.

Thought Reform helped some people to understand themselves in a new way. However, it was a traumatic and psychologically taxing experience that was mostly used as punishment. Some people later referred to it as ‘a carefully cultivated Auschwitz of the mind’. Thought Reform scared China’s intellectual classes into submission, but preserved their skills and knowledge for the service of the new society.

SANFAN: THE THREE ANTIS

A Three Antis campaign (sanfan) against ‘corruption, waste and bureaucratism’ was launched in 1953. This was carried out alongside Thought Reform.

Sanfan aimed to uncover politically unreliable government officials and corrupt party cadres. Public servants who had worked for the Guomindang were kept under close scrutiny. Mao declared: ‘We need to have a good clean up … which will thoroughly uncover all cases of corruption whether major, medium or minor, and aim the main

PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS

One feature of the Thought Reform movement was highly publicised denunciations of well-known intellectuals. Although the famed language reformer Hu Shi (Hu Shih) lived in Taiwan—where he had been Foreign Affairs Minister under Jiang Jieshi—his followers and his ideas were attacked with menace. In 1933, Liang Shuming (Liang Shu-ming), a member of the Democratic League Party, received a verbal hammering from Mao during a government meeting. When Liang voiced concerns about CCP policies in rural areas, Mao snatched the microphone and snarled: ‘I suppose you think you are very beautiful … but to me you stink’. For the next hour, Mao outlined why intellectuals such as Liang were in need of rectification:

Mao’s criticism of Liang Shuming

There are two ways of killing people: one is to kill with a gun and the other with a pen. The way which is most artfully disguised and draws no blood is to kill with the pen. That is the kind of murderer you are. Liang Shuming is utterly reactionary … What service did you do, Liang Shuming? In all your life, what service have you ever done for the people? Not the slightest, not the least bit.

In 1953, Mao personally initiated a campaign against Communist literary theorist and writer Hu Feng, who had criticised the politicisation of popular culture. Hu was accused of heading an anti-Party conspiracy, arrested, and imprisoned until 1979.

Historian Maurice Meisner argues that the Communists saw their campaign as ‘educational’ rather than vindictive. It was designed to produce ‘correct thoughts’ that would, in turn, bring about correct political and social behaviours.

Thought Reform helped some people to understand themselves in a new way. However, it was a traumatic and psychologically taxing experience that was mostly used as punishment. Some people later referred to it as ‘a carefully cultivated Auschwitz of the mind’. Thought Reform scared China’s intellectual classes into submission, but preserved their skills and knowledge for the service of the new society.

SANFAN: THE THREE ANTIS

A Three Antis campaign (sanfan) against ‘corruption, waste and bureaucratism’ was launched in 1953. This was carried out alongside Thought Reform.

Sanfan aimed to uncover politically unreliable government officials and corrupt party cadres. Public servants who had worked for the Guomindang were kept under close scrutiny. Mao declared: ‘We need to have a good clean up … which will thoroughly uncover all cases of corruption whether major, medium or minor, and aim the main

PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS

One feature of the Thought Reform movement was highly publicised denunciations of well-known intellectuals. Although the famed language reformer Hu Shi (Hu Shih) lived in Taiwan—where he had been Foreign Affairs Minister under Jiang Jieshi—his followers and his ideas were attacked with menace. In 1933, Liang Shuming (Liang Shu-ming), a member of the Democratic League Party, received a verbal hammering from Mao during a government meeting. When Liang voiced concerns about CCP policies in rural areas, Mao snatched the microphone and snarled: ‘I suppose you think you are very beautiful … but to me you stink’. For the next hour, Mao outlined why intellectuals such as Liang were in need of rectification:

Mao’s criticism of Liang Shuming

There are two ways of killing people: one is to kill with a gun and the other with a pen. The way which is most artfully disguised and draws no blood is to kill with the pen. That is the kind of murderer you are. Liang Shuming is utterly reactionary … What service did you do, Liang Shuming? In all your life, what service have you ever done for the people? Not the slightest, not the least bit.

In 1953, Mao personally initiated a campaign against Communist literary theorist and writer Hu Feng, who had criticised the politicisation of popular culture. Hu was accused of heading an anti-Party conspiracy, arrested, and imprisoned until 1979.

Historian Maurice Meisner argues that the Communists saw their campaign as ‘educational’ rather than vindictive. It was designed to produce ‘correct thoughts’ that would, in turn, bring about correct political and social behaviours.

Thought Reform helped some people to understand themselves in a new way. However, it was a traumatic and psychologically taxing experience that was mostly used as punishment. Some people later referred to it as ‘a carefully cultivated Auschwitz of the mind’. Thought Reform scared China’s intellectual classes into submission, but preserved their skills and knowledge for the service of the new society.

SANFAN: THE THREE ANTIS

A Three Antis campaign (sanfan) against ‘corruption, waste and bureaucratism’ was launched in 1953. This was carried out alongside Thought Reform.

Sanfan aimed to uncover politically unreliable government officials and corrupt party cadres. Public servants who had worked for the Guomindang were kept under close scrutiny. Mao declared: ‘We need to have a good clean up … which will thoroughly uncover all cases of corruption whether major, medium or minor, and aim the main
blows at the most corrupt, while following the policy of educating and remoulding the medium and minor embezzlers so that they will not relapse.34

**WUFAN: THE FIVE ANTIS**

In 1957, the Three Antis were expanded into the Five Antis, wufan, which targeted tax evasion, fraud, ‘cheating’ (excessively profiting from government contracts), theft of government property and bribery.

Businessmen and industrialists who had previously been reassured of their place in the People’s Republic suddenly became the target of wufan. Historian Jack Gray describes the campaign as ‘an opportunity to pulverize China’s capitalists politically’.35 Mao believed that it was the ‘sugar coated bullets’ of bourgeois capitalists that brought about the corruption of Communist cadres and government officials.

During the wufan campaign, 450,000 businesses were investigated.36 Fines were handed out and some businessmen were imprisoned. Between 1952 and 1953, most factories became joint ventures between private owners and the state, as heavy fines took their toll on China’s industrialists. Historian Ross Terrill argues that the Chinese Communists did not need to destroy the bourgeoisie, as they were easily subdued by the new order: ‘Many capitalists simply turned red when the heat went on, silently , like lobsters put in hot water’.37

**PURGES AND EXECUTIONS**

One feature of the Land Reform, Thought Reform and the Antis movements was the use of mass campaigns to mobilise ordinary people. This became an ongoing characteristic of the People’s Republic:

- **Cadres** were encouraged to report on their comrades
- **Workers** informed on their bosses
- **Neighbours** kept an eye on each other.

Few people were tried in a formal court. Instead, people suspected of any of the Antis were brought before a mass meeting of workers and Party activists. Suspects were ‘struggled’ against and made to confess their crimes. A struggle could go on for days before a satisfactory confession was given. A punishment was then decided. In some cases, managers and officials were removed from their positions and sentenced to hard labour. Some were executed.

However, it was more common that people who were found guilty were shamed through public denunciation and were given large fines. The experience was often harrowing, as the humiliation of ‘losing face’ and the pressures of ‘struggle sessions’ were too much for some. Zhou Qingqi, the wife of a well-to-do Shanghai businessman, recalled: ‘So many wealthy people committed suicide at this time. They could not stand the idea of a public trial.’38

**HOUSEHOLD AND WORKPLACE REGISTRATION**

As soon as the CCP came to power, structures were put in place for applying Party influence among everyday people through compulsory registration of both:

- **Household (hukou)**
- **Workplace (danwei)**

**ACTIVITY**

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Who was a target of the following mass campaigns?
   - Land reform (fanshen)
   - Thought Reform
   - Three Antis (sanfan)
   - Five Antis (wufan)

2. What similarities did these campaigns share? How did they differ?

3. Define the following terms:
   - hukou
   - danwei
   - fanshen

4. How did these measures encourage conformity and consolidate the power of the CCP in the PRC?

5. Explain how the mass campaigns impacted on the everyday lives of those affected.
Women hold up half the sky. ' 
Mao Zedong: ‘Women hold up half the sky’

The Communist government brought about significant benefits in the social and economic standing of women. In May 1950, the new government passed its first piece of major legislation — the Marriage Law. This law:

• gave women the same legal rights as men
• banned customs such as arranged marriages, child marriages, polygamy and footbinding
• permitted women to choose their own partners
• permitted women to divorce abusive husbands

Further laws guaranteed women the right to equal pay, maternity benefits and, in some cases, work-based childcare. Women’s rights were enshrined in Article 48 of the Constitution.

The new regime provided greater opportunities for women to join the workforce and be involved in Party campaigns through street committees or by holding positions of responsibility in government organisations. The writer Han Suixin heard the following radio announcement in the early 1950s: ‘It is better for a woman to have big hands and big feet. Big feet are beautiful, big hands are capable hands. A white skin is sickly.’

Women were now being assured of their useful roles in society, rather than being judged on their appearance.

There was also a dedicated national body for women’s rights: the All-China Women’s Federation. The Federation was founded in 1949 and quickly gained a membership of 76 million. It celebrated women’s contributions to society and advocated for policies to improve women’s daily lives. The Federation had offices in every level of government and published its own magazine: Women of China.

Despite the emphasis the Federation placed on the role of the Communist Party in freeing women from male domination, it had progressive political figures in its membership, such as honorary President Soong Qingling (who was Sun Yixian’s widow). The Federation provided a platform for women’s voices and activism.

The People’s Republic of China (1949–1957)

Chapter 6

Women’s Rights and Social Campaigns

The Spirit of Change: China in Revolution


Registration of marriage by free choice

As a young man during the New Culture Movement, Mao Zedong wrote a number of articles explaining the importance of women’s rights.
CLEANLINESS DRIVES

The down-level street committees played an important role in social welfare. Their main role was explaining government decrees and organising mass meetings. However, the heads of the committees also:

- mediated in family and neighbourhood disputes
- organised rubbish collections and fire prevention
- distributed welfare to the needy
- organised local recreational activities.

In a spectacular drive to improve cleanliness in the new society, people were mobilised to clean the laneways, their household belongings and what seemed like every inch of urban living space. Throngs of residents would be seen in the street scrubbing, polishing and sweeping. Street committee officials visited each household to inspect housework. Keeping up to standard largely remained the burden of women.

PUBLIC HEALTH

In the early 1950s, many advances were made in public healthcare. Mass inoculations prevented diseases that had affected China for centuries:

- Outbreaks of cholera, smallpox and typhus dropped dramatically.
- Education campaigns discouraged spitting—which reduced the spread of tuberculosis.
- Urinating in public was discouraged—which improved sanitation in urban areas.
- A national campaign was used to educate midwives on sterile birthing techniques.

The government’s efforts in preventing disease led to an increase in life expectancy—a significant measure of national health—from 38 years in 1950 to 57 years by 1957.42 Cases of sexually transmitted diseases also dropped dramatically from 1954 after brothels were closed and sex workers were trained for other occupations. Opium addicts were put into rehabilitation programs and people selling opium were severely punished.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Use Sources 6.13–6.17 and your own knowledge to copy and complete this table about Communist rule in the early 1950s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAURICE MEISNER</th>
<th>JOHN KING FAIRBANK</th>
<th>JOSEPH W. ESHERICK</th>
<th>JUNG CHANG &amp; JON HALLIDAY</th>
<th>FRANK DIKOTTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions taken by the CCP in the early years of the People’s Republic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key descriptions of life in the early years of the PRC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historians’ overall assessment of early CCP rule: Positive, Negative or Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare and contrast how three of these historians have explained the continuities and changes that emerged in the People’s Republic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maurice Meisner

The new regime was authoritarian and often repressive, but the cities were governed honestly and efficiently for the first time in modern Chinese history.


John King Fairbank

Here was a dedicated government that really cleaned things up—not only the drains and streets but also the beggars, prostitutes, and petty criminals, all of whom were rounded up for reconditioning.


Joseph W. Escherick

Most Chinese did not experience the success of the revolution and the coming to power of the CCP as some form of personal liberation. It was a new world, in many respects, and for most it was a better world. But the PRC ushered in a better world in part because the CCP brought order and discipline to their environment, and this was probably as important to many as was any sense of liberation.


Jung Chang and Jon Halliday

Once the state was secure, Mao began systematic terrorisation of the population, to induce long-term conformity and obedience. Mao intended most of the population—children and adults alike—to witness violence and killing. His aim was to scare and brutalise the entire population.


Frank Dikötter

The Chinese Communist Party refers to its victory in 1949 as a ‘liberation.’ The term brings to mind jubilant crowds taking to the streets to celebrate their newly won freedom, but in China the story of liberation and the revolution that followed is not one of peace, liberty and justice. It is first and foremost a history of calculated terror and systematic violence. The first decade of Maoism was one of the worst tyrannies in the history of the twentieth century, sending to an early grave at least 5 million civilians and bringing misery to countless more.

MAO IN MOSCOW

Josef Stalin: ‘You’re a winner now, and winners are always right. That’s the rule.’

When the CCP came to power, Mao said that China would seek an alliance with the Soviet Union. On 16 December 1949, Mao made his first trip abroad, taking a train to Moscow. Mao was nervous during the journey—and at one stage became ill and almost fainted during a stop in Siberia. Meeting Stalin was a big deal for Mao—Stalin had a strong personality and was the leading figure of the international Marxist movement. Members of the Soviet Politburo lined up to meet Mao, and a lavish welcome was staged at the Kremlin.

Tough negotiations

At their first meeting, Mao announced that he was seeking ‘Something that doesn’t just look good, but tastes good’. The head of the KGB, Lavrentiy Beria, giggled when this was translated—as he thought Mao was referring to something sexual. Stalin asked for clarification. Mao gave none, but Stalin knew what the Soviets: [Image 56x56 to 282x313]

A sweet and sour treaty

On 14 February 1950, the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance was signed, but it didn’t all go China’s way. The treaty was both a sweet and sour deal. Under the terms of the treaty, the USSR:

- loaned China US$100 million—to be paid in instalments over five years
- offered experts and machinery to help develop Chinese industries
- agreed to support China if it came under military threat.

However, the ‘mutual assistance’ also came at a price, as the Soviets:

- obtained the right to mine minerals in the Chinese province of Xinjiang
- kept control over Outer Mongolia—a region that was historically claimed by the Chinese
- had strict conditions on the money loaned to China, with steep repayments.

Despite these harsh conditions, the alliance strengthened the socialist bloc at a time when international tensions were mounting. In 1949, Mao had declared: ‘The Chinese people must lean either to the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism. There can be no exception. There can be no sitting on the fence, there is no third path.’ On Mao’s return to China, he announced that there was ‘Eternal and Indestructible Friendship’ between the Chinese and Soviet peoples.

However, after the death of Stalin in 1953, Sino-Soviet relations would become increasingly strained and Mao would forge his own distinctive ‘third path’ to socialism.

THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN

By 1953, the government of the PRC had:

- carried out initial social and political campaigns
- brought inflation down to manageable levels
- ensured military control of the nation

On 1 October 1953, the People’s Republic had its fourth anniversary. On that day, the Chinese government announced the beginning of ‘the general line for the transition to socialism’. China would use the USSR as its model for further development, particularly for industrial production. Vice-Chairman Liu Shaoqi declared: ‘The Soviet road is the road all humanity will eventually take. To bypass this road is impossible.’

Just as Stalin had done in the USSR, the Chinese government drew up a Five-Year Plan to guide China into a new era of economic progress from 1953 to 1957. However, the Party was still debating different elements of the plan—and its exact content was not made public until 1955.

PRIORITY INDUSTRIES

Priority was given to heavy industry, which received 89 per cent of the government’s budgeted capital for the production sector. Manufacturing industries received just 11 per cent of the capital. Very little investment was put aside for agriculture. The centre of the Five-Year Plan was the construction of 700 new industrial enterprises, of which 560 were in heavy industry. The construction of the new industrial plants and soviet-made machinery. About 28,000 Chinese went to the USSR for training.

PRODUCTION OUTPUT, FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN (1952–1957)

![Production Output](image)

STEEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Metric Tons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>4.48 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RAW IRON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Metric Tons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>19 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>5.9 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ELECTRICITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kilowatt Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>726 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>19.54 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source 6.19 ‘Study the advanced production experience of the Soviet Union, struggle for the industrialization of our country’, 1953.

PRODUCTION QUOTAS

The Chinese Five-Year Plan followed the Stalinist model—it set production quotas and regulated them through a central administration. Targets were set by a State Planning Commission, and the heads of industrial enterprises were required to meet the targets. The First Five-Year Plan was quite successful. It met or exceeded most of its industrial targets, and laid the basis for further economic advances. The plan achieved a very respectable increase of 10 to 16 per cent in overall annual production. For the first time, China was able to produce its own trucks, aircraft, cars and ships. Even starting from a low base after the war years, the plan, as historian Jonathan Spence puts it, was still a formidable achievement.50

LOAN REPAYMENTS

While the Chinese appreciated the Soviet technical assistance, the Russian investment loans were of dubious value—they were actually more beneficial to the Soviet Union than China. By 1955, the repayments on the loan were so steep that China was repaying more than it was receiving in Soviet aid. Soviet capital was limited, and accounted for about 3 per cent of total investment. Most of the costs for the Five-Year Plan came from the Chinese, financed largely by agricultural exports. And although Soviet investment brought impressive gains in heavy industry, growth in overall farming production—which was vital to China’s large population and grain trade—was only 4 per cent a year.51

STAGED COLLECTIVISATION

Although China followed the Soviet model for their industrial planning, the Chinese were more original in their rural policies. The USSR had collectivised agriculture as a way to improve efficiency and increase government income. But the practices they used to force Russian peasants into collective farming brought about much suffering.

The Chinese Communists wanted to have collective farming too, but they approached it in a gradual and persuasive manner:

- Peasants were encouraged to form Mutual Aid Teams—six to ten families shared tools, draught animals and labour during the peak harvest and planting times.
- When teams were established, they were encouraged to form cooperatives, either:
  - ‘lower’ Agricultural Producers Cooperatives—twenty to forty households
  - ‘higher’ Agricultural Producers Cooperatives—100–300 families.

In lower cooperatives, peasants would receive a payment for the remainder of their work once they had met the government grain quota—which was about a quarter of their harvest. This quota was measured by the amount of land they owned and the labour they contributed. Those people with more land received a higher annual payment. In lower cooperatives, peasants kept their titles of ownership to their plots of land.

In higher cooperatives, land ownership became collective—and farmers were paid only for their labour. Higher cooperatives were larger in size than most villages, and coordinated by full-time administrators.

AGRICULTURAL STAGNATION

The greater concentration of workers in a cooperative meant that excess labour could be used to clear land and carry out small-scale irrigation works, such as new dams and ditches. Although the Chinese gave limited funds to developing the agricultural sector—which might seem strange given how important farming was—they assumed that the ‘socialist technique’ that came with collective farming would bring great benefits and balance out the lack of funds. It was also assumed that:

- Farmers would take on superior production methods
- The size of harvests would increase.

However, peasants were reluctant to give up their land, so the shift from Mutual Aid Teams to cooperatives was met with resistance in some areas. The government had also decided to fund its industrialisation drive by setting two key measures:

- High grain taxes
- Low fixed prices.

Many peasants felt they were being exploited by this tactic. Grain yields were expected to increase significantly, but grew by just 2 to 3 per cent annually. Other crops, such as soybeans and cotton, experienced a decline. This meant that grain production was only just keeping pace with population growth of 2.2 per cent—and the surplus that was intended to fund industry did not exist.52

Furthermore, peasants were allowed to maintain some land for their own use, as long as these plots did not exceed 5 per cent of collective farmland. Peasants tended these plots with great care and used them to grow vegetables. They then used the income from selling the vegetables to raise poultry and pigs. This meant that peasants were eating better than before and more meat was available for urban markets.

However, peasants were keener on farming their private plots than they were on collective farming. This lack of growth of the agricultural sector slowed down the industrial progress of the Five-Year Plan. As historian Craig Dietrich explains, China’s leaders began an earnest debate among themselves: ‘Did they prescribe the wrong medicine, or was the dose too small? Should they go backward or forward?’53

In small groups or as a class, discuss why the First Five-Year Plan and the aid received from the USSR might be described as ‘sweet and sour’.
**GAO GANG AND THE HIGH TIDE OF 1955**

**Mao Zedong:** ‘We must guide the movement forward boldly and must not fear dragons ahead and tigers behind.’

### COLLECTIVISATION DEBATES

The speed and extent of collective farming was a hot topic in upper Party meetings throughout the Five-Year Plan. To Vice-Chairman Liu Shaoqi and economist Chen Yun—who was the architect of the Plan—there was no sense pushing for collectivisation until industry could provide the machinery needed to modernise farming further. In 1953 and 1955, Liu Shaoqi even authorised the disbanding of several Agricultural Cooperatives. Liu explained that there should be ‘no collectivisation without mechanism’.54

However, Mao did not agree with Liu. Mao believed that if the peasants were left to farm as they pleased, their ‘spontaneous tendencies towards capitalism’ would undermine efforts to introduce socialist policies. Furthermore, Mao and his closest allies were not concerned by a lack of modern tools or tractors. As shown earlier at Yan’an, revolutionary zeal could overcome any material deficiencies. Mao also preferred a faster approach to collectivisation, rather than making gradual progress.

### THE GAO GANG AFFAIR

Gao Gang (Kao Kang) was one of Mao’s key allies during the collectivisation debates. Gao’s career had flourished in the early years of the PRC. As the top CCP official in Manchuria, Gao had supervised the building of many new industrial enterprises there. He also played an important diplomatic role by encouraging closer relations between China and the USSR. In late 1952, Mao called Gao to Beijing and appointed him head of the State Planning Commission.

However, Gao’s political advance would come to a dramatic end in the first major political purge of the CCP in the era of the People’s Republic. In private, Mao complained to Gao that Liu Shaoqi was not enthusiastic about collectivisation. Gao misunderstood the conversation, and took it as a sign that he should conspire against Vice-Chairman Liu. By early 1953, Gao had drawn another leading official into his conspiracy against Liu and sounded out backing from high-ranking Party leaders. The Gao Gang Affair set a dangerous precedent for intrigue at the top of the CCP hierarchy.55 Mao had also given a warning that even those in high positions of authority relied upon their continuing favour to remain in power.

### THE HIGH TIDE OF COLLECTIVISATION

By early 1955, a majority of the CCP Politburo agreed that Agricultural Cooperatives could only be implemented carefully and gradually. However, Mao did not share this view. He told one critic of collectivisation: ‘Your mind needs to be shelled with artillery’. Mao was not satisfied with the Party leadership, and appealed directly to provincial cadres. In July 1955, he delivered a speech on ‘The Question of Agricultural Cooperation’.

**Mao’s criticism of CCP officials during the high tide**

An upsurge in the new, socialist mass movement is eminent throughout the countryside. But some of our comrades, tottering along like a woman with bound feet, are complaining all the time, ‘You’re going too fast, much too fast’ ... on no account should we allow these comrades to use the Soviet experience as a cover for their idea of moving at a snail’s pace.

‘Dragons ahead’ and ‘tigers behind’ were not to be feared. Mao declared. Mao’s appeal to the Party had an electrifying effect and placed the initiative firmly back in his hands. Provincial officials launched an all-out drive to bring as many peasants as they could into higher Agricultural Cooperatives. Mao hoped that half of the rural workforce might be collectivised by the end of 1957, but the cadres were keen to do even better. They praised the virtues of collective farming and put pressure on peasants who expressed caution. By December 1956, about 97 per cent of the peasantry had joined the cooperatives. Mao was overjoyed, and told his secretary that he hadn’t been as happy since the defeat of Jiang Jieshi.56

**ACTIVITY**

**CREATIVE TASK**

Using any social media medium of your choice, create a fictional response to either the Gao Gang Affair or the High Tide of 1955. Try to demonstrate how someone from that era reacted to one or both of these developments.
NATIONALISATION OF INDUSTRY

The so-called ‘Little Leap’ in the countryside was echoed by a similar drive for further socialist measures in the cities. In late 1955, Mao asked a delegation of businessmen how socialism might be extended into industry. The industrialists enthusiastically said that what remained of the private sector should be nationalised as soon as possible.³ The Five-Ants (wufun) movement had evidently provided enough ‘pepper’ that most business people were keen to do whatever they were asked.

It was an extraordinary tactic. It meant that the state was not obliged to force industry to nationalise by law, but was able to achieve it through persuasion (along with some thinly veiled intimidation). In late 1955, Mao declared that by the end of 1957 all private enterprises would be taken over by joint state-private ownership. Mao’s vision was completed by mid-January 1956—less than a month later. On 15 January, a rally at Beijing’s Tān’enmen Square was attended by 200,000 people to celebrate the triumph of socialism over capitalist private enterprise. There were odd scenes of businessmen leaping for joy and enthusiastically embracing as they handed over the deeds to their factories and firms. Similar scenes followed in other cities.

PROBLEMS AND DEBATES

Although the 1955 High Tide was satisfying for Mao, the successes of the First Five-Year Plan brought new problems:

- Central planning required a large bureaucracy—which meant that revolutionary sentiment might get lost.
- Many of the comrades were ‘trotting’ on ‘bound feet’ (they lacked enthusiasm) rather than showing a kick for hard work.
- Mao began to doubt the merits of Soviet-style economic planning.

Mao needed something new. He was excited by the extraordinary ‘leap’ towards further socialist developments in the High Tide campaign, and called for a rapid increase in the production of grain and cotton. According to Mao, collective farming could achieve this increase if it was done ‘more, faster, better and more economically’.

Mao’s ideas were acknowledged by the Central Committee—but given a lukewarm reception by the rest of the Politburo. Premier Zhou Enlai and Liu Shaoqi worried about the impact of collectivisation. Grain harvests were down and peasant handicrafts were suffering. Despite this, Mao maintained that all that was needed to increase grain and cotton production was an infusion of Yanan-style energy.

THE EIGHTH PARTY CONGRESS

Further unpleasant surprises came in 1957 with popular uprisings against Communist regimes in Hungary and Poland. However, the biggest shock came on 25 February when Soviet leader Nikita Khruşčhev denounced the crimes of deceased Soviet leader Josef Stalin, particularly his cult of personality.

Deng Xiaoping and Zhu De were among those gathered in Moscow as guests for the Twentieth Party Congress. The Chinese Communists had been given no warning of Khruşčhev’s speech. Mao was particularly displeased, as he feared that Stalin’s flaws might be measured against his own.

Ma was proved right. At the Eighth Party Congress in September 1956, the CCP moved to limit the emergence of a cult of personality in the People’s Republic. Direct references to Mao Zedong Thought as the CCP’s guiding doctrine were dropped from the CCP constitution. A new leadership team emerged, headed by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.

On the surface, Mao seemed to accept these changes. He declared that he would move to the ‘second line’ of leadership where he would consider broader policy questions, leaving the ‘first line’ of day-to-day administration to Liu and Deng. The Congress also saw Zhou Enlai offer a critical analysis of the recent rapid pace of collectivisation. It appeared the ‘High Tide’ would soon fade away—which was a personal setback for Mao.

Events would show that Mao did not agree with the views of the Party leadership. He now had three challenges:

- developing an original Maoist-style approach to socio-economic development
- avoiding the emergence of popular dissatisfaction with socialist policies (a so-called ‘Hungarian situation’)
- preserving ‘revolutionary’ virtues while governing through an increasingly centralised and bureaucratic administration.

Mao was already thinking about a surprising tactic that he hoped would resolve his anxieties.

DID YOU KNOW?

A joke popular in the CCP in 1955 shows how different leaders approached the task of convincing businessmen to accept socialist policies. Asked ‘How would you make a cat eat chili?’ Liu Shaoqi said, ‘You get somebody to hold the cat, stuff the chili pepper in its mouth, and push it down with a chopstick.’ This would not do, Mao said. Persuasion, not force, was needed. Zhou Enlai said, ‘I would starve the cat. Then I would wrap a pepper on to the cat’s backside. When it starts to burn, the cat will lick it—and be happy to be permitted to continue.’

If you were permitted to choose your leader, who would it be? Why?

CHINA RISING 3RD EDITION

Mao Zedong

SOURCE 6.24 Mao Zedong (left) with Deng Xiaoping

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Briefly outline how different leaders in the CCP viewed the pace and extent of collectivisation:
   - Mao Zedong
   - Liu Shaoqi
   - Zhou Enlai

2. What did the Gao Gang Affair reveal about Mao’s leadership style?

3. By 1956 what had Mao achieved through the High Tide regarding:
   - collectivisation of agriculture
   - nationalisation of industry

4. What changes emerged in the CCP following the Eighth Party Congress regarding:
   - leadership
   - ideology
   - economic planning

ACTIVITY

Write a 250–350-word extended response on one of the topics below. Your response should include a clear contention, arguments supported by relevant evidence and a clear conclusion.

- What challenges emerged for the Chinese Communist Party during the First Five-Year Plan?
- Explain how Mao Zedong attempted to change the economy and political system of the new society in the period up to 1956.
- How were everyday people impacted by the policies of the Five-Year Plan?
- Explain how internal disagreements created challenges for the CCP in the early years of the PRC.
- Explain why the policies of the Five-Year Plan were used by the Chinese Communists to consolidate their power.
- How did the limitations of the Five-Year Plan reflect a compromise of revolutionary ideals for some in the CCP?
- What changes emerged in Chinese society because of the First Five-Year Plan?
THE HUNDRED FLOWERS CAMPAIGN

Mao Zedong: ‘Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend’

Mao responded to the broad challenges of 1956 with a campaign to encourage greater freedom of expression among intellectuals. He believed the benefits would be twofold, as:

- intellectuals could help to make the Party more responsive to popular sentiment
- people could express social grievances through discussion rather than protest.

In January 1956, Zhou Enlai gave a speech to non-Party academics in which he attempted to clarify the problematic class status of China’s intellectuals. According to Zhou: ‘The overwhelming majority of intellectuals have become government workers in the cause of socialism and are already part of the working class’.

At this time, the government was concerned that China had a shortage of technical expertise—a serious obstacle to industrial development. Creative thinking was essential for scientific innovation, and it needed to be encouraged. Zhou’s speech promised a more understanding relationship between the Communists and intellectuals.

Mao tried to popularise Zhou’s idea. In May, he revived the classical expression, ‘Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend’. This expression was interpreted to mean that the Communists valued freedom of speech and wanted to encourage a variety of opinions. Mao hoped that public debate would both:

- shake up the Party bureaucracy
- ‘vaccinate’ the masses against the sort of suppressed discontent that had recently troubled Eastern Europe.

ON CONTRADICTIONS

On 27 February 1957, Mao reinvigorated the Hundred Flowers campaign with a speech to the Supreme State Conference. This was a gathering of Communists, as well as scientists, academics, writers and delegates of the democratic parties.

It was significant that Mao chose to address a non-Party forum, as it showed his frustration with his CCP comrades. Mao’s speech was titled ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People’, and it was his way of explaining the nature of social conflict in a post-capitalist society.

Although class conflict had eased, Mao argued that ‘contradictions among the people’ were still bound to occur. Such contradictions were different from class conflict. They could (and should) be resolved peacefully among the people by the Maoist approach of unity–criticism–unity (which was a direct reference to the techniques of the 1942 Rectification movement). Mao believed that greater consensus would be achieved by a process of debate and criticism. Contradictions were only harmful if they were ignored and allowed to aggregate the people—as had happened in Eastern Europe. In Mao’s view there was no harm in contradictions: ‘They are just contradictions, that’s all. The world is full of contradictions.’

Mao’s campaign for critics to voice their opinions slowly gathered momentum. By April, Mao had won over his colleagues, who were reassured that the forthcoming rectification by popular means would be ‘a gentle breeze and a fine rain’. The new period of rectification would see ‘Comradely heart-to-heart talks in the form of conversations’.

Mao also made a three-week train journey through eastern China where he encouraged non-Party intellectuals and did his best to ease the concerns of provincial cadres. The enthusiastic welcome he received at carefully stage-managed meetings with workers and peasants gave him a sense that the people were fully supportive of his measures. This was mass line on a mass scale. On 13 April 1957, the People’s Daily—which had previously been silent on the issue—released an editorial promoting the Hundred Flowers. It was now widely known that Mao was seeking criticism from outside the Party—and the first critics began to speak up.
BLOOMING AND CONTENDING

By May 1957, signs of lively ‘blooming and contending’ were appearing. This critical ‘fine rain’ of criticism soon grew into a heavy downpour of resentment. Dissatisfaction with the new regime flooded in through public meetings, in letters to the press and on large wall posters at universities and public buildings.

- Academics called out meddling by Communist officials in intellectual matters and objected to wasting valuable research time on political meetings.
- The ‘work style’ of Party cadres was said to be no better than that of corrupt GMD bureaucrats or Imperial scholar-officials.
- People expressed frustration at the CCP’s monopoly on political power.
- One young academic stated that the government treated him and his colleagues like ‘dog shit one moment and 10,000 ounces of gold the next’.
- One critic said the PRC constitution was only good for toilet paper.

Even Mao was criticised for his ‘arbitrary and reckless character’. On several occasions, the Communists were accused of betraying their socialist ideals—which was a particularly stinging denunciation. The Hundred Flowers campaign involved students and academics, but workers went on strike in some cities. Students rioted at some universities, and popular unrest was mounting.

‘POISONOUS WEEDS’

Mao was shocked at the criticism unleashed by the Hundred Flowers campaign. Although he had expected criticism, he had assumed that it would be constructive and would single out practices and individuals within the Communist administration—not the system itself. According to historian Rana Mitter, Mao had hoped for ‘moderate criticism of the details, rather than the fundamentals, of life in the new China’. Many lower-level members of the Party were also appalled.


Sidney Rittenberg recalling the Hundred Flowers campaign

While the intellectuals were protesting... nearly everyone else was smouldering on the sidelines... such critics of the Party didn’t seem to be heroes crying out for intellectual freedom... they seemed to be selfish and ungrateful eggheads and city slickers... I thought the critics were wrong... and misguided.

Mao soon made it known that critical talk had gone beyond acceptable boundaries. On 8 June 1957, an editorial in the People’s Daily announced that denunciations of the Party would no longer be tolerated. This signalled the end of the Hundred Flowers movement. Mao’s speech, ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions’, was published by the paper on 19 June with significant revisions. Mao now made a distinction between ‘non-antagonistic’ contradictions and ‘antagonistic’ contradictions:

- non-antagonistic contradictions were beneficial and could be resolved peacefully
- antagonistic contradictions were bourgeois, dangerously anti-revolutionary and would not be tolerated.

Mao explained that this was like ‘distinguishing between fragrant flowers and poisonous weeds’. Ideas that were contrary to socialism, divisive, critical of the democratic dictatorship or the Communist Party were ‘poisonous’. As Mao it: ‘Any word or deed at variance with socialism is completely wrong’.

THE ANTI-RIGHTIST CAMPAIGN

After just five weeks, the cultivation of ‘flowers’ turned into the pulling of ‘weeds’. Deng Xiaoping was appointed to direct an Anti-Rightist campaign. As a result, tens of thousands of academics and students were put through harsh ‘struggle’ and ‘self-criticism’ meetings. Institutions that employed intellectuals were given a quota—they had to expose 5 per cent of their staff as Rightists. If they failed to do so, the leadership of the institution would be suspected ofRightist leanings. Denunciations and self-criticism were just the beginning of the campaign. Between 300,000 and 400,000 Rightists were sent to the countryside for ‘re-education through labour’ in prison camps. Their terms of labour could be up to ten or even twenty years. As one happened to her at Yan’an, the outspoken feminist writer Deng Ling came under target. She was exiled to a labour farm in the far north-east. Many thousands lost their jobs or were demoted to positions far below their qualifications. People whose partners were judged as Rightists were urged to ‘draw a line’ between themselves and their spouse, and seek a divorce. About 40 per cent of the Guomindang Revolutionary Committee and Democratic League parties were found guilty of following an ‘anti-Communist, anti-people, anti-socialist bourgeois’ line.

Their influence declined even further. The prospect of professional ruin and the pressure of self-criticism led to many suicides. People exercising early in the morning at Beijing’s Summer Palace gardens often found bodies hanging from trees and floating in the lake.

The Anti-Rightist campaign ruined countless lives. It damaged China’s higher education system and discredited people with technical expertise. This would have tragic consequences for economic planning during the Great Leap Forward.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Which social group was encouraged to speak freely in the Hundred Flowers campaign?
2. What classical expression did Mao revive to encourage the campaign?
3. List three or more of the criticisms that were made of the CCP during the Hundred Flowers campaign.
4. How long did the Hundred Flowers campaign last? Why?
5. What punitive campaign followed the Hundred Flowers campaign? How many ‘Rightists’ were sentenced to hard labour during this campaign?

EXTENDED RESPONSES

Write a 250–350-word extended response on one of the topics below. Your response should include a clear contention, arguments supported by relevant evidence and a clear conclusion.

- Explain why Mao Zedong launched the Hundred Flowers campaign.
- How did the Hundred Flowers campaign undermine the revolutionary ideals of the new regime?
- Explain the impact of the Hundred Flowers campaign within the PRC.
- Explain Mao Zedong’s role in the Hundred Flowers campaign.
THE HUNDRED FLOWERS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

It’s a trap!
The Hundred Flowers campaign has been presented as a cunning trick that Mao used to expose his critics. Michael Lynch argues that ‘Mao’s apparent mellowing was an act. He had not really become more tolerant; he was engaged in a ruse’. The speed with which the movement was brought to an end, Lynch contends, supports this contention. Jung Chang and Jon Halliday agree that Mao had ‘cooked up a devious plan’. Mao admitted that he did set a trap of sorts, but explained that his motives were honest:

Mao on the Hundred Flowers
The purpose was to let demons and devils, ghosts and monsters ‘air views freely’ and let poisonous weeds sprout and grow in profusion so that the people, now shocked to find these ugly things still existing in the world, would take action to wipe them out... The Communist Party forecast this inevitable class struggle. Some say this was a secret scheme. We say it was open.

More complex intentions
Other historians highlight the mixed and ambiguous influences on the Hundred Flowers campaign. Alan Lawrence is sceptical of Mao’s portrayal of the Hundred Flowers as an intentional trap: ‘It implies that the Communist Party knew what it was doing: that it was in control all along’. Mao’s doctor, Li Zhisui, recalls that, ‘Mao of course was shocked. He had never intended that any of the criticisms be directed against him. He had never meant the Party as an institution to come under attack... Mao had grossly miscalculated’. Like Lawrence, Maurice Meisner believes that Mao’s motives were complicated and uncertain. Mao’s claim that he had set a trap was issued later as an explanation and defence. A number of subtle factors were at play at the time:

- Mao’s desire to use public criticism to rectify the Communist bureaucracy and release popular tensions
- Mao’s genuine surprise at the extent of popular dissatisfaction
- The backdated revisions to Mao’s speech on ‘contradictions’

Historian Jasper Becker points out that some of the CCP officials who came under attack in the Anti-Rightist campaign were those who had opposed Mao’s collectivisation drive. According to Jonathan Spence, ‘It was... a muddled and inconclusive movement that grew out of conflicting attitudes in the CCP leadership’.

The Hundred Flowers campaign—regardless of intent—went a long way towards silencing those who dissented from Chairman Mao’s ‘revolutionary’ line. It was ‘an extraordinary response to the challenge the CCP was facing’, according to Jonathan Fenby, one that demonstrated Mao’s ‘naivete—and then his utter ruthlessness’.

Philippa Short on the Hundred Flowers
The ‘Hundred Flowers’ was the most ambitious attempt ever undertaken in any communist country to combine a totalitarian system with democratic checks and balances. Even Mao was unsure what it would produce. ‘Let’s try it and see what it’s like,’ he said at one point. ‘If we acquire a taste for it, there will be no more worries.’ What would happen if the Party did not ‘acquire a taste for’ being criticised was left differently unsaid... As the torrent of popular anger, mistrust and bitterness swelled, Mao began to have second thoughts... What had started as an attempt to bridge the gap between the Party and the people... was turned on its head. It became a trap... for the hundreds of thousands of loyal citizens who had taken the Party at its word.

DID YOU KNOW?
After the Hundred Flowers campaign, Mao distrusted intellectuals for the rest of his life. He was fond of saying: ‘Peasants have dirty hands and cow sh*t-sodden feet, but they are much cleaner than intellectuals’.

DISCUSSION
In small groups or as a class, discuss your perspective of the following:

- What was the purpose of the Hundred Flowers campaign?
- Was it a trap?
- Was Mao genuinely shocked by the result?
- Was the Hundred Flowers campaign bound to end in tragedy?
- What did the Hundred Flowers campaign reveal about the nature of the new regime?
Using Sources 6.30 and 6.31 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

HISTORICAL SOURCES: THE HUNDRED FLOWERS CAMPAIGN

Wu Ningkun (1920–2019) was a professor of English literature. He attended university in the USA but returned to China in 1951 to take up a teaching position in Beijing. He was labelled a Rightist and sentenced to hard labour following the Hundred Flowers campaign.

…intellectuals and members of ‘democratic’ parties … were urged to ‘air their views without reserve’ … We all applauded the courageous decision taken by the Party … The People’s Daily and other newspapers in Beijing carried numerous articles by well-known intellectuals criticizing Party officials and even the guidelines of the Party itself … many people poured out their hearts in hopes of helping the Party and its members mend their ways … Freedom of speech was having its day; that day was short … [Mao] let it be known at a later date that all this had been a premeditated plot … to ensnare his critics into a trap … I fell into the trap … According to later government statistics, more than half a million people were labeled rightists. There were no figures for those who had been denounced but spared the label, nor of those who had been driven to insanity or suicide. The ‘hundred flowers’ ended in a mass intellectual castration that was to plague the nation for decades to come.

\[\text{Source 6.30} \quad \text{Wu Ningkun,} \quad \text{A Single Tear} \quad \text{(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993), 51–52, 64.}\]

Sidney Rittenberg (1921–2019) was an American member of the CCP who held a prominent position as a ‘foreign expert’ in the Broadcast Administration of the People’s Republic. Here he recalls the Hundred Flowers campaign.

Mao said let a hundred flowers bloom in the fields of art and literature, let a hundred schools of thought contend in academia, but the intellectuals turned it into politics … So they began saying and writing things like ‘Why should the Communist Party always rule? Why shouldn’t there be a multi-Party system?’ … It was done with great artistry. I mean when Mao was conspiratorial, he was a master. He let everybody talk—unchallenged, unhindered—and everybody felt this is great. What a fabulous day! And then an editorial appeared on the front page of the People’s Daily, with no warning, saying ‘Why is this? Bang! From that day on, it was hammers down on the critics. And they were classified as Rightists and hauled up before big public meetings … this was the campaign, ‘to clean out anti-socialist elements’, not from the Party so much but among the intellectuals … intellectuals talk too much, they raise too many questions … I took part in hassling these people. And they were all innocent and good people. I think that is the most serious mistake I ever made.

\[\text{Source 6.31} \quad \text{Sidney Rittenberg, interviewed in} \quad \text{The Revolutionary} \quad \text{(Stourwater Pictures, 2012).}\]

ACTIVITY

CREATIVE TASK
Taking the persona of an intellectual, business owner, landlord or former Guomindang civil servant, write a diary entry, letter to a close relative or an extract from a self-criticism that highlights your experiences of one of the political campaigns in the early years of the People’s Republic.

ACTIVITY

REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCES
Create a table like the one below to compare the experiences of different social groups and their responses to challenges and changes of everyday life in the PRC. Note where specific campaigns, policies or developments caused changes in their lives. Continue to add to your table as you read later chapters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL GROUP</th>
<th>POLICIES OR CAMPAIGNS</th>
<th>RESPONSES OR CONSEQUENCES</th>
<th>EVIDENCE: QUOTATIONS, STATISTICS, DATES, EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peasants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business owners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party cadres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>