

Land Reform in the Jiangxi Soviet

HIST 3615, Fall 2024

Instructions for the class

- We are the village of “White River” 河白 in Jiangxi Province. Some of you are peasants, some of you are not. A few of you are CCP officials sent to the village.
- Using the [Jiangxi Soviet Land Law](#), determine which of these four categories applies to each of you: landlord, rich peasant, middle peasant, poor peasant.
- There should be at least 8 individuals per category. You must collectively decide on the assigned categories, but the CCP officials have the final say over which category applies to which individual.

Additional instructions to be introduced a few minutes into the start of the exercise

- At the end of the class, poor peasants will receive a 0.5% boost in their course grade. Middle peasants, rich peasants, and CCP officials will receive no boost. Landlords will lose 0.5%.
- If you do not decide on categories for the whole class, everyone loses 0.5%.

Role Descriptions

Roles should be assigned at random (i.e. print the descriptions on separate sheets of paper and place them face down at the front of class. Students should then select a description that will apply to them without the instructor assigning roles and without students knowing which role they have ahead of time).

Three or four individuals should be CCP officials:

You are a CCP official. Your job is to decide on class categories based on what the villagers tell you. You should listen to the villagers, but you get the final say on who is what classification. CCP officials need to agree on classifications.

The remainder of the class should randomly select a role from the below list:

- You are a poor individual who was previously a member of the local Anti-Bolshevik league.
- You are a poor individual whose cousins were leaders in the local Anti-Bolshevik league.

- You are an individual who, thanks to frugal saving, is relatively well off compared to others in the village.
- You are a farm laborer who has converted to Catholicism.
- You are a teacher at the local school, but you lost your job last year when the CCP established the Jiangxi Soviet.
- You run the local store in the village and helped the villagers survive a famine in the past by lowering grain prices.
- You are an individual from a family that was once wealthy, but you are now married to a farm laborer.
- You are the adopted child of a local landowner, and you appear to have forgotten what it is like to work in the fields.
- You are a Catholic priest in the village and run the local church.
- You are a nun at the local Catholic church. You were previously a laborer in your family's tenant farm.
- You are the child of a local landlord, but you were adopted by local peasants after your family died in the most recent famine.
- You are a local merchant whose family are still very poor.
- You are a local miner who enjoys smoking tobacco and gambling.
- You are the spouse of a local government official who previously passed the Imperial Civil Service Examination under the Qing.
- You are the spouse of a local soldier in the new Red Army.
- You were part of the local militia for the White Army and previously helped to run several farms in the area.
- You were previously a member of the Social Democratic Party, but now claim to be a supporter of the CCP.
- You are a local landowner, but you are the only one in the village who knows how to cultivate rice properly.
- You are the head of the local Clan Organization.
- You are a local farmer whose spouse was executed for collaborating with a local KMT faction.
- You are a local farmer who previously denounced the CCP at a public rally.

- You are the family member of a local farmer, who was beaten by KMT soldiers for not surrendering his grain.
- You are a local landowner whose daughters are all married to poor farmers in the village.
- You are a local fortune teller, who many of the superstitious villagers rely on for divining their futures.
- You are an independent artisan who makes clothes for the villagers.

- You are a local merchant, but you were never very good at trading and often relied on hunting in the local woods for subsistence.
- You are a lumberjack and chop firewood for the villagers to use as fuel.
- You are a monk at the local Daoist temple.
- You are a tenant farmer in a local sorghum farm. Your spouse is well-known as a gossip in the village.
- You are a local artisan specializing in making farm tools.
- You are the child of a local landowner who has been a vocal supporter of the CCP. You can explain Marx and Lenin to the villagers.
- You are a local soothsayer, but you supplement your income by helping in the farms during harvests.
- You are a Catholic and regularly attend church. You have relatives who are landowners, but you work in the local stables.
- You are a teacher in the local school. The CCP has relied on you to teach villagers about Marx.
- Your family were previously the local gentry under the Qing, but now you are small-scale landowners. Your farm employs most of the peasants in the village.
- You operate the local fishponds and help feed the villagers.
- You are a poor farmer, but you are married to the local shop owner.