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MASS MOBILISATION
THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE PEASANTS

by

TANAKA KYOKO

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
the Australian National University, July 1972.
This thesis is my own original work.

Tanaka Kyoko
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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The central question of the Chinese revolution is also the central question of the changing world; how can men liberate themselves from all kinds of alienation in the existing systems? How can they break the network of the ties of oppression, obedience and fear? How can they build new social and political organisation based on communication and responsibility?

A revolutionary transformation means not only a replacement of a group in supreme power with another group within a short period of time, but also a replacement of the whole system of government and socioeconomic organisation and, above all, the whole social value system with a new egalitarian one in the daily life of the people. In this sense, the Chinese Communist revolution is the first and the most profound revolution in this century. Moreover, the all existing values have been challenged by the new value system of the Chinese Communists, which they have attempted to put into practice. It is so different from any existing value system in human history that it is little understood by the 'China experts' outside the country.

The whole process of the Chinese Communist revolution was directed to free the whole Chinese population from alienation, in its broader sense, which is now the primary challenge of Marxism to both highly industrialised and 'underdeveloped' societies. It suggests to the third world a way to 'modernise' itself by its own efforts, as Dr. Mark Selden has maintained throughout his fascinating book, The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China, that is, how can the people be capable and industrious when they are even partly freed from alienation. It is, of course, not only the problems of alienation that is presented by the Chinese revolution, but also the problems of political and economic organisation.
These organisations, however, are designed to minimise social alienation of their components. As suggested in the CCP's concern with the elimination of the 'three great differentials' in the Cultural Revolution, the problem of alienation is a focal point in the Communist revolution. This is also the question of the Chinese way to communist society.

Mass mobilisation by the CCP in the Yenan period included all these questions, and moreover, the 'Yenan way' seems now to be considered by the CCP a possible shortcut to communist society. Mobilisation of every individual in the Communist territory was necessitated by the war circumstances in the Yenan period, but its achievement went beyond its minimal goal, survival. In the process of mass mobilisation in the Yenan period, the CCP challenged almost all the existing values, customs and habits in rural China which had tied up energy and activism of the peasants. It was difficult work, but the Party succeeded to an impressive extent in a drastic transformation of social values, in addition to the changes in political and economic systems. The experience of Yenan mass mobilisation formed the basis of the Party's challenge to the existing ways in the 'modernisation' of China after 1949.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

I am indebted to so many people that I cannot list all their names here. Above all, I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to Dr. Stephen FitzGerald from Far Eastern History Department, A.N.U. He supervised my work throughout the writing period, and gave me immeasurable help in extremely useful suggestions, criticisms and encouragement with the content of the work as well as with English expression, and was always willing to spend hour after hour in doing so. He also took the trouble to arrange facilities for my work. Without his assistance, this thesis would never have come out in this form. I also have to express
my gratitude to Professor C. P. FitzGerald who supervised my work during the first one and a half years in collecting source materials and also kindly reading my draft even after leaving Canberra. Dr. Arthur Stockwin from Political Science Department, A.N.U., is another person to whom I am heavily indebted. He looked after my work mainly in the period when I had supervision difficulties after Professor FitzGerald had left here and Dr. FitzGerald was absent.

I am very grateful to the Department of International Relations, A.N.U., and its heads, Professors J. D. B. Miller and Hedley Bull, who provided me with all the facilities which enabled me to work on this thesis. I am also thankful to all my friends from the Department who encouraged me in my work; among them, I am particularly grateful to Mr. David Sissons, Dr. James Angel, now teaching at the University of Sydney, Mrs. Ann Kent and Miss Robyn Abell, who were particularly helpful in various ways during the time I was engaged in this study.

Professors Wang Gungwu and Jerome Ch'én were kind enough to read a substantial part of the thesis manuscript and give me their comments, which were full of encouragement and suggestions.

In my work of collecting source materials, I was helped by enormous number of people in this country, Japan and Taiwan. First of all, I must thank Mr. Wang Sing-wu from the National Library of Australia, who tried hard to obtain all the materials I suggested. I am also thankful to him and his colleagues in Orientalia Section for their help when I worked with them. Miss Enid Bishop, who is in charge of Oriental Collection of the Advanced Studies Library, A.N.U., is another person who helped me with source materials.

In Japan I was given great help by Professor Hayashi Shigeru of the University of Tokyo in using the collections of the Libraries of War History Department, the Self-Defence Agency, and the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs. Colonel Morimatsu Toshio, the author of *Hoku-Shi no Chian-sen*, from War History Department, supervised my work on Japanese military sources. Mr. Baba Akira took the trouble to provide me with relevant documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Professor Ikekami Teiichi of Aichi University was kind enough to open for my use the collection which the University received from Tōa Dobunkai. Professor Ichiko Chūzō gave me kind assistance in using the collection of the Centre for Modern China Studies of Tōyō Bunko. I am grateful to all those who assisted my work with Chinese Communist sources in Taipei, particularly to Professor C. Y. Hsu of National Taiwan University, staff members of the Research Institute of International Relations and also of the Investigation Bureau Library of the Ministry of Justice.

Finally, I have to thank Miss Heather Spence who worked day and night to type this thesis. I am also very grateful to my friends for their constant help and encouragement.

Canberra, July 1972.
NOTES

1. Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
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<td>CFJP</td>
<td>Chieh-fang jih-pao</td>
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<td>Chin-Ch'a-Chi</td>
<td>Shansi-Chahar-Hopei</td>
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<td>Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü</td>
<td>Shansi-Hopei-Shantung-Honan</td>
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<td>Chin-Sui</td>
<td>Shantung-Suiyuan</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)</td>
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<td>Mao, I, II, III, or IV</td>
<td>Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume 1, 2, 3 or 4</td>
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<td>SKN</td>
<td>Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia</td>
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<td>SMR</td>
<td>South Manchurian Railway Company</td>
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2. Measurement Units

- 1 catty = 1.3 lb. or 0.6 kilograms
- 100 catties = 1 picul or 0.6 quintal
- 1 Chinese dollar (yuan) = US$0.33 (1936)
- 1 hsiang (shang) = 2 mou or 0.45 acre
- 1 mou = 0.15 acre
- 1 picul = 133.3 lb.
- 1 tou = 1 peck or 10 catties

3. Names

For Chinese and Japanese names, surnames are put first, and for western names, surnames are put last.

4. Books by Mark Selden and Richard Solomon

The two books, *Yenan Way in Revolutionary China* by Mark Selden and *Mao’s Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* by Richard Solomon were published after the first draft of this thesis had been completed. Similar conclusions of this thesis to that of these two books, therefore, have been reached independently.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Yenan period of Chinese Communist history is attracting renewed attention from students of contemporary China, partly as a result of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, some aspects of which have been interpreted as an attempt to revive the Yenan spirit. The reinvocation of the Yenan spirit has been a recurring feature of Chinese politics since 1949; examples are the Socialist High Tide and the Great Leap Forward, when the slogans of the Yenan mass movements were revived and the 'glorious tradition' of Yenan was stressed. In the Cultural Revolution, it is clearly identified in the line represented by the policies of Mao Tse-tung, whatever interpretation one places on the line pursued by Mao's opponents, Liu Shao-ch'i and his supporters.

There are, of course, significant differences between 'Yenan-type' policies after 1949 and the policies of the Yenan period itself. In the Yenan period, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had to depend almost entirely on the peasant masses, to emancipate through basic social and political reforms the mass energy which had been contained by the existing authoritarian social system in order to sustain the resistance and survive through the struggles with Japan and the Kuomintang (KMT). Since 1949 the Yenan strategy has not been so much a matter of survival as a political and economic policy to which Mao has resorted to meet new challenges or to resolve developing crises. This practice, and particularly the experience of the Cultural Revolution, make it important that the Yenan period itself should be subjected to further scrutiny if the contemporary policies and strategies of the Chinese leadership are to be more fully understood.
1. Some Comments on the Existing Literature on the Yanan Period

In the early years after the Chinese Communist Party came to power, most western commentators doubted that the Communist government enjoyed genuine mass support, partly because Communist strength during the war against Japan was generally underestimated by foreign observers, and to many, the Communist victory over the KMT in the Civil War came as a complete surprise. In the first decade of the People's Republic, mutual hostility between the Communist and non-Communist worlds, and the impact of the Cold War and the Korean War, had a profound influence on studies of Chinese Communist politics and society in the western world. Although there were exceptions, a great deal of writing on China in this period presented a simple 'polemical' image of 'totalitarian' misery; the people were oppressed and forced to do the bidding of the CCP, which was that they should have no pursuit other than to work hard. They had an extremely low standard of living, and were only waiting for a leader to overthrow the Communist regime. Even during the Cultural Revolution this image was revived and the Communist government in China was hopefully thought to be on the verge of collapse by a number of observers in the western world.

It seems unnecessary now to argue that the alleged vulnerability of Communist power in China was only an illusion of the anti-communist world. In the process of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, China has shown that Communist rule is firmly rooted in the support of the people and that it is unlikely to collapse in the foreseeable future.

Insufficient attention has been given, however, to the important question of why and how the Chinese Communists succeeded in winning active support from the people, especially at the basic level. It is,
of course, impossible to analyse what happened in the minds of the illiterate Chinese masses, because of the complete lack of source materials. Virtually, all the material available is written by intellectuals, not by the 'masses' themselves, and there is a question of how far the intellectuals were in a position to understand exactly what happened to the masses. The CCP has been conducting oral history projects on the process of the revolution at the basic level of society, and while the results do provide some sources which represent the viewpoint of the masses, they are still few in number and the presentation of material is possibly modified by the peasant's experiences after 1949.

Of the western studies which have been made so far, two important articles by Richard Solomon concentrate on the question of how the masses turned from traditional to new patterns of behaviour, and the significance of this transformation in the establishment of the CCP's authority and power.\(^1\) Analysing the traditional pattern of human relations and the psychology of the basic people in Chinese society, he points out that the CCP tried to mobilise personal resentment and hostility and channel the resulting emotions towards political ends.\(^2\) From his study of Mao's Selected Works Solomon argues that Mao completed his conceptualisation of mass mobilisation techniques in the early 1940s. Subsequently, the successful implementation of the tactics of mass mobilisation, which are still applied in the stage of socialist construction, were established.

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\(^2\) "On Activism and Activists," p.86.
in a series of mass movements launched from 1942 onwards.

The Yenan period is divided into two distinct phases, by the point of commencement of the Party rectification (cheng-feng) campaign in early 1942. The first phase was characterised by emphasis on the united front with the KMT, and the second by the concentration of the CCP's energies on a series of mass movements. In the last three chapters of his recently published book, The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China, which is the first comprehensive study of socioeconomic transformation in the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia (SKN) Border Region under Communist control, Mark Selden has examined the evolution of mass mobilisation techniques by the CCP. He stresses that in terms of mass mobilisation, the period after the rectification campaign was almost entirely different from the preceding period, and that the CCP's mass line techniques were developed in action in the process of the series of mass movements launched in the second period. Both Solomon and Selden make the point that the mass movements were important in producing the political activists who were essential to the success of the CCP, in that they provided the new local leaders and Party members.

The present study is concerned with the general problems discussed by these two writers but with a different focus and in an attempt to answer somewhat different questions. Solomon's interest is in the psychological transformation of the individual peasants; Selden is concerned with the evolution of the CCP's socioeconomic transformation policies and techniques in the SKN Border Region. This study deals with the

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organisational basis of, and political explanations for, mass mobilisation. On the question of political explanations, it is concerned particularly with the rival interpretations of revolution or class struggle, and nationalism, as the principal political factor. Debate about nationalism and revolution in the CCP's rise to power leads inevitably to the pioneering work of Chalmers Johnson.

Johnson has studied the period mainly from Japanese military sources, and he concludes that nationalism was the primary factor in the mobilisation of the peasants and that this was the basis for the establishment of Communist power. It is, perhaps, not surprising that he was led to this conclusion through Japanese sources, since the Japanese did not pay close attention to the peasants' response to Communist policies and campaigns.

Johnson's work, the only published full-length study before Selden's to concentrate on Chinese Communist activities in the Yenan period, provides a clear insight into Japanese pacification efforts and the emergence of Chinese resistance to the Japanese in the early years of the war. It does not, however, extend to the fundamental question of what happened to the peasants at the basic level in the resistance

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1 This is not an entirely new argument. Donald Gillin has argued, against Chalmers Johnson, that socioeconomic as well as political factors were critical for the CCP's winning of mass support, on the basis of his detailed study of the peasants' response to the three armies in Shansi in the early period of the war. See his review article, "'Peasant Nationalism' in the History of Chinese Communism," Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.23, No.2 (February 1964), pp.269-289.


3 The Japanese military leaders and staff officers, who were the disciples of the successful leaders of Japan's 'modernisation from above' in the Meiji Era, never did recognise the strength of the mobilised masses. Right up to the time of the surrender in 1945, they continued to view the situation as one in which 'ignorant and obedient masses' were made to work for the Communists, having been manipulated by elaborate CCP techniques.
Johnson argues that the Japanese invasion destroyed the old authority and the old social system in China, and that this, together with the masses' hostile reaction to the brutality of the invaders, made it easier for the Communists to mobilise the masses for the resistance and thus to lay the foundation for a new authority and a new social system.

This study does not take issue with Johnson on this point. But there is a further dimension to the problem which Johnson does not explore. It is doubtful that the Chinese, who were historically contained within a village life which was politically 'static' and who were deeply suspicious of the outside world, who lived close to starvation and who feared involvement because of the trouble it might bring, could have been mobilised by the Communists solely in the nationalist cause, despite the ruthless Japanese 'three all' (sankō) policy and the attractive economic policies of the CCP.

The point is not that Johnson is mistaken in giving close attention to the element of nationalism in Communist mass organisation, but that his focus is selective; his interest is in how the peasants helped the Communists in their rise to power, rather than in at what point the peasants were mobilised by the CCP and precisely how this occurred at the basic level.

In the long term, the question of the techniques by which the CCP mobilised the peasants at the basic level is far more important than how the mobilised peasantry assisted the Communists in the war, for the CCP continued to depend on the 'Yenan technique' of mass mobilisation both in the Civil War and after 1949, and still regards this technique as of use in the period of socialist construction and communist transformation.

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1 The political and economic situation of the peasants is discussed in the following chapter.
On the question of mass mobilisation at the basic level, Franz Schurmann's discussion of Communist penetration in the basic villages by collectivisation of agricultural labour, and James Townsend's analysis of the Yenan political system are both suggestive for this study. Schurmann argues that the CCP in the Yenan period was the first government in China's history to be aware of the significance of the 'natural village' and to be successful in integrating it into the political system. Townsend's investigation of mass participation in the basic administration concludes that this was of critical importance in assuring the legitimacy of the Communist government.

Few people now dispute that the Chinese Communists succeeded in mobilising the people, the overwhelming majority of whom were peasants, during the anti-Japanese war. By examining their political system and the mass movements in North China which served to link the CCP to the general population, we can hope to elucidate the reasons for their success, and that is the purpose of this study.

2. Source Materials

There are two main sources of material on the Communist movement in China in this period, Japanese and Chinese Communist. Japanese sources are valuable on such matters as the size and location of the CCP and its military organisations, and for their observations of Communist mass work. The main concern of the Japanese military was with the military and political strength of the CCP, and the Communist 'infiltration' in the areas under Japanese control. Japanese sources are


2 James Townsend, Political Participation in Communist China, (Berkeley: 1967), especially Chapter 3, pp.36-64.
concerned also with the CCP's tactics and manoeuvres in winning over the peasants. These the Japanese admitted to be ingenious because they also were keen to win over the peasants in order to make their puppet governments more stable, and to destroy the effects of Communist mass work. Japanese observations of Communist military and political activities often reveal details of what the Communists did to mobilise the masses. The special value of Japanese sources lies in the fact that they were prepared by the enemy of the CCP, and naturally tend not to overstate Communist successes, as CCP sources sometimes do.

The main shortcoming of the Japanese sources for this study is that they are not primarily concerned with the active movements of the people at the basic level. Since most Japanese who were reporting on the situation in China believed that the people were ignorant and passive, and could be dealt with easily by skilful manoeuvres from outside, Japanese sources do not have much to offer on the question of active response from the basic peasants to the 'tactics and manoeuvres' of the Communists. The Japanese puppet administrations were established from above down to the hsien (county) level and no further, although puppet hsien governments did try to gain control of village administrations. But the Japanese could not penetrate to the bottom of the administration system because they did not have the manpower; and in any case, they believed that they could control the administration and the people at the basic level simply by control from the top.

Another problem of the Japanese sources is that they are concentrated in the early years of the war. Investigation in the villages became increasingly difficult after 1942; from late in 1942, Japanese garrisons in the villages could no longer be maintained because most of the best troops were transferred to the Pacific theatre and were replaced by aged soldiers who were poorly trained, less experienced and worse-
equipped. Japan's loss of command over the East China Sea also made it difficult to send regular reports to Tokyo. The years after 1942 were, in fact, the most important in the Yanan period in terms of mass mobilisation.

The CCP sources on the other hand are devoted to the policies and propaganda of the Party, and it is not always easy to judge how far they can be relied on as research materials. They are, however, valuable to the extent that they reveal the Party's intentions, its observations and conclusions, and the matters which it sought to propagate, particularly in its own territories. Since the CCP was intent on mobilising the basic masses, Party sources, especially the newspapers, devote considerable attention to mass movements. Although it cannot be denied that the Party newspapers tend to report success rather more than failure, they do not completely avoid pointing out problems and failures, even in successful cases, as lessons by negative example. From the widely acknowledged fact that the CCP came to power because of its success in mass mobilisation during the war, it can be assumed that its successes in mass work outnumbered its failures. Even if it could not be assumed that most cases were as successful as those reported in CCP sources, these reports do reveal what sort of mass mobilisation methods the CCP considered desirable and how these were supposed to be applied to concrete situations.

Unfortunately, local Communist newspapers are available only in fragments, and this study relies mainly on the Chieh-fang jih-pao (Liberation Daily), the central organ of the CCP, published in Yanan from May 1941. The paper does deal quite often with news and other items on other Communist bases, but the greater part of its content is occupied with reports and articles on the SKN Border Region, where the Central Committee was located. Because of communication difficulties,
the Chien-fang jih-pao rarely reports on the bases in South and Central China, and the frequency of reports on Shangtung, Honan, and southern Hopei is lower than for the Shansi bases, which were closer to Yenan. Even though the war situation in these provinces, which were behind the Japanese lines, was different from that in the SKN Border Region, which the Japanese had not invaded, the CCP decided its policies in Yenan and called for their implementation in all its base areas in China. Moreover, because of the relatively stable conditions in SKN and the location there of the Central Committee, the CCP used this region as a laboratory for policy implementation; it was the most advanced base and model for the others.¹

The CCP tended to implement new policies in the base areas after it had confirmed their effects in SKN. One reason for this was the relative political advancement of SKN as a long-established Communist base, which made it well-suited for experimenting with new methods of organisation and mobilisation. The other base areas followed the SKN policies and techniques, usually from three to six months later.² Consequently, in spite of different circumstances, mass mobilisation in SKN was basically the same as in the other bases.

Despite the relative paucity of information on the other bases, the experimental role of SKN makes it possible to discuss this region as an example of the general practice of the CCP and the general experience of the peasantry, although in the present study every effort has been

¹ Mark Selden's book, cited above, is devoted to the revolutionary history of the SKN Border Region, which includes the immense mass campaigns launched from 1942 onwards. Although he is fully aware of the Border Region's model and experimental role in revolutionary transformation among the base areas, he does not deal with developments in the other areas.
² The role of the SKN Border Region as the model base (mo-fan kên-chü-ti) declined towards the end of the war, as the bases behind the Japanese lines increased in experience and significance. In the civil war, SKN, or Yenan, was no longer important in policy-making or policy-implementation.
made to include available information from other regions where this is relevant or where it differs from the SKN experience.

Because of its propagandist character, the contemporary Communist media may be regarded as of dubious, or perhaps rather singular, reliability. The problem is not one of facts but of interpretation; there may be cases in which the facts are not as reported, but as numerous studies based on CCP sources have shown, there is always a basis of truth in what the Party has to say. It is in such matters as the attribution of cause, or of popular response, that questions may arise. Precisely because all CCP sources are 'controlled', however, the truth can often be deciphered to an extent that is not always possible with many other open sources. Even if they do not report events exactly as they happened, they still present typified or composite examples, or a summation of evidence drawn from a wide range of samples. Used with care, CCP sources are rich, informative, and in a sense, reliable.

Mao Tse-tung's writings are of great significance because of his position as the supreme leader of the Party. Although it is now well-known that he has repeatedly revised them for current practical purposes, this study relies on the English translation of his Selected Works published in Peking in 1965, but only where later revisions do not affect the original meanings. Since most of Mao's works were written to be presented to the CCP in the course of the Chinese Revolution, they are important for this study in understanding how Mao regarded the situation of the war and the revolution, and what he thought were the urgent tasks for the Communists. Accordingly, in cases where revisions or elimination of some parts of the original have changed the meaning of the original, I have provided my own translations from the Chin-Ch'a-Chi edition, Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung),
and from the compilation of original versions published recently in Japan, *Mao Tse-tung chi* (Collected Writings of Mao Tse-tung). The latter, which is the most comprehensive collection to have been published so far, contains most of Mao's known writings,\(^1\) in their original form, with notation of the differences between the originals and post-1949 editions of the *Selected Works*. The former was compiled and published by the Party Committee of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei (Chin-Ch'a-Chi) Border Region in 1944 in five volumes, as a set of 'working' documents for practical use.\(^2\) It excludes most of Mao's pre-1937 works.

Substantial parts of Mao's Yenan-period writings have been eliminated from the post-1949 *Selected Works*, partly because they were too specific and detailed on the peculiar problems of the Yenan period to be utilised by the CCP after 1949. These detailed writings of Mao, however, are important for the present study, since they often reveal difficulties experienced by the CCP in policy implementation, and suggest ways to overcome these difficulties. A good example is Mao's report, "Economic and Financial Problems," to the Senior Cadres Conference in the SKN Border Region at the end of 1942. About nine-tenths of the original report is deleted from the post-1949 *Selected Works*. Chapter 1 of this report, the only chapter included in the present *Selected Works*, discusses rather general problems, whereas the other chapters deal with the concrete situation of the SKN economy, the policies implemented up to 1942, and policy proposals for 1943 onwards.

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1. *Mao Tse-tung chi* includes quite a few articles and Party directives which the editors judge to have been written by Mao, although they were not published under his name. It is known, however, that Mao does not seem to have regarded his writings as his personal works. The articles and directives written under his name were carefully read and checked by his Politburo colleagues before publication, while some articles and directives published in the name of others or of the Party, the government and the army were later included in the *Selected Works* as Mao's own work.

Like other Communist sources, Mao's writings should be handled carefully, because they were written for contemporary practical purposes. His writings intended strictly for Party members are also clearly distinct from those for non-Party readers. Apart from their usefulness in providing information on what Mao and his Politburo colleagues thought about particular problems, Mao's writings also reveal the CCP's perception of the problems of special importance at particular periods of time.

In the authorised four-volume *Selected Works*, Volumes 2 and 3 of which are devoted to his Yenan-period works, there is a marked shift of emphasis in 1941. In the period up to 1941 his main concern seems to have been with the united front with the KMT and with military questions, whereas in the period after 1941 he concentrated more on political and economic problems within the Party and the areas it controlled. In other words, he became concerned with political and economic construction, and consolidation of Communist territory, rather more than with the war against Japan. This does not mean that he lost interest in the broader perspective of the war, or that he was not concerned with political and economic construction within the Communist areas before 1941, but that he and his colleagues became more sceptical about their KMT and foreign allies and realised more clearly that they could only rely on their own power, based on the people in their territory.

3. Concepts of Mass Mobilisation and Nationalism

It was here that 'mobilisation' became the central problem for the CCP, as the only basis on which it could survive the war, and in the process of 'mobilisation' the revolution would go deeply into the basic level of society. 'Mobilisation' in the Chinese Communist sense, that is, *fa-tung* rather than *tung-yüan*, carries a slightly more active meaning than Karl Deutsch's well-known definition of social mobilisation. Deutsch defines social mobilisation as
the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour.

He states that this process includes two stages:

1. the stage of uprooting or breaking away from old settings, habits and commitments; and
2. the induction of the mobilized persons into some relatively stable new patterns of group membership, organization and commitment.

In the Communist base areas in China, the first stage of the above 'process' was developed by the Party, with the help of the Japanese invasion, within a relatively short period. The second stage, however, was a more active, more far-reaching and more ambitious process than is implied by the word 'induction'. The first stage took place in the period between 1937 and 1942 in rural North China, and 'people became available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour'. But their new social, economic and psychological commitments to the Communist system, which are included in the Communist sense of 'mobilisation', were achieved after 1943.

Applying Deutsch's definition to the case of the CCP in the Yenan period, 'mobilisation' is also virtually synonymous with politicisation. That is to say, the 'old settings, habits and commitments' of the Chinese rural population were generally politically quiescent, whereas the new patterns, which extended into every aspect of daily life, were politically highly active and involved. In its mass mobilisation offensive, the CCP sought from the people a psychological as well as a practical involvement in or commitment to the political process.

2 Ibid.
Undoubtedly, nationalism was a significant element in accelerating this 'politicisation' process. As Chalmers Johnson has emphasised, the credit for spreading nationalism among the peasants must be attributed to the CCP. Even though it was assisted by ruthless Japanese behaviour towards the civilian population, the CCP's success in arousing nationalist feelings among the general populace is amazing if one remembers the failure of almost all the nationalist crusades to awaken the peasantry carried out by Chinese students after 1919.¹ Nationalism had long been of an urban and intellectual nature in China, and the CCP became the first nationalist force to succeed in winning over the general rural population to the nationalist cause. Foreign observers as well as the Japanese regarded the Communists as the most uncompromising fighters among all anti-Japanese nationalist groups in China, and as concerned nationalists who desired to put an end to China's position of international humiliation.²

In spite of its significance in recent world history, 'nationalism' is a most difficult concept to define, although great efforts have been made by political scientists and historians. Nationalism in Asia is a somewhat different phenomenon from that experienced in Europe, because of different historical backgrounds and political environments.³ Anti-colonial and anti-European elements in Asian nationalism made it almost

² See, for example, Stuart Schram's argument that one of the two nuclei of Mao Tse-tung's thought has always been nationalism, 'glory of the Hans'. Schram, Mao Tse-tung, (Pelican, 1966), pp.15-17 in sum.
³ See Munif al-Razzaz, The Evolution of the Meaning of Nationalism, (New York: 1963), as an example of works which emphasise the difference between 'old European' and 'new Afro-Asian' nationalism.
inevitable that this nationalism acquired a socioeconomic component, typified in Communist nationalism in China. For purposes of this study, however, it has seemed preferable to avoid a general theoretical examination of nationalism, which would require a book-length study, and to accept a general working definition. Chalmers Johnson's functional definition seems both applicable and adequate for this study; it is "one which identifies specific physical pressures that by acting upon given political environments give rise to nationalist movements."¹ In other words, nationalism here means not only an 'idea' or 'state of mind', but also a dynamic force which acts to maintain and develop the individuality of a nation and realise its values and objectives.

Nationalism was an awkward question for communist parties which based their world view on the Marxist theory of class struggle and proletarian internationalism. In Asia, where revolutionary party members were stubbornly anti-colonial, the question of the class struggle was often forced to take second place to that of nationalism. National revolution or national liberation was generally regarded as the stage preceding socialist revolution. The presence of foreign economic and military power complicated the domestic politics and the economy of colonial Asian countries. Foreign interference was deeply interlocked with the existing socioeconomic structure. Asian nationalism, if it aimed at economic as well as political independence from foreign control, could not be merely a political or ideological movement; it had to be concerned with restructuring the domestic socioeconomic and political system, that is, with revolution. Mao's approach to the Chinese revolution and class analysis, particularly his introduction of the concept of 'the people' who participate in the revolution, illustrates the peculiar

¹ Johnson, op.cit., p.xi.
character of revolution in an unindustrialised and semi-colonial Asian country. Mao defined the Chinese revolution in the 1930s and the 1940s as an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution in which 'the people', including the national bourgeoisie and middle and small landlords, could serve the national liberation and social reform.

Because of Japan's intention to expel all other foreign powers from China, the Japanese invasion in 1937 simplified and clarified for Chinese nationalism the question of whom to fight and what for. The war also opened the way for sociopolitical reform, since it destroyed, or severely damaged, the existing sociopolitical system. It is well-known that Mao's concept of 'the people' is flexible and that the classes included in this category have changed according to different situations. In the Yenan period, when the CCP worked in the rural areas with the primary purpose of defeating Japan, the definition of 'the people' was the broadest it has ever been; any Chinese who did not cooperate with the Japanese invaders was included among 'the people'. There was theoretically no public enemy of the revolution in the Communist areas, except for spies and collaborators with the Japanese. Class conflicts were moderated by policies of compromise, especially by the replacement of land revolution with rent reduction. What, then, were the existing classes in rural China in the Yenan period? Using both scholarly works on the rural Chinese economy and Communist documents, the classes in rural China during the war may be distinguished as follows.

Hired farm hands or hired or employed peasants, who were landless, and employed by rich peasants or landlords for agricultural work on a permanent basis. Poor peasants, who were landless, or who owned a piece

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1 See, for example, "On New Democracy," Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 7, pp.147-206.
of land too small to be self-supporting, who rented land, or hired themselves out each year for agricultural or other manual labour on a part-time basis. Lower-middle peasants, who, in terms of land-ownership, were similar to poor peasants, but with the difference that renting land and hiring their labour was on an occasional rather than annual basis. They had no large farm appliances. Upper-middle peasants, who owned land which was fully self-supporting, or if not quite self-supporting, could be supplemented with other income, who hired part-time agricultural labourers every year, or occasionally. They owned some larger farm appliances and draught animals. Rich peasants, who owned more than enough land to support themselves and sometimes rented a small part of their land, who hired one permanent or some part-time agricultural labour, who owned large farm appliances and draught animals, and sometimes small manufacturing units such as water mills and oil mills. Landlords, who owned land, all or large part of which was rented out, who lived mainly on land rent, and did not work in the fields, who often had other jobs such as merchants, usurers, army officers, industrial managers, government officials and so on. Intellectuals, who had completed at least secondary education and lived on income from such occupations as government officials, teachers, medical doctors, and students in higher education. Small merchants and craftsmen, who were small shopkeepers, pedlars and craftsmen working by themselves or with one or two employed assistants. Workers, who were factory workers, shop and craft assistants and servants.¹

The cadre (kan-pu) is a different category from the class or occupational group. The cadres, both Party members and non-Party personnel, were full-time administrative, organisational and military officers for

¹ In CCP documents the hired farm hands are often included in the category of the workers, or the proletariat.
the Party, the government, the army and the mass organisations. They were not necessarily 'intellectuals', and illiterate cadres were not uncommon at the lower levels, although the majority of the cadres above the hsien level were of intellectual origin, even after 1942.¹

The dual tasks of the revolution - anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism - were a combination of nationalism and the class struggle.² By 'anti-imperialism' the CCP in the Yenan period meant both anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, but with heavy emphasis on the former as the primary task, with the latter relegated to a secondary position, as exemplified by the moderate land policy. Was the land reform programme, however, merely of secondary importance for the CCP? Was anti-Japanese nationalism the main factor in the CCP's accession to power after the war? These are central questions to be discussed in the present study.

4. Purpose of this Study

Before discussing the theme and purpose of this study, its chronological and geographical framework should be made clear. The period when the Central Committee of the CCP was in Yenan extends from October 1935 to March 1947. The Yenan period in the history of the Party, therefore, extends over the eleven and a half years between these dates.

¹ According to a SKN Border Region government resolution, in 1943, 90 percent of the district and hsiang level cadres were of peasant origin and "generally ... deficient in cultural and intellectual development." At the hsien level, the majority of the cadres were of peasant origin, but 40 percent had received primary and secondary education, while at the Border Region level more than 70 percent of the cadres were young intellectuals who had joined the Communist government service after the outbreak of the war. "Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'i chien-cheng shih-shih kang-yao," (A summary programme for simpler administration in the SKN Border Region), Chieh-fan jih pao (referred to hereafter as CFJP), 6 March 1943. Selden quotes this part of the lengthy resolution from a pamphlet published under the same title. See Selden, op.cit., pp.146-147.

² The words 'class struggle' are used in this study in a slightly broader sense, as the CCP uses them, than they carry in strict Marxist terminology.
The 'Yenan Period', however, is usually regarded as the eight-year period of the Chinese-Japanese War, from July 1937 to August 1945, when the CCP fought a nationalist war as part of the united Chinese forces against the invader. In terms of the Party's experience, the two year period before the war broke out was characterised by a theoretical and political preparation for the forthcoming united front against the Japanese, and in terms of the Party's engagement in actual warfare the one-and-a-half-year period after Japan collapsed can be said to be a transitional period from a nationalist war to a class war. The Yenan period in this study is limited to the eight years of the war.

A limitation is applied also to the geographical framework. In geographical terms, North China does not include Shensi, Ninghsia or Kansu Provinces, which are very important in the present study, but it does include Honan Province which is not discussed at any length. North China here is defined as the areas where the Eighth Route Army was in action before 1944, in other words, the four Border Regions of the SKN, Shansi-Suiyuan (Chin-Sui), Shansi-Chahar-Hopei (Chin-Ch'a-Chi) and Shansi-Hopei-Shantung-Honan (Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü), and Shantung Province. With the exception of SKN, these regions correspond approximately to the area of responsibility of the Japanese North China Army, which was practically independent from the puppet Central Government in Nanking.

There are two reasons for the selection of North China for a study of the CCP's mass mobilisation during the Yenan period. Firstly, since the aim is to explain the Communists' success in mass mobilisation, 1 From 1944, the CCP started establishing new Liberated Areas around the border between Manchukuo and China Proper, and northern Kiangsu was transferred from New Fourth to Eighth Route Army control.
North China, where the CCP was most successful, can offer more in the way of both examples and source materials. Secondly, for post-1949 China studies, North China in the Yenan period is more important than other parts of China, because the CCP was able to win power on the basis of its political and military success in North China, and it has applied the spirit, the methods, and the strategies and tactics of Yenan to the period after 1949.

Chalmers Johnson points out in *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* that interpretations of the Communist takeover of China which attribute their success to a Moscow conspiracy, the agrarian reform of the CCP, or the corruption of the KMT have been proved to be unrealistic. It seems clear that the CCP enjoyed mass support before 1949, and that the Japanese invasion provided a golden opportunity for the CCP to establish its authority among the peasant masses, especially in North China where the old Chinese rulers and the ruling system itself were almost swept away by the Japanese.

As Johnson points out, however, it was improbable that the old regime or KMT, could have established authority firmly without initiating a social revolution, even if the Japanese had not invaded China. The social and economic system which had remained unchanged since Imperial times had almost reached explosion point, particularly in the rural depression in the 1930s, and it is doubtful whether the KMT or the warlords would have been capable of adjusting to the situation to prevent the explosion. Even if the Japanese had not invaded China, it seems clear that the CCP could have survived in North China, where the circumstances were more favourable than in South China, and could have succeeded finally in defeating the KMT on the basis of social or

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economic reforms in the areas which it occupied. But the Japanese invasion accelerated social transformation by destroying the old system and impelling the Communists to develop more effective policies for mass mobilisation.

Mass organisation and mobilisation are the central issues in the Communist contest for power and also in the strategy of socialist and Communist transformation of the Chinese economy and society. The present study is concerned with the methods by which the CCP succeeded in mobilising the peasant masses in its rural base areas during the war with Japan. It also examines the reasons for the Party's success in the mobilisation. Analysis of the processes of mass movements and mobilisation should assist in explaining both how the CCP gained mass support in the war, and also how it consolidated and has maintained that support after the victory of the revolution.

Johnson argues that, mainly because of its nationalism, the CCP was able to establish its authority among the peasants and that once this authority was established the trust of the people justified its actions. This is partly correct, especially if one considers only the behaviour of the peasants after they had undergone the process of mobilisation. In this process, however, to which Johnson does not give full attention, one can see clearly that the CCP was dealing with a peasantry that was politically 'unaroused', in the Communist terminology, and, being naturally suspicious of all outsiders, was suspicious also of the CCP government, and of the Party itself. They were motivated initially only by the possible benefits that might accrue to them, regardless of whether these related to nationalism or communism.

Even after 1942, when the Party attempted to organise the peasants into organisational production, it had to face the peasants' suspicion and resistance. Similar attitudes are seen towards taxation, the hsia-hsiaung (down-to-the-village) campaign and in many other cases in which outside cadres went into the villages.
The CCP concentrated its efforts on the struggle against Japan; all its policies were designed to serve the final goal of defeating the Japanese. In a sense, this was a matter of survival for the Party, as the Japanese efforts were concentrated on elimination of the Communists, particularly after 1940. It may be argued that the CCP was forced to mobilise the peasant masses simply to keep fighting the Japanese. Even given, however, that the immediate goal of mobilisation was survival in order to resist and defeat Japan, it does not follow that the CCP's success in mobilising the peasantry was attributable to peasant nationalism or the CCP's propagation of the nationalist cause. The vicious circle described by Johnson, of guerrilla warfare and Japanese pacification, cannot explain the Communist success in the early years of the war when the Japanese paid little attention to the rural Communist guerrillas, or in those areas where the Japanese either did not penetrate or were not brutal towards the peasantry. In fact, Donald Gillin gives a number of examples which suggest that, from autumn 1937 to spring 1938 when the Japanese marched into Shansi, the Shansi peasants were indifferent to the war and did not respond favourably to the Shansi and KMT armies which were desperately fighting the foreign invaders. Moreover, the peasants were even willing to work for the Japanese when paid better; they were friendly to the Communist army, although it was not as resolute a fighter as other Chinese armies in this period in Shansi. The explanation stressed by Johnson is Communist propaganda on the subject of nationalism, but this in itself could not have been effective among

1 Johnson, op.cit., pp.9-12.
the basic peasants, who were illiterate, and indifferent, at least to the fate of the Chinese nation. 1

There can be no doubt that during the war there was a nationalist upsurge among the general peasantry in the areas of rural China under Communist control. This is evidence at least of peasant politicisation. The question is, however, whether this peasant nationalism, or politicisation, was sparked by the Japanese invasion or by the socioeconomic programmes of the CCP. In other words, the question which has not been answered satisfactorily by Johnson is whether peasant nationalism was a phenomenon attributable to foreign invasion and Communist propaganda, or more the result of peasant politicisation and mobilisation triggered by the CCP's socioeconomic policies, which were generally of class character.

Mass mobilisation by the CCP, even if ultimately in the nationalist cause, was founded on economic and political measures which brought some benefit to the masses, even though they were not always designed directly to benefit the masses, nor were all the benefits necessarily tangible. In the areas contested by the Communists and the Japanese the class struggle was dressed with nationalism, for the protectors of the existing order were at the same time the foreign invaders, while the social

1 According to an interview by a Japanese scholar with a sixty-four-year-old pao head in 1940 in a village in Shuni Hsien, about 30 miles north from Peking, KMT takeover of Peking in 1928 neither attracted the attention of his fellow villagers, nor brought any change to village life. All he was worried about was a possible change in taxation. He told the interviewer that, as village headman from 1925 to 1927, change in the central government had nothing to do with his village, and that the peasants were too busy with their daily work to worry about wars and politics. The political indifference of the peasant masses in the hinterland was probably much greater than that of the above interviewer, if we consider that he was a village political leader in an area close to Peking. Chūgoku Nōson Kankō Chōsa Kankōkai, ed., Chūgoku Nōson Kankō Chōsa (Rural Custom Survey in China), (Tokyo: 1953), Vol.1, pp.100-101. For the organisation, methods and value for research of this revival survey carried out by Japanese specialists, see Ramon H. Myers, The Chinese Peasant Economy, (Cambridge, Mass.: 1970), pp.27-39.
reformers were also the nationalist fighters. An American reporter, Jack Belden, provides interesting examples relevant to this argument of cases in which landlords cooperated with the Japanese troops at the expense of poorer villagers, and for their own profit exploited opportunities for collecting levies on behalf of the Japanese. 1 Social reform was inevitable if the CCP was to mobilise to the full the broadest possible masses, and on this point, greater attention must be given to the CCP's argument that the people must be promised greater political rights and an improved livelihood, an argument made consistently from 1936 onwards. 2 On the other hand, the old order represented the direct opposite of mass politicisation, and as such was extremely vulnerable to challenge in the form of a politically mobilised peasantry.

All mass movements carried out by the CCP in the Yenan period were, in effect, part of the class struggle, in spite of the appearance of compromise even after 1942. For example, the production movement, in which most of the peasant masses were organised into production organisations, was directed deliberately towards replacing the influence and prestige of the landlord-gentry with the new authority and leadership of the cooperative and mutual-aid organisations. Election campaigns

1 Jack Belden, China Shakes the World, (New York: 1949), p.165. It seems that in some areas the landlords had good reason for collaboration with the Japanese, other than their general fear of the CCP. See Gillin, "'Peasant Nationalism' in the History of Chinese Communism," pp.287-288.
are another example; the CCP was careful to ensure that landlord-gentry dominance was eliminated from all levels of administration. Taxation and rent reduction policies were also designed to be mass campaigns to weaken the economic basis of landlord-gentry power.

Class antagonism was not encouraged; it was denounced, in favour of emphasis on the multi-class united front. But while the CCP's policies were not as radical as in the Kiangsi period, they were still sufficiently radical to aim at social and economic reforms at the expense of the landlords. Even the anti-Japanese united front policy itself was implemented in such a way as to force the richer classes to sacrifice at least part of their interests for the nationalist cause. In terms of the ultimate effect of these less radical policies, the point is that the CCP made every effort to ensure their full implementation throughout the territories under its control. And while the CCP tried to avoid violent measures in the process of policy implementation, it did not intervene to prevent violence. The rent reduction movements are a good example. The CCP did not object to tenants taking violent measures to force landlords to implement regulations on reduction of land rent and to refund excess rent collected illegally.

In its propaganda, the CCP tried to suggest that the Japanese exploitation of the Chinese people did not exempt the richer class, and that the only way for richer people to preserve their property, therefore, was through cooperation with the CCP. This was generally true, particularly in the last years of the war when the diversion of supplies to the Japanese forces in the Pacific resulted in severe shortages for the Japanese armies in China. It is also true that the CCP guaranteed that landlords' property would not be confiscated, and that if land was used for investment or renting out, reasonable profits and rents were permitted. The CCP badly needed the educational qual-
ifications and the wealth of richer class. It was also careful to take
steps to prevent the landlord-gentry class from reasserting dominance
over the peasantry by means of capital investment or land renting.

The position of the landlord-gentry class in the Yenan period was
somewhat similar to that of the Shanghai businessmen in first decade
of the People's Republic, with the exception of those who were politically active. Their property was protected and their skills were respected, but they were not permitted to exploit this privilege to establish a dominant position in the community, nor were they allowed to use their wealth to indulge in a luxurious life. If they were politically active, however, their class was 'qualified'; they were either 'enlightened' landlords or national traitors. The test of whether a landlord was 'enlightened' was the sincerity, activism, and extent of his support for Communist policies. To be 'enlightened', therefore, he had to put aside his personal interests, and in return, he was allowed to share in political leadership in his community, or to hold office in the Communist-led political machine.

Because of wide variations in the situation in the villages, where the cadres enjoyed broad autonomy in implementing regulations and policies, it is extremely difficult to prove by concrete evidence whether or not nationalism was generally the primary lever of Communist mass mobilisation; or to what extent the CCP was willing to mobilise the masses for the class struggle. Moreover, for the greater part of the Communist base areas, it is impossible to obtain source materials on implementation of policies at the basic level. In the areas where the

1 Class affiliation, in Chinese Communist terms is not exactly a matter of how a person lives in terms of production relations, but rather, it is a matter of a person's way of thinking. This was observed still in the Cultural Revolution. See Joan Robinson, The Cultural Revolution in China, (Penguin Books; 1969), p.15.
villagers were confronted with frequent Japanese 'mopping-up' operations, it is, of course, likely that propagation of anti-Japanese nationalism was exploited effectively by the CCP; that the masses, whose survival was threatened by the Japanese 'three-all' policy, could be mobilised by such an appeal.

Nationalism, however, was more probably the result of mass politicisation rather than the cause. For example, in 1939 when the worst floods for a hundred years attacked central and southern Hopei, the CCP and its infant local governments were able to use these floods as an opportunity to mobilise the people in the affected areas. The Party's relief work was far more efficient and effective than that of the Japanese and their puppets, and as a result the masses were more willing to lend their support to the Communist administration, and the Communists were able to consolidate their control of this region.¹

The first and primary means of mobilising the peasant masses in China was economic and/or social rather than ideological. Nationalist appeals were effective in the villages only when the villagers were persuaded of the relevance of the nationalist cause to their own village life. In the rear areas, the CCP had to direct its propaganda to the hardship of village life under the Japanese and KMT, and the harshness with which the peasants were treated by them.

The CCP's mass mobilisation programme was accompanied by enormous efforts in education and indoctrination. In addition to the establishment of large numbers of primary and secondary schools, the CCP instituted widespread literacy courses for adult peasants, in which

¹ K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-ch'i chieh-fang ch'u kai-k'uang (General Situation of the Liberated Areas in the Anti-Japanese War), (Peking: 1956), pp.67-69.
indoctrination was an essential part of the curriculum. The mass movements also were exploited as great opportunities for mass indoctrination, and in many cases, the primary concern of mass movements seems to have been more with education than with the announced goals. Take, for example, the rent reduction movement, the immediate task of which was to reduce rent by 25 percent or to 37.5 percent of the crop yield. From the way in which the Communists carried out this movement, however, there is reason to doubt whether the CCP considered it more important to reduce rent and refund excess rent, than to give the tenants more confidence in their power, to eliminate their fear of the landlords and to make them trust the Communist government and the army. Although the village government was normally responsible for implementing all the regulations at the basic level, in the rent reduction movement it did not usually take the initiative, but passed responsibility and leadership to the peasant associations. It seems that the government did not want simply to impose rent reduction from above, preferring that the tenants should demand and win rent reduction on their own initiative. In the process of the movement, the cadres of the peasants associations were warned repeatedly by the Party not to do everything for the tenant masses (pao-pan tai-t'i), it did not want them to regard rent reduction as a favour bestowed from above.

The CCP apparently tried to focus on the psychological functions of mass mobilisation, which it believed to have more lasting effects. In other words, it believed, and still believes, that no institutional

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2 See an example of the rent reduction campaign in Chapter V, and also William Hinton, Fanshen, (New York: 1967).
reform could last long without psychological reform of the people who comprised and supported the institution. Similarly, the psychological transformation of the masses would not permit old institutions to survive or revive. This idea is based on Mao's concept of man, who is the basic unit of society and whose perception of society and the world determines the direction in which a society will move. The most distinctive feature of the Chinese Communist revolution is its emphasis on education or psychological indoctrination of the people; and the most important element of the Communists' social revolution has been the attempt to transform the minds and the value systems of the basic peasants.

The central questions posed in this study are what moved the peasants to support the Communists and how did this occur; how were they changed mentally and politicised by the CCP, and by what means was the CCP able to mobilise them.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNIST BASE AREAS IN NORTH CHINA

If one accepts Chalmers Johnson's argument that the CCP's success in mass mobilisation depended mainly upon mass nationalism generated by Japanese brutality and fed by Communist propaganda, then the situation in which the peasants lived before the arrival of the Communists would be of little relevance. Johnson's explanation, however, is not in all respects convincing. A combination of Communist propaganda and Japanese ruthlessness is only a partial explanation, and Johnson's thesis tends to minimise the significance of other relevant factors, particularly the relative importance of revolution and the class struggle in the mobilisation process. If the CCP succeeded in arousing mass nationalism for the first time in rural China, why was it that it was the CCP's propaganda that was effective, and not that of the KMT or other groups. And if this was the case, how was the CCP's propaganda effective? If the brutality of the Japanese was one of the two major causes of rising mass nationalism, the Communist success in the first three years, represented by rapid growth of Party membership, of the size of the Communist armed forces and of the Communist-controlled or influenced areas, simply cannot be explained when compared with the years after 1940, when the Japanese were much more brutal towards the rural populace in the notorious 'three-all' policy.

Johnson seems to underestimate the economic and social aspects of peasant mobilisation in this period, or what the Communists themselves would call the elements of 'class struggle', and to put too much emphasis on mass nationalism. Although he states that there was "a dialogue of mutual interest" between the CCP and the peasantry, and
that the latter felt "that it is to their advantage to follow govern-
mental directives," if one looks at the overall perspective of the
Chinese revolution and its development through this period, one can
only regard Johnson's analysis of the peasants' interests as inadequate,
to say the least. He argues that "their (the Chinese masses') interests
lay with plans and abilities that offered a means to cope with conditions
of mass destruction and anarchy." Since he seems to mean social and
political chaos caused by war, that is, by "mass destruction and
anarchy," the significance of the Communist "plans and abilities" in
social and political revolution has been overlooked. His implication
is that the peasants had been somehow satisfied with the economic and
political circumstances in which they had lived before the war.

Johnson does not overlook the crisis in the Chinese rural economy,
and admits that this alone might have led the peasants to revolutionary
mobilisation. What he has overlooked is the socioeconomic effects of
the Japanese invasion on rural China. Even though the Chinese peasants

1 Johnson, op.cit., p.10.
2 Ibid.
3 It would be fair to point out that Johnson writes: "Obviously, an
argument based solely on the economic situation in China ignores the
influence of the Japanese invasion, and thereby misinterprets the role
of the Communist Party as leader of the anti-Japanese peasant armies.
This is not to argue that if the Japanese invasion of China ... had not
occurred, the prewar government could have continued to exist unassailed
or that the process of social change associated with the Communist
governments would never have begun. If the invasion had never occurred,
a severe economic catastrophe in the future, or a prolongation of the
rural depression of the 1930's, might well have produced revolutionary
mobilisation. But a constantly or slowly evolving, rate of economic
deprivation would still have constituted only a conditioning factor in
the subsequent revolutionary movements; and it is unlikely that such
revolutionary movements would have confined themselves to economic re-
forms, just as the Chinese Communist government aims at more ambitious
goals than the relief of rural misery....An economic analysis alone
offers no insights into the potentiality of a revolutionary movement,
and commonly distorts attempts at political analysis of the policies
pursued by postrevolutionary governments." Ibid., pp.17-18.
4 Ibid.
experienced the brutality of the Japanese, and even though the Communists' nationalist propaganda was effective, it is unlikely that the ordinary peasants would have been moved simply by an abstract idea of nationalism if this had nothing to do with socioeconomic or political reform, or at least expectation of such reform.¹

Obviously, nationalism drove the intelligentsia, the students, teachers, and local government officials, to resist the Japanese.² But the Communists offered prospects for protracted resistance by introducing the concept of class struggle, even if modified to a certain extent by the united front.³ It was not simple nationalist propaganda that enabled the Party to mobilise the masses, but the introduction of the idea of class struggle to the Chinese peasantry; in other words, socioeconomic and political reforms and transformation.⁴

If we are to interpret the CCP's success in mass mobilisation in the Yenan period and to understand Communist policies and techniques in mass mobilisation at the basic level, it is essential to understand the rural situation in North China when the war started and the history of mass mobilisation in the five Communist bases in North China which, with the exception of the SKN Border Region which had been a Soviet region since 1927, were established in the first three years of the war. The general economic and political situation in rural North China is important for understanding why the great majority of the peasants welcomed even the moderate Communist reform programmes. Description of

¹ Donald Gillin gives examples of Shansi peasants who were indifferent to the war in 1937/38, but welcomed the Communist army because they expected it to carry out social reform. See Chapter I, p.23.

² Gillin gives a good example of Shansi officials and students on this point. See Gillin, "Peasant Nationalism' in the History of Chinese Communism," pp.273-274.

³ The CCP was careful in this period not to use the words 'class struggle', but it was in fact class struggle that the Party promoted at the basic level of the administration.

⁴ This point is supported by the fact that the Communist success in mobilising the masses occurred after 1942 when they became less concerned with the united front and more concerned with socioeconomic transformation than they had been during the period before 1942.
the Communist bases in North China also provides a background to Communist mass mobilisation in these areas. And discussion of mass mobilisation must be set against Communist policies in the early years of the war.

1. The General Situation in Rural North China

From the 1911 Revolution until 1949, when the People's Republic was established, China was never unified. The KMT defected the warlords in South and Central China, but after the Shanghai Coup of April 1927, in which the KMT eliminated the Communist elements in its own ranks, the warlords in North China and the Manchuria were absorbed rather than defeated. The KMT completed the 'unification' of China mainly through compromises in which it recognised the governing institutions and military systems of the warlords as part of the National Government. This was significant in terms of the CCP's subsequent operation. Firstly, it meant that the administration of the National Government never penetrated very far in North China. Secondly, the absorption of the warlords, whose power rested on the old land-owning class, contributed to the reactionary character of the KMT administration. In short, at least in North China the KMT preserved the old ruling system at the basic level; it simply adopted the new dress of 'modern' government in Nan-king, based on Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People, which was basically oriented to western parliamentary democracy.¹

¹ 'Modern' here does not mean 'democratic'. On the basis of Sun's political concept, the KMT defined this period as the period of political 'tutelage' in which the KMT ruled the central and local administration by itself while training the people for the period of 'constitutional government'. The KMT was to convene the National Assembly to adopt the constitution in 1937, but that was postponed until 1947 because of the war.
In this section it is not intended to discuss in detail the rural situation in North China in the pre-Communist period, but to outline the economic and political factors which at the basic level contributed to the acceptance of and support for Communist power. The greater part of this discussion, moreover, is devoted to the economic situation, since it was the depressed economic situation of the peasant masses on which their political and social positions in the villages rested, a position without power and without rights. Among economic problems, the land owning system lay at the root of all the others.

Land Owning System and Agrarian Management.

China was, and still is, an agricultural country, with at least seventy percent of the population engaged in agriculture. A basic feature of the Chinese agrarian economy by the 20th century was over-population and shortage of land. Food production was not sufficient for the enormous population of China; too many people were competing...
for food to eat and land to till. Here was the basic cause of extremely intensive labour, high rates of land rent and debt interest, and low wages, which characterised the Chinese economy. Land hunger inhibited China's industrialisation, because investment tended to flow to land, which was safer, more prestigious, and more profitable than manufacturing, in which Chinese capital had to compete with European and Japanese capital, even in the domestic market. It should be borne in mind that there was no powerful central government in China to protect and encourage industrialisation or to resist 'imperialist' capital. The National Government tried to regain China's independence by its economic and financial policies in the mid-1930s, but before the effects were felt, the Japanese invasion intervened. Infant Chinese industry and commercial capital were concentrated in the coastal cities, which were occupied by the Japanese after 1937. Chinese capital, evacuated from the coastal cities when the National Government retreated to Hankow and then Chungking, tended to be invested in land in Szechwan rather than in industrialisation in the hinterland of China. Prestige and the economic advantage of land ownership formed the basis of the social system in rural China, and without radical reform of the whole economic, social and political structure, industrialisation was almost impossible.

Population pressure also affected agrarian management; rather than developing capitalist management of agriculture, large landowners tended to divide their land into small lots which they hired out to tenant farmers, since this was easier and safer than hiring their own labourers. One reason for this tendency was that landowners could

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1 This had been accelerated by the rural depression after 1931, which had caused a decline in land values, and in the price of agricultural and handicraft products, and consequently increased the number of landless peasants.
avoid the risk of bad harvests and unstable markets, because they could ignore harvest conditions in their rent collection. Another reason was that by renting out their land the landowners could impose 'land taxes and levies' on their tenants for their own land taxes. In North China, however, the great majority of agricultural management was in the form of small-scale owner-farming,¹ which was reinforced by the equal inheritance system, a centuries-old practice in China.²

Most 'owner-farmers' in China had only a small plot of land, too small to support one family. According to an investigation report of the Land Commission of the Ministry of Industry, the distribution of land ownership was as follows:³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Land Owned</th>
<th>Percentage of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 mou*</td>
<td>35.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 9.9</td>
<td>23.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 14.9</td>
<td>13.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 29.9</td>
<td>16.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 99.9</td>
<td>9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 499.9</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 999.9</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 and over</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1 mou is approximately 0.15 acre.

¹ According to J.L. Buck's survey in 1929-1933, the average size of a farm in North China was 5.09 acres. He reports that 76 percent of the farmers in North China were owner-farmers, 18 percent part-owners and only 6 percent tenants. The tenancy ratio is about one half of that in South China. *Land Utilization in China*, (Nanking: 1937), pp.197-268.

² The equal inheritance system, among sons, was well-entrenched. Where rural surveys have been conducted, there is almost no case in which a father's property was inherited, owned, and managed jointly by his sons. Niida Noboru, *Chūgoku no Nōson Kazoku* (Rural Family in China), (Tokyo: 1954), pp.106-122. This study is based on the extensive surveys carried out by Japanese scholars in Hopei Province in 1941 and 1942.

A rural investigation by the South Manchuria Railway Company (SMR) in 1937 concluded that it was impossible to sustain 'ordinary rural life' in North China at that time on less than 5 mou of land per person. Assuming that each family had an average of five members, it needed at least 25 mou of land to support itself. Table 1 indicates, therefore, that almost 90 percent of the peasants who actually owned land did not in fact have sufficient land to support their families. The total shortage of land was even more acute than is expressed in Table 1, which excludes landless tenants and farm labourers.

In addition to the overall shortage of land, there was also a serious problem of unequal distribution. Seventy percent of agrarian households owned only about 20 percent of the total cultivated land; landless peasants accounted for more than 20 percent of the total. About 10 percent of agrarian households owned more than 50 percent of the land. The following investigation by the SMR in Hopei Province clearly shows the uneven distribution of land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>East Hopei</th>
<th>Ting Hsien (Central Hopei)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Household (percent)</td>
<td>Land (percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper section</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>42.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-middle section</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>14.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle section</td>
<td>13.66</td>
<td>20.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower section</td>
<td>76.46</td>
<td>21.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2 The average size of a rural family in North China at this time was
Another survey in ten villages in Pao-ting Hsien, central Hopei, in 1930 by Ch'en Han-seng obtained the following results. 1

TABLE 3  Land Ownership Distribution in Pao-ting Hsien in Hopei Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>Household (percent)</th>
<th>Land (percent)</th>
<th>Size of land per household (actual number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landlords</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>58.5 (mou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich peasants</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle peasants</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor peasants &amp;</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm labourers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As these tables indicate, it can be assumed that at least 70 percent of the peasants were suffering from shortage of land and were unable to live by tilling their own land, that they had to rent others' land, take side jobs such as hiring themselves out for farm labour or manual labour in the cities and Manchuria.

In sum, the inequality of the distribution of land ownership was not as extreme as in South China, and the dominant form of agrarian management in North China was small-scale owner-farming. Because of general shortage of land, 'owner-farmer' did not mean one who had enough land to support his family, and in most cases the owner-farmer had to seek more land to till, or hire himself out in order simply to support his family. Improvement or expansion of production by such owner-farmers was almost out of the question.

footnote 2 cont'd
The land problem was so serious that the great majority of the peasantry were in fact forced to be part-time farmers. They were naturally unhappy with their small landownership and the situation which forced them to seek side jobs with low wages. Their desire to obtain more land, at least sufficient land to maintain themselves, provided the Communists with potential mass energy to be released by even a small prospect of improving this situation. The tenancy system, taxation, loans and other oppressive practices were based on the serious inequalities and breakdown in the land-owning system, and made the lives of the landless and land-hungry peasants more depressed, and accordingly sharpened their desire for socioeconomic reform.

The Tenancy System

Although small-scale owner-farming was common, the tenancy system was also present on a significantly wide scale. Pure tenancy accounted for only about 10 percent of all agrarian households, but partial tenancy was widespread and rent-paying peasant households accounted for almost 40 percent of the total. The widespread existence of tenancy was both politically and economically important, for the circumstances of the tenants were sufficiently difficult to arouse dissatisfaction or resentment. Furthermore, as with all other 'disasters', the Japanese invasion in 1937 brought chaos to the villages in some parts of North China, and the peasants could not plant crops in the autumn. Since they had no store of food or cash, many peasants were forced to sell their

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1 Although J.L. Buck reports that tenant and partial tenant households in North China comprised 24 percent of the total agrarian households, a Chinese source gives the following figures for the ten provinces in North China: 60.7 percent owner-farmers, 20.3 part-owners and 19.0 tenants. *Kita-Shina no Nogyō to Kaizai*, p.678.
draught animals, farm appliances, and, in some cases, their land, in
order to procure food.¹

The practice of tenant-farming varied both in the period of tenancy
and in the method of fixing and paying rent, and in the degree of land-
lord intervention in the actual management of land. Rent varied from 20
to 90 percent of crop yield according to the conditions of tenancy and
the quality of land. In a typical tenancy in North China, the contract
was renewed every two or three years, or agricultural seasons; rent
was paid in grain the rate being about 50 percent of crop yield; and
the landlord did not interfere with actual cultivation.² Extra payments
or some form of service, usually the provision of labour, was normally
given by the tenants to the landlords out of fear of cancellation of the
tenancy contract. It was a common practice for landlords to use
measures from 10 to 20 percent larger than the standard measures when
collecting grain rent, and smaller ones when lending grain to the
starving peasants.³

As seen in the previously cited Japanese rural survey from 1940 to
1942 in Hopei and Shantung, land ownership meant not only wealth but
also power.⁴ Because of the general shortage of land and land hunger
among the great majority of the peasants, the landlords were able to
exercise power over both tenants and potential tenants, intimidating

¹ Kehoku-shō Enzan-ken Dai-san-ku Bōjuchin-son Gaiyō Chōsa Hokokushō, pp.8-10.
² Hsüeh Mu-chiao, Chung-kuo nung-ts'un ching-chi ch'ang-shih (Outline
of Chinese Rural Economy), translated into Japanese by Yonezawa Hideo,
no Nogyō to Keizai, pp.418-441.
³ For example, "Ma-tien-chen chien-tsu tou-cheng" (Struggle for Rent
Reduction at Ma-tien Village), CFJP, 14 December 1942. The burden on
the tenants also included payment of guarantee money for the tenancy
contract, transportation of rent grain to the landlords' store houses,
food and wine for entertaining the landlords or their rent collectors
when rent was collected.
⁴ See Chapter I, p.24, Note 1. See also the discussion of village
politics later in this section.
the former by threatening to cancel their tenancy, and influencing the latter by offering some hope of renting land. This was of vital importance for a peasantry on the verge of starvation. The peasants' fear of landlords, which was the hardest wall for the CCP to break through, was rooted deeply in the peasantry, since the landlord determined whether they would survive or whether they would starve in the next bad year.

Taxes and Levies

The main tax on the peasantry was land tax, usually about 3 percent of the value of land owned. The problem for the peasantry lay in the advance collection of land tax and in the various taxes additional to this. More than half of the Chinese provinces collected land tax in advance. It was quite usual for land tax to be collected twice or three times a year; and actual land tax was often so high as to account for a half of the year's crop.¹

The additional or miscellaneous taxes were collected on production and consumption of goods. For example, salt tax accounted for from 60 to 70 percent of the price of salt. There were also taxes on pigs, cattle, silkworms and so forth. The government also collected, when it considered it necessary, special taxes for such matters as education, the self-defence corps, highways, air services, 'national salvation', etc.² The amount of tax paid by the people often reached several times that which the government prescribed; and because government officials at every level from the province to the village added their own profit to the taxes, the actual amount the peasants had to pay grew to a few

¹ Hsüeh Mu-chiao, op.cit., p.129.
² Ibid., pp.132-135.
times the amount of the original tax.\(^1\)

In addition to taxes, of which there were often more than fifty kinds, levies were made by order of the provincial, hsien, district and township governments, without any limitation by the Central Government. The same corrupt practice occurred with levies as with taxes, by which local officials added their own profit at each level. There are many reports on the burden of the peasants. An interesting monograph was published by the Academia Sinica on military requisitions:

The collections are carried out by threats and deceit and in the last resort the collectors can always make their gains by false measurements and by manipulation between coins and paper money. Sometimes the requisition is purposely divided into several instalments so that additional demands may be made at each instalment. For instance, in the district of Weinan, in the middle and eastern part of Shensi, four instalments were demanded in the year 1930 to 1931 on 10,000 piculs of wheat. At the end of the fourth instalment 11,000 piculs had actually been collected, of which however, only 7,000 were reported and delivered by the magistrate, Chang Kung-fu. The provincial authorities then demanded the collection of an additional 3,000 piculs to make up the original sum. On this pretext a further collection of 4,000 to 5,000 piculs was then made, of which only 410 were handed over to the provincial authorities.\(^2\)

Not only was the taxation system itself corrupt, discriminatory and oppressive, but the procedure for tax collection was also chaotic. Even though the National Government tried to abolish the traditional tax farming system and to organise the collection of taxes by the Taxation Bureau at the hsien level,\(^3\) the old Ch'ing system of tax collection

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3 Yi Ming-shi who worked for a Land Registration Office of the KMT Government in 1936 or early 1937 describes the bureaucratic attitudes and corrupt behaviour of the officials who were providing a new land cadastre for the 'modernised' taxation system of the KMT. See "Experiences of an Official in the Land Tax Consolidation Bureau," in ibid., pp.149-153.
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persisted until 1937 in North China. Since the land registration on which the Ch'ing taxation system rested was inherited from the Ming dynasty and the land cadastre had been kept by the local tax collectors, whose positions at the basic level were in many cases hereditary, direct taxation by the National Government was only nominal. The Government could not avoid farming out taxes and the collectors could collect any amount they wished, so long as they paid the required amount to the hsien or district governments.

Heavy and arbitrary taxation in the pre-Communist period offered a great opportunity to the CCP to impress the people with its efforts to lighten their burden and to eliminate the corrupt practices of the officials. Since it depended entirely on administrative work, the taxation system was easier for the CCP to reform radically than were other practices which were more complex and more closely related to the socio-economic system as a whole. The collapse of the KMT and warlord administrations with the Japanese invasion made the reform task even easier for the CCP, as it meant that the Party did not have to cope with resistance from the existing ruling order. As soon as the new administration was set up, the Communists introduced an entirely new system of progressive taxation, which was designed to place a heavy burden on the richer people. Because of the war, the tax burden was still heavy, but by eliminating miscellaneous levies and corrupt practices, the CCP was able to lighten it to an impressive extent by comparison with the old taxation system, especially for poorer people.

1 A progressive hsien magistrate in western China under the KMT told Edgar Snow, presumably in 1939, that he had found an old and corrupt tax collection system when he had become the magistrate after the outbreak of the war. See Edgar Snow, The Battle for Asia, (New York: 1941), pp.313-314.

2 Hsiao, op.cit., p.85.

3 See Chapter V, pp.245-246.
Rural Loans

Since they had to live on extremely small plots of land, and yet were forced to pay taxes and levies which often amounted to half the crop yield from this land, the common peasants had to cut their living expenses to the absolute minimum. According to an SMR survey on the peasant home economy in east Hopei in 1937, the annual living expenditure of a peasant household which operated less than 25 mou of land was 237.80 Chinese dollars, roughly equivalent to 80 U.S. dollars. Of this amount, expenditure on food occupied about 60 percent, while expenditure on maintenance of health, on education, and on entertainment amounted to less than 1 percent in each case. Although 60 percent of the total expenditure was on food, the meals of even the middle peasants in North China, eaten twice a day and three times daily in busy seasons, consisted mainly of staples and very little protein. Meat and eggs were eaten only at festivals, weddings or funerals. The poor peasants did not even eat wheat, which was dearer than millet and kao-liang.

As their income from land was scarcely enough to maintain even this standard of living, peasants who could not earn enough from side jobs were forced to support themselves with loans, particularly in the pre-harvest seasons. According to an official Chinese source in 1936, a normal harvest year, in Hopei and Shantung Provinces, more than three quarters of the peasant households earned less than 150 Chinese dollars a year, and those who earned more than 400 dollars accounted for less

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1 Kita-Shina no Nogyō to Keizai, p.736. J.L. Buck's survey gives C$190.63 in North China in 1922-1925. The difference between the two figures is due to inflation during the decade, which was more serious than these figures indicate, for Buck's figure is the average of all his informant households, including large land owners. See Buck, Chinese Farm Economy, (Chicago: 1930), p.385.
2 Kita-Shina no Nogyō to Keizai, p.741; Chinese Farm Economy, pp.382-421.
than 5 percent. This meant that a substantial number of peasant households in North China spent more than they earned during a year. For special occasions such as weddings or funerals, or in times of sickness or famine, the majority of peasants had to borrow sums often equivalent to or more than their annual income. They borrowed from their richer relatives and friends, and from usurers who were in most cases landlords, gentry or merchants. In 1933, rural households paying interest on loans amounted to 62 percent of the total.

The nature of the loans themselves also compounded the debtors' burden. Firstly, the debtor obtained a loan in order to support his family and only extremely rarely to expand production, and the principal and the interest could only be repaid from what he could earn by his labour. Secondly, the rates of interest were extraordinarily high.

Given below are the interest rates in rural China in 1934, compiled by the Central Institute for Agricultural Experiment of the National Government.

2 Same source as referred to in above Note 1, quoted in Myers, op.cit., p.242. Myers states that in a normal harvest year an average of one third of peasant households had to borrow because their expenditure exceeded their income.
3 Myers, op.cit., p.242. Buck states that the average cost of a funeral or wedding in North China in 1922-1925 was about C$50. Chinese Farm Economy, pp.416-417.
4 Survey by the Central Institute for Agricultural Experiment in 1933, quoted in Hsieh Mu-chiao, op.cit., p.113. Sun Hsiao-ts'’un, however, quotes slightly different figures from Nung-ching pao-kao, Vol.2, No.4, published by the same Institute: "Cash-indebted rural households occupied 65 percent, grain-indebted occupied 48 percent among all rural households in China." Gendai Shina no Tochi Mondai, p.217. Myers quotes much smaller figures from the above cited National Government source: in 1936 in Hopei 43 percent and in Shantung 28 percent of rural households were in debt. Ibid.
5 See Myers, op.cit., p.243.
6 Hsieh Mu-chiao, op.cit., p.119. See also CCP's report quoted in Selden, op.cit., pp.13-14; Myers, op.cit., pp.243-244.
TABLE 4  Rates of Interest on Rural Loans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual rate of interest (%)</th>
<th>Percentage among the whole rural loan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 20</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 30</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 40</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 and over</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rate of interest on grain loans was much higher than that on cash loans; it was over 85 percent annually, and most of those who were in debt for grain loans were poor peasants.\(^1\) According to a report by Lee Kuo-ch'un, moreover, between 1932 and 1936, the interest rates roughly doubled and the number of usurers increased considerably.\(^2\)

Thirdly, the terms of loan repayment were short. Land was usually required as security for a long-term loan, and as poor peasants had not enough land to mortgage, the terms of their loans could not but be short, usually within one year. According to the 1933 survey by the Central Institute for Agricultural Experiment, 77.3 percent of the loan contracts in rural China were for less than one year.\(^3\) Frequently, the debtors were even required to pay interest for one whole year on loans of less than one year's duration, so that the actual monthly interest rate was more than 50 percent higher than that for long-term loans. In the case

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) "Usury in the Rural Districts of Szechwan", *Agrarian China*, p.194.

\(^3\) Hsüeh Mu-chiao, op.cit., p.120. Lo Kuo-hsien reports that in pawnshops in the rural areas the terms of loans were reduced from three years to two and a half years at the beginning of the present century. From then on a series of reductions occurred, and in 1935 pawnshops in many hsien reduced the redemption period to six months. "Pawnshops and Peasantry", *Agrarian China*, p.192.
of grain loans, the ordinary term was six months and the monthly interest rate exceeded 10 percent.¹

Fourthly, the creditor was usually the local landlord or merchant. The 1933 survey by the Central Institute for Agricultural Experiment gives the following percentages for the sources of loans:²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5 Sources of Rural Loans in China, 1933.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawnshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private money exchanger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If one considers that most private money exchangers and owners of pawnshops and shops were often actually the same people as the landlords and/or merchants, 95 percent of the creditors were landlords and merchants.³

The power of the landlords was reinforced by the system of lending money, which was as vital as tenancy for survival of the poorer majority of the peasants. This was another source of the peasants' fear of the landlords. If two-thirds of the rural population had to depend on loans from the landlords simply for survival, it is not difficult to understand how deeply landlord rule permeated the basic level of society in rural China, or how difficult were the problems which the CCP had to face when it tried to mobilise the peasants for rent and interest reduction, which was a class struggle. This was the crucial question in mass mobilisation. The CCP understood from its experience that so long

¹ Hsüeh Mu-chiao, op.cit., p.120; Gendai Shina no Tochi Mondai, pp.193-213.
² Hsüeh Mu-chiao, op.cit., p.122.
³ According to a survey of pawnshops in Kiangsu Province in 1933, the source of the capital of pawnshops was either landlord or merchant. See Agrarian China, p.192.
as the fear of the landlords persisted, institutional or organisational transformation would be insecure and the old system could be easily revived.

Village Politics

In this economic situation, therefore, about seventy percent of the peasantry was barely able to maintain the lowest standard of living, and had to supplement income either by side jobs or by going into debt. What, then, was their political status in the villages? How did the administration work at the village level at the time the war broke out?

It is a commonplace in writings on China's political history that the Chinese villages had for centuries enjoyed an internal autonomy. National administration extended only as far down as the hsien level, although after 1929 the power of the Kuomintang central government did penetrate increasingly into the villages. Central governments, of course, had tried for more than ten centuries to organise villages in accordance with the number of households, ignoring the natural shape of the villages. The National Government was no exception; in 1929 it set out to reorganise the villages into hsiang (township), each of which was to comprise a hundred households. But the natural village (tsu-jan ts'un or ts'un), the basic unit of rural life, survived all attempts at reorganisation by central governments, and remained as the basic administrative unit with its own administrative organisations.

3 For example, the pao-chia system of the Ch'ing dynasty made a division into pao, consisting of 110 households and subdivided into 10 chia of 11 households each. Usually a pao coincided with a natural village, and the number of households varied widely.
Who worked in the village office? What kind of self-government did the Chinese villages have? Did autonomy mean self-government by all the villagers?

In theory, all villagers were equal, and eligible to hold administrative positions in the village, particularly after 1929, when the National Government enforced the Hsien Organisation Act which stipulated popular suffrage for village officers. The practice, however, was significantly different.

Village administration was carried out normally by various associations (she or hui) within the villages. The purpose of these associations varied considerably over time and also from one place to another; they might be religious, military, 'crop-watching', financial, or what Sydney Gamble describes as 'mixed', that is combining several functions within one association. Many villages had a number of associations with different purposes. But the most universal were the crop-watching associations, which in most cases actually assumed the role of village administration, to an extent that in some areas the term for the crop-watching association was regarded by the villagers as another term for the village office. Even after the KMT Government introduced, in some areas at least, its programme for a well-defined village administration organisationally independent of the association, the latter remained almost synonymous with the village government. The village office, in

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1 For a description of these associations, see Gamble, op.cit., pp.32-44.
2 See, for example, the survey by Japanese scholars in 1940-42 in Hopei and Shantung, on the use of the terms Ch'ing-miao hui in Hopei and Kung-k'an i-po hui in Shantung. Chūgoku Nōson Kankō Chōsa, Vol.1, pp. 3, 6 & 190; Vol. 5, p.7. Simizu Morimitsu, a Japanese sociologist who specialises in Chinese rural society, has given special attention to the class character of crop-watching associations which comprised only landowning villagers. He states that one of the purposes of the associations was to discriminate against landless villagers. Chūgoku Shakai no Kenkyū (A Study of Chinese Society), (Tokyo: 1944), p.297.
most cases concurrently the association secretariat, was usually in
the miao (temple), which normally also accommodated the primary school.
The physical proximity of the administrative, religious and education-
al organisations in the village reflected a degree of organisational
solidarity. The associations carried out religious celebrations and
festivals; the administration and school were run by the association
leaders, with funds provided by the association. The association had
several leaders ¹ who had equal responsibility for the joint management
of the association and of the village administration.

Qualifications for village (association) leadership did not
necessarily include wealth or education. In practice, however, a
degree of wealth was essential, because the leadership positions
carried no salary, and the leaders themselves needed time for meetings
and other work associated with village administration. In fact, most
informants in the 1940-42 Japanese survey said that it was impossible
for men without property to be village leaders. ² Although education
was not a required qualification for village leadership, some regular
education or knowledge of the world outside one's village commanded
respect.

The position of the association leader was not, at least in
theory, hereditary. The term of office varied from one or two years
to lifetime appointment. Where the term of office was short, the
association leaders were usually elected by the members; where it was
permanent, they were appointed by other leaders. ³ Irrespective of

¹ The number of association leaders varied from 3 to 40 in accordance
with size of the village.
³ The former was the case in Shantung and the latter in Hopei.
whether the leaders were elected or appointed, land ownership was, in practice, an essential condition for appointment, because both the associations and the village administration and school were maintained by fees assessed on the basis of land ownership. It was unusual, although not unknown, for those whose contribution was small to be elected or appointed to village office.

According to the Hsien Organisation Act of 1929, the village headman was supposed to be elected annually by all villagers above the age of twenty, irrespective of sex, but this provision proved little more than nominal. In many villages, the association leaders appointed the headmen, and an election was conducted among male family heads merely as a formality. Even in villages where the election was more than a formality, only male family heads who could pay taxes and village association fees were able to vote. Usually, the poorer half or two-thirds of the villagers did not attend the election. If they did, it made little difference to the outcome of the election. The poorer villagers knew whom the village leaders wanted to be elected and they also had to write their own names on the ballots together with the names of the candidates which meant that they 'voted' for the leaders nominee. This was partly due to the fact that the position of village headman was both difficult and with-

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1 Association fees were usually about 1 Chinese dollar per mou annually. Myers states that village leaders were chosen on the basis of the socioeconomic ranking of their family or clan in the village. Op. cit., p.259.

2 Some villages had a system of election of headman by family heads even before 1929. But in most villages elections were introduced after 1929 on the orders of the hsien administrations, which often sent officials to inspect the village elections. But the case described by Chao Shu-li in his novel Li Yu-ts'ai pan-hua, in which one person assumed headmanship for more than ten years, was not uncommon in other parts of China, including, according to Japanese investigation, Szechwan and Hopei. See Li Yu-ts'ai pan-hua (Li Yu-ts'ai's Story Songs), (n.p.: 1949), p.25; Chūgoku Nōson Kankō Chōsa, Vol.1, p.97; Vol.4, pp.6 & 354.

out financial reward, and therefore not sought after by poorer villagers. But it was also a product of the village social system, and of the subservient position of the poorer villagers.

The village was under joint leadership of the headman and the association leaders; neither in the extensive Japanese rural survey nor in the survey by Sydney Gamble is there evidence of dictatorship by one man. The headman convened meetings of leaders to discuss important matters as they arose. On administrative and financial matters, the villagers apart from the leaders were rarely consulted by the headman, and they were not active participants in village administration.

Since the hsien government enjoyed absolute power over the villages, the richer families with personal connections in the hsien could control the villages, and the other villagers had little means of resisting. Village autonomy was, in fact, oligarchic self-government by the richer villagers, who comprised 20-30 percent of the village population, who owned on average more than 20 mou of land, and who had some education.

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1 Since the main task of the headman was to collect taxes and levies from the villagers for the hsien government, it was difficult to satisfy both the villagers and the hsien, when the hsien required large amounts of taxes and levies. See Gamble, op.cit., pp.294-295. The headman was entirely responsible for collection of taxes and levies in his village, which meant that he had to pay for the poor villagers when they could not pay in time, or else face imprisonment by the hsien administration. In addition, he had to spend a large part of his time on village activities.

2 It was uncommon for meetings to be convened of all the villagers, although this was not unknown. Even when a villagers' meeting was held, the poorer villagers, who had no time to spare for such meetings and felt that their presence would be ineffective, did not attend. See Chūgoku Noson Kankō Chōsa, Vol.1, pp.51, 97 & 125, Vol.4, pp.9, 38 and 354.


4 The case of Tieh-so, described in Chao Shu-li's novel Changes in Li Village, was neither exceptional nor exaggerated. A case of a middle peasant whose daughter-in-law committed suicide is reported in Chūgoku Noson Kankō Chōsa: he was expelled by the village leaders who settled the case with the hsien government on his behalf.
or knowledge of the administrative system. The poorer seventy to eighty percent were left powerless, and had virtually no part in the 'self-government' of their villages.

The politicisation of this powerless seventy to eighty percent, the inculcation of confidence in their own strength and security and in Communist power, was the main task for Communist mass mobilisation. However, the power of the rich could not be broken immediately by the CCP. In the period from 1937 to 1941, particularly when the Party was more concerned with establishing a new administration on the basis of the united front rather than with mobilisation of the poor for class struggle, the Party needed the education and administrative skills of the rich, and landlordism tended to survive.

There may be exceptions to the general situation described above, but generally, about seventy percent of the peasantry were in a depressed condition, both politically and economically. For such peasants, war and famine were disasters which threatened death. A Japanese investigation of a village in Yenshan Hsien in Hopei Province provides a representative case of the difficulties caused by war. In the autumn of 1937, just before the Japanese troops arrived, many villagers fled to the cities and to faraway villages to avoid the levies and butchery of the Japanese, and thus missed the wheat sowing season. In their absence, Chinese troops stationed overnight at the village stole their food stocks. Consequently, from the winter of 1937 to the spring of 1938, many of the villagers suffered from starvation. Many were forced to go to Manchuria, both to earn money and to reduce food consumption in the village. But even this was not sufficient to relieve the problem. The remaining families had to borrow grain, or go into debt to purchase grain simply in order to survive. Some of them had to sell their livestock, furniture, clothes, and other personal effects to purchase food.
In the worst cases, they had to sell or mortgage their land, but the value of land fell by 20 percent because so many wanted to sell, and too few people were willing to purchase. Over eighty villagers, especially the old, the weak, and the very young, starved to death. If this were not sufficient privation, drought attacked the village in the next year, 1939. Although the peasants adopted the same defensive measures as they had in the previous year, almost a hundred villagers died from hunger in 1939.¹

In times of disaster, the peasants seem not to have expected relief from the administration, while the government, in turn, appeared to have no serious concern for the peasants' welfare.² There were, of course, some warlords who attempted to reform the administration, but as long as their power rested on the traditional social system, radical political reform was impossible, or at least improbable.³ The KMT government system was no exception, even though it tried to 'modernise' the government system as a whole. At the basic level, the behaviour of its officials differed little from the corrupt traditional practice of the Imperial bureaucrats.

This is not to deny that there were idealistic officials who tried rigorously to operate a 'modern' administration under the warlords. But they were exceptional, and they were not able to effect fundamental changes in the traditional practice of the local level administration. Even at the top level of the administration, the National Government

¹ SWR, Kakoku-shō Enzan-ken Dai-San-ku Bōjuchin-son Gaiyō Chōsa Hōkokusho, pp.8-12.
² See, for example, Edgar Snow's description of the famine in 1929 and 1930 in Suiyan and Shanxi Provinces and the attitudes of the officials towards the 20 million dying people. Journey to the Beginning, (New York: 1958), pp.7-11.
never appeared serious in its proclaimed intent to implement the basic platform of its agrarian policy, reduction of land rent. Generally, the administration at the village level remained unchanged from the Ch'ing period until the Communists attempted to reform it after 1937, and most of the Imperial administrative practices were kept alive by virtue of the peasants' political inaction.

Against this background of rural Chinese society, the Japanese began in the autumn of 1937 to try to establish control over agricultural production, and the Chinese Communists attempted to set up political control over the villages. In the early period the resistance forces were a motley collection, and the CCP concentrated its energies on attempting to unify them and bring them under its influence, and, in the process, on seeking better techniques of mass mobilisation.

The peasant masses in North China, their depressed socioeconomic conditions exacerbated by the war, had been abandoned by the KMT and the warlord army and administration in 1937. They were ready to take action to improve these conditions, if effective leadership and vision were forthcoming. The Communists were the first revolutionaries in the history of Republican China to provide the rural masses with such leadership and such vision. This was directly related to the vital question of the CCP's own survival against its two powerful enemies. To mobilise the peasant masses, the CCP had to develop new techniques to break through the existing ideas and thinking among the peasants. Socioeconomic transformation and mass psychological breakthrough were inseparably intertwined; neither was possible without the other.

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1 For the implementation of rent reduction under the KMT, see Lin Chu-ching, "The Kuomintang Policy of Rent Reduction," Agrarian China, pp.144-149.

2 The essential interest of the Japanese in rural North China was to secure food supplies for their troops, and cotton for their mills in the coastal cities in China and in Japan.
In the first five years of the war, however, mass mobilisation by the CCP did not operate to its full extent. The Party seems to have been more concerned with the establishment and maintenance of its administration in the new areas on the basis of the multi-class united front policy, rather than with full mobilisation of mass energies. It should not be surprising that there existed serious debates among the top leaders over the question of whether to pursue a moderate 'united front' line or a radical 'mass' line, and that there was some indecision in Party policy concerning mass mobilisation. The following two sections describe briefly the Communist base areas in North China, and the changes in mass mobilisation policies in the early years of the war.

2. Communist Base Areas in North China

The five major base areas in North China - the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia (SKN), Shansi-Chahar-Hopei (Chin-Ch'a-Chi), Shansi-Hopei-Shantung-Honan (Chin-Chi-Lu-Yu) and Shansi-Suiyuan (Chin-Sui) Border Regions, and Shantung Region - were established gradually in the period between 1937 and 1941. With the exception of Shantung, four of the five were 'border regions', extending into parts of a number of provinces, separated by railways. That is to say, the CCP built its strongholds in the mountains, remote from the administrative centres and the strategic cities of the Japanese, and from the Japanese forces positioned along the railway lines. This was patterned after the Party's experience in South China in the early 1930s. Even in the Shantung base, administrative districts were separated by the railway lines, and the Communist strongholds were in the mountains; the administrative

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1 For Mao's thinking on base areas, see "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War against Japan," Chapter 4, Mao, II, pp.94-98.
districts operated almost as independent units, since the Provincial government of Shantung had difficulties in communicating with the local governments.

The SKN Border Region was distinct from the others. It was not really an 'anti-Japanese war base' but was actually a soviet area which had a history of Communist control since 1927. It was the nerve-centre of the Communist system. All other bases were referred to by the Communists as 'base areas behind the enemy' (ti-hou kên-chü-ti), and were set up after the outbreak of the war.

The SKN Border Region

The SKN Border Region was the only 'soviet region' left in Communist hands after the National Government's successful extermination campaign against the soviet regions in South China. After 1937, however, SKN became the most advanced of the Communist base areas, partly because of the location of the CCP Central Committee in the region and because of its longer history, and partly because it was not directly subject to Japanese military attack. Many of the fundamental policies and political strategies were created and first put into practice in SKN and then extended to other areas.

In 1937, the Border Region covered twenty-three hsien in northern Shensi, the northeastern corner of Kansu and the eastern corner of Ninghsia. It had a population of about 1.5 million, most of whom were peasants. At about the time of the arrival of the Central Committee in 1935, the Communists became particularly active in

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1 K'ang-jih chan-cheng shi-h-ch'i chien-fang ch'ü kai-k'uang, p.7; Selden gives a description of this region. See op.cit., pp.1-18.
2 The only published work on the history of the Communist guerrillas in this region is that of Mark Selden, although he devotes only about one-third of his book to this subject. Selden, op.cit., pp.19-78.
expanding the territory south- and eastward. Jan Myrdal has described the process of peasant mobilisation carried out by the Communists in 1935 from interviews with old village cadres at Liulin in Yenan Hsien. From these reports, it is possible to reconstruct a simple pattern of the peasant mobilisation process at that time. First, propaganda corps of the Red Army entered the villages and organised the peasants into mass organisations, such as peasant associations, and armed them with a few rifles, old spears and swords. Second, the mass organisations instructed their members to stop paying land rent and taxes, confronted the armed forces of the landlords and the KMT, and, if they were able to defeat them, established peasant administration in the villages. Finally, the mass organisations conducted redistribution of the landlords' property, including land, reinforced the peasant armed forces, and by land redistribution and the dismantling of the old administration, heightened the peasants' morale. This pattern remained basically unchanged until 1949, although there were many subsequent variations, depending on local circumstances and the practical application of the Party's united front policy.

The Communists entered directly into the villages, ignoring the KMT officials who lived in the cities and came to the villages only for tax collection. To the peasants, who had little contact with the administration except for payment of tax, the Communists, who urged them to stop paying taxes and rents, were most welcome 'officials'. This illustrates the vulnerability of the KMT regime at the basic level, and the potential for common ground between the Communists and the poor peasants.

2 Ibid., p.107.
As Selden stresses, mass mobilisation in the pre-1937 land revolution had important effects on the later development of mass movements in the Border Region. First, by 1937, the socioeconomic basis of landlord rule in the greater part of the Border Region where the land redistribution had been carried out. Secondly, the SKN had established peasant political rule at the basic level of its own administration and of society. The results of the 1937 local election in four hsien recorded in the Government Report illustrate these two points. More than ninety percent of the local assembly seats at hsien, district (ch'ü) and hsiang levels were occupied by workers, poor peasants and middle peasants. Thirdly, and most significant for later mass movements, the peasant activists in the land revolution had become local cadres at the basic level, and assumed the role of linking the peasant masses with both the Communist government and the Party.

Base Areas Behind the Japanese Lines.

The Communist territories in China amounted to nineteen at the end of the war. After the Japanese pacification campaign began in 1938, Communist areas were divided into three categories; base areas (k'än-chü-ti), guerrilla areas (yu-ch'i ti-ch'ü) and enemy areas (ti ti-ch'ü). These corresponded to the Japanese division into 'non-order areas' (mi-chian chiku), 'semi-order areas' (jun chian chiku) and 'order areas' (chian chiku), depending on the degree of Communist influence. Normally, the 'base areas' were in the mountain regions, where the Japanese armoured troops could not operate, although in the later period of the war the Communists were able to establish 'base

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areas' on the plains, partly because of the transfer of Japanese troops to the Pacific theatre.

As a consequence of the military situation, the borders of these areas were constantly changing. The Japanese tried to destroy Communist strongholds, even in the mountain regions, by frequent 'mopping-up' (sōtō) campaigns, while the Communists tried to establish their influence in the Japanese 'order areas' by infiltrating armed propaganda corps. The term 'base areas' in Communist documents often includes 'guerrilla areas' that is, those under the 'dual' control of the Japanese and the CCP, and which paid tax to both sides and/or had two village headmen. The term is used in this study to mean the areas where the CCP government could collect tax behind the Japanese lines.

Most base areas were established through cooperation between the Communists and local nationalists who had started resistance to the Japanese before the Communists arrived. The CCP's role was to unify the nationalist groups under an integrated military and political authority. In the process of this unification the CCP, with its political programmes, succeeded in assuming leadership of the resistance as a whole. The united front policy pursued by the CCP was, therefore, more practical than theoretical in the areas behind the enemy lines.

The Communist attempts to establish bases behind the Japanese lines began with the Eighth Route Army's march into Shansi; the 115th Division moved to northeast Shansi, the 120th Division to northwest Shansi, and the 129th Division with the Field Headquarters of the Eighth Route Army to southeast Shansi.¹ By the agreement between the

¹ For the organisation of the Communist army, the Eighth Route Army, at the beginning of the war, see Johnson, op.cit., p.96. From that time on, the Headquarters of the Communist army never returned to Yenan, where the Rear Headquarters was located.
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¹ For the organisation of the Communist army, the Eighth Route Army, at the beginning of the war, see Johnson, op.cit., p.96. From that time on, the Headquarters of the Communist army never returned to Yanan, where the Rear Headquarters was located.
KMT and the CCP for the united front, the Eighth Route Army, the former Red Army, was now part of the Chinese army under Yen Hsi-shan, commander of the Second War Zone. The Eighth Route Army fought in cooperation with Yen's Shansi Army and the KMT troops under the command of Wei Li-huang to defend Shansi, from September 1937 to March 1938.

After the partial victory at P'inghsinkuan in northeast Shansi, in late September 1937, Nieh Jung-chen, Vice Commander of the 115th Division, led about 2,000 troops to the Wut'ai mountains and founded the first base behind the enemy lines, the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region. The main part of the 115th Division under Lin Piao joined the 129th Division in southeast Shansi and established the T'aihang-T'aiyueh base, which later became the heart of the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region. The 120th Division prepared to set up the North-west Shansi base which later expanded into the Chin-Sui Border Region.

1 The battle of P'inghsinkuan later enjoyed a glorious historic position in Chinese Communist military history, as the first victory over the Japanese in a long series of Chinese defeats. Although the Chinese army could not prevent the Japanese capturing Taiyuan, the battle was an encouragement to Chinese nationalism and resistance to Japan. For a description of the battle itself, see Johnson, op.cit., pp.218-219, Note 3; Böeichō Böei-kenshūjo Senshi-shitsu, ed., Hoku-Shi no Chian-sen (The War for Public Peace in North China), (Tokyo: 1968), Vol.1, pp.37-40; Jen-min ch'u-pan she, ed., K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-ch'i ti Chung-kuo jen-min chieh-fang chün (The People's Liberation Army of China During the War of Resistance), (Peking: 1954), pp.11-20.

2 The size of the force which went to the Wut'ai mountains with Nieh Jung-chen is unclear. See Johnson, op.cit., p.97. But a Chinese Communist source states that Nieh led 2,000 troops, which comprised one brigade and one cavalry battalion, to Wut'ai on 23 October 1937 and set up the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Military Region Headquarters there on 7 November. K'ang-Jih Chan-cheng shih-ch'i ti Chung-kuo jen-min chieh-fang chün, p.26.

3 Lin Piao himself went back to Yenan and became president of K'ang-ta (Anti-Japanese Military and Political College) having left his Division under the two brigade commanders, Ch'en Kuang for the 343rd, and Ho Hai-tung for the 344th Brigades, who led them to the east and set up new base areas.
It is significant that Shansi Province became the nucleus for all Communist base areas. Divided by the Tatung-Pochow and Chengtung-Taiyuan railways, the Northeast Shansi base extended northward into the Chin-Sui Border Region, the Wut'ai base to the east and northwest into the Chin-Ch'a-Chi and the Hopei-Jehol-Liaoning Border Regions, the T'aihang-T'aiyüeh base east- and southeastward into the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region and the Shantung Region. Shansi presented the CCP with certain advantages; first, because of the radical nationalist organ- 
isation, the Shansi Sacrifice League for National Salvation (Shansi hsi-sheng chiu-kuo t'ung-ming hui or Hsi-ming hui), 1 and its armed 
force, the Shansi New Army, 2 both of which were organised under Yen Hsi- 
shen to fight the Japanese in the initial stages of the war, and 
secondly because the oppressed peasants had had contact with the Com- 
munist Army in the previous year and were to some extent already ac-
quainted with its programme of social reform. 3

Shansi was divided into several guerrilla administrative regions 
by Yen after the fall of Taiyuan in the autumn of 1937. 4 It was at 
this time that Yen removed many of his local officials and replaced 
them with Sacrifice League members for the purpose of conducting a 
guerrilla war. Among the newly appointed officials there were a number 
of young patriots who later held leading positions in the Communist 
Government, including Po I-po, a Standing Committee member of the

1 On the formation of the Sacrifice League and its cooperation with 
the Communists, see Johnson, op.cit., pp.97-100; Gillin, Warlord, 
pp.231-232.

2 The New Army comprised volunteer students and Taiyuan workers armed 
with rifles which were supplied by Yen. It adopted a system of political 
commissar and put emphasis on political education of the soldiers, even 
though its senior commanders were from Yen's old Shansi Army.

3 See Gillin. "'Peasant Nationalism' in the History of Chinese Com-

Sacrifice League, and a Communist since 1926.¹

At the basic level of administration, the War Region Mobilisation Committee (Chan-ti tung-yüan wei-yüan-hui) with its voluntary armed force, which had been encouraged by Yen, was to act as the basic administrative organ in the general retreat of Yen's administration.² The Communist army apparently tried at the basic level to encourage mass anti-Japanese organisations where they existed, and where they did not, the troops attempted to create such organisations by convening mass meetings, propagating the nationalist cause and reducing tax.³

The Communists not only made use of the Mobilisation Committee and its militia, but also exploited Chiang Kai-shek's words 'those who have money, contribute money [for national salvation]' (yu-ch'ien ch'u ch'ien) to impose heavy tax and military requisitions on the richer people.⁴ If they resisted, they were branded 'traitors' (han-chien) and were subject to arrest and property confiscation.⁵ Thus, in the initial stage of the war, the Communists carried out their revolutionary policies in the name of the nationalist cause.

In their pacification campaigns in 1938 and 1939, the Japanese found that the peasants in the Wut'ai mountains had been well-organised by the Communists, to an extent that the Japanese could not obtain

¹ Ibid., pp.274-275; K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-ch'i chieh-fang ch'ü kai-k'uang, p.44.
² K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-ch'i chieh-fang ch'ü kai-k'uang, pp.26-27.
⁵ Ibid., pp.283-284.
accurate intelligence. Mass organisation and mobilisation in this period, however, do not appear to have been as successful as the Japanese believed. The radical policies pursued by the CCP in new areas in this period were shortly replaced by much more moderate policies, and mass mobilisation was made subordinate to the maintenance of the multi-class united front in the villages. This fluctuation between radical mass mobilisation and the united front continued until 1942.


As soon as the Central Committee arrived in north Shensi, the CCP established the policy for the anti-Japanese united front at the Politburo meeting in December 1935. After its dramatic invasion of Shansi, the CCP strengthened its calls to the KMT for a united front against Japan, changing the 'Crush Chiang and resist Japan' slogan to 'Force Chiang to resist Japan'. Meanwhile, the Party modified its policies toward the landlords and rich peasants and entered into an agreement with the Northeast Army in Sian for a united front.

The changes in land policy in 1936, however, were not necessarily for the formation of the united front, although the CCP propagated them as such. Mao had been known as a proponent of a mild 'rich peasant line' in land reform since the Kiangsi soviet period, and it is possible that the Central Committee wanted to take a moderate line for the economic and political benefit of the Party in SKN rather than for the sake of the united front. Wu Liang-p'ing, then Head of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee, has described the

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1 The change in the CCP's attitude to Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT is illustrated by a comparison between the Politburo resolution in December 1935, "The Current Political Situation and the Party's Tasks," Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 5, pp.19-40, and the Central Committee's "Letter to the KMT" in August 1936, pp.67-76.
change in the Party's policy toward the rich peasants. His views may be summarised as follows:

On the basis of the Party's experience with the anti-rich peasant policy in the Soviet Regions in the last few years, the Party has reached the following conclusion:

1. In the present stage of the democratic revolution, peasants are not our primary enemy.
2. Ruthless struggle against the rich peasants pushes them into the counterrevolutionary camp and into alliance with the landlords, who are our primary enemy in rural areas.
3. An anti-rich peasant policy will discourage the middle peasants from increasing production and make them fear the Government.
4. Heavy taxation and grain levies on the rich peasants, and confiscation of their land, spare oxen and farm implements, deprive them of the means to increase production.

The main reason for the change in policy towards the rich peasants, therefore, appears to have been the failure of the previous policy. Further justification could be found in the CCP's position on the united front; that is, the Party wanted to unite with the secondary enemy in order to isolate the primary enemy, the landlords. Mao Tse-tung, having learned from the failure of the Kiangsi Soviet, had concluded that isolation of the primary enemy of the revolution and preservation of the means of increasing production were vitally important for the survival and development of the revolution and of the revolutionary party, the CCP. It was in 1937 that the CCP retreated further to a position of compromise with the landlords, by substituting a rent reduction policy for the redistribution of land. ¹


² Pai Yu-teh, the Soviet Chairman for Fusze Hsien from November 1935 to January 1936 and the responsible person for the newly established United Front Office in central Shensi from March 1936, told Jan Myrdal: "Chairman Mao came to us [at the end of 1935 or early 1936] and spoke of the necessity for forming a united front. The Central Committee now stopped our activities against the landowners. They insisted that we had been guilty of departing from the correct revolutionary way, so we reinvestigated the true class circumstances of every family. We had been far too strict, we were told. We were now to fight shoulder-in-shoulder even with the landowners."
The formal collaboration between the KMT and the CCP was created in September 1937, against the background of the nationalist upheaval against Japanese military action in North and Central China. But since 1935, when the agreement which obliged Chinese armies and political parties to withdraw from Hopei Province was signed between Generals Ho Ying-chin and Umezu Yoshijiro, the CCP had defined the contradiction between Japanese Imperialism and China as the primary contradiction and all the others as secondary.¹

According to Lin Po-ch‘ü’s government report, started to implement moderate policies in SKN prior to the formal establishment of the collaboration with the KMT. According to a CCP source, in March 1937, land redistribution ceased and in May civil rights were restored to the landlords, rich peasants, and capitalists by the new election law of the SKN Border Region.² The principles of the new land policy were as follows:

1. All land belonging to landlords which has not been confiscated during the period of the Soviet Government shall no longer be confiscated.
2. When they return to the Border Region, landlords whose land and houses have already been confiscated shall be given land and houses on an equal basis with the ordinary peasants.
3. The Government will not interfere with tenancy as long as the rent is reasonable.

Footnote 2 cont’d

While this (arrangement for a united front between the CCP and the Northeast Army) was going on, the class struggle in the villages and countryside had had to take second place and we had stopped our attacks on the landowners.” Myrdal, op. cit., pp. 95 & 100.

It is not clear whether Pai means that land redistribution was stopped or that only violent attacks on the landlords were stopped. According to Lin Po-ch‘ü’s official report in 1939, land confiscation ceased in March 1937. Shen-Kan Ning pien-ch‘ü ts’an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.14.

² The landlords, rich peasants and capitalists were permitted to enjoy civil rights at the end of 1937. But the results of the first elections indicated that they were far from being restored to political power. See Chapter IV, p.6, Note 1.
³ Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch‘ü ts’an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.15.
The Communist government, faced with the problem of the high rate of illiteracy, introduced this policy at least partly because it needed the help of educated people. It is in any case a fact that many landlords, rich peasants and capitalists returned to the Border Region and a considerable number joined the service of the government after these policies were implemented. This worked in favour of the traditional elite, offering some opening for it to restore or to preserve its power and influence in the new political system, particularly after the subsequent introduction of Communist policies to 'regularise and stabilise' the administration and of the 'three-third' system in which the participation of the traditional elite in the administration was encouraged. The dilemma the CCP had to face was that the skills of the privileged were so valuable that the Party had to utilise them, but such utilisation helped them maintain their privileged status and might eventually undermine the revolution.

The three principles of the new land policy were apparently so vague that they resulted in a decline in the pace of mass mobilisation, and disorder at the basic level. Some landlords and rich peasants demanded the return of their former land, houses, oxen, farm appliances, etc. Some creditors demanded repayment of debts which had been cancelled. And some landlords compelled their tenants to pay rent for the period of their absence from the Border Region. In May 1938, the CCP had to issue the following proclamation forbidding such demands and the disruption of the mass organisations:

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1 In north Shensi, one of the most backward areas in China, illiteracy was estimated at over 90 percent. An old Communist in Yenan told Jan Myrdal: "In the old days, it often happened that there was not anyone able to read for several villages around." Myrdal, op.cit., p.409.

2 Shen-Kan-King pien-ch'u ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.15.
The Government (of the SKN Border Region) and the Rear Headquarters (of the Eighth Route Army), in order to protect the rights already secured by the people, forbid any unauthorized change in the distribution of land or houses and in the cancellation of debts made within the areas under the jurisdiction of the Border Region Government before internal peace was established.

The Government and the Rear Headquarters will protect the activities of all the military, political, economic, cultural and mass organizations which were in existence when internal peace was established and which have since advanced and expanded in accordance with the principle of the united front, will promote their progress and stop all intrigues and disruptive activities against them.

Although this might have helped to prevent the richer people from regaining their former authority and power in the villages, the new land policy of rent reduction was obviously not carried out as actively as land redistribution had been. This may have been partly because of confusion among the basic-level cadres, and partly because of the Central Committee's policy of giving more importance to the united front than to the mass movement. It is apparent that the CCP had little interest in mobilising the masses for the rent reduction struggle in the early years of the united front. Only a few official documents deal with mass mobilisation or rent reduction, while a great number of documents on the united front appear in the Party's official organs. Mark Selden defines the 1937-1941 period as the period of stabilisation and regularisation of the political system, from his close investigation of Party documents in the SKN Border Region. With the rise in the number of cadres from an elite background, the role of cadres from revolutionary backgrounds was proportionately diminished. The mass organisations lost their activism, while the administration was

1 Mao, II, pp.75-77.
2 See for examples, Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, the Chieh-fang chou-k'an (Liberation Weekly), the Chieh-fang jih-pao and the Ch'ün-chung (Masses Weekly).
consolidated through its vertical chain of command, in the cause of 'efficiency'. The CCP later had to confront the serious consequences of this excessive stress on the united front and 'regularisation', and of its indecisiveness in land policy.

The problem of the contradiction between the class struggle, or social revolution, and the multi-class united front including the landlord class, the primary enemy of the social revolution, had not been solved when the CCP moved into Shansi, Hopei and other provinces in North China to establish guerrilla bases. Two articles written in October 1937 and February 1938 on the basic policies of the CCP by Liu Shao-ch'i, then Secretary of the North Bureau of the Central Committee and responsible for Party activities in the whole of North China except for SKN, indicate the great difficulty faced by the Party in the Wut'ai Region in the first ten months of the war. The first article is concerned with popular suffrage, democratic government, rent and interest reduction, redistribution of 'traitors' land, protection of the workers, free marriage, and protection and encouragement of mass organisations, all policies which represent the 'class struggle' or social revolution line. In this article Liu does not even mention the united front.

1 Selden, op.cit., pp.144-148. This is confirmed by Peter Seybold from the CCP's education policy. See Seybold, op.cit., pp.649-656.

2 Mao admitted in a report to a Party conference in December 1942 that the peasants in a great part of the Border Region were still suffering from heavy rent and interest because the rent and interest reduction policy had not been implemented rigorously, and that this was one of the main factors undermining their enthusiasm for increasing production. Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 8, p.196.

3 I must thank Professor Imabori Seiji for his drawing my attention to these two articles of Liu Shao-ch'i in his article, "Enan-seiken ni okeru Nashonarizumu to Kaikyō-tōsō" (Nationalism and the Class Struggle within the Yenan Government), Ajia Keizai, Vol. II, No.6 (June 1970), pp.2-30.
The second article indicates a retreat to emphasis on the united front at the expense of the basic policies Liu had expounded in his first article. The policies advocated here are protection of private property, encouragement of runaway landlords to return to the base areas, voluntary reduction of rent and interest; temporary suspension of guarantees of permanent tenancy, of upper limits to land rent, of an eight-hour working day and of lower limits on wages. In this article the 'elements' to be included in the united front extend even to the 'traitors', on the condition that they help the Communist guerrillas, and with the justification that they had been forced to collaborate with the Japanese by threats to their lives and property.

This article suggests the virtual abandonment of social reform for the sake of the 'broadest' possible united front. But it does not seem to have reflected Liu's personal opinion on the policies the CCP should pursue in the new areas. The significant fact is that Liu's second article, despite the fact that it differs greatly from Mao's line in "On the New Stage", written in November 1938 only nine months later than Liu's second article, was apparently accepted and published by the Central Committee. It can be assumed that the line presented

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1 This was Mao's lengthy report to the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee of the CCP, which fixed the guidelines of the CCP's wartime policy in the perspective of the rapid growth of the base areas and the dispute between Mao and Wang Ming on united front policy. Although Mao's basic line in this article is to put the class struggle in a subordinate position to the national struggle, his attitudes toward the landlords and the 'traitors' are quite clear and harsh. This was later developed into 'On New Democracy' in 1940 in which Mao argued that the proletariat should take the initiative to Japan. "Lun hsin-chieh-t'uan" (On the New Stage), Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol.6, pp.163-240.

2 Both of Liu's articles are included in K'ang-chan i-lai chung-yao wen-chien hui-chi (Important Documents Since the Resistance), compiled by the Central Committee Secretariat, published in Yenan in 1942.
in Liu's second article became the guideline for policies in the base areas, after a brief period of radical policies such as are described by Gillin,\(^1\) when the CCP found that the concrete situation in the areas behind the enemy lines made it much more difficult to mobilise the masses and set up new governments than had been expected. Liu's retreat from the 'class struggle' line to the 'united front' line of second article may indicate that in the intervening four months he had found that rural conditions in North China were not sufficiently favourable for his 'class struggle' policies to be implemented successfully.

In the period from 1937 to 1940, Liu, as Secretary of the North Bureau, assumed supreme leadership of the Party in the North China base areas, which covered the whole area north of the Yellow River. It may be said, therefore, that Liu was at least partly responsible for the relatively low level of mass mobilisation in North China bases in the first four years of the war. There are Communist sources which indicate that spontaneous movements of the poorer peasants were suppressed by the Communists in order to allay the richer peasants' fears and keep them in the united front.\(^2\) The Central Committee in 1939 noted, in the context of the threat from the anti-Communist tendencies of Yen Hsi-shan and the KMT, that cadres had been inactive in mass mobilisation, putting too much emphasis on the united front with the landlords, and on 1 November 1939 the Committee issued a decision on mass work. The decision points out:


\(^2\) P'eng Chen writes on the period in which new political power was being set up in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region: "The broad peasant masses, who had undergone thousands of years of oppression, suddenly attained liberty and could not avoid excessively leftist acts of vengeance. They went so far as to infringe the personal, property, and land rights of the landlord class....But when we brought up and implemented the 'three-thirds' system of political power, and strictly
Many leading bodies of the Party have not even put mass work in their schedules, have been unable to direct their subordinates on how to do mass work, or, there has been little discussion and few directives. Many branches and Party members have stayed apart from the masses, and have either done nothing or do not know how to do mass work.

In the areas where mass work was developed in its initial stage, many leading organs of the Party have gone no further in discussion on and leadership in mass work, (with the result that) it has ceased altogether. This indicates that almost no satisfactory work had been done in mass mobilisation, on the excuse that prior importance should be given to the united front with the landlords. In practice, this had developed into what was known as the Wang Ming line of 'everything through the united front' at the basic level of policy implementation, which was criticised by Mao at the Sixth Plenum.²

Footnote 2 cont'd

guaranteed the political rights and property rights of all anti-Japanese people, the landlords finally felt like supporting the anti-Japanese democratic regime and participating in it." Chung-kung Chin-Ch'a-Chi pien-ch'ü chih k'o-chung cheng-ts'e (Various Policies of the CCP in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region), quoted in Lyman P. Van Slyke, Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History, (Stanford: 1967), p.152.

Ch'i Wu, a Chinese Communist historian, records a similar situation in Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü. When the bases were set up, mass struggles for anti-corruption, reform of the old political power, and rigorous implementation of the 'reasonable burden' occurred in many places. There were also many peasants who spontaneously stopped paying land rent and debt interest. From the viewpoint of the leadership, however, in this period, initiating the resistance and mobilisation for war service were emphasised at the expense of the improvement of the people's livelihood and the struggle for democracy. Accordingly, the CCP had not yet been able to implement rent and interest reduction rigorously. Ch'i Wu, ed., I-ke k'o-ming k'en-chü-ti ti ch'eng-chang (Growth of a Revolutionary Base Area), (Peking: 1957), pp.116-117.

¹ "Chung-kung chung-yang kuan-yü shen-ju ch'ün-chung kung-tso ti chú-shé-ting" (Decision of the CCP Central Committees on Penetration of Mass Work), K'ang-chan i-lai chung-yao wen-chien hui-chi, p.111.

The Central Committee decision of November 1939 cited above demanded that the Party organs "in the areas where the Eighth Route and the New Fourth Armies are operating," implement radical economic and political reforms which were beneficial to the broad masses. In the economic field, the decision required local Party organs to implement three policies promptly: rent and interest reduction, abolition of exorbitant taxes and miscellaneous levies, and improvement of the workers' livelihood. Those organs which had already implemented these policies were asked to check up on how rigorously they were practised. In the political field, the Central Committee decision called for the implementation of popular elections. Furthermore, the decision demanded that all who disrupted the mass movements, primarily the landlord class, should gradually be expelled from the governments at all levels, with mass support.¹

According to Ch'i Wu, the mass struggles for rent and interest reduction and wage increases, which were encouraged by the Central Committee decision, were launched with some violence during the winter of 1939/40, and the peasants became so radical as to threaten the collapse of the united front.² The bloody rift between the Communist-influenced New Army and Yen Hsi-shan's old Shansi Army in the same winter accelerated radicalisation of the mass movement. Reacting to this situation, in April 1940 the North Bureau convened a conference at Li-ch'eng in southeast Shansi to adjust the mass movement within the united front. Ch'i Wu states that the Li-ch'eng conference was called in order to define the local Party organs' tasks of rent and interest reduction and mass organisation. Ch'i admits, however, that

¹ Ch'i Wu, op.cit., p.112.
² Ibid., p.118.
the conference emphasised correction of the 'leftist' tendency in the
united front, making light of rent reduction and mass mobilisation.
The conference resulted in a deterioration in the mass movement in
1940 and 1941.¹ Lacking a consolidated basis of mass mobilisation, the
base areas had to face their worst crisis in 1941 and 1942, with the
Japanese 'three-all' policy and severe natural disasters.²

This suggests that the North Bureau may have inclined more
to the united front with the landlords than the Central Committee,
which demanded that local Party organs mobilise the masses and reduce
rent and interest. It seems reasonable to assume that from 1938 to
1941 the North Bureau was dominated by the guidelines of Liu Shao-ch'i's
second article, as there is no evidence to suggest that the North Bureau
tried to change that line and become active in mass mobilisation. The
Central Committee decision of 1939, which was presumably drafted by Mao,
suggests that the North Bureau's policy, emphasising the united front
at the expense of radical mass mobilisation, might be extremely danger-
ous in the event of "a possible incident which would be disadvantageous

¹ Ibid.
² In 1939 Hopei Province was affected by bad floods, which actually
helped the CCP to consolidate the new guerrilla administration,
because the government had an opportunity to show its concern for the
people. See K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-ch'i chieh-fang ch'u kai-k'uang,
p.33. In 1941, 1942 and 1943, however, the situation was catastrophic;
T'aihang-T'aiyeh did not have rainfall in 1941 and 1942, while Hopei
suffered from disastrous flooding again. Locusts attacked all over
Shansi in 1942 and 1943, and the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region had to
accept refugees from the KMT region of Honan Province where the
famine was even more severe. See Jack Belden, op.cit., pp.61-62;
Natural disasters, mainly drought, the intensified Japanese mopping-
up campaigns and hostile KMT action came together. Mark Selden com-
pares the Party crisis in these years with the ones in 1927 and 1934-35.
p.99. For the serious economic difficulties in SKN, see Selden, op.
cit., p.177-187. On the difficulties in the Chin-Chia-Chi Border
Region, see eyewitness accounts of Michael Lindsay, "The Taxation
System of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Border Region, 1938-1945," China
to the Party and the resistance." such as an armed attack by the KMT or Yen Hsi-shan, either of which was predictable in November 1939. In reality, the 'possible incident' occurred soon after the Central Committee's warning, in the so-called West Shansi Incident: the Sacrifice League and the New Army were attacked by Yen's armies throughout Shansi. The North Bureau, however, does not seem to have learned from this incident. On the contrary, as soon as the Incident was over, the North Bureau at its Li-ch'eng conference tried to dampen down the mass radicalism inspired by the Central Committee decision and the Incident. Mass mobilisation seems never to have been the primary concern of the North Bureau until the Central Committee's Decision on Land Policy in January 1942.

The remarkable expansion of the Communist territories and membership of the Party and the mass organisations in the first three years of the war may be regarded as one of the great successes of the CCP, particularly in comparison with what the CCP had achieved before the war. Even after it lost control over a great part of its territory in the military crisis of 1941 and 1942, the CCP claimed that it still controlled 52,800 villages in 455 hsien and had 12 million members in various mass organisations and 6 million militia.

1 The KMT adopted "Measures to Restrict the Activities of Alien Parties" at its Fifth Central Executive Committee in January 1939, in response to rapid expansion in Communist political and military strength, and as a result of the repeated armed clashes between the KMT and the CCP in 1938 in North China. The "measures" signalled the beginning of the KMT's open hostility to the CCP, which developed into the blockade of the SKN Border Region in December 1939 and culminated the New Fourth Army Incident in January 1941.

2 For the Decision and the Party's land policy, see Chapter V, Section 3, pp. 222-230.

3 Party membership had grown from 40,000 in 1937 to 800,000 in 1940, regular forces from 80,000 to 400,000, population of the base areas behind the Japanese lines from 0 to more than 50,000,000.
in its base areas. If one considers that the CCP had had neither territory, nor mass organisations nor militia under its control in these areas before the war, the achievement was amazing.

These figures, however, do not necessarily represent the real strength of Communist power in these areas. It was reported that even in the SKN Border Region, people listed as members of the mass organisations often did not know they were members, nor did they pay membership fees. The peasants regarded the mass organisations as the government and their cadres as the officials. An example of organising the Sacrifice League in a village in Shansi in late 1937, described in Changes in Li Village, is obviously more than fiction; one of the village leaders, when asked by a League cadre from the district government, said that he enrolled members simply by putting their names on the list.

As reported in Mao's speech to a Party conference at the end of 1942, the cadres tended to be concerned more with formal appearance, such as the lists of membership, meetings, slogans and written orders and directives, than with the fact of how far the peasants were really organised and how firmly the Communist policies were implemented. Until it faced the crisis in 1941-42, the CCP did not appear to be concerned seriously with such 'formalism' in organising the masses and implementing its policies. As Mao later admitted, the CCP's

1 Wang Jo-fei, "Wo-men tsen-yang tsai ti-hou k'ang-Jih kên-chü-ti chien-she ch'i hsin-min-chu chu-i ti cheng-chih" (How we Started to Establish the New Democratic Politics in the Base Areas behind the Enemy Lines), CFJP, 7 July 1942. The figures do not include SKN, but do include the bases in Central China.
2 "Ch'un-chung t'uan-t'i tsen-yang kai-tsa" (How to Reform the Mass Organisations), CFJP, 29 June 1942.
3 Chao Shu-li, Changes in Li Village, pp.113-115.
success in 1937-40, therefore, had a fragile footing, which was one of the factors that caused the crisis in 1941 and 1942.

How, then, was the Communist government system working, and what sort of measures were taken to consolidate the Communist control over the base areas and SKN?
CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN NORTH CHINA

PART I: THE ARMY AND THE PARTY

The following two chapters examine the system of Communist government, that is, the institutions which assumed the key roles in mobilisation of the general population, which not only carried out revolutionary war and CCP policy but which were the institutional means by which the CCP interacted with the people. Numerous articles have been written on individual aspects of the CCP in this period, but no scholarly work has yet attempted to present a total picture of the various arms of Communist government in the interaction with the peasant masses which resulted in politicisation and mobilisation. There were four main components of the system; the army, the party, the government and the mass organisations. These were closely interrelated and affected each other in their roles of supporting Communist rule and fighting a war of resistance. The point on which the work of all parts of the system was ultimately focussed, mobilisation of the masses for war, also suited the revolutionary interests of the CCP, whose raison d'être was the prosecution of the Chinese revolution.

The Japanese invasion resulted in the expulsion of most of the KMT and warlord armies with their administrative organisations and personnel from North China. The areas into which the Communists moved, therefore, were areas in which administration by central or provincial authorities for all practical purposes did not exist. The inability of the Japanese army to control such a vast and densely populated area as North China made it relatively easy for the Communists to take control of villages
which were of no strategic importance to the Japanese. Although it was often extremely difficult for the CCP to capture big or middle-sized cities like hsien capitals, it could still set up hsien administrations based in countryside villages from which it could exercise control over the local people.

Over-population of the Chinese villages, although a problem in terms of the Chinese economy, gave the Communists an advantage because the CCP found its strength in the support of the masses. If they could be mobilised in the nationalist cause, concentrations of rural population would work to the political advantage of the CCP rather than to the advantage of the Japanese. Another advantage for the CCP was the fact that in rural North China, as distinct from central or local, administration was still largely the same as it had been in Imperial times. Since the rural inhabitants were accustomed to inefficient and corrupt administration, even minimum efficiency and honest administration by the CCP might enable it to gain support from the masses and arouse them from their traditional unwillingness to take direct political action.

1 The Japanese North China Army recognised the fact that shortage of men made it unable to control the rural areas or prevent the Communists from extending their influence there. "Kahoku-shô nai Chian-jokyo Chosa Hôkoku" (Investigation report on the public peace in Hopei Province), quoted in Hoku-Shi no chian-sen, p.178.

2 The density of rural population in North China was lower than that in Central and South China: 422 and 653 persons per square kilometer of crop area respectively. Buck, Land utilization in China, pp.167 & 362. In North China, however, the proportion of land under cultivation was much higher than in Central and South China. It is assumed, therefore, that rural population was more equally distributed over wider areas than in Central and South China. Although it was less dense and more scattered than in other parts of China, the rural population in North China is still a problem, because of lower productivity of the land, conditioned by a colder and drier climate, and because of a rural population density which even in North China reached as much as fourteen times that of Denmark, Buck, Chinese farm economy, p.352.

3 Muramatsu Yuji, op. cit., pp.207-209. See also Chapter 2, Section 1 on village politics. The rural control system and its effects on the basic level of society in Imperial China is fully described in Hsiao Kung-chuan, op. cit.
The KMT Government, and some warlords, had tried to reform the traditional system of government, but their efforts had not been very successful because they were unwilling to reform the economic and political system at the basic level of society. The Japanese, whose intention was to control the whole of North China permanently if possible, were also reluctant to carry out such basic reform. The rivals of the CCP in the struggle for control of the Chinese peasantry, therefore, were not fighting on the same terms, and their failure to implement basic level reforms worked very much to the advantage of the CCP. The warlords were not particularly concerned with the establishment of a modern political and economic system. The KMT and the Japanese, on the other hand, tried to set up modern administrations but did not succeed, at least at the local level. The Communists were the first to understand clearly the importance of the common people as a power base.

The CCP tried to build a system of government in such a way that it could utilise all the human and material resources available to it in the area under its control. This was necessary for the CCP in two ways: on the one hand, as a matter of revolutionary principle, the CCP tried to politicise the masses to bring them into active support of its government, and on the other, as a matter of survival, it had to utilise all means available to it in order to face the superior numbers and equipment of the Japanese and the KMT armies. The Communists could not afford a large number of government personnel, even though the salaries for their officials were extremely poor; they were forced to depend upon voluntary work. This very dependence also served the CCP's purpose, in that popular organisations were a means by which the Party could advance its cause of politicising the basic mass of the people.
Popular organisations, therefore, were an integral part of the Communist concept of the institutional dynamic of government as well as being simply a part of the administration. Although the Party as an organisation was distinct from the government, which consisted of a variety of groups working together in the anti-Japanese united front, it assumed leadership by means of its rigid organisation, its army, and its well-defined political and economic programme and military strategy and tactics.

This chapter is concerned with the two rigidly organised, disciplined and centrally controlled institutions of the Communist government system, the army and the Party, which operated on a much larger stage than the other two arms of the system, the government administration and the mass organisations. The army and the Party had their supreme authority in Yenan. From Yenan, the Central Committee of the CCP and its Military Affairs Council controlled the whole Party organisation and all regular Communist troops in China. The administration and the mass organisations, which are discussed in the next chapter, were more decentralised and locally based and had less rigid and disciplined organisations.

1. 'People's Army'

The Chinese revolution had been an armed revolution since 1911, and the army was given a special significance by the CCP. From 1927, when the CCP first established an army, this army was essential to the Party's own survival. During the war with Japan, its role was even more vital, since the CCP faced an enemy which possessed one of the most impressive armed forces in the world, and at the same time had to contend with an uncertain ally which had devoted a great deal of energy to attempting to eliminate the Communists by armed force. For the CCP,
a revolutionary party, the revolution at this stage meant war and the army was the instrument of war; all other institutions were elements supporting the army. In his speech at the Sixth Plenum of the CCP Central Committee in November 1938 Mao Tse-tung said:

In China war is the main form of struggle and the army is the main form of organisation. Other forms such as mass organisation and mass struggle are also extremely important and indeed indispensable and in no circumstances to be overlooked, but their purpose is to serve the war.¹

The significance of the army did not, however, lie only in its military function, but also in the indispensable function of mass mobilisation. Mao's comment on the historical significance of the Long March, for example, illustrates the importance attached to the non-military function of the army:

The Long March is also a propaganda force. It has announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation. Without the Long March, how could the broad masses have learned so quickly about the existence of the great truth which the Red Army embodies? The Long March is also a seeding-machine. In the eleven provinces it has sown many seeds which will sprout, leaf, blossom, and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future.²

This comment could be applied equally to the resistance war period in North China, substituting for 'Long March' the 'Eighth Route Army'.

In other words, after 1937, when the Communist army joined the war, a vast new area was opened to it, in which it could function as a 'propaganda force' and a 'seeding-machine'.

Before discussing the political work of the army, it is worth reviewing briefly the situation of the Communist army in North China in the first three years of the war, which has been described in

¹ Mao, II, p.221.
detail by other writers. The Eight Route Army of the Chinese National Revolutionary Army was substantially the former Chinese Red Army, organised in August 1937 in accordance with the KMT-CCP agreement. The Communists' deployment was flexible enough to enable them on many occasions to spare at least some troops to help the voluntary corps which were fighting the Japanese. This enabled the Eighth Route Army to absorb many of the voluntary armed forces, including ex-KMT troops such as those under the command of Lu Cheng-ts'ao; and this process of absorption contributed to the increase in the size of the Eighth Route Army from 80,000 in 1937 to 400,000 in 1947.

The effectiveness of the Communist army as a fighting machine is undisputed; its morale was high, and its use of guerrilla tactics was both skilful and successful. In the three years from the Battle of P'inghsinkuan in September 1937 to the Hundred Regiments Offensive beginning in August 1940 the Communists conducted very few large scale operations against the Japanese and "concentrated their efforts on expending their effective strength rather than on armed confrontation with the Japanese." The Japanese Army was aware that, in

1 At the time of reorganisation, the Eighth Route Army, formally the Eighteenth Group Army from November 1937, had three divisions, the 115th, the 120th and the 129th. One division consisted of two brigades and one brigade consisted of three regiments. For details of the leaders of the Eighth Route Army at the time of reorganisation, September 1937, see Johnson, op. cit., p.96.


3 Ibid., p. 52. This is confirmed by Japanese military sources. The Japanese North China Army was aware that the Communist influence was growing rapidly, although it had difficulty in making contact with the Communist guerrillas in its pacification campaigns because of the guerrillas' tactics of rapid retreat to avoid confrontation with superior Japanese troops. See military reports quoted in Hoku-Shi no Chian-sen, pp.55, 60, 64-65.
its pacification campaign in the areas which it occupied following the defeat of the regular Chinese armies in 1937, the Communists were the main and uncompromising enemy. The Japanese did not appreciate, however, the real strength of the Communists, and until the Hundred Regiments Offensive they still believed that they could destroy the Communist 'bandits' by routine 'mopping-up' campaigns, such as they conducted against other armed groups who opposed them.

Political Work of the Army

The political work of the army both within its own ranks and among the populace in general was of critical importance for the political success of the CCP, since for the CCP the army was not merely a fighting machine but a 'propaganda corps' directed toward the general population. The role of the army as a 'propaganda corps' had been enunciated by Mao Tse-tung himself as early as December 1929, in the Kutien Resolution of the Red Army. This Resolution was enshrined as a sacred text for the political work of the army during the Yenan period. The Resolution defined the tasks of the Communist army as 1) fighting, 2) raising funds, and 3) mass work. According to the editor of the

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1 See, for example, the following statement in the "Gun-senryō-chiiki Chìn-ji Jisshi-yoryo" (Essentials for Peace Maintenance in the Occupied Areas of the [Japanese] Army), issued by the Japanese North China Army: "Among the various bandits at large we should concentrate on subjugating the Communist bandits, and especially try to destroy the Communist bases at their point of origin. ...We must completely eliminate the Communist bandits [though other bandits can be won over]." Quoted in ibid., pp.54-55

2 For discussion pp. 102-105. of the Kutien Resolution, see Gittings, op.cit., pp.102-105.

3 In the campaign to 'support the government and cherish the people', beginning in October 1943, the CCP Central Committee designated this Resolution as one of the rectification documents within the army. According to the editorial note of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi edition of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, the Resolution is "one of the earliest and most important documents about construction of the army and the party of the Chinese Communists: its principles, methods and basic content are still perfectly applicable." Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi, (n.p.: 1944), Vol.3, p.135.
**Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung** published in 1944 by the Party organ in the Chin-Ch’a-Chi Border Region, which includes the Resolution as an appendix, the tasks of the Communist army at that time were the same as those of the old Red Army as defined in the Resolution, except that 'raising funds' had been replaced by 'production'.

The Kutien Resolution does not describe the first two tasks of the army in detail; it concentrates almost exclusively on political work, including propaganda work as a most important component, which is a clear indication of the relative priority of political work of the army. The Resolution stresses that propaganda work is the first and essential stage in the general tasks of the army, the aims of which are "to organise the masses, arm the masses, set up political power, eliminate reactionary forces and accelerate revolutionary upsurge." The Resolution defines more than the principles of the political work of the army, and it goes on to describe in detail procedures for organisation of propaganda corps within the army.

The suggested organisation of such propaganda corps was that each detachment (brigade) was to have one propaganda company of 21 members, with a company commander, a deputy commander, 16 propaganda workers, a porter and two clerks. The propaganda workers were to be divided into several squads, consisting of a leader and three propaganda workers, for work at battalion level and below. The propaganda workers were to be drawn from progressive civilians nominated by local governments, and suitably qualified soldiers from the ranks.

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1 *Ibid.* After 1949, the three tasks of the army have still been regarded as relevant for the PLA, and particularly in the period after Lin Piao became Defence Minister, the last two tasks have been stressed. See Lin's speech "Long Live the Victory of People's War" in 1965. In the Cultural Revolution political work in the army has been emphasised even more. See, for example, joint editorial of the *Jen-min Jih-pao* (People's Daily), Hung-ch'i (Red Flag) and the *Chieh-fang chün-pao* (Liberation Army Daily), 1 August 1970.

At each level of the army responsibility for training propaganda workers and supporting their activities, and command of the propaganda squads, lay with the Political Department.\(^1\) The system of political commissars and political departments is a well-known and distinctive feature of communist armies, to which many western scholars and military men have given attention. In the case of the Chinese Communist army,\(^2\) the political commissar, who assumes the ultimate responsibility for, and leadership of, Party activities and political work within the army, is appointed only at division and brigade levels; these Commissars are responsible to the General Political Department in the army corps headquarters. They command the Political Department at each level and the Political Officers (literally, cheng-chih chih-tao-yüan, or 'Political Instructor') at regiment level and below.\(^3\) According to Japanese military information, the organisation of the Political Department at the division level during the war was as follows:\(^4\)

\(^1\) Ibid., p.165.


\(^4\) Taá Corps, op.cit., p.217. This is slightly different from that of the New Fourth Army described by Johnson, but apparently based on the same principle. See Johnson, op.cit., p.82.
The political work of the army, which the CCP regarded as decisive for its survival, consisted of three components: work within the army itself to give officers and men political training and improve relations between them; work directed toward the local people to win sympathy and to organise mass organisations and new local governments; and work directed at enemy troops with the aim of demoralisation. 1 Within the army "political work was, and still is, regarded as a totality which embraces all aspects of the army's everyday life, of its cultural, educational, and sparetime activities." 2

Although there have been a number of studies of political work in the Chinese Communist army, it is important for this study and deserves some discussion here. Its importance cannot be overemphasised, particularly in the perspective of the Chinese revolution and in the context of the peculiar role allotted by Mao to the army in his theory of revolution. The three major western studies on the Chinese army, while recognising the importance of political work, are concerned mainly with political control of the troops, Party-army relationships or morale maintenance; none of them focuses attention on the army's political function in the revolution. It is with this latter aspect of army political work that the present study is concerned, and in the following pages an attempt is made to examine how the army worked in mass political and social mobilisation, and how it served the CCP in bringing revolu-

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2 Gittings, op.cit., p.105.
tionary changes to the Chinese villages.

From this point of view, political work within the army, aiming at radical transformation of the political personality of individual soldiers, may have had more significance for the CCP than the securing of Party control over the army or the maintenance of morale. As illustrated by the first rectification campaign, political education and thought reform had, and still have, special importance in the Chinese Communist revolution. One of the distinctive elements of the Kutien Resolution, the first chapter of which is included in the post-1949 editions of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung as "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," is that it suggests that most of the eight 'mistaken ideas' of Party members within the army could be corrected by education and thought reform.

Nomura Kōichi interprets this as an attempt by Mao to use the army to create a 'vanguard of the revolution', or proletariat, out of the poor peasants who comprised the majority of the members of both the Party and the Red Army. This interpretation appears to be confirmed in a talk by Liu Shao-ch'i in 1946 with Anna Louise Strong on "Mao's inventions in Marxism." Strong writes:

Even the concept of the 'proletariat', said Liu, gets a new meaning in China. "... [I]n China we have very few such people (industrial workers). ... So Mao Tse-tung has been training another kind of people - the farm hands and poor peasants in the army - who have the same qualities of discipline and devotion that the industrial workers have. They give their lives in the fight against foreign and native oppressors even when very young. They fight now for the 'new democracy', but when the time comes for socialism, they will be ready to build that too."2

In the rural situation, in which there were virtually no factory workers for recruitment into the CCP and the army, the Communists were

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1 Nomura Koichi, Chūgoku Kakumei no Shisō (Thought of the Chinese Revolution), (Tokyo: 1971), pp.94-95. This book is an outstanding and most comprehensive study of Mao's revolutionary thought.

forced to create, through political education of the peasantry, the political consciousness and discipline which, according to orthodox Marxism, are supposed to attach to the urban proletariat because of their oppressed or alienated position in society and factory life.

Mao seems to have been attempting to create in individual members of the army and the Party the consciousness which makes the urban proletariat the vanguard of the revolution. Party members were, however, more isolated than the members of the army, since they were scattered in a variety of units throughout the society. The highly organised nature of the army, and its size, made it a more suitable substitute for the non-existent proletariat in rural China than any other institution or group of people available to the Chinese Communists. In effect, the army did become the vanguard of the revolution, not only by providing physical security for the newly established revolutionary political power, but also by being the embodiment of revolutionary thought and behaviour, and by contributing to the social and political transformation of the rural population.

If the Kutien Resolution is seen in this context, "mistaken ideas" were particularly dangerous in the army. On the other hand, through political education or indoctrination, mistaken ideas were more easily corrected in the army than in any other institution because of the army's organisational character as a rigid full-time organisation with a clearly defined vertical chain of command, which exercised full control over the lives and actions of its members. Thought reform or political education was not, of course, demanded only in the army but also among all Party members. It should be noted, however, that in the army all cadres and men were expected to be constantly aware of

1 Mao, I, p.105.
their mission as the vanguard of the Chinese revolution, no matter whether they were Party members or not, whereas only Party members were required to undergo thought reform in other fields.

Political education in the army became even more important in the Yenan period when the number of soldiers rapidly increased as a result of recruitment from the peasants and the absorption of nationalist guerrillas, and when the scope of the army's activities was many times larger than in the Kiangsi period. Failure to carry out political education in the army might result in serious losses, not only in the military field but also in mass political mobilisation on which the CCP depended for survival.

The behaviour of the individual soldiers, particularly in areas newly occupied by the Communists, was one of the critical factors determining whether or not the CCP would succeed in the war and the revolution. After examining major theories about the success of the Chinese Communists, Roy Hofheinz concludes that none of them can be completely satisfactory, and he suggests that:

the contextual and motivational theories lie at the two poles of a continuum of explanations which centers on what is perhaps the most important and least examined of all the possible explanations of Chinese Communist success: the behavior of the Chinese Communists themselves. ...

... [A]t least half of the credit for the revolution belongs to the Communists themselves. The expansion of Communist forces in any area during any period was likely to be better correlated with Communist presence in the vicinity than with any other social phenomenon.

1 Alexander George has noted from his interview with Chinese prisoners in the Korean War that: "The Chinese Communist military model was imbued with an ethical and missionary flavor that was appreciably stronger than that typical in the history of the Soviet Army. As a result, the type of small group life the PLA tried to establish recalls in some ways the closely knit military-religious orders of the past." Op.cit., p.27.

by 'the behavior of the Chinese Communists' he does not mean only the behaviour of the Communist soldiers. But in the context of the pattern in which the CCP established contact with the people, a great part of "the behavior of the Chinese Communists" was that of the Communist army.

Propaganda by the army among the civilian population depended primarily on the establishment of good relations between them, for which strict discipline was a minimal requirement; the Communist troops also experimented with various methods of winning over the local masses when they marched into new areas. Many reports testify to the rigid discipline of the Communist army. For example, at the beginning of the war, an American reporter Nym Wales travelled with the newly reorganised Eighth Route Army moving from Shensi to Shansi, and gives an eyewitness account:

The Red Army never carries tents, but camps in deserted buildings or in the peasants' houses. They pay for everything, even including a few coppers for the use of a cooking stove for a few minutes. In the Soviet districts payment was made in Soviet currency, but in other places it was in Kuomintang notes. No matter how tired and exhausted they were at night, the soldiers swept the floor and courtyard and cleaned up their quarters before retiring, following army regulations to the letter. We sometimes passed melon patches and pear orchards in a hot, deserted valley, but the Red soldiers never turned their heads—the price was high, and they were too poor to buy anything but shao mi. Their respect for private property was a little startling—in a Communist movement. But, of course, it is this nicety which has kept the support of the peasantry for them all these years. All the people along the way in these "White" areas were friendly to the Red travellers, including merchants and landlords, and the travellers were very courteous to them.¹

The "army regulations" in the above quotation are the well-known 'three main disciplines and eight points of attention' which were observed by the soldiers "to the letter," for the army could not survive in a 'water' of hostile people.²

² Anna Louise Strong reports a story of an officer of the New Fourth Army who answered a foreigner who protested at a death sentence given to a soldier who 'raped' a girl: "What the girl did has no bearing.... If a peasant father considers his daughter's honor violated by a man of our army, we must eliminate the cause. Unless the peasants can trust our army to sleep in their homes, knowing that their women are safe, our army cannot survive." Op.cit., p.201. For other stories on disciplinary practices, see pp.198-201.
The good behaviour of the soldiers was not merely essential for the survival of the Communist army, but in the vast areas into which they marched after the outbreak of the war, it was one of a few critical elements which contributed to winning the favourable judgment of the people. The army tried to win over the peasants not only by its courteous attitudes and its care not to annoy them, but also by positive attempts to exploit every opportunity to help them. For example, the soldiers often offered to help with simple work, such as carrying water and repairing furniture, for the family with which they stayed; the troops were mobilised to help the peasants on the fields in the busy seasons; the army supplied medical services to the local people among whom they were stationed, particularly after 1943, in the campaigns to love the people and to eliminate superstition.

Such practices helped to make political work effective. A Japanese investigation of Communist army political work in Hê-shun hsien in Shansi Province reveals the care and efficiency with which the Communists approached the tasks of propaganda and organisation.

In August 1937, one battalion of the 129th Division entered Hê-shun hsien. Its political workers started a propaganda campaign for national salvation utilising Yen Hsi-shan's administration and the Sacrifice League. In April 1938 when the Japanese troops occupied Hê-shun, the Communist troops withdrew. As soon as the Japanese moved out in the next month, the Communists came back to try to establish their own hsien administration. When they found that they had failed to gain sufficient sympathy for the establishment of the hsien administration, they mobilised every soldier and political worker of the Army stationed there, and also the cadres of the Sacrifice League, to help the peasants harvest wheat and millet. This banal tactic was quite successful in winning over the peasants. For two weeks after the harvest, the CCP propagated rent reduction and reasonable taxation based on the cause of national salvation, and economic benefit for the tenants. The landlords and rich peasants were in the minority and dared not express their objection to this propaganda. The Communists organised various mass organisations for national salvation in the rent reduction campaign.¹

¹ Excerpt from the report of Misaki Ryôichi, who was sent by the Japanese North China Army to Hê-shun hsien for a month in May and June
The effectiveness of the political work of the army among the civilian population, which depended heavily on the behaviour of the individual soldiers, is undoubted. Besides numerous western reports which testify to this, there are countless Japanese military reports stating that the Japanese troops found the Communist mass work skilful enough to have enabled them to win over the local inhabitants, who worked for the Communist guerrillas and provided them with intelligence. Although the Japanese regarded the Communists' success in winning over the local people as deception or manipulation, they did appreciate the skill of the Communists and their effectiveness in this work.

Recruitment, for example, is one indication of the effectiveness of the army's political work among the local people and its relations with them, since the Communist army recruited on a volunteer basis and not by conscription. In the Chieh-fang jih-pao, there was no indication of difficulties in recruitment until the first half of 1944. After June 1944 a 'join the army' campaign was launched even in such areas as the SKN Border Region, and between June 1944 and April 1945 the army was expanded from 320,000 to 600,000. This may indicate that the Communist army had no difficulty in maintaining its numbers at a level of 300,000, but that when it wanted to expand rapidly beyond that, it needed some kind of campaign, persuasion or pressure. Even Anna Louise Strong, a well-known reporter with close relations with the CCP, admitted that at least social pressure was applied in recruitment. She describes how this operates:

Meetings were held at which speakers said: "Our army needs men; we expect such a quota from this county."

Communists and government officials were expected to be the first to give their sons. Militiamen volunteered, considering the regular army a promotion. Often the meeting refused some volunteer on

Footnote 1 cont'd
1939 on a fact-finding investigation on Communist activities. Lengthy citation in Hoku-Shi no Chian-sen, pp.91-92.
the ground that he was the sole support of a family. Men who had no such excuse found their neighbors watching them, expecting them to go.

From whatever motives they come, when the list is made up they are all "volunteers," celebrated and honored as such, in which they have horses to ride, paper flowers and rosettes to wear, special seats at puppet shows and Yang-ke dances. Gifts are given to their families. In every way their community cheers them on. Under such circumstances the quota of recruits for a county is usually more than met."

It is perhaps this last sentence which is the most significant. Jack Belden, another reporter close to the CCP, writes that it was not easy for the villager to avoid joining the army because of 'terrific' pressure. Besides the propaganda in mass meetings, day-to-day gossip and in discussions and plays the support of family members was enlisted in persuading prospective recruits to join the army; if this did not work, then the whole village might be mobilised to persuade them to join up.2

The important point here is not the existence of pressure, but that it came from the local people as much as from the Party. In other words, the local people had accepted the army, and also its recruitment of their sons, brothers and husbands to defend their own lives and their new-found political power. The CCP itself tried to make the potential recruits feel that joining the army was an honour, that they were to fight not only for a great cause but also on behalf of their fellow villagers and for their own interest.

As many writers have observed, the transformation of the image of the army in society by the CCP was revolutionary, if one remembers the place of previous Chinese armies, including the KMT army, in society and in the eyes of the people.3 The transformation was im-

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2 Belden, op.cit., p.342.
3 See, for example, ibid., pp.341-348. Gillin describes the differences between the Eighth Route Army and other Chinese armies in their behaviour toward the local people and also different reactions of the people to these armies. See "Peasant Nationalism" in the History of Chinese Communism," pp.276, 280-281.
possible without political education of individual soldiers. Political work was the critical element in building up an entirely new type of army in China, and in changing the image of the army among the people.

Movements to Overcome Difficulties after 1941 and Their Political Significance.

The function of the Communist army as the vanguard of the revolution was achieved not only by study, discussion, instruction and criticism—self-criticism, but also by mass campaigns launched after 1941. After the fall of Wuhan in the autumn of 1938, the Japanese turned their attention to the consolidation of their position in North China, and found Communist guerrillas building an administration over an increasingly wide area. In 1939 and 1940, they developed the tactics of what has been called a 'cage policy' in order to contain the Communist base areas. As Gittings describes it, "Hundreds of miles of roads were built, and a network of key points, fortified with blockhouses, trenches, and barbed wire, spread through Hopeh and Shansi."¹ The effectiveness of this 'cage policy' can be seen from the fact that the Communists had to launch the Hundred Regiments Offensive in the latter half of 1940. The reason for the Hundred Regiments Offensive was not seen by the Japanese Army as a result of the effectiveness of its 'cage policy'.² It is, however, agreed among foreign observers that the 'cage policy' forced the CCP to launch a large scale battle to cut off the Japanese communication lines, to destroy the containment and blockade network, even though

¹ Gittings, op.cit., p.53.
it meant heavy losses in men and material and also predictable Japanese countermeasures.1

Following the Hundred Regiments Offensive, the Communists discovered that their position was quite vulnerable. Alerted by the Communist military strength and excellent intelligence system demonstrated in the Hundred Regiments Offensive,2 the Japanese intensified their efforts to eliminate the Communists and became more brutal and ruthless. Moreover, in January 1941 the armed clashes between the KMT and the CCP culminated finally in an open rift brought about by the New Fourth Army Incident.3 The financial support for the Eighth Route Army by the Central Government was stopped and the blockade around the SKN Border Region was tightened.4

Partly to overcome these difficulties the Communists devised three policies, summarised in three slogans: 'Better troops and simpler administration', 'Production and self-sufficiency' and 'Rectification to correct style of study, style in Party relations and style of writing'.

These movements were, of course, not entirely military, but were designed to affect the political education of the army, and the army's relationship with the civilian people. The intention of the first policy was to reduce the number of regular troops and to replace them by local guerrillas and militia. The Communist armed forces

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1 See, for example, Griffith, op.cit., pp.69-70; Gittings, op.cit., p.53.
2 The Japanese did not detect any prior indication of the Hundred Regiments Offensive and it was a great surprise to them. "Kita-Shina Hōmen-gun Kiroku" (Record of the North China Army [of Japan]), quoted in Hoku-Shi no Chian-sen, p.338.
3 For the details of the Incident, see Johnson op.cit., pp.136-140.
4 For the serious effects of the cutoff of the KMT support and the tightened blockade on the SKN economy, see Selden, op.cit., pp.177-187.
consisted of the regular army, guerrilla troops and the militia. The regular army, which in North China was the Eighth Route Army, was under the command of the Military Affairs Committee of the CCP and supplied by the border region governments. The guerrilla troops were also full-time, but were local small-scale units with great autonomy, under the command of the regular army in each military region. Guerilla troops had originally been organised by local leaders for resistance against the Japanese, especially after the KMT regular army had collapsed and withdrawn south. They were gradually integrated into the Eighth Route Army, a process which was completed at the beginning of 1941 when the last of the ten military regions in North China was established. But local guerrillas still retained economic independence; they were supplied by local governments at hsien or district level, or, if the local government was not able to meet their requirements, they had to seek supplies from higher military or administrative organs, or obtain them from the local people or the enemy.

In terms of military tactics, the Communists became more dependant on the guerrillas and militia, and turned from pitched battles to concentration on small-scale guerrilla warfare, in which the emphasis was on destruction of the Japanese lines of communications. It was as a result of this policy change that the well-known 'tunnel warfare' was introduced by the guerrillas and militia in the Hopei plain. It was more than three years before the CCP was again in a position to launch a pitched battle.

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1 The CCP set up military regions one after another after the establishment of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Military Region in October 1937. Most of them in North China were established in 1939-1940 when the Communist-controlled areas were being expanded continuously. A military region corresponded to a sub-region of an administrative district, except in the SKN Border Region where no military region was set up. After 1944 new military regions were set up, particularly around the border with Manchuria.

2 Liu Shao-ch'i, "Chien-ch'i'h hua-pei k'ang-chan ti wu-chuang pu-tui," (Armed Forces Which Maintained the Resistance War in North
A more important effect of this policy change was in the economic field, which was the first and primary purpose of the policy change. The economic effects were obvious. A reduction in the size of regular forces meant a reduction in military taxation. Greater reliance on guerrillas and militia eased the shortage of manpower, by reducing the number of soldiers serving away from home and unable to take part in production.

The political effects of the 'better troops' policy on both the army and civilian population were apparent in many ways. Firstly, its educational effect appears to have been immeasurable. A substantial reduction of the number of the regular forces made both soldiers and civilians realise how serious were the difficulties they faced. This was helped by an intensified indoctrination, the rectification campaign which followed the 'better troops and simpler administration' policy. Secondly, the 'better troops' campaign contributed to improvement in the political standard of the guerrillas and the militia, because of the influx into their own ranks of well-trained and well-indoctrinated troops from the regular army. These soldiers who joined local guerrilla corps and the militia contributed also to

Footnote 2 cont'd
China), Chieh-fang chou k'an (Liberation Weekly), Yenan, No. 43/44 (1 July.1938), p.52.
1 From the beginning of 1944, the Communists started to capture the Japanese garrison spots in the guerrilla areas. It was in the latter half of 1944, however, that the Communists became able to attack hsien capitals, being helped by the Japanese move to the south in order to secure the communication lines from China to Indo-China.
1 For example, in T'aihang Subregion, the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region, where the 'better troops and simpler administration' policy was well implemented, the grain tax was reduced by 120,000 piculs in 1942, which was one-third of that collected in 1941. This was enabled by the 'better troops and simpler administration' according to the Chieh-fang jih-pao, 4 December 1942. In 1943, the Border Region reduced grain tax by one-fifth again, partly because of the above campaign and also because of production by the army and government staff.
2 In the first half of 1941, the number of the regular forces of the Eighth Route Army was reduced from 400,000 to 300,000.
the improvement of the relationship between the regular Communist
system of government and the local mass organisations, which included
the militia.

A third consequence of this campaign was that the army supplied
many of the leaders in the political and economic life in the villages.
The soldiers who 'returned to production work' were able to assume
leadership because of their high degree of political consciousness
and the discipline derived from their life in the regular army.¹
This enhanced the prestige of the army among the peasants and
strengthened the link between the army and the populace.²

In sum, the 'better troops' campaign achieved a greater degree
of involvement of the basic level masses in the Communist political
process. At the same time, it secured a stronger position for the
Party and the army leadership and a greater receptivity of the lead-
ership among the masses at the basic level of society.

¹ A number of cases are reported in the Chieh-fang jih-pao where the
retired soldiers assumed leadership at the basic level in administra-
tion and production. See, for example, 28 February and 4, 24 March,
23 May, 12 December 1942, 24 February and 5 April 1944.
² An outstanding example in the CCP literature of a retired soldier
who assumed leadership in a non-military field was Yang Chao-ch'én,
who challenged Wu Man-yu, the first and most distinguished labour
hero, for competition in the production campaign between individuals,
production teams, army units, etc., which later spread into other
fields such as study, military training and transportation. Yang
started reclaiming a piece of land on a hill in An-sai hsien in the
SKN Border Region, after he retired from the army in early 1942,
refusing to live on pension. After one year of hard work and the
introduction of better methods of cultivation, he was able to
achieve a very good harvest, while giving assistance to the local
government and to fellow villagers. In the production drive after
1943, he organised his whole village into mutual aid teams, and
became one of the highest level labour heroes in the SKN Border
Region. What is striking, not only in Yang's case but also in many
other cases of retired military men who became leaders in the
production campaign, is that the 'glorious tradition of the Eighth
Route Army in helping others to solve difficulties' and to be loyal
to the Party, was emphasised both by the retired soldiers themselves
and by the CCP "Yang Chao-ch'én hê t'ui-wu chün-jen ti ch'i-chih"
(Yang Chao-ch'én and the Banner of the Retired Soldiers), CFJP, 8 Jan-
uary; "T'ui-wu chün-jen ts'an-chia sheng-ch'an" (The Retired Soldiers
Join Production), editorial, CFJP, 6 March 1943.
Even the reduced regular army of 300,000 men placed a heavy burden on the peasantry in terms of material and manpower. The CCP tried, therefore, to devise a system in which the army, the government and the schools could produce all or part of the goods they consumed. This was the point of the second policy, 'production and self-sufficiency'.

Production work by regular troops was introduced well before the all-out production campaign initiated by the Central Committee in 1942. The garrison troops in the SKN Border Region had engaged in agricultural production since 1938, and it was in fact their successful example, particularly that of the 359th Brigade of the 120th Division in Nanniwan district, which encouraged the Central Committee to call for an all-out production campaign by both army and government. The 359th Brigade was recalled from the Northwest Shansi Military Region in 1941, to garrison the Nanniwan district in SKN. Shortly after it reached the district it revived a project for reclamation of wasteland, which had been abandoned by the suppressed Mohammedan rioters about a hundred years before. It also established a weaving factory, a paper mill, an oil press, 14 flour mills and a number of handicraft factories, with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency. These manufactures helped to control inflation in the SKN Border Region, which had been particularly serious after 1941, by supplying 'industrial' goods at cheaper than market prices, while contributing to the improvement in the standard of living of the local people. According to the Brigade Commander, by the end of 1940 the 359th Brigade, which "didn't have enough to eat" when it had come to Nanniwan, was self-sufficient in vegetables and was able to supply its members with one catty of pork a month per head. ¹

As Mark Selden observes, the reason why the 359th Brigade was made the 'banner' of the production drive was its 'spirit' of self-sufficiency, self-reliance and hard work, which enabled it to create new methods to overcome difficulties, rather than its practical achievements. Its example suggested to the CCP possible ways of developing the economy with a few 'experts', poor technology, small capital, and with the creative spirit of self-reliance and hard work. This was later revived as the 'guerrilla' way of industrialisation after 1949.

As with the 'better troops' campaign, the production drive was of importance in the improvement of relations between the army and the people. As Gittings has suggested, the Communist leaders seem to have been interested as much in the psychological, or political effect of these two mass movements as in the more tangible benefits. We should not, however, overlook the fact that the first and primary purpose of the CCP in the production movement was undoubtedly economic. Even so, according to Mao, through the production campaign the army not only won great sympathy from the populace, but also acquired the habit of frugality in the use of daily essentials. He says that by cultivating wasteland the troops of the 359th Brigade gained great sympathy from the local people. The small factories of the Brigade, which supplied basic commodities at lower prices to the local people, helped to establish close ties between the

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1 Selden, op.cit., p.253.
2 "The significance of these two mass movements (reduction of the number of the regular troops and production by the army) probably lay more in the psychological boost which they gave towards creating a much-needed sense of solidarity between the army, government officials, and civilians than in producing tangible benefits for any of the parties involved." Gittings, op.cit., p.58.
troops and the masses. Thus the 359th Brigade became a model for the production drive and also for the 'support the government and cherish the people' campaign within the army after 1944.

The role of the army in this kind of work was of critical importance, since the nature of such a full-time military organisation meant that any campaign in the army demanded conformity from each and every member. The army had to respond very quickly to the call of the Central Committee for mass movements. The advantages of the army for mass education and mobilisation were further exploited in the 'support the government and cherish the people' campaign, which was similar in its effects to the rectification and production campaigns.

'Support the government and cherish the people' (yung-cheng ai-min)

It was natural that the CCP should wish particularly to strengthen the ties between the army and civilian population during the difficult years of 1941-42. The campaign to 'support the government and cherish the people' was initiated in 1942 by the Rear Corps in the SKN Border Region. The CCP appears to have felt impelled to launch such a movement because in the difficult year 1941 it believed that the army was not as close to the people as it was expected to be. The weakness in its mass work was exposed when it faced serious difficulties, as Mao pointed out at the end of 1942, in his report on the relationships between the government and people in the SKN Border Region. In 1943,  

1 Ibid.  
2 The success of the 359th Brigade in reclamation of wasteland Nanniwan reached a stage in 1944 where cultivated land became so abundant that the Brigade invited landless peasants from the north to migrate and cultivate the land; Nanniwan had to set up a new district government for the newly settled inhabitants.  
3 Mao pointed out in his lengthy report to the Senior Cadres Conference of the Party in the SKN Border Region that even in Yenan hsien, the most advanced hsien in mass political work in SKN, many cadres were
this campaign, which was coupled with a campaign among the government and the mass organisations to 'support the army and give preferential treatment to the soldiers' families' was proclaimed throughout the Communist regions, by the October 1 Directive of the Politburo of the CCP.¹

The twin campaigns were a part of a series of mass movements launched in the base areas from 1942 onwards. Like other Communist mass movements, they had a seasonal character, as indicated by the fact that the Politburo directive was issued on 1 October 1943, calling for the introduction of the mass movement for the season after the autumn harvest. The Directive called for rent reduction, preparation for the following year's production work, and a set of campaigns for improvement of relations between the army and the people, all to be implemented during the winter slack season around the Chinese New Year celebration.²

The 'support the government and cherish the people' campaign was a mass education campaign within the army,³ under the joint leadership of the Political Department of the military region and the Party Committee of the region. Accordingly, the precise form of the campaign depended on the military situation in each military region, although a universal pattern had been established by the Political Department of

Footnote 3 cont'd

inactive and bureaucratic in their work among the peasant masses; and in early 1943 some peasants ran away from their villages, some others divided their family property so that they could avoid the heavy burden of progressive taxation, and yet others sold their draught animals to curtail their production scale. These phenomena indicate an extensive distrust of the Communist government among the peasantry. See Mao Tse-tung, "Ching-chi wen-t'i yu ts'ai-cheng wen-t'i" (Economic and Financial Problems), Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 8, pp.197-198.

¹ The October 1 Directive was written by Mao as an inner-Party directive and most of it was later included in his Selected Works. Mao, III, pp. 131-135.

² The campaign was carried out in the winter slack season, since the soldiers also engaged in agricultural production work. Winter was the usual season for mass campaigns, as illustrated by the example of the winter schools.

³ Gittings interprets the campaigns of production and 'support of government and cherish the people' as a part of the 'rectification'. See, op.cit., pp.115-116.
the Garrison Corps in the SKN Border Region in 1942-43. The campaign was initiated by a directive issued by the Political Department of the military region, which ordered that one month around Chinese New Year should be devoted to the 'support the government and cherish the people' campaign, and stipulated what should be done during that month.

The 'support the government and cherish the people' campaign was, apparently, an army version of the 'rectification', with more practical than ideological aims. Given the importance placed on the maintenance of good relations with the civilian population, and Mao's determination to carry out a rectification, the revolutionisation of the thought and behaviour of the 'vanguard organisation' was a first concern of the Central Committee. This is one of the distinctive characteristics of the Chinese Communist revolution. The 'support the government and cherish the people' campaign, therefore, as a mass movement for reform of thought and behaviour had to be carried out rigorously.

The first part of the campaign consisted of education of army personnel on relations with the civilian population. Meetings for officers were held first, in order to correct erroneous ideas and attitudes toward civilians through discussion, investigation, and self-examination. The officers then gave lectures to the men and led them in discussion and self-criticism meetings at platoon or company level. Discussions and self-criticism had to be related to concrete facts and the experiences of the soldiers, and the leaders were particularly cautioned against "conformity".

1 For the process of the yung-cheng ai-min campaign of the Garrison Corps in 1943, see a detailed report in the Chieh-fang jih-pao, 19 January 1944.
2 The Chieh-fang jih-pao at the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944 reports the directives of all Party committees and military regions in North and Central China in detail.
3 The technique of small group self-examination, criticism and self-criticism was developed in the rectification campaign. See the following section.
The second part of the campaign was devoted to practical action to improve relations between the army and the people. The most common action projects were propaganda activities among the people through stage plays and yang-kê (folk dancing with simple plays on the street) plays during the New Year holidays. Another common activity was for the company or platoon to organise an ad hoc campaign committee which checked with every household in its garrison area to discover whether the troops had damaged property. Where damage had been done, the troops immediately had to make repairs or give compensation. A third common measure was the organisation of social evenings for the army and the people, at which the army personnel pledged to 'support the government and cherish the people', and criticised their past activities. These social gatherings of the army and the local people were also a part of the other campaign to 'support the army and give preferential treatment to the soldiers' families' (Yung-chên yu-k'ang). To these meetings the local people brought gifts for the army, such as grain, meat, vegetables and shoes.

Part of the yung-chêng ai-min campaign was an offensive to organise the soldiers' families for production. The aim was to reduce preferential

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1 Pledges to 'support the government and cherish the people' were normally publicised together with pledges of the mass organisations to 'support the army'. The pledge consisted usually of eight to ten items, for example, as follows:

"We will: 1) resolutely implement government decrees and respect government staff, 2) actively fight, defend political power and protect the people's life and property, 3) help and train militia to fight, 4) help the people's production work and solve the people's difficulties, 5) cherish the people's property, take not even a needle or a thread, 6) protect the people's economic and physical strength, implement the Resistance War Service Act, 7) accept the people's opinions, and protect the mass organisations against Japan, 8) have a friendly attitude toward the people, and respect the people's customs." Pledge for yung-chêng ai-min of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Military Region, CFJP, 8 January 1944.

2 CFJP., 31 December 1943; 2, 7, 8 & 19 January, and 5 February 1944.
treatment for the dependants and thus lighten the burden on the government and the non-dependent masses. The CCP sought through organisation of collective labour to overcome the shortage of labour among the soldiers' families, and through indoctrination to make them refuse preferential treatment, which was a burden on the border region economy. In the production drive in 1943 the CCP first gave individual praise to soldiers' wives who worked hard and supported their families well. It was not, however, until the yung-cheng ai-min campaign for 1944 that the CCP set out to organise all soldiers' and cadres' dependants for production, to lighten the above burden and to utilise in other ways the labour invested in tai-kâng, tilling the soldiers' and cadres' land.

To the CCP, the problem was not solely economic. More serious was the possibility that preferential treatment might result in ideological problems. The CCP was aware that preferential treatment had in some cases corroded the revolutionary spirit of the dependants and fostered the tendency to 'exploiting' behaviour. The CCP was alert to the fact that preferential treatment was fostering a form of a social injustice. The CCP was concerned that this would influence the children, the successors of the revolution. In February 1944, the Yenan Subregion convened a conference of cadres' (military and civilian) dependants. Similar meetings followed throughout Communist territory, at which a new mass organisation, the Union of Cadres' Families, was established.

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1 Various forms of preferential treatment were given to the soldiers' and cadres' families, such as exemption from taxation, and tai-kâng or the tilling of their land by other people without material reward. How heavy a burden this put on the non-dependant peasants is shown in Lin Po-ch'ü's report. For example, in An-ting Hsien in SKN, every peasant had to spend one month per annum on average for tai-kâng in 1939. Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.9.

2 For example, CFJP, 30 May and 16 November 1943.

3 Wang Chen's lecture at the conference of cadres' dependants of Yenan Subregion, CFJP, 21 February 1944.
Although they made every effort to indoctrinate the soldiers, the Communists still seem to have experienced some difficulties, and they had to rely on the civilian population to keep some soldiers in army service. The 'support the army' campaign by the government and mass organisations, for example, in early 1943 included kui-tui kung-tso, a campaign to ensure that soldiers on New Year leave returned to their units. Judging from the reports and articles in the Chieh-fang jih-pao, it seems that there was a considerable problem with soldiers who did not want to go back to the army after their home leave at Chinese New Year, at least in 1943. Apparently, the CCP did not want to force them back to the army, but wanted the local governments and mass organisations, and their families and friends to persuade them to return. Hence, the kui-tui kung-tso was included in the 'support the army' campaign. The Chieh-fang jih-pao reports kui-tui kung-tso only in the SKN Border Region and in the Central Shantung Subregion, but this does not necessarily mean that there were no such problems in other regions.

Reports on kui-tui kung-tso appeared in the Chieh-fang jih-pao only in early 1943. It is not clear whether the problem was as serious in other years, or whether the newspaper simply did not bother to report it. It can probably be assumed that 1942 was in fact the worst year for the army, and that the rectification campaign had not yet produced the effect of persuading the soldiers to cope with serious financial and military hardships.

The 'support the government and cherish the people' campaign was a special form of rectification, in which the Politburo presented to

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1 According to Jack Belden, even soldiers who ran away were not put in jail or beaten. Their home villages were asked to try to persuade him to go back to the army. Only after they deserted three times were they turned over to the district magistrate for hard labour. Op.cit., p.342.

2 See CFJP, 2 February, 2 and 5 March 1943.
the individual soldier the problem of relations between the army and the people as the central question of the army's role in the revolution. Whereas the Party rectification campaign was designed to indoctrinate the cadres, the production drive in the army was aimed at indoctrination of the men through economic activities and manual labour. The yung-cheng ai-min campaign combined these two, and defined the role of the army as military, political and economic. It was logical, therefore, for the Central Committee in January 1944 to use the Kutien Resolution as one of the rectification documents for the army.

These mass movements launched by the army, and other institutions, were applied forms of 'education and production', defined by the CCP as the primary tasks for the year 1943 and after. 'Education' did not mean only regular school education but also political or ideological education. 'Production' was a means of educating the people, particularly those who had not engaged in production and considered themselves non-productive workers, such as armymen and intellectual cadres. 'Education' in turn was necessary for effective production work, since it was essential that everybody should understand the importance of production for revolution and war. 'Education and production' were of special significance in the army because of the CCP's theories about the character of the Chinese revolution and the 'vanguard' role of the army: the current stage of the revolution in China involved war, and the army had to be the 'vanguard' of the revolutionary forces.

The role of the army in the Yenan period was indispensable both in

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1 At the Senior Cadres Conference of the SKN Border Region, which lasted nearly three months in 1942/43, the CCP stressed that production and education should be made the primary tasks of the Party from 1943. This was put into practice in the all-out production drive in 1943 and the reform of the basic educational system in 1944. See Chapter VI, Section 1.
the military and political development of the Chinese Communist revolution. The first and primary task of the army was, of course, military - to secure and expand the Communist territory. The political task of the army, however, was not regarded as secondary. Military tasks were essential for the survival of Communist political power, but the survival of the army itself depended on its political work. Its military role could be carried out effectively only if the political tasks had been carried out effectively. The military role was an integral part of the political role and vice versa.

The political task was a component of the everyday life and behaviour of the individual soldiers, even during military campaigns, as long as they had contact with the civilian population. Although the question had been raised by the Kutien Resolution in 1929, it was probably necessary for the CCP and the army to go through the crisis of 1941-42, and the mass campaigns for self-strengthening, to develop to the full the role of the army as the vanguard of the Chinese revolution. After 1942, this vanguard role, which involved sacrificing oneself for the cause of the revolution with clear consciousness of one's mission, was carried on throughout the army ranks. The mass campaigns wrought a critical change in Party and army life. Discipline was tightened; the revolutionary mission was constantly inculcated in the individual; daily behaviour was more strictly controlled by the techniques of discussion, criticism and self-examination.

The army became, in effect, an organisational and functional substitute for the proletariat which China lacked, both in the 'new democratic' and the 'socialist' revolution. The Party, which is discussed in the following section, assumed a similar vanguard role but with somewhat different characteristics.
2. The Party

The formal relationship of the Communist Party to the government system in the base areas was similar to the situation in early years of People's Republic. The government was composed of various groups which made up the united front, of which the Communist Party was, in theory, only one. In practice, however, the Party ruled. The relationship between the administration and the Party was symbolised by the process of making the 'political programmes', which were in fact provisional constitutions, of the border regions. These programmes were all drafted by the local Party committees and submitted to the border region assemblies for approval. Not only the political programmes, but also the major decrees and policies, were enacted by a similar process. This did not mean that the Party disguised its rule by united front government, but that the Party used the united front policy to obtain help and support for its rule, particularly from the intellectual-gentry class.

The Party was similar to the army in terms of organisational discipline and in the performance of a vanguard role in the revolution. The important difference between these two organisations, however, was that the army was a professional institution, whereas Party members, with the exception of higher level full-time cadres, were engaged in other occupations and served the Party on a 'part-time' basis. Unlike the army, which exercised total control over the lives and actions of its members, the Party was a relatively decentralised organisation.

What distinguished the Party most clearly from other institutions was that Party members were scattered in virtually every small unit of the military, the administration, and the economic and mass organisations, and in all of these units they assumed the leading role. In other words, the role of the Party was of critical significance, in that it exercised
a directing capacity in almost all the basic organisations in the Communist areas. In this respect, the Party was more deeply rooted in the daily life of the populace than the army, which, by necessity, moved constantly from place to place.

Among the four major institutions which made up the Communist government system, the Party occupied a key position, integrating all four institutions into one system, and directing them all in the pursuit of the 'nationalist' war and social revolution. Party members in the army, the government and the mass organisations were controlled by the Central Committee through a hierarchical chain of command, and were expected to assume leadership in their working units, and by this means the Party was able to implement its policies. The Party was, in practice, a policy-making institution for the Communist 'state', and the other institutions were policy-implementing. However, the leadership of the Party was exercised not only in its role of policy-making, but also in actual implementation, through the capability and hard work of its members at the basic level of the policy-implementing institutions, by which Party members acted as agents for social mobilisation of the masses. It was the Party members who were the first to become involved in the Communist political process; and they had to be constantly aware of their revolutionary mission and to give expression to this in their daily life.

Party Organisation in North China

Since the Party assumed the integrating role for the whole government system, the chain of command of the Party was, in effect, the chain of command of the government system itself, through which policies flowed down for implementation, and mass response flowed up for consideration in policy making. Although the main interest of this study is not
in the Party organisation itself, it is necessary to describe briefly its organisation in North China, the organisational background against which Party members played their roles in other organisations.

During the decade from 1927, the greater part of the Party organisation in North China had been destroyed by KMT suppression. However, as the Communist-compiled history of the border regions, K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-ch'i chieh-fang ch'u kai-k'uang, points out, there were many examples of local Communists who had lost contact with the central Party organisation, who took arms and led guerrilla corps at the outbreak of the war, and who together with the guerrilla units under their command later were reabsorbed into the Party, the Communist army or CCP-led guerrilla units.

As the CCP increased the number of its troops and expanded the guerrilla bases, it was able to reconstruct the Party organisation, partly on the foundation of these 'abandoned' Communists, who became the nucleus in many areas and whose existence made the reconstruction process much easier. In the rural areas, however, the Party had had no organisational base before the war; and if for no other reason than that it was fighting on the basis of the peasants' support, it was essential for the Party to have locally based branches composed of native activists. The 'native activists' were found and trained by the local administrative bodies and mass organisations which were designed to provide as many opportunities

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1 The exception, of course, was the north Shensi Soviet region. Apart from this area, CCP organisations in North China had been confined almost exclusively to the cities, and on this point John Israel writes in reference to the period 1935-36: "Although the CCP had practically no organized strength in the cities, the party acquired valuable assets in the minds of China's young intelligentsia." Student Nationalism in China, 1927-37, p.102.

as possible to involve the general population in their activities.  

The following chart of the Party hierarchy shows the chain of command, and the position of the basic organs, which are the main focus of interest of this study, both in the chain of command and in relation to other Party organs. The higher committees and bureaus were, of course, important, since the Party was a highly centralised and disciplined organisation. For purposes of this study, however, it is the basic organs, whose members worked with the non-Party masses at the basic level of society, which are most important. Until the autumn of 1939, the CCP organisation in North China was in the following form:

1 Tada Corps, op.cit., pp.56-57 & 82-83.
National Congress

Central Committee
(Chairman: Mao Tse-tung with 93 members)

Central Secretariat
(Secretary: Chang Wen-t'ien)

Politburo
(Chairman: Mao Tse-tung with 24 members)

Military Affairs Council
(Chairman: Mao Tse-tung)

Northwest Bureau
(Secretary: Kao Kang)

North Bureau
(Secretary: Liu Shao-chi & later Yang Shang-kun)

18th Group Army General Committee
(Chairman: Wang Chia-hsiang)

North Sub-bureau
Shantung Sub-bureau

Division Committees
Shantung Column Committee

SKN Border Region Committee
Border Region or Provincial Committees

Brigade Committees
Detachment Committees

Regiment Committees
Battalion Branches

Company Cells
Hsiang Branches
Natural Village Cells

Enterprise & Mass organisation Branches
Enterprise & Mass organisation Cells

The supreme power given to the National Congress in theory, was in practice nominal, and during the Yenan period the Congress did not, in fact, meet even once. Although the Party did plan to convene the...
In practice, therefore, the Central Committee, especially its Politburo, held supreme power over the whole Party.

In the actual process of mobilisation and politicisation of the masses, the really important sections of the Party hierarchy were the lower levels, particularly the basic unit of local Communist organisation. Both because of the Party's views on organisation and because of the war situation, the basic organs were given broad autonomy. Uniformity in methods of policy-implementation appears to have been disliked by the Central Committee. In most of its directives and circulars, the Committee emphasised that there should be a variety of methods to implement policies, according to different places, times and conditions. Under certain conditions, however, broad autonomy in the lower level organs seems to have become a problem; the final stage of the rectification was aimed at this problem, at the question of discipline.

But the dynamic strength of the Party was generated at the basic level, through contact and interaction with the non-Party masses. The basic unit of Party organisation was the branch, of three or more members in the village, in mass organisations, enterprises and the army. Its main task was to mobilise the general population to implement or support the policies of the Central Committee; although within the broad framework of Party policy; there was room for initiative at the branch level. The mobilisation tasks of the local Party branches are described by one Japanese source as follows:

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1 Propagation of communism (during the war, national salvation should be the main point of propaganda).
2 Implementation of the resolutions and programmes of the Party, and mobilisation of the masses outside the Party.
3 Recruitment and education of new members.
4 Political, economic and cultural work aimed at involving Party members and the non-Party masses in the political and economic struggle.

The branch was controlled by a committee elected by a meeting of members and comprising 3 to 5 members including a secretary. The committee executed the resolutions of the members' meetings and the directives of the higher Party organs. The branch was divided into several cells, each of which had an elected chairman (chu-jen). The cell met at least once a week. The chairman collected the Party fee, attended the cell chairman's meetings convened by the higher Party organs, and was responsible for implementation of the directives of the higher organs.

The activists of the local governments and the mass organisations were often Party members, because the Party had been concerned constantly to recruit village activists - the best elements of the basic units of organisation. These basic members played a crucial role in mass mobilisation. In the mass movements by which the Central Committee sought to activate the populace and implement its policies, their role was to stir the masses to action, to provide leadership, and to act as models for the masses to follow. Mass movements were initiated in two ways; either by the Central Committee, in which case the movements were usually broader in scope, or locally. In the latter case the movement usually originated from locally adopted 'better' methods of carrying out Central Committee policies, which were then taken up by the Central Committee and propagated all over Communist territory. Mass movements were usually launched by

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1 Tada corps, op.cit., p.45, based on captured Communist documents and on investigation reports by the Japanese.
meetings of cadres from the local Party branch or cell, and from the
government and the mass organisations. They informed themselves on the
nature and objectives of the movement by study of the documents and
discussion with cadres from the higher level Party organs or governments,
and discussed the techniques which might be used to inform the masses
about the movement and win their support and participation. Local Party
members had an important functional role in that they had responsibility
for rousing the masses to action and sustaining their active participation
until the objectives of the movements were achieved.

Equally important, in the process of mass movements Party members
were expected to act as models for emulation by the masses, which under-
lines the critical importance of the personal behaviour of local Party
members. For their model role to be accepted by the masses as worthy
of emulation, they had to be at the very least 'good' people in the
broad sense that this is generally understood. The model role, in fact,
demanded that in their everyday behaviour Party members give priority
to the public interest, putting their private interests last. For example,
even if they shared the initial suspicions of their fellow villagers
about the effectiveness of cooperatives and mutual aid teams, it was
expected of them that they should take the lead in joining such organisa-
tions. Where the tendency of some villagers was to understate their
income for taxation purposes, Party members were expected to report
their income accurately. Party members were expected to work hardest
in mutual aid labour and to be the least demanding in the distribution
of the benefits of this labour. The model role was important for the
Party in gaining prestige among the villagers. The Party was anxious
that its members should be elected chairmen of mass campaign committees,
leaders of mutual aid teams and, particularly, labour heroes. It was
essential, therefore, that they should be good examples.
Moreover, the Party also sought to recruit into its ranks those non-
party leaders who were elected by the masses, in order to maintain and 
strengthen the link between the Party and the masses. Activists, who had 
liberated themselves from the traditional political mentality of the 
general population, and from the fear of established authority, and who 
were prepared to struggle to overthrow the social order, were vitally 
important to the Party in breaking through the wall of popular political 
quiescence.1

Above the district level, there were hsien, subregion and region or 
province committees whose organisation and functions were similar to those 
of the district committees. They elected a secretary who had the supreme 
responsibility for the committee work of each level. The committees above 
the hsien level set up six departments, with responsibilities as shown 
below:

1 Organisation Department
Registration of new Party members, allocation of cadres, and 
collection of Party fees.

2 Propaganda Department
Propaganda and education work outside and inside the Party, 
and control of various Party schools and training teams.

3 Arming and Mobilisation Department
Planning, leadership, recruitment and all other work concerned 
with guerrillas, self-defence corps, and other local armed 
forces.

4 Enemy and Puppet Work Department
Propaganda directed towards the Japanese and puppet armies 
and education of war prisoners.

5 Mass Movement Department
Organisation and leadership of the mass organisations.

6 Social Department
Investigation and examination of disputes and counterrevolution-
ary activities.

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1 For the role of activists in Communist mass mobilisation, see Richard 
Solomon, "On Activism and Activists," China Quarterly, No.39, pp.76-114, 
especially 89-92.
In addition, the subregion and region committees had a military department for the education and leadership of the military regions and local regular armies. The committees at the hsien level and above were supposed to edit and publish newspapers or magazines. The division of the subregion for the Party organisation did not follow the regular administrative district. Being similar to the administrative district, the Party was flexible enough to set up regional committees covering two or more provinces or a part of a province, and hsien committees covering a part of several hsien or several hsien committees controlling one administrative hsien.

The region and subregion committees had from forty to sixty staff who lived in the peasants' houses in the rural areas, under the protection of regular or guerrilla troops, and who moved around the region. According to Japanese military information, around 1940 in North China excluding SKN the CCP had 18 regional committees, 73 subregion committees, 461 hsien committees, and numerous committees below the hsien level.¹

The Party organisation within the army was formally separated from the local Party organisation, and was responsible to the political department. The political commissar of a division controlled all Party organisation and activity within the division. Brigades and regiments had Party committees and political commissars, while companies had Party branches or cells and political leaders without political departments, and the platoon had a Party cell. The Party branch of the company was the basic unit for Party activities within the army.²

¹ Tada Corps, op.cit., p.53. These figures are only for the Party organs discovered by the Japanese army.
² Ibid., pp.213-214.
The relationship between the local Party organ and the army Party organ was one of close cooperation. They held meetings frequently and the Party in the army was supposed to participate in the local Party's activities. When there were differences of opinion, both sides had to report to the next highest level of the Party, the branch or political department, for settlement. In the new areas, however, where no Party organisation existed, the Party organisation within the army was responsible for mass organisation, and for setting up a Party organisation until such time as the higher-level local Party appointed cadres to lead the new organisation.¹

There seem to have been conflicts of opinion between the army Party cadres and local Party cadres, and also between cadres appointed by the higher Party organs and local cadres. These conflicts affected the centralised leadership and efficiency of Party work. Mao had to make it clear in the rectification that the local cadres' opinions must be respected 'if poor relations develop'. In making this suggestion to give more power to the local cadres rather than to military and/or outside cadres, Mao's assumption was that in dealing with mass mobilisation, it was better to trust the cadres of peasant origin than those of intellectual origin.²

Unlike the administrative organisation in the border regions, the Party organisation was designed to be rigid, exclusive and highly centralised. Mao emphasised democratic centralism as the principle of organisation, and explained democracy as being manifest in the process of policy-making, and centralism in the process of policy

¹ Ibid., pp.219-220. On the subject of the army's role in organising the local masses in the new areas, there is an eye-witness account by Agnes Smedley, of November 1937 in Shansi. See China Fights Back, (London: 1938), pp.52-53, 99 & 107.
² Mao, III, pp.45-47.
executive. It seems that 'democracy' was intended to mean the election system from the bottom of the Party organisation, participation of every member in the decision-making process in a Party branch or cell, and the broad autonomy of lower level organisation. In practice, the election system could not operate effectively because of the war, and for the same reason centralism was almost inevitable. Within the Party organisation as a whole 'centralism', or discipline, was actually emphasised more than 'democracy'. Mao summarised Party discipline as follows:

1) The individual is subordinate to the organisation;
2) The minority is subordinate to the majority;
3) The lower level is subordinate to the higher level; and
4) The entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee.

It is of the greatest significance that the CCP and its army had this rigid and highly centralised organisation and that it extended throughout the Communist areas in China, when other institutions, which rested on the united front basis, were of a local nature. Through its individual members, the CCP was the only institution that was able to control the whole administrative and military system in its territory. This was one of the reasons for the rectification campaign, an intention to keep the quality of Party members high, in order to maintain political and military achievements in a large and rapidly expanding territory.

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1 One of the purposes of the rectification campaign was to control local Party organs more rigidly.
The Rectification Campaign

Most of the new members who came into the CCP in the years from 1937 to 1940 were peasants and young intellectuals. Due to the rapid expansion of the base areas, the Party, as well as the administration, suffered from shortage of cadres, and the new members lacked sufficient political training. Reflecting the long Chinese tradition of a wide gap between officialdom and the masses, cadres without sufficient training tended to become arrogant and self-content. The link between cadres and the masses, which had been somewhat tenuously established, was weakened by malpractices by Party cadres in mass work. According to Mao, the economic difficulties in North China in 1941 and 1942 were caused not only by KMT and Japanese attacks but by the Party's incorrect policies and the cadres' bureaucratic style of work, which failed to mobilise the masses to the full.

Mao had been fully aware of the significance of the work style, or life style, of Party members; in fact, his attention has always been on this point. To him, Party members, the revolutionary elite, should be distinguished from non-Party people by their strict self-discipline, by their example of serving the interests of the people and the revolution and ignoring their own interests. Mao pointed out in September 1937 that one of the manifestations of 'liberalism' in the Party was:

To be indifferent to them (the masses) and show no concern for their well-being, forgetting that one is a Communist and behaving as if one were an ordinary non-Communist.

1 According to Hu Hua, a Chinese Communist historian, 90 percent of new members were from the petty bourgeois class, including intellectuals, middle and poor peasants. Hu Hua, ed., Chung-kuo kē-ming shih chiang-i (Lectures in History of the Chinese Revolution), (Peking: 1962), p.422.
3 "Combat Liberalism," Mao, II, p.32. (My emphasis). This is one of the few articles in the Selected Works to which the editor does not add an explanatory note, and it is not known for what purpose the article
Another manifestation of 'liberalism' in Mao's view, was "to be aware of one's own mistakes and yet make no attempt to correct them, taking a liberal attitude towards oneself." In this article "Combat Liberalism," Mao listed eleven types of 'liberal' attitude which could bring about "political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organizations." Most of these eleven types of liberalism are identical with the errors which were said to require 'rectification' in the rectification campaign in 1942. On the causes of liberalism, Mao states that

Liberalism stems from petty-bourgeois selfishness, it places personal interests first and the interests of the revolution second, and this gives rise to ideological, political and organisational liberalism.

If erroneous 'liberalist' attitudes, or work styles, existed and had to be corrected in 1937, it is not surprising that by 1942, after Party membership had expanded by twenty times within the three years 1937-1940, a large-scale Party rectification campaign became necessary. In 1937, Party membership was as low as 40,000, but these 40,000 were mostly well-tried members who had come through the difficulties in the war with the KMT in South China and the Long March. Even among them, according to Mao, there were 'liberalist' tendencies which came from 'petty-bourgeois selfishness'. It was natural that the Party should see the need for a rectification movement for 800,000 members, 90 percent of whom were of petty-bourgeois origin.

Footnote 3 cont'd
was originally written. Presumably, it was an inner-Party circular or a speech to a Party meeting.

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., p.31.
3 Ibid., p.32
In "Reform Our Study," a report to the cadres meeting in Yenan in May 1941, which marked the start of the rectification campaign, Mao pointed to the widespread existence of 'subjectivism' and 'dogmatism' in the Party.\(^1\) The "Central Committee Resolution on Strengthening the party Spirit" dated 1 July 1941, which was probably written by Mao himself, recognises that the unity and discipline of the Party was damaged by "a broad agrarian environment characterised by long-range, dispersed, independent, guerrilla warfare," and also by the very high "gravity of small producers and the intelligentsia in the Party."\(^2\) Although some important articles on anti-subjectivism appeared in the Chieh-fang jih-pao from September 1941, this did not become a full-scale campaign until 1 February 1942 when Mao gave a lecture entitled "Reform in Learning, the Party, and Literature" at the opening day ceremonies of the Central Party School. In this lecture, he presented three problems: 1) the question of thought or subjectivism, 2) the question of the Party's internal and external relations or sectarianism, and 3) the question of literature or Party formalism.\(^3\) These problems were interrelated and stemmed from the same general problem, which was, in Communist terms, "petty-bourgeois ideology and ways of thinking."\(^4\)

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4. Ibid. Ho Kan-chih states the cause of these problems thus: "As the Party was working in the rural areas, it could not help being constantly affected by the broad mass of petty-bourgeoisie which surrounded it. The bourgeoisie also tried every means to influence the Party. After the outbreak of the anti-Japanese war, a large number of progressives of peasant or urban petty-bourgeois origin joined the Party. As the Party represented the interests of the whole nation as well as of the working class and enjoyed a very high prestige among the people, it was both inevitable and reasonable that a large number of progressives of petty-bourgeois origin should join the party of the Chinese working class and constitute a majority of its membership." A History of Modern Chinese Revolution, (Peking: 1959), p.376.
The full-scale campaign was initiated by this lecture. Immediately afterwards a leadership study committee was organised in the SKN Border region government with Lin Po-ch'ü as chairman and Li Ting-ming as vice-chairman. These two were Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Border Region Government. The Committee required all staff of the Border Region government to 'study' two hours a day. On 5 February the Chieh-fang jih-pao carried an editorial calling for reeducation of cadres in service, and at the end of February the Central Committee issued a resolution on the same subject. In-service cadres here means government staff, whether or not they were Party members. The CCP suffered from a serious shortage of educated administrative staff; quite a number of in-service cadres were even illiterate. It is likely that these cadres without political or 'cultural' training regarded themselves as 'officials' in the old sense, and easily became arrogant towards the people. Moreover, the CCP had to contend with their administrative inefficiency. The repeated emphasis on reeducation of in-service cadres in the rectification indicates how seriously the lack of political and 'cultural' education among them affected government work.

On 8 February the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee convened a meeting of the propaganda workers in Yanan at which Mao gave

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1 Two hours of study each day was still the rule in 1944, when foreign journalists visited Yanan. See Stein, op.cit., p.105.
2 The "Central Committee Resolution on the Education of Cadres in Service," 26 February 1942, was later made one of the rectification documents.
3 See Lin Po-ch'ü's report which states that in the SKN Border Region the great majority of cadres below hsien level had no educational background. Quoted in Selden, op. cit., p.146.
4 See the example of Hsiao Yuan in Chao Shu-li's novel, Li Yu-ts'ai pan-hua, pp.52-56.
5 'Cultural' education means basic education consisted mainly of literacy education and giving basic knowledge on China's history.
a lecture, "Oppose Party Formalism," and every participant was given a pamphlet, "Propaganda Guide," both of which were later included in the twenty-two rectification documents. On 11 February another editorial "Heighten the Cultural Standard of the Cadres" appeared in the Chieh-fang jih-pao. K'ang Sheng delivered two lectures to the cadres of the SKN Border Region on 21 February and 3 March which were also to be included in the twenty-two documents.¹ In February and March, the Chieh-fang jih-pao reported that the higher level Party organs and Party schools had undertaken discussions and investigations.

In April 1942, the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee issued a resolution² directing all Party organs to carry out a thorough study and discussion movement. The resolution named eighteen documents to be studied by every Party organ, as well as setting out the schedule of the campaign. Out of the eighteen documents, fifteen were written by leading figures of the CCP or were Central Committee resolutions, one was from Stalin's work on Bolshevisation of the party, one was the conclusion to the "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," and one was a pamphlet which consisted of quotations from two Chinese and two Russian works about propaganda. Among the fifteen Chinese documents, seven are listed under Mao's name, but most of the five Central Committee resolutions seem also to have been drafted by him.³ Another four are by Liu Shao-ch'i, Ch'en Yun and K'ang Sheng.⁴

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¹ These are not included in Cheng-feng wen-hsien, see CFJP, 24 February and 8 March 1942.
² Compton, op.cit., p.1-7. This was later called 'April 3 Resolution'.
³ One of these Central Committee resolutions, "On Methods of Leadership," was later included in Mao's Selected Works.
⁴ This reflected the relationship between the Chinese and Russian Communist Parties at this time. As symbolised by the attacks on Wang Ming in the rectification, practical experience in the Chinese revolution was becoming increasingly powerful in the CCP compared with Marxist-Leninist theory which was based on the experience of Europe. As to Wang in the rectification, see Compton, op.cit., pp.xxxvii–xxxix, and
April, four Russian works were added to the eighteen documents by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee.¹

It is interesting that the works of Mao and his Central Committee colleagues occupied the main body of the rectification documents, while the Russian works were given only supporting positions. This marks the final emergence of Mao as a 'Chinese Marxist', who stands on the reality of Chinese society and the practice or experience of the Chinese revolution, using Marxism-Leninism as a way of thinking and a method of revolutionary struggle.² In a sense, the rectification was a campaign to make the Chinese revolutionaries acquire this Marxist way of thinking and Marxist methods of revolutionary struggle and enable them to use them in the practice of the Chinese revolution. Mao states that the purpose of studying Marxism-Leninism is "to seek from this theory the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution," comparing the Chinese revolution and Marxist-Leninist theory to the target and the arrow.³ The twenty-two documents, therefore, provided the basis of the rectification objectives of seeking a Marxist-Leninist 'stand, viewpoint and method' and of utilising these in the Chinese revolution.

A significant fact is that Mao put more emphasis on dialectical materialism than on historical materialism, when he introduced Marxism

Footnote 4 cont'd

¹ Compton, op.cit., pp.7-8.
² Nomura Kōichi sees this point as a distinctive feature of Chinese communism. In Chinese communism, he points out, the emphasis is placed on materialist dialectics rather than historical materialism, on utilisation of a theory rather than construction of a theory. See Nomura, op.cit., pp.131-136.
³ "Reform Our Study," Mao, III, p.22; Compton, op.cit., p.66.
to his Party members. ¹ This helped him to 'Sinicise' Marxism, that is to say, to use Marxism as a tool, not a dogma, to promote the Chinese revolution. This is why it did not occur to Mao that nationalism could be incompatible with Marxism-Leninism. To Mao, all ways in which the Chinese revolution could be advanced were Marxist-Leninist. Nationalism was no exception. In other words, his first and main concern was with the revolution in China. When he saw in nationalism a great driving force of social revolution, Marxist dogma concerning 'proletarian internationalism' did not worry him.

The schedule of the rectification campaign is given in the April 3 Resolution. The first stage was to be devoted to study and discussion of the twenty-two documents and at the end of this period an examination was to be held. This stage was to take three months from 20 April for ordinary Party units, and two months for schools. The second stage, for which no time limit was given, was to involve investigation of Party work by the 'investigation committee' elected within the individual units and schools. The third and final stage was for summarising the study and discussion and for making reports, which were directed to improve the work of the individual units and schools. The reports were to be submitted to the higher Party organs.²

There are two points which should not be overlooked in the April 3 Resolution. The first is that non-Communist cadres could be included in the discussion and investigation, and although they were not coerced, in practice all non-Communist cadres joined the campaign.³ The campaign was not limited, therefore, to reeducation of Party members only, but

¹ See, for example, "On Practice" and "On Contradiction," Mao, I, pp. 311-346.
² Compton, op.cit., pp.3 & 8.
³ Ibid., pp.5; CFP, 1 June 1942.
extended to all cadres in the administrative and military organs. The campaign was carried out by the Party branches in the political, military, economic, educational and mass organisations, in conjunction with the 'better troops and simpler administration' campaign. In addition to political indoctrination, an important part of the campaign was the professional training of in-service cadres.

The second point is that 'incorrect' opinions and minority groups were not to be oppressed in the discussion and investigation, and all opinions were to be included in the final reports to the higher Party organs. This was intended to provide a means by which the opinions of minority groups could be communicated to the higher organs, right up to the Central Committee if necessary. Boyd Compton writes:

The object of Cheng Feng was not physical control of the Party's members. Its purpose was the type of intensive indoctrination and training which would allow the Party to operate with unanimity in a situation when close administrative control and inspection were out of question.

The campaign aimed not only at ideological rectification of the Party members but also at professional and technical improvement. The Central Committee Resolution on the Education of Cadres in Service stresses this point. It urges 'cultural education', meaning the provision of a knowledge of characters and of elementary education, especially among "most of our Party's cadres of worker and peasant origin." At the beginning of April 1942, supplementary schools for in-service cadres were set up in the SKN Border Region for 'cultural' and professional

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1 The Central Committee Resolution on Education of In-service Cadres starts with the following statement: "Under present conditions, the task of cadre education should occupy first place in the general educational program, and in the task of cadre education, priority should be given to the task of cadres in service." Compton, op.cit., p.80.
2 Compton, op.cit., p.xxxvi.
3 Ibid., p.81.
training. Improvement of efficiency in every office and army unit was necessitated by the reduction in the number of cadres during the 'better troops and simpler administration' campaign.

A variety of methods was adopted to carry out the study campaign, which concerned particularly the twenty-two documents, in April and May. In June, in meetings held to review the experiences of the previous two months, the Party found that it had been unsuccessful. It seems that it was in June that the Party determined to go through a prolonged rectification campaign, by setting up a hierarchy of study committees under the newly established Central Study Control Committee which had Mao Tse-tung as its chairman. The second phase of study was characterised by self-examination, in accordance with the twenty-two documents. In the three months of June, July and August, numerous meetings for self-investigation and self-improvement were held. The significance of criticism and self-criticism meetings is, as Richard Solomon has pointed out, in making a psychological breakthrough, in enabling cadres to 'liberate' themselves from the 'face' culture in Chinese tradition. Fear of losing face had to be eradicated if the cadres were to establish close links with the masses and mobilise

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1 The most common method in April was to send investigation teams from higher organs to lower levels to investigate cadres' work and work style. In May, group reading and discussion of the twenty-two documents was most common. See editorial, "I-ting yao hsüeh-hsi erh-shih-erh ke wen-chien" (We Must Study the Twenty-two Documents), CFJP, 5 May 1942.

2 "Yenan i-ke-yüeh hsüeh-hsi yün-tung tsung-chieh" (Summary of One Month Study Movement in Yenan), editorial, CFJP, 5 June 1942.

3 Ibid.

4 The Chieh-fang jih-pao states in its editorial entitled "We Must Investigate Ourselves" on 23 May 1942: "Unless we investigate ourselves seriously, and put the spirit of the documents sincerely and correctly into practice, the documents are in danger of becoming a dogma."

them. Solomon analyses this as follows:

In the context of the general notion of the "mass line" approach to leadership, the Party institutionalized the technique of group "criticism-self-criticism," by which traditional attitudes towards the use of authority were to be overcome: the mandarin posture of stern aloofness and arrogance towards the lao pai hsing which had helped to maintain the political passivity of China's peasants was to be abandoned in favour of direct and active communication and social contact with those whose support was seen as necessary to the success of a mass political-military movement.¹

Criticism and self-criticism was a technique by which the CCP mobilised the cadres' political activism through generalising their personal problems in study and work. This corresponded to the method known as the 'speaking bitterness' meeting used in mass psychological mobilisation, which socialised the personal experiences of the oppressed to mobilise their resentment and hatred of the oppressors and develop these feelings into a political force which could change the social system.

The fact that all administrative organisations and schools spent half a day for study and self-criticism meetings² indicates how firmly resolved the Party was that its members should carry out this movement.

It is reported that on the first day of the Yenan Literature Forum in May 1942, when he received the news that KMT troops were about to attack Yenan, Mao said: "I will stay in the mountains with cadres and continue the rectification there, if Yenan falls; we must by all means and under all circumstances go through with the rectification."³ To Mao, the fate

¹ Ibid., p.88.
² After May 1942, when the Central Committee recognised the necessity of extension of study period, many organisations increased time for study and meetings.
of Yenan, the capital of the Communist state of China, could not be
compared to the rectification, on which to him the future of the Chinese
revolution depended.

In September, with the Central Committee Resolution of the first of
that month on the Unification of Leadership in the Anti-Japanese War
bases, 1 the emphasis shifted to rectification of the style of the Party's
internal-external relations. The Central Committee now recognised that
the Party had reached the stage where it should establish good relations
with non-Party people, as well as tightening Party discipline, on the
basis of the study and discussion which had gone on in the preceding
half year. In this stage, the Party sought to secure its leadership
among the masses, a task which was approached from two directions. One
was that Party members had to win acceptance as the masses' own leaders,
through outstanding activism and modesty in the mass movements. The
other was that the Party sought to recruit to its own ranks activists
from among the masses. Mao repeated in an article entitled "Some
Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership," written in June 1943, that
a leading group which was closely linked with the masses could be formed
only gradually in the process of a movement, or struggle. He continued:

In the process of a great struggle, the composition of the leading
group in most cases should not and cannot remain entirely unchanged
throughout the initial, middle and final stages; the activists who
come forward in the course of struggle must constantly be promoted
to replace those original members of the leading group who are
inferior by comparison or who have degenerated.

Note, the aspects of the drive to secure Party leadership, the intra-
Party campaign to bring Party members close to the masses and the
recruitment of activists, came together, in the process of struggle to

1 For the text, see Compton, op.cit., pp.161-175.
2 Mao, III, p.181.
overcome the political passivity of the masses and bureaucratic attitudes of party cadres, at that point where mass mobilisation was occurring.

Illustrating Mao's concept of the mass movement was the shift in emphasis in the CCP's policy from rectification to production at the end of 1942, which was an indication of the Central Committee's intention to make use of a 'great struggle', both for further rectification of Party cadres and for generation of the masses' activism in the course of improving their own livelihood.

Reviewing the campaign in "Our Study and the Current Situation" in April 1944, Mao said that "the rectification movement and the development of production have yielded results of a fundamental nature, thereby making our Party invincible both ideologically and materially." The success of the series of policies and movements carried out in the same period - the three-third system, rent and interest reduction, better troops and simpler administration, unified leadership, and the development of production - owed much to the rectification campaign, which guaranteed a high efficiency and morale among the Party members who assumed leadership of the basic units in the movements. The mass movements in turn, helped revitalise the Party at the basic level.

One of the major ideas put forward in the rectification documents concerns the responsibility of the vanguard party. As far as the CCP was concerned, responsibility consisted of two aspects: one is self-control, self-education or ethical stoicism, and the other is leadership or responsibility to other people or organisations. The Central Committee Resolution on the Unification of Leadership in the Anti-Japanese War Bases states: "The Party is the vanguard of the proletariat and the highest form of proletarian organisation; it should lead all other

1 Ibid., p.169.
organisations whether military, governmental, or mass.\textsuperscript{1} Leadership does not necessarily mean control or domination but means, according to Mao, "the Party's correct policy and the example we set by our own work to convince and educate people outside the Party so that they willingly accept our proposals."\textsuperscript{2} This was applied to the leadership of the army, and also to the higher organs within the Party. The Central Committee required the cadres at higher levels to undertake more study and more work, and it delegated more responsibility to senior cadres than it did to the lower levels and junior cadres.

A significant point about Party organisation in this period is the fact that the Party was the only centralised political organisation in North China, whereas the Communists' government organisation was decentralised and lacked any form of central government. In fact, the Party was the link between the border region governments, and it assumed the role and the policy-making functions of a \textit{de facto} central government for all governments throughout Communist territory. As a highly centralised organisation of the best elements in the base areas, the Party was willing to share power and responsibility with non-Party people in the administration and the mass organisation, securing its own leadership. Party linkage between the base areas served to spread better methods and techniques of mass mobilisation and new policy implementation, because Party members at the basic level of society carried the task of radical mobilisation of the non-Party masses.

Another important point which deserves more attention is the fact that the Party was built as a vanguard of the proletariat by intense political education and thought reform. For Mao, the decisive factor in

\textsuperscript{1} Compton, op.cit., p.162.
\textsuperscript{2} Mao, II, p.418.
determining a person's class affiliation is not so much the family one is born into, but the kind of 'thought' one holds. A person can, therefore, be transferred from one class to another by individual efforts to acquire new 'thought' and new behaviour. Thus, through thought reform it is possible to create people of one class from people of other classes. The rectification was an intensive phase of the CCP's attempt to transform the best elements of the petty-bourgeoisie, that is the activists of peasant and intellectual origin, into a proletariat, the vanguard of the revolution, by providing them with discipline and a consciousness of their historical mission.¹

In the rural situation, where there was an almost complete absence of any proletariat, the Party was not only the vanguard of the proletariat but often assumed, like the army, the role or character of the proletariat itself. When Party documents refer to the leadership of the proletariat, they often mean the leadership of the CCP. It must be remembered, however, that this 'proletariat' included many members who were not politically motivated. As Liu Shao-ch'i pointed out, there were members who had joined the Party because "they have not found their way in society - they have no profession, no work, no education, or they want to get rid of their families or wives," or "because they wish to rely on the Party to escape taxation or be certain of 'something to eat' in the future."²

Against the background of China's history, an organisation which served primarily the interests of the proletariat, and the liberation of the nation and mankind, rather than the interests of its members, was entirely new. It was natural, therefore, that many Party members understood the CCP and the revolution only in the context of their individual experience and knowledge, in which there was little place for such

¹ Cf. Selden, op.cit., p.196. See also his excellent analysis of the rectification campaign, pp.188-207.
concepts as placing the highest value on the people, the masses, mankind or the public. From such basic raw material the Party had to create the vanguard of the proletariat, which "should possess all of the greatest and highest human virtue,"¹ to assume leadership in the Chinese revolution. Political education was essential, therefore, for the Party to maintain the qualities necessary for the vanguard of the Chinese revolution.

The Party, and its army, ruled with an intense consciousness of a revolutionary mission and with ethical self-control. The latter was produced through political education and training during the mass campaigns. Another condition which enabled the CCP to control the vast territory of North China was that it had no rival with as well-defined a programme and political strategy, well-trained and active political and military leaders at the basic level, rigid organisation and particularly mass support. But the Party could not exercise its rule without a government administration and mass organisations, which were constructed at the local level and on a united front basis. The Party's prestige and mass support were won through the participation of its own members in these two institutions, which provided the Communists with opportunities to demonstrate to the non-Communist cadres and the masses how capable, hard-working and modest they were. The government administration and the mass organisation were different in nature from the Party and its army.

¹ Ibid., p.113.
CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN NORTH CHINA

PART II: THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE MASS ORGANISATIONS

The two highly disciplined and rigidly controlled institutions in the Communist government system, on which the CCP placed the vanguard role of the Chinese revolution, present a contrast to the less disciplined, less rigid and local institutions, the government administration and the mass organisations. These were organised on the basis of the multi-class united front and functioned with the primary purpose of resistance to Japan. They were essential and integral parts of the Communist government system, and through them the CCP was able to link itself with the broad mass of the people and to put its policies into practice.

Due to their local nature, and the fact that they provided a more permanent presence than the army and to some extent also the Party, the administration and the mass organisations were rooted more deeply amongst the local inhabitants. They were the organisational means by which the daily life of the local people was linked to the resistance war. In practice, the CCP had to depend very much on these two institutions in its task of mobilising the people for war and revolution. They also enabled the Party to develop close contact with non-Party people and to involve them in the Communist political process.

1. The Administration

From 1937, when it agreed to collaborate with the KMT, until the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, the CCP never claimed that its government represented the entire Chinese nation. In a sense, the local governments it controlled were legally under the
Central Government of the KMT; and the Communists themselves insisted that, on the basis of the KMT agreement, the SKN and Chin-Ch'a-Chi border Region governments were Special Region Governments of the KMT Central administration. They established local governments from the basic level upward: that is, village governments came first and when there were a certain number of village administrations in one area the CCP established a district (ch'ü) government and then a hsien administration. The highest-level governments in the Communist territories were border region governments, which corresponded to the provincial administration under the Central Government.

Under the system of KMT tutelage, neither the province nor the hsien had the right of self-government, whereas the township (hsiang or chên) office was supposed to be elected by a township assembly consisting of two representatives from each pao head was elected by the pao assembly and the chia chief was elected by the family heads of each chia. The pao-chia system, which had been a Ch'ing local security control system, was revived by Chiang Kai-shek in the former Communist areas in South China after the KMT extermination campaign against the CCP succeeded, and in 1939 extended to the whole of China under its control. This was manipulated to encourage peasants to spy on each other, by the threat of arrest of the whole chia or pao if one Communist was discovered among its members. The Kuomintang's adoption of this guilt-by-association system indicates its resolution.

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In August 1937 when the KMT-CCP agreement for the united front was reached, the SKN Border Region government was approved by the Central Government as a local government under its jurisdiction. The Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region was similarly recognised after its inauguration in January 1938. See George Taylor, _The Struggle for North China_ (New York: 1940), p.35. After the war, the Communist-established local governments became one of the two main issues in the KMT-CCP negotiations. See Note 1, "On Chungking Negotiations," _Mao_, IV, pp.60-63.
to eliminate all Communists, even if 100 innocent peasants had to be
imprisoned for the guilt of one.

When the war began in 1937, local government control was not
uniform throughout the country. "In some parts of the country
where recalcitrant militarists of the old order were in power, the
central government could do little to enforce its will," though the
'centralised area' was expended year by year. In the 'centralised
area' the Central Government exercised control over the local
governments through the appointment of personnel. Its orders and
ordinances, and local KMT organisations were quite effective, as
far as central control was concerned. In terms of administrative
reform and the rent reduction program, however, the KMT government
was far from efficient.

The war interrupted the trend towards administrative central-
isation. Most high officials of the local governments in North China
abandoned their offices and fled to the south. The Communists then
moved in and replaced them. The CCP took the various local anti-
Japanese organisations as the nuclei of the local administration.
This method gave the Communists a twofold advantage, in addition to
economising on the use of their own personnel. Firstly, the native
administration was more acceptable to, and effective among the local
people; and secondly, the CCP was able to win new members and sym-
pathisers from among the local people through the non-Communist

1 Chien Tuan-sheng, "Wartime Local Government in China," *Pacific
Affairs, Vol. XVI, No. 4, December 1943, p. 445. This article
(pp. 441-460) examines the whole system of local government under the KMT.
2 Ibid., p. 446.
3 For the origin of the Communist base areas, see Johnson, op. cit.,
pp. 92-122.
administration. Since they were distinct from the army, which belonged to the Party, local governments in the Communist territory were, at least in theory, completely separate from the CCP.

The System of Government Administration

The government was divided into two parts: the assembly (ts'an-i-hui) and the government (chêng-fu), which were legislative and administrative departments respectively. The judicial department was supposed to be independent and was nominally under the direct jurisdiction of the Nationalists' Supreme Court. However, the president of the higher court was elected by the border region assembly and its staff were appointed by the government; and below the hsien level, the judicial department was practically a part of the administrative department. The three departments made up the 'government' in its broadest sense, and the word chêng-fu in Communist documents often means all three departments as integral parts of the government.

The assembly was based on the Provisional Assemblies of the Provinces and Municipalities Organisation Act produced by the KMT government in 1938. At the same time the National Government ordered each provincial government to enforce the regulations for the establishment of provisional hsien assemblies. The CCP made use of these KMT legislative measures for its own purposes. The provincial or border region assembly was elected by the residents in the

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1 See the section below on the judicial system. For the judicial system in the SKN and Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Regions in this period, see Leng Shao-chuan's "Pre-1949 Development of the Communist Chinese System of Justice," China Quarterly, No.30 (April-June 1967), pp.101-108.

2 Under the KMT law the assembly was not able to assume more than a consultative function, nor were the members elected by the people. Fukushima Masao, Chugoku no Jimin Minshu Seiken (People's Democratic Power in China), (Tokyo: 1965), pp.174-176 & 264-265.
province or border region above the age of eighteen, and was given similar powers as legislatures in western parliamentary systems.

There were assemblies at three levels, the border region, the hsien, and the township (hsiang or chen). The function of the assembly of the border region and the hsien was approximately the same: to elect members of the administrative body and decide all important matters within the area.

Figures for the kind of people who became assembly members by popular election are available only for a few cases below hsien level. The following are the results of the village election in 1941 at 55 administrative villages in 11 hsien in northwest Shansi.

1. Administrative village chairmen and assembly members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landlords &amp; rich peasants</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle peasants</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor peasants &amp; farm workers</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Natural village headmen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landlords &amp; rich peasants</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle peasants</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor peasants</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Article 2 and 3, Regulations for Election of the SKN Border Region, 1939, Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch’ü ts’an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.53.


3 Article 6, Regulations for Organisation of the Assemblies of All Levels of the SKN Border Region, 1939, and Article 7, same, 1941. The size of a hsiang at that time varied, from less than 500 to more than 2,000 in population. There were cases, despite the Regulations for Organisation of the Assemblies, in which the assembly was at district level, depending on local military and political conditions.

4 Articles 10 & 11, Regulations for Organisation of the Assemblies of All Levels of the SKN Border Region, 1939.

5 K'ang-Jih chan-cheng shih-ch'i ti chieh-fang ch'ü kai-k’uang, p.104.
Significantly, these figures indicate that the CCP ensured that the poor and middle peasants secured a majority in the village political power organisation in the first three years of the war. This was so in northwest Shansi and presumably also in all other Communist bases. Ch'i Wu, for example, gives figures for class composition in the village administration in T'aihang Region in 1942, which shows a roughly 20:40:40 ratio for landlords-rich peasants: middle peasants: poor peasants-farm workers. The proportion in the category of landlord-rich-peasant was, however, much greater than that in the SKN Border Region, where 'landlord-rich peasant' occupied no more than 7 percent of the assembly seats below hsien level. These figures do not show what proportion was occupied by Party members, but it can be assumed from the later 'three-thirds' (san-san-chih) policy that more than one third, or approximately one half of the assembly and the administrative committee members were Communists. Source material on the class composition of Party membership at each level is not

1 Ch'i Wu, op. cit., p.95.
2 Lin Po-ch'ü's report in 1939 on the local election in 1937. The result of the 1946 election of the SKN Border Region Assembly was reported by Li Ting-ming as follows: 6 workers, 18 poor peasants, 69 middle peasants, 26 rich peasants, 9 merchants, 34 landlords and 8 others were elected for 170 seats. In comparison with the figures given by Lin, the proportion of rich peasants and landlords is remarkably high. The change of class structure through rent reduction and the production drive in early 1940s might be one explanation for the increase in the number of rich peasants. Another explanation is that the rich peasants and landlords were educated people who were necessary for the higher level government. Li's report is in Shen-Kan-Wing pien-chü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, pp.296-303.
3 The three-thirds system was put into practice after the 1941 election, at least at border region level in SKN. Japanese sources do not deny the existence of assemblies whose members were elected by the people in the Communist areas, although they are suspicious about the purpose of the CCP in establishing a 'democratic' system. See, for example, Dai-Tsao-shō Sōmu-kyoku, ChuKyo Gaishetsu (Outline of the Chinese Communist Party), (Tokyo: 1944), pp.51-55; Tada Corps, op. cit., pp.233 & 244.
available, but it appears that at lower levels Party members were mainly poor and middle peasants, whereas at higher levels the majority were educated people from elite backgrounds. For this reason, the proportion of Party members in assembly and government seats was not necessarily smaller at higher levels than that at lower levels, even though the proportion from the richer class was greater.

Basic Administration

The basic administration, the hsiang and the natural village, played a most important role among all branches of government in political mobilisation of the people, in close connection with the mass organisations. The Communists were sufficiently practical to create a hsiang assembly system different from that of the higher level assemblies, in that it was also given the functions of the administration.¹ In the Chin-Ch’a-Chi and the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Regions there were respectively village meetings and villagers' representative councils instead of village assemblies. For all three types the villagers were organised into small residents' group of from 15 to 60 people, which elected representatives to the assembly or the representative council. According to Hsieh Chüeh-tsai, then Vice Chairman of the SKN Border Region Assembly, the assembly member elected by the residents' group should also be the leader of that group; that is, he should lead the group members in carrying out the policy decided by the assembly, and the group members should express their opinions to him as their representative. If the elected representative did not act properly he could be recalled. When the people felt that their interests were properly represented by him they

¹ The natural village usually had villagers meetings instead of assemblies.
would come to believe that elections were important.\footnote{"Hsiang-shih ts'an-i-hui tsen-yang kung-tso" (How the Village or Town Assembly Works), Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'i'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.189.}

The system was well designed to involve all people in the political process in the village. Small residents groups were more easily convened to discuss village matters and directives from higher levels in the administration than were the meetings of the whole hsiang which had been held occasionally before 1937. The leader, or the representative, was closer to villagers by virtue of being elected by the small group. The villagers were actively involved in village politics. And most significant, the peasants were required to communicate not only with the village government but also with their fellow peasants. This was essential if they were to be to be politicised and mobilised; the first step in political involvement was for the peasants to regard themselves as part of the whole society and to know where they stood in relation to the society. Through the CCP's system of government at the basic level, the villagers now had to confront and communicate with the larger world outside the family circle.

The executive body of the hsiang administration was the hsiang office (hsiăng-kang-so) or government (hsiăng-cheng-fu) which was composed of a headman (hsiăng-ch'ang) and several council members. The headman was elected by the assembly and was also the chairman of the legislative body. The hsien government could veto the election of the village headman and council members, and was able to exploit this power to remove the influence of the landlords and gentry from the village administration. As election campaigns provided an opportunity for the CCP to educate and indoctrinate the villagers, short terms of office for the village headman and assembly members,
usually one year, as well as the veto of the hsien government, were necessary to the success of the Communist political system. ¹
The function of the election campaign is discussed below.

There were several committees in the hsiang office, both permanent and temporary. Permanent committees included those for education, construction, security, hygiene, grain control and conciliation, while the temporary committees were for such matters as spring ploughing, irrigation and autumn harvest. ² The hsiang did not have to follow strictly the organisation regulations of the township government, and since the system combined political, economic and military functions, Communist regulations on township administrative organisation were flexible and varied from place to place. The hsiang government was encouraged to absorb skilful villagers into the committees and make them propagandists for the hsiang administration; this practice served both to create political leaders and to bring the administration close to the masses. ³

As a rule, all hsiang government staff were part-time and honorary, except for the headman and the secretary. ⁴ This followed the practice of the traditional village administration in which even the headman was not paid. In making the above two positions full-time and paid, the CCP wanted to ensure that poor villagers could take the headmanship, and

¹ The terms of office of the elected members of the Communist government were generally short: assembly members were elected every year for the border region and the hsien, and every half year for the village. The administrative heads were elected every one or two years for the border region and the hsien, and every year for the village.
² Articles 12 and 13, Regulations on Organisation of the Township Government of the SKN Border Region; Article 7, Regulations on Organisation of the Village Government of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region, Tada Corps, op.cit., p.264.
³ Hsieh Chüeh-tsai, op.cit., p.181.
⁴ Sometimes the hsiang was able to have full-time vice headmen and military leaders.
to give more responsibility and power to the headman and the village administration than had existed before. Part-time and unpaid administration, however, also had its own significance for the CCP and was more than simply a question of following the traditional practice in the villages. It could be utilised as one means of working towards the communist ideal of abolishing the bureaucracy, or for eliminating the distinction between the government and the people. The CCP actually attempted later in the Cultural Revolution to make local governments part-time and unpaid.

In the base areas the *hsiang* headman was concurrently commander of the militia squad, whose deputy commander and political leader were both also full-time. After the elimination of the landlords and local gentry from the *hsiang* administration, the CCP apparently suffered from a shortage of clerical workers for village offices, and to overcome this, it stressed that use should be made of primary school teachers for secretarial work for the office and the assembly. The supreme power in the *hsiang* seems to have been with the headman, but as in the traditional village administration he shared power with the committee members; decision-making involved the committee and the headman was expected to carry out the decisions jointly made.

Below the *hsiang* level, the administrative village (*hsing-cheng ts'un*) in SKN had an office, run by a *ts'un* chairman (*chu-jen*) and a vice chairman who were elected by mass meetings in the village. In

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1 Article 6, Regulations on Organisation of the Village Government of the Chin-Ch' a-Chi Border Region.
2 Hsieh Chüeh-ts'ai, op.cit., p.184. The part played by school teachers in the Chinese resistance to Japan was significant. Jack Belden found in 1947 that almost all the fifteen or twenty *hsien* magistrates he met had been school teachers before the war with Japan. Belden, op.cit., p.72.
3 Article 10, Regulations on Organisation of the Township Government of the SKN Border Region.
other base areas no administrative village existed and the natural village was directly under the hsiang. The work of the natural village (ts'un) office was similar to that of the hsiang office and was managed by a small staff who were representatives of the mass organisations (in Shantung) or of residential areas (in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi). The term of office of the ts'un chairman and vice chairman was half a year in the SKN and one year in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region. In the SKN Border Region, the natural village was under the administrative village and had also a village head (ts'un-ch'ang) elected by mass meeting.

Two points about the basic administration system of the Communist government should be stressed. One is that all village office-holders in the administration were elected by the villagers in one way or another. The effect on village politics, especially on the majority who previously had been virtually ignored, was profound. The other is that the Communist administration penetrated right down to the natural village, and the Party ensured that its influence persisted at this level, by exploiting the power of vetoing the appointment of the hsiang headman, the ts'un chairman and the hsiang council members, and by frequent elections. For the first time in Chinese history, a government attempted to extend its political control to become closely involved in the natural village.

Another point of interest lies in the CCP's use of educated manpower. As Mark Selden has pointed out, the acute shortage of educated

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1 Article 2, Regulations on Organisation of the Ts'un Office of Shantung Province, Tada Corps, op.cit., p.267. In the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region the village representatives meeting elected the ts'un chairman. Article 2, Regulations on Organisation of the ts'un Office of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region, Tada Corps, op.cit., p.266.
2 Article 10, Regulations on Organisation of Township Government of the SKN Border Region.
3 Chou Erh-fu, Chin-Ch'a-Chi hsing (Travel to the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region), (n.p.: 1946) pp.51-55.
4 Article 10, Regulations on Organisation of Township Government of the SKN Border Region.
manpower in rural China made it imperative for the CCP to make use of the landlord-gentry in its administration, particularly in the period between 1937 and 1941.\(^1\) Apparently, however, these people were needed more by the higher level administration than by the villagers, and as a result and also because of the CCP's careful attention to the elimination of landlord power in the village, the traditional elite was virtually removed from village politics.\(^2\) After the elimination of the native gentry, the village government lacked educated staff, and was encouraged to appoint the village primary school teacher to the position of secretary of the village office.

Elections

It is not difficult to imagine that there were formidable problems involved in campaigning and voting, although popular election of administrative positions was essential for the CCP to secure mass support. In election campaigns it was necessary first to explain the electoral system to the villagers before the actual campaign could commence. To this end, the government, the mass organisations and the Party first convened meetings to discuss methods of propaganda, and organised propaganda teams to be trained and sent among the peasantry. The mass organisations assumed the most important role in election campaigns, both because they were concerned with the question of who was to be elected to the administration, and also because in many cases they had their own quotas for assembly and council seats. In most Communist bases, all members of mass organisations, political parties, and if there were any present, members of the army, were eligible for

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1 Seldon, op.cit., pp.130-131, 169-224.
2 See Lin Po-ch'ü's report, quoted in ibid., p.146. In 1943, 90 percent of the district and hsiang cadres were poor peasants.
elections. In typical cases, after one week of campaigning, the mass organisations would call a meeting of all voters in the village, at which the candidates would give their final speeches, and the voters would criticise the existing government and the platforms of the candidates.¹

The actual process of voting presented certain problems, because the overwhelming majority of the voters was illiterate, and because the Election Regulations adopted the principle of the secret ballot.² The voting method had to be simple and clear enough to convince the villagers that the election was carried out properly. The stipulation of the secret ballot was, in many cases, rather nominal, and the simple method of raising hands at the village election meetings was apparently widely practiced, particularly at the natural village level.³ When the secret ballot principle was observed, the use of 'bean and bowl' seems to have been extensive in many of the regions, although concrete methods of voting were not laid down in the laws.⁴

In effect, the election was a mass campaign, which involved the whole population of each village. The reasoning behind the CCP's approach to elections was that if the peasantry had once experienced self-government, and if this was supported by the economic benefits of rent reduction and progressive taxation, they would probably resist

¹ For the role of the mass organisations, the Party and the army in the elections, see Strong, op.cit., pp.93-96. Many news items in the Chieh-fang jih-pao report that the mass organisations, the Party and the army were playing an active role in the elections. For example, 16 June 1941 for the Youths National Salvation Association, 3 July 1942 for the army, 24 May 1941 for the Women's National Salvation Association, 9 July 1942 for the Party, and for the propaganda team training, 11 August 1941 and 26 July 1942. There are numerous reports on election meetings, e.g., Harrison Forman, Report from Red China, (New York: 1945), pp.98-99; Chou Erh-fu, op.cit., pp.51-55; Hai Yen, "Hsüan-min hui shang," (At the Voters' Meeting), CFJP, 23 June 1942.

² Article 2, Regulations for Election of the SKN Border Region.

³ Selden, op.cit., p.134.

⁴ Strong, op.cit., p.91. This and other methods of voting are described in Jack Belden, op.cit., pp.85-86.
the revival of the old system of government. ¹ Mark Selden states in
relation to election in the SKN Border Region in late 1937:

If the land revolution had destroyed significant
elements of the old order, the election movement
was a step toward the integration of a new polity
and a new community. In it the Communists sought
both to harmonize broad elements of the population,
including the former elite, and to establish new
channels of legitimate power to insure the economic
and political gains of the revolution.²

This is why the election campaign was as important as the voting itself.
The party found opportunities in the campaign to educate the villagers
for participation in its political programme.

The election meeting also provided the villagers with an
opportunity to criticise the government openly,³ which made it easier
for them to overcome their fear of government. The whole process of
the election campaign and voting was designed to achieve the ultimate
goal of political participation of the whole population in the new
system. Hence, for the CCP the election was a very important mass
movement.⁴

¹ In the period of tutelage, the KMT did not recognise that the
people were ready to carry out local self-government. On the KMT
local government system, see Chien Tuan-sheng’s article cited above,
and Fukushima, op.cit., pp.260-273. In 1944, Teng Fa, then head of the
Mass Movement Committee of the CCP Central Committee, told Israel
Epstein, "'[I]f the people take a single step forward by their own
efforts and organization, they are there to stay. Even if an enemy
cancels their gains with fire and sword, he can't kill the memory
and they'll try again when they have a chance." Epstein, The
² Selden, op.cit., p.128.
³ Chou Erh-fu, op.cit. Li Ting-ming said in his report to the Third
Assembly of the SKN Border Region in 1946 that one of the most
important tasks in the election was to investigate whether the govern-
ment had been working properly.
⁴ Cf. Selden’s analysis of the election in the SKN Border Region
In order to secure dominance by the poorer people, the CCP adopted a quota system for the seats in the government in the greater part of the base areas. According to Article 7 of the Regulations for Election of the Assemblies of All Levels of Lin-i Hsien in Shantung, the groups and their quotas in the assemblies were as follows:

1. At least 12 percent for trade unions.
2. At least 20 percent for the peasants national salvation association.
3. At least 10 percent for the youths national salvation association.
4. At least 15 percent for the women's national salvation association.
5. At least 13 percent for the intellectuals and anti-Japanese gentry.
6. At least 12 percent for the local guerrillas, self-defence corps and other military groups.
7. The remaining 18 percent should be won by free competition.1

These figures indicate that about 80 percent of the assembly seats were reserved for those who were poor, active and loyal, even if some elements of the intelligentsia and gentry might oppose the CCP. Items 1 to 6 above were minimum quotas and the remaining 18 percent could be taken possibly as nil in case the six groups of from items 1 to 6 up by representatives of the first six categories.

The quota system had the advantage of consolidating the mass organisation and of linking them closely to the government administration, as well as ensuring that the anti-Japanese elements remained in control. As Chou Erh-fu relates, these groups held meetings to decide platforms and candidates before election meetings for the whole village.

Although the CCP was concerned with securing the peasants' rule in the government, it was also ready to share power with the privileged elements for the sake of the united front. The three-thirds system (san-san chih) was a peculiar 'self-restriction' policy of the CCP in the Yanan period.

The Three-thirds System (san-san chih)

Until the establishment of the North China People's Government in 1948, there was no integrated Communist government in North China owing to the war and poor communications. Each border region government was organisationally isolated from the other and the link between them was the Communist Party and the army. Party members were usually leading members of the mass organisations and local governments because they were the most active elements among the anti-Japanese forces, and the border regions were protected by the Communist army. One of the roles given to the administration was to keep the broadest possible strata on the Communist side by maintaining the united front. The government administration was the main institution of the Communist system which could absorb the political demands of all strata.

The CCP had a clear idea of what kind of people should be in the government administration. Although the three-thirds system was propagated by the CCP as a great effort of self-restriction and as indicating a willingness to cooperate with non-Party people, one of the most important objects of the three-thirds policy was the party's desire to enlist non-Party people, mainly from elite backgrounds, into the administration. The Party first called for this policy just after the bloody rift between the Communist-influenced Shansi Sacrifice League and the New Army and the old Shansi Army of Yen Hsi-shan the so-called West Shansi Incident, or as the CCP later called it, the first tide of the KMT anti-Communist offensive.
The three-thirds system was launched by Mao Tse-tung in a circular of the Central Committee in May 1940:

In accordance with the united front principle concerning the organs of political power, the allocation of places should be one-third for Communists, one-third for non-Party left progressives, and one-third for the intermediate sections who are neither left nor right....

The non-Party progressives must be allocated one-third of the places because they are linked with the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie. This will be of tremendous importance in winning the latter over.

Our aim in allocating one-third of the places to the intermediate sections is to win over the middle bourgeoisie and the enlightened gentry. Winning over these sections is an important step in isolating the die-hards.1

As Lyman Van Slyke argues, this policy did not mean that the CCP's intention was to relinquish its political leadership in the government, "but rather to make that leadership more acceptable."2 Mao writes in the above circular:

We must make sure that the Communists play the leading role in the organs of political power, and therefore the Party members who occupy one-third of the places must be of high calibre. This will be enough to ensure the Party's leadership without a larger representation. Leadership is neither a slogan to be shouted from morning till night nor an arrogant demand for obedience; it consists rather in using the Party's correct policies and the example we set by our own work to convince and educate people outside the Party so that they willingly accept our proposals.3

Since this was an inner-Party circular, Mao was presumably quite serious in proposing that his Party should give two-thirds of the

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1 Mao, II, p.418. This was apparently a by-product of the West Shansi Incident from November 1939 to February 1940. The three-thirds system was adopted by the Central Committee for the first assembly of Hopei and the election of the Hopei Administrative Council which began in February 1940.

2 Van Slyke, op.cit., p.144. This book has a full description of the three-thirds system, pp.142-153.

3 Mao, II, p.418.
positions in government to non-Party people. The vanguard organisation had to work harder and assume more responsibility than others. But the proportion of representation was almost a secondary concern so long as the Party recruited the best elements in society, and hence, Mao's emphasis on the quality of Party members.

The immediate purpose of the system was to consolidate the united front within the border regions, particularly in the face of the 'anti-Communist high tide' by Yen Hsi-shan and the KMT. The three-thirds policy was aimed at winning over the 'middle-of-the-roaders' in the Communist-governed areas; those who were willing to resist Japan but not very happy with or indifferent to the CCP.

There is no doubt that the CCP was sincere in putting forward this policy, but the Party had difficulties in carrying it out, both in the old liberated areas and the newly occupied areas. In the old areas, most political activists and members of the governments had in fact already been recruited into the Party. In the new areas, the middle elements such as groups of national bourgeoisie, left-wing landlords and remnant troops of the warlords or the KMT, were reluctant to cooperate with the CCP, and in some cases even tried to take power from the Communists.1 The Central Committee incorporated the three-thirds principle into the Political Programme of the SKN

1 P'eng Teh-huai wrote in 1941 that the three-thirds system was implemented only where the CCP, the Eighth Route Army or the New Fourth Army was dominant; for the anti-Communist reactionaries would take over and destroy the solidarity of the united front, making use of the system where the Party and its Army were not powerful enough. "Democratic Politics and Organisational Form of the Three-thirds Government: Report of the Party School at the North Bureau of the Central Committee" (Japanese translation from Chinese), Tōa Kenkyūjo, ed., Sei-kan-Nei henku no seisaku to kinkō (Policies and Current Situation of the SKN Border Region), (Tokyo: 1942), p.68.
Border Region, adopted in May 1941. Although the CCP made some efforts to implement the system in the election of 1941, in the old areas in the Border Region, Party members still occupied from 40 to 50 percent of the assembly members at all levels. In the new areas communists came closer to one-third of the assembly and government council members. Mac himself, in the circular, did not expect that every local government could enforce the policy rigorously:

The above figures for the allocation of places are not rigid quotas to be filled mechanically; they are in the nature of a rough proportion, which each locality must apply according to its specific circumstances. At the lowest level, the ratio may be somewhat modified to prevent the landlords and evil gentry from sneaking into the organs of political power. 2

Hsieh Chüeh-tsai excused the preponderance of party members in the old areas by saying that the system was not enforced by law, and if people wanted to elect Party members nothing could be done. 3

In 1942, however, the three-thirds system was taken up more positively and emphasised as an important policy of the CCP. The Chieh-fang jih-pao began to promote it in December 1941; 4 and in March 1942 this was repeated. To some extent, this was a part of the rectification campaign. The campaign aimed at 'rectifying sectarianism, subjectivism and Party jargon'; and the three-thirds system was both a method of rectifying Communist sectarianism in local government and

1 Shen-Kan-nung pien-ch'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.104.
2 Mao, II, p.419.
3 Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, pp.201-202. This article, "San-san chih ti li-lun yü shih-chi" (The Theory and Practice of the Three-thirds System), first appeared in the Chieh-fang-jih-pao 27 and 28 March 1942 and was later included in the book as appendix.
4 "Chia-ch'iang hsien-ch'ü hsing-cheng ling-tao" (Administrative Leadership in Chia-ch'iang Hsien), editorial, CFJP, 21 December 1941.
a consequence of this rectification. Together with the rectification campaign, the three-thirds system was of vital importance to the CCP in overcoming the difficulties of 1941 and 1942.

From the end of March 1942, where the number of Communists was more than one-third in hsien assemblies and governments, Communists began to resign and to be replaced by non-Communists. At the village assembly election of that year in SKN, the CCP was eager to implement the three-thirds system at the village level. Yet many articles and essays by leading Communist figures at that time indicated that there were doubts and fluctuations about the system among Party members. Some thought it was a 'temporary tactic', and tried to ensure that the non-Communist two-thirds were without any real competence. Others thought that the Communists would not be able to exercise leadership if they occupied only one-third. Mao had to emphasise repeatedly the Party's sincerity in introducing this system.

It seems that the Party failed to implement the three-thirds system particularly in the base areas behind the Japanese lines.

In his government report to the first assembly of the Central Shantung Subregion in July 1945, Administrative Chairman Ma reported that in the guerrilla areas it was hard to implement the system.

1 "Fan-tui cheng-ch'uan chien-shieh ti kuan-men chu-i" (We Oppose Sectarianism in Building Political Power), editorial CFJP, 29 December 1941.
4 Hsieh Chüeh-ts'ai states that in the new areas of SKN, the three-thirds system was well established. p.202.
because of the flux of the middle forces, and in the old liberated areas it was also difficult because most activists at all levels had become Party members. It is obvious that Communists occupied well over one-third of positions in most areas. In this report, for example, Communists occupied about 40 percent or more of positions in the local government in Central Shantung Subregion; the progressives comprised about 30 percent, and the middle forces less than 30 percent.¹ In spite of Mao's surmise that the Party could not easily muster even one-third in newly established local governments behind the enemy lines, the reverse was in fact the case. In the Wut'ai Region, for example, the elected representatives comprised at minimum 34 percent CCP members, and in some cases as many as 75 percent.² Van Slyke quotes another statistic in which 86 percent of village government members and 60 percent of the village headmen in T'ai Hsien in Kiangsu Province, were Communists.³

The expected benefits of the three-thirds system were achieved even though the system was not implemented rigorously. The Party impressed the middle elements with its fair and open attitude toward them, and with its willingness to share power with non-Party people. This helped to legitimise Communist government as representing the whole population. By sharing power with non-Party middle elements, the Communists obtained political training in working with all classes and parties fighting the common enemy. Moreover, in order to ensure

² P'eng Chen's report on Communist policies in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region, quoted in Van Slyke, op.cit., p.150.
³ Ibid.
Party leadership, it was essential that the Party members develop the spirit of hard work, active participation in the political process, and modesty toward the non-Party people. This point is stressed by Hsieh Chüeh-tsai. But the maintenance of Party leadership does not mean that the three-thirds policy was not effective in attracting the middle elements into government work.

It should be recognised, however, that the government in the Yenan period was not really a policy-making institution, but rather a policy-implementing institution. Even in the tasks of policy implementation, it was not the government which played the dominant role among the masses, but the mass organisations. The government, which was responsible both to the assembly and higher level government, assumed a secretarial role for the policy implementation.

The secretarial function was important; it worked as a means of liaison between the parts of the system. Jack Belden writes on the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü government:

The government did not have the controlling power in the Border Region. That was vested in an organisation known as the National Salvation Association, which controlled and mobilized the 'masses'. [There was a saying in the Border Region: 'The government has the right; the Salvation Association has the power.'][1]

'Simpler Administration'

Introduced at the same time as the three-thirds system was the 'better troops and simpler administration' campaign, which was more enthusiastically pursued because it was directly related to the question of Communist survival. This had originally been proposed

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1 Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'u ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chü, pp. 204-207.
2 Van Slyke, op.cit., pp. 140-152
3 Belden, op.cit., p. 80
by the non-Communist Vice Chairman of the SKN Border Region Government, Li Ting-ming, who put the idea personally to Mao and, with Mao's approval, raised it at the Border Region Assembly in November 1941. Li's intention was mainly to reduce the economic burden on the government and people in the SKN Border Region, in the face of the economic crisis caused by the KMT blockade and by drought. The CCP accepted the proposal for the same purpose, and the policy was first implemented at the top levels of the administration in the SKN Border Region in December 1941.

Although the economic difficulties provided the original impetus, there were other effects on border region politics of 'simpler administration'. As Selden points out, in the period from 1937-1941, the SKN Border Region built 'regular' administration, which followed the provincial government under the KMT; educated manpower was concentrated at the higher levels, vertical control of the government departments was strengthened, and the lower level administration tended to be ignored. A typical bureau-ratification of government was coming into the Communist areas. This does not seem to have been a phenomenon peculiar to SKN. As indicated by the reports on the 'simpler administration' campaign in the T'aihang Region, the other base areas were also building a 'regular' bureaucracy in this period.

Simplified administration was imperative not only for the expansion of revolution down to village level, and also for more efficient use of

1 See Gunther Stein's interview with Li Ting-ming in Stein, op.cit., pp.110-111.
2 According to Lin Po-ch'ü's report, the Border Region reduced the number of officials by 1,598 at all levels during five months from December 1941 to April 1942; 300 of them were transferred to lower level administration and the rest were sent for training or back to production. CEJP, 1 June 1942.
educated manpower at the middle and lower levels of the administration.

The simpler administration campaign also had its effect on the political education of cadres. As the three-thirds policy affected the political training of Party members, the simpler administration campaign required government cadres to transform their thinking. This transformation was more fundamental than in the case of the three-thirds system, because the political education involved in the simpler administration campaign required the elimination of the old value systems rooted in the minds of cadres, particularly among those who were of intellectual origin. The simpler administration was an important form of the rectification, in which the CCP pursued a new model of government administration, attempting to eradicate contempt for manual labour and manual labourers and old ideas of government administration on the 'regular' western model.

At the beginning of January 1942 the simpler administration campaign reached the hsien level, and the Communists called on every anti-Japanese base to implement the same policy. 1 It was this stage that the campaign became a part of the Party rectification campaign. It now involved the ideology of the cadres as well as problems of the economy.

Writing on the simpler administration campaign in September 1942, in an editorial in the Chien-fang jih-pao, Mao said:

But men's minds are liable to be fettered by circumstance and habit from which even revolutionaries cannot always escape.... When the weather changes, it becomes necessary to change one's clothing.... But owing to the force of habit people sometimes fail to make it at the proper turn and they fall ill. Present conditions in the base areas already require us to shed our winter garments and put on summer clothing so that we can move about nimbly to fight the enemy, but we are still heavily padded and weighed down, and quite unfit for combat.

1 Ch'i Wu, op.cit, p 97.
Jiao demanded that cadres think flexibly so as to adapt to the changed situation, reflecting one of the three slogans of the rectification, 'overcome subjectivism.'

The Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region was said to have made the best response to the Central Committee's call for simpler administration.\(^1\) The following generalised account of a campaign is based largely on a report in the Ch'ing-fang jih-pao on the complete process of the campaign in the T'aihang Region in the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region, with the addition of some information drawn from the campaign in SKN.

In the first campaign, up to April 1942, the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region reduced the number of officials to less than one percent of the number of residents, by simplifying the administrative system. Trained cadres were transferred to lower levels in order to rectify the top-heavy system of administration and improve efficiency at lower levels. The second campaign was launched in May, both in the SKN and the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Regions. The former sent work teams from the Border Region Government to lower levels to give more power to the hsien governments, while the latter reduced the number of officials in the upper two levels of government, the Border Region and the subregion, by two-thirds or three-quarters, and reorganised the whole administrative machine, particularly at lower levels.\(^3\)

In the second campaign from May 1942, the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region found that the main target of the Japanese pacification campaign was the natural village, while the local guerrilla headquarters and

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\(^1\) Ibid., p.99.
\(^2\) For the process of the campaign in the SKN Border Region, see Selden, op.cit., pp.212-216.
\(^3\) CFJP, 20 & 21 May, 4 June and 9 July 1942, and "T'aihang ch'ü san-tru chien-cheng tsung-chieh" 'Synopsis of the Three 'Simpler Administration' Campaigns in the T'aihang Region', CFJP, 7 May 1944.
administration were concentrated at the hsiang level. Once fighting broke out, therefore, natural villages lacked leaders, while the hsiang easily lost their supporting natural villages and became isolated. This was not only a problem of warfare but also of administration. Since all the cadres, military and administrative, were concentrated at the hsiang level, they became remote from the residents under their administration: meetings of the natural village residents were rarely convened; the problems and difficulties in natural villages could not be identified and solved quickly. During the second campaign, the hsiang government was simplified to an administrative council of several people, and was spread into natural villages which consisted of about 100 households.

This illustrates the problem of bureaucratisation during the first four years of the war. As with the traditional Chinese administration, so also had the Communists taken the hsiang as the basic unit of administration, to the relative neglect of the natural villages. The result was that the natural villages were vulnerable to the Japanese mopping-up campaigns, particularly since the Japanese attacked natural villages with the purpose of completely eliminating the villages themselves. Although the Chish-fang jih-pao does not admit the fact, it may be assumed that the Communists failed in many cases to mobilise the masses in natural villages in the face of the Japanese attacks. Effective penetration of the Communist administration into the natural village was not really achieved until 1941. Decentralisation of the village administration from the hsiang to the natural village in the process of the simpler administration campaign helped the CCP to consolidate its administrative position at the bottom of society, and to bring itself closer to the villagers.
The third campaign began in January 1943, and it emphasised unification of leadership and strengthening the district and village administration; it corresponded to the final stage of the rectification campaign which concentrated on unification of leadership in the Party. ¹ Many officials at higher levels were transferred to lower levels again; higher level administration continued to function by the combination of departments with similar functions, and concentration on 'primary work' to the relative neglect of work of secondary importance. By these measures the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region reduced administrative personnel by a total of 51 percent of its personnel. For example, in the course of the three campaigns, the Border Region Government was reduced from the original 548 to 100.² In Central Shantung, 2,282, or one-third of the personnel were transferred outside the government.³ However, the total by which the number of cadres at all levels was reduced in the simpler administration campaign should not be over-estimated. As Mark Selden points out in the case of SKH,⁴ although the number of cadres at the border region level was reduced drastically, it is possible that the overall total of administrative personnel was not reduced significantly. But there can be no doubt that the top-heavy system of administration was rectified, and lower level administration was strengthened by the addition of more and better qualified cadres.

Together with the hsia-hsia campaign among the cadres of intellectual origin, which was part of the rectification movement, the

¹ See the preceding chapter, Section 2, on the Party.
² "Taihang ch'ü san-tzu chien-cheng tsung-chien.
³ Lu-chung hsing-cheng kung-shu, op.cit., p.10.
downward transfer of higher level cadres from an elite background, was an expression of Mao's ambition to "close" the enormous gap between the educated elite and the illiterate masses, a gap which had helped to secure elite rule in the old Chinese society. In order to build a new egalitarian society, gap had to be eliminated, not so much by the efforts of the masses but by the transformation of the old value system held by the elite class. This was not simply an ideal but a revolutionary necessity; Mao believed that the revolution would not survive unless old ways of thinking were swept away, because 'men tend to build the objective world in imitation of their subjective world.'

The CCP expected cadres who were transferred to lower levels to bring to the village both new ideas and methods and administrative skills and efficiency. Conflict, or tension, between outside cadres and native cadres seems to have been widespread, since Mao had to make clear that outside cadres had to bear responsibility if poor relations developed.1

The simpler administration campaign served the CCP's purposes in many ways. Economically, to a certain extent, it lightened the financial burden on the government and released more manpower for production. Politically, it helped change conventional ideas of administration and government, it strengthened lower level administration by providing it with more educated manpower; and it fed into the production organisations better-trained manpower for organisation and management, which was especially necessary in the all-out production drive from 1943. Finally, as suggested above, the campaign was of critical importance in bringing the government administration close to

the masses. Administration now extended right down to the natural village.

From 1941, the simpler administration campaign became submerged in the 'production and self-sufficiency' movement, in which the emphasis was no longer on administrative streamlining. Although it had been forced by economic circumstances to introduce simpler administration, the CCP obviously found this to be a new and useful way of bringing government cadres closer to the masses, through manual labour and simple office work, a process by which both cadres and the masses to identify with each other.¹

The government administration, then, was designed deliberately to involve the whole of the local populace in the Communist political process. The CCP's objective was typified by the election system and the election campaign. Universal suffrage in elections for all responsible positions enabled the Communists to claim legitimacy for their local governments.² The masses identified with the government by electing assembly members and executive personnel and also by open criticism of local government work in the course of the election campaign.

The three-thirds policy was another device by which the CCP succeeded in legitimizing its administration. It both made use of the influence and skills of the privileged class, and helped to win

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¹ Transfer of the cadres from the border region level, where those of intellectual origin were concentrated, to the lower level was exploited by the CCP explicitly for the reform of the cadres' thought. See, for example, CFJP, 16 May 1943, in which the simpler administration campaign was regarded as part of the rectification.

² The CCP claimed to the Central Government after the war that the legitimacy of its local governments derived from the fact that they were elected by the people. See Mao, IV, pp.61-63.
this class over to the side of the CCP. It also had been an important
effect on thought reform of Party members. The 'simpler administration'
campaign decentralised administration downward to the natural village,
trained the cadres from elite backgrounds, provided the lower level
administration with educated cadres, and brought about a revolutionary
transformation of the government administration, involving denunciation
of bureaucratism and privilege.

The ultimate intention of the CCP in all aspects of government
administration was mass mobilisation and participation in the political
process. Although one cannot say that every objective of the CCP was
achieved, the Party did succeed in transforming the system of political
power in the course of the campaigns described above, and in the process
established the basis of a long-lasting revolutionary power. Even
though the role of the government administration in policy-making was
not as important as it is in western political systems, the administra­
tion was still of considerable significance because of its indispensable
function in policy-implementation, mass mobilisation, and communication
between the vanguard organisations and other organisation and the people.

2. The Judicial System

What made the Communist judicial system in the Yenan period a means
of mass mobilisation were its educational and propaganda characteristics.
It was quite distinct from other judicial systems, both Chinese and
foreign. Being free, simple and informal, the system was open to the
masses, who in traditional China had been alienated from the judicial
system, and an essential instrument for mass political mobilisation.
It is also distinguished by its lack of independence from the executive
or from the tasks of education and propagation on laws and policies of
the Party and the government. In other words, despite nominal independence from the executive under the KMT judicial system, the judicial department of the Communist government in the Yenan period was designed to serve the purpose of mass mobilisation as an integral part of the administration.

In the early Yenan period, the CCP made greater efforts to follow the KMT judicial system, at least formally, than it did subsequently. This is clear from a comparison of the Regulations on Organisation of the Higher Court of the SKN Border Region (Shen-Kan-Ning pien-chü kao-teng fa-yüan tsu-chih t'iao-li) adopted in 1939 with the Regulations on Organisation of the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region Government (Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü pien-chü cheng-fu tsu-chih t'iao-li) of 1941. The former stipulated that the higher court was under the jurisdiction of the Central Government (Article 2) and that the higher court executed its judicial competence independently (Article 3), while the latter stipulated only that the higher court was under the Border Region government's leadership (Article 20). The Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border

1 Although in the Yenan period the CCP avoided to argue against 'independence of the judicial department', it believed apparently that the judicial work should be part of administration and should serve to advance the revolution. See K'ang Shu-hua, "Ssu-fa tu-li ti fan-tung pan-chih" (The Reactionary Nature of 'Independence of Justice'), Cheng-fa yen-chiu, 1958, No. 2, pp.49-55.

2 Throughout the Yenan period, the CCP continued to name its decrees 'regulations' (t'iao-li) instead of 'laws' (fa) implying that they were local regulations included in the KMT legal system.

3 The Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region enforced the Regulations on Organisation of Courts in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region (Chin-Ch'a-Chi pien-chü fa-yüan tsu-chih t'iao-li) in 1943. It stipulated that the higher court was under the control of the Central Supreme Court, but had no clause about independence of the judiciary. Fukushima Hisao, "Shin Chūgoku no Shinsei-seido to Sono Tokushoku (1)" (The Judicial System of New China and its Character (1)), Tōyō Bunka, No.13 (November 1953), pp.19-20.
region did not even bother to enforce separate organizational regulations for its judicial system.¹

The hsien was supposed to set up a local court (ti-fang fa-yüan) which was to be independent and directly under the higher court. But in practice most hsien ran judicial affairs through the justice bureau (ssu-fa chü) of the executive department and did not establish independent local courts.² Even where a local court was set up, the magistrate was concurrently the head of the local court, while at higher levels the court president was elected by and responsible to the border region assembly. Ma Hsi-wu,³ who served as head of the branch higher court of the Lung-tung Subregion in SKN, has written of his own experiences, and these provide some insight into the CCP’s judicial system ⁴ Ma’s article confirms the CCP’s intention to make use of judicial cases for mass education and mobilisation. He writes that the judicial organs at all levels formed part of the government at the corresponding levels, and carried out their work under the unified leadership of the government.⁵

Informality and the educational function were the two basic features of the administration of justice. No formal procedure was required to bring a suit, nor was any cost charge made. Anybody could bring a case to court, either his own, or that of a family member, relative or friend. The case could be presented in oral or in written form. If requested, the clerk of the court had to do clerical work for the litigants, free of charge. This represented a most significant advance

¹ For the SKN Regulations, see Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch’ü ts’an-i-hui yen-hsien hui-chi, pp.61-65, and for the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Regulations, see Fa-ling hui-pien, cited above, pp.16-19.
³ Ma Hsi-wu was a native of Chih-tan Hsien in north Shensi, from a poor
since 80 percent of the population was illiterate, and in the history of Chinese justice procedural formalities and costs had usually been far beyond the educational and economic means of most people. Informal- ity was applied to the trial itself, which was carried out in the form of discussion among the litigants and the judge, without legal trappings. Informal and free justice was designed to 'serve the people', which meant to involve the people in the Communist judicial and government system. The CCP was interested in much more than simplified court procedures. A typical method of adjudication for mass education purposes was the public or mass trial (kung-shen).

Mass Trials

Mass trials often took place during the Land Reform after 1949 in China and included vigorous action by those present against the defendants, the landlords. In the Yenan period, however, when the CCP restricted the scope of the class struggle, mass trials do not seem to have been held primarily for furthering the class struggle. As Ma Hsi-wu states, for a mass trial the court carefully chose a case which might be useful for propagation of the government's policies and decrees, and also for political training of the masses. 1

Footnote 3 cont'd

family, and an old revolutionary of the Shensi Soviet. He became the first jurist hero in 1943 when he was in charge of the branch higher court of Lung-tung Subregion in SKN, because of his fair judgment based on his attitude of 'seeking truth from facts'.

4 Ma Hsi-wu, op.cit.
5 Ma, op.cit., p.8.
1 Shu Yen, "Pien-ch'ü hsih-lu" (A True Account on the Border Region), Tōgō Kenkyūjo, op.cit., p.181.
2 Ibid., p 182; Ma Hsi-wu, op.cit., p.12. Ma writes that there were three kinds of mass trial, mass meetings (ch'un-chung kung-shen hui), judgment meetings (shen-p'an ta-hui) and representative meetings, (tai-p'iao kung-shen hui), but he does not explain the difference between them.
Mass trials, therefore, did not mean trials by the masses but trials in front of the masses, an important and often overlooked distinction. Shu Yen gives a brief description of the process of mass trials. The preparatory stage was as important as trial itself. It began with a close investigation of the case by the prosecutor's office and carried out a preliminary examination. Then, the court asked the mass organisation concerned with the case to send their representatives to the mass trial as jurors, and meanwhile the court appointed the judge for the trial. These jurors held a preliminary meeting with the judge who explained the known facts of the case. Participants were the judge, the jurors, the prosecutor, press men and representatives of the mass organisation. Individuals could also attend. The clerk read the brief and the prosecutor stated the reasons for the litigation. The judge questioned the defendants directly, and the representatives of the mass organisations also gave their opinions based on prior presentation. Then the final statement was given by the defendants. The judge and the jurors left the court and discussed the decision. Voting was held by the judge and the jurors, and the judge delivered the verdict.\(^1\)

Mass trials were employed both in criminal and civil cases at the levels both of the higher and of the local courts. The two examples shown to the foreign journalists who visited the SKN Border Region in 1944 were a dispute between a father and his daughter over her marriage\(^2\).

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1. Shu Yen's article based on his eyewitness account, Tōa Kenkyūjo, op.cit., p.183. Shu Yen observed a mass trial in the SKN Border Region, presumably in early 1941. All mass trials in the Yanan period were not, of course, in conformity with this form.

2. This was introduced in detail in the Chieh-fang jih-pao, as one of two typical cases of the way in which Ma Hsi-wu conducted trials, praised as the highest example of Communist justice. "Ma Hsi-wu t'ung-chih ti shen-p'an fang-shih" (Comrade Ma Hsi-wu's Method of Trials), CFJP, 13 March 1944. This case was related to the western press men in 1944 and was introduced outside the Border Region. Harrison Forman, op.cit., pp.102-103.
and a case of a witch doctor who killed her patient by 'superstitious' treatment. The former was conducted by Ma Hai-yu on behalf of one of the two branches of the SKN higher court, while the latter was conducted by the local court. According to Shu Yen, in the first one and a half years of the existence of the higher court of the SKN Border Region, three mass trials were held by the higher court; one was of a national traitor, another was of a soldier who sold the troops' rifles, and the third was of a couple who tried to commit double suicide.

From these examples, one can see which aspects the CCP sought to emphasise in its use of mass trials to educate the masses. It could have been the case, as Leng Shao-chuan has suggested, that anti-traitor campaigns by mass trial were particularly common in the areas contested between the Communists and the Japanese, although no evidence is available. Propagation of the new marriage law was one of the prominent Communist policies in this period. Shu Yen reports that the double suicide case caused a sensation among the young people in the Border Region, whereas the other two cases did not cause so much excitement. It seems that the CCP was particularly bent on full implementation of the new marriage law, and that it gave a special educational value to marriage cases. The new marriage law was designed to liberate the oppressed in the old family system, to break their vertical ties with society, and to attract them to a new society.

2 Tōa Kenkyūjo, op.cit., p.184.
3 Leng Shao-chuan, op.cit., p.106. His statement here about the role of mass trials in anti-counter-revolutionary campaigns is, I think, too sweeping. He writes: "There is no question that mass trials played a major role in campaigns against counter-revolutionaries and frequently resulted in on-the-spot execution." This is correct for the Civil War period but not in the Yenan period.
4 Tōa Kenkyūjo, op.cit., p.184.
Elimination of superstition was another policy emphasised by the CCP. For such cases as those concerning marriage and superstition, mass trials were effective in making entirely new social concepts acceptable to the masses. In those cases which were deeply concerned with customs and habits of daily life, concrete examples illustrated by mass trials were more persuasive to the ignorant peasants than simple presentation of policies or enforcement of laws. From the viewpoint of the government, it could thus bring itself physically closer to the masses, and by directly interfering with disputes or criminal cases which had previously been thought unimportant, it could obtain their participation in the political process. As the government came closer to the people, the people could also identify themselves with the government through their participation in this process.

Three prominent features of the 'Ma Hsi-wu method', pointed out by the Chieh-fang jih-pao, were 1) proper and detailed investigation on the spot, 2) adherence to principles, resolutely implementing government decrees as well as respecting customs and habits of the masses and protecting their interests, and 3) simple and informal procedures and trials. For the purpose of the first and third points, on-the-spot trials and circuit trials were employed by the higher court and its branches, particularly for complicated cases of longstanding. In practice, many mass trials also took place as on-the-spot or circuit trials. The purpose of these was concentrated on one point, "to bring the courts into direct contact with the masses, gather firsthand information and evidence, settle the disputes with the aid of the local

1 The above mentioned article in the Chieh-fang-ji-pao stressed this point, of giving proper examples for political education of the masses and also of the court staff. "Ma Hsi-wu t'ung-chih ti shen-p'an fang-shih."

2 Ibid.
people and educate the masses through participation in trial proceedings.

Informality was fully applied to the conduct of his circuit courts by Ma Hsi-wu. He himself was the court; the people could ask him anywhere and at any time to bring suits for them. The most famous marriage case dealt with by Ma was brought to court after a girl had told Ma her story when she came across him in the street. Informality was the keynote of another remarkable method of judicial work in the Yanan period, conciliation for civil and minor criminal cases.

Conciliation

From 1943 onwards, the CCP became increasingly intent on solving disputes by conciliation rather than by lawsuits. One possible reason was a shortage of judicial personnel partly because of the war and also because of the simpler administration campaign. Another reason was probably that the Communists had found more opportunities to educate the masses through conciliation than through lawsuits, both in the number of people contacted or affected and in the degree of thoroughness with which the educative process was carried out. The official reasons were to promote solidarity among the people, to make production more convenient, to educate the people to love the country and respect the law, and to reduce the number of lawsuits.

In 1943 the SKN Border Region government issued a directive to promote conciliation, and the higher court also issued a detailed

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1 Lei Shao-chuan, op.cit., p.107.
2 "Ma Hsi-wu t'ung-chih ti shen-p'an fang-shih."
3 Ma Hsi-wu admits that the CCP suffered from a shortage of qualified staff for judicial work, even though it tried hard to train them.
4 ibid., p.8.
directive on methods of conciliation. The proportion of the cases settled by conciliation increased remarkably from 1943:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Civil Cases</th>
<th>Minor Criminal Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>18 (percent)</td>
<td>0.4 (percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all cases which provided models for judicial work carried by the Chieh-fang jih-pao after 1944 were cases settled by conciliation, including another case of Ma Hsi-wu involving a land dispute.

This land dispute case is interesting and is worth recounting briefly. It gives a very clear idea of what the CCP regarded as a good example of conciliation, especially where it concerned land disputes, which occupied a considerable proportion of the conciliation cases. In this case, Ma first sent a judge to investigate the case in the village, after which he himself went to the village and called a meeting of several villagers including four 'respectable' gentry and village elders, at which he asked for opinions about the dispute. This meeting lasted two days. On the next day Ma went along with about twenty villagers and village cadres for an on-the-spot investigation with the village cadres and once again ascertained the villagers' opinions. Finally, a group consisting of village activists and cadres under a judge and the district chief proceeded to the actual process of conciliation between the parties, and persuaded both to accept a compromise settlement.

The points appreciated by the CCP in Ma's settlement of the above case were a careful investigation of the facts, the solicitation of

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Land and marriage disputes accounted for over 60 percent of all civil cases, and they seem usually to have been settled by conciliation. See ibid., p.8.
4 "Ma Hsi-wu t'ung-chih ti shen-p'an fang-shih."
opinions from the 'respectable' and 'reliable' people in the village and also from other villagers, and conciliation by local activists; thus, the conciliation could be acceptable to both parties and to other villagers. The principles were the same in the conciliation of criminal cases. Given below is a criminal case settled by Ao Hai-ch'ing, a judge of Chih-tan Hsien, in the SKN Border Region, who became a model judicial worker. Yuan stole 3.6 tou of grain belonging to Wang, at a time when everybody was starving in the season just before the harvest in 1939. Wang brought a suit against Yuan. The district government summoned Yuan, but he denied being guilty of the crime. Ao Hai-ch'ing went to see Yuan at his home, and saw the nearly starving situation of the family. He summoned both parties and tried to persuade Yuan to admit to the crime, and Wang to withdraw the suit. Yuan would not accept this. Ao said to Wang, "It is not right just to leave grain in this starving season, not to give it to others to eat. Why didn't you lend it to others to eat? Everybody is nearly ill from starvation." When he heard this, Yuan suddenly admitted that he was the one who had stolen the grain, and told Ao that nearly 3 tou of grain was still left in his house although his family had eaten a part of it.¹

It is unlikely that Yuan was given any punishment by the court, though the Chieh-fang jih-pao does not mention what happened. It was more a question of teacher and students discussing what was the right thing to do, rather than judge and litigants trying to discuss what was an unlawful act. An educational purpose was applied to the plaintiff and also all witnesses and informants, as was the case in Ma's conciliation of the land dispute. As seen in Ma's conciliation case, social pressure was made use of for acceptance of the conciliation. The court

¹ CHAP, 23 April 1944.
tried to ascertain villagers' opinions on the dispute to find out what they thought reasonable for settlement. If the great majority agreed on a reasonable settlement, it was usually taken by the court, and the parties had to accept it. The villagers, thus acquired a feeling of participation in the government decision-making and identity with the Communist government.

Mass trials could involve more people as participants, but conciliation could involve people more deeply in the decision-making process. Both methods were designed to educate and mobilise the people, as was the whole Communist judicial system. Apart from the security work of exposing traitors, which was mainly carried out by the militia and lower level of government, the whole judicial department worked for educational purposes. For example, the prisoners were taught characters, and had evening meetings every day for indoctrination, besides manual labour. They were fed the same food as the court staff, and any behaviour insulting to them was strictly prohibited. As Gunther Stein writes, the "conviction that man is not born evil and that most wrongdoers can be improved by proper social education apparently determines the judicial policies in Yenan."  

It was more practical for the CCP to educate and 'win over' the criminals than to punish them, when it suffered from shortage of manpower. This was not, however, a matter of economic necessity, but a matter of the most fundamental political philosophy of the Party; that is, as discussed above, "to change the objective world, and at the same time, their (the proletariat and the revolutionary people) own subjective

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1 Shu Yen's report, Tōa Kenkyūjo, op.cit., p.82. Shu points out the poor building and conditions of facilities of the jail.
2 Stein, op.cit., p.227.
Mass trials and conciliations were designed to give the people opportunities to transform their inside and outside worlds, as were all other mass movements. The mass organisations were the keynote which provided the contact point for the CCP to mobilise the masses for its policy and strategy for socioeconomic transformation.

3. The Mass Organisations

The organisation of the masses by the CCP represented a radical change from the traditional Chinese view of the position of the masses, who had been passive objects of political change throughout Chinese history, except for short chaotic periods of peasant uprisings. As Richard Solomon has observed, lateral communication and ties had rarely been established in traditional Chinese society, while hierarchical communication based on uncritical obedience by the 'inferior' to the 'superior' had dominated the social system. The gap between the literate elite and the illiterate masses had divided society into two isolated worlds. Within each world, vertical obedience had dictated human relations, and to express one's own opinion in front of superiors or even among peers had been an almost unforgivable sin. Solomon explains the silence of the inferiors in front of the superiors by filial piety, and among the peers by the desire to avoid conflict of opinions. This had, however, an economic background, in that all inferiors needed the superiors' protection and help to obtain their livelihood.

The advantage to the CCP when it came to mobilise the peasants was that most of those who lived in the traditional hierarchical society

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were dissatisfied; but the fear of losing their livelihood was a major pillar of the established social order. Once they knew that the CCP had the power to provide them with a livelihood, they were ready to speak out and support the Communists.\footnote{An old village cadre in north Shensi told Jan Myrdal about the peasants' basic psychology in 1935 when the CCP first redistributed land in his village: "Most families were happy to have been given land, but some of them were worried. They did not believe that we could keep power .... But, then, gradually they became calmer, as they saw that the power of the landlords was beginning to be broken.... Those years, life was better than it had been before. Now, after this land reform, I was more politically-minded than I had been, and in August 1935, I joined the party." Myrdal, op.cit., pp.122-123.} This is of tremendous importance. The CCP brought a message of different prospect of the future to those who had been humiliated in the old social order. The weakened authority of the establishment as a result of the war also worked to the advantage of the CCP.

The organisation of the masses into mass organisations, that is, 'national salvation associations' (chiu-kuo-hui), involved cutting the traditional vertical ties between association members and the old authorities, and establishing new horizontal ties between members and new vertical ties with the new Communist authorities. The name 'national salvation association' was taken from those which had long been organised by urban intelligentsia before 1937. However, the mass 'national salvation associations' organised by the Communists were quite different in nature and function from those older ones whose purpose was to fight directly against the Japanese economic and military invasion, but had little interest in their members' welfare. On the other hand, the Communist-organised mass chiu-kuo-hui were firstly and directly concerned with their members' welfare, or livelihood, and their indirect and ultimate purpose was 'national salvation'. They were
organised more like the peasant associations and the trade unions in the Kiangsi period. They were in fact the legitimate successors of those mass organisations in the Soviet period.1

The Party provided the young and the poor, the oppressed majority of the rural Chinese population, with a patriotic cause and an organisational unity. Nor did the CCP overlook the place of women, who made up half of the Chinese population but who had remained in the household for hundreds of years and had not been mobilised for work outside.2 As the war removed young labour power from the fields, the CCP had to mobilise women for production, and also for primitive textile industry, being cut off from textile supply from the cities. This in turn strengthened their status within the family. Organisation further promoted women's productive capacity and reinforced their improved status in society.3

The significance of the mass organisation lay in their class nature; the fact that, unlike the urban intelligentsia's chiu-kuo-hui, the rural mass chiu-kuo-hui could not work without first consideration on their members' living situation. Thus, the mass organisations became inevitably an expression of the class struggle, which was directed at social transformation at the basic level. Organisation and mobilisation of the masses had to go through transformation of

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1 As the fact that the peasant association and other mass organisations were transformed into the peasants 'national salvation' association and other chiu-kuo-hui indicates, 'national salvation' does not mean those associations were organised primarily for nationalism, but rather indicates the CCP's formal attachment to the KMT-CCP agreement for collaboration against Japan.

2 In contrast to South China, where women had widely engaged in agricultural work, in North China women with bound feet had not usually worked in the fields.

3 Jack Belden gives a remarkable example of the emancipation of women with help of the women's association just after the war. See op.cit., pp 275-311.
production and human relations and class structure, being bound by the severe socioeconomic conditions in which the rural population had lived.¹

The CCP, carrying the revolutionary mission, was helped by the mass organisations in its ambition of mass mobilisation for war and revolution. These two organisations, the Party and the mass organisations were identical in their ultimate goal, transformation of the old social system, and were in interdependent relations in their function.

In the first phase of the war, popular anti-Japanese organisations, which had been organised locally since the loss of Manchuria in 1931, were used by the Communists to set up political power in the areas behind the Japanese lines.² By recruiting into the Party leading members of these mass organisations, the CCP gradually established Party leadership within them.³ In addition, the CCP, or the army, also created new anti-Japanese associations, both as a device for establishing local political power, and as a means by which the whole population might be absorbed into mass organisations.⁴

Through the mass organisations the Party was able to bring its

¹ See Chapter II, Section 1.
² A typical case is the Shansi Sacrifice League of Yen Hsi-shan, described in detail by Chalmers Johnson, op.cit., pp.97-106. CCP sources report the existence of local anti-Japanese organisation in North China organised by non-Communist local leaders. George Taylor lists eighteen anti-Japanese organisations, armed and non-armed, which sent representatives to the Provisional Assembly of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region in January 1938. Taylor, op.cit., p.35.
³ The Party organisation within the mass organisation was under the local Party branch. In practice, all local Party members joined the mass organisations, and assumed leadership as the most active elements.
⁴ As typified in the case of the Sacrifice League, local non-Communist anti-Japanese organisations normally consisted of young literate people and excluded the masses. This occurred because of the desperately wide gap between the intelligentsia and the masses, and also because of indifference of the masses on the fate of the nation.
policies right down to the masses. The peasants association, for example, was given power to carry out rent reduction, while the women's association was enlisted in implementation of the new marriage law. The youth association played an important role in organising militia and local guerrilla corps and production work teams. The militia corps took the place of local police and protected the achievements of social reforms such as rent reduction and the new marriage law against the destructive activities of spies and traitors.

Literacy Schools: The Primary Task of the Mass Organisations

The primary task of the mass organisations, however, was 'education and lifting up'; that is, raising literacy and political levels among the members. An important task of the mass organisations, therefore, was to establish and maintain what were known as 'winter schools' during winter slack season which lasted about three months. Although these were primarily literacy schools for the peasants, they also functioned as schools for political education and mobilisation. Through the winter school committees, which comprised representatives of the Party, local government, local troops and mass organisation, the schools were an institution for propagating the nationalist cause, the principle of the united front, and new policies and decrees of the Party and government. In many cases the school texts were the political programmes of the border region governments, new laws and decrees, or Party documents. In order to maximise the effectiveness of the schools, the characters

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1 This is stressed repeatedly in various articles in the Chieh-fang jih-pao. For example, "Hua-pei ch'ing-yün tung-t'ai" (Trend of the Youth Movement in North China), 3 February 1942; "Ch'üên-chung t'uan-t'ı tsen-yang kai-tsao" (How to Reform the Mass Organisations), 29 June 1942.
taught were those most closely related to the peasants' life. Even in the busy seasons the winter school committees tried a variety of measures to maintain literacy and political standards until the next winter.

An example of the operation of winter schools is that of northwest Shansi, which in the winter of 1942/43 took the newly adopted Political Programme, and the laws and regulations of the provisional assembly of the Region as the central curricula. The emphasis was on propaganda and education concerning the following slogans:

1. Carry out guerrilla warfare, join militia corps, support anti-Japanese troops, carry out war service and give preferential treatment to the soldiers' families.

2. Implement the three-thirds policy in political power, consider the interests of all classes equally, and reduce rent and interest.

3. Pay grain tax, increase agricultural production and develop the spinning and weaving industry, so as to improve people's livelihood.

These slogans represented the whole of Communist policies, military, political and economic. The mass organisations were expected to propagate the Party policies among their members, the masses.

The contribution of the winter schools to indoctrination and organisation was immeasurable. The K'ang-chan jih-pao (Resistance War Daily), the organ of the CCP in northwest Shansi, reported a model case in which almost all the villagers of one natural village were enrolled in the village winter school, the head of which was a village labour hero. The school organised its 'students' into five study groups which were also concurrently 'winter production' groups for charcoal-making, charcoal-carrying, cooperatives, spinning and weaving, and militia. This was due to the outstanding leadership of the head, who took responsibility for all management and clerical work of the school. All political and economic work in the village during the winter, which was the season

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1 CFJP, 7 January 1943.
for mass mobilisation and struggle, such as tax-payment, militia training, and shoe-making for the army was carried out through the winter school, and successfully carried out, in which 'thought of the masses was lifted up' through discussion and the struggle.¹

This was appreciated by the CCP as an example of the 'unity of study and production'; the villagers received the policies, orders and directives from the government or mass organisations through the school and they discussed them while learning characters. The school became an effective instrument for indoctrination, organisation and mobilisation of the villagers for production work.²

Other Tasks

The next most important task assumed by the mass organisations was implementation of government policies, laws and regulations. A typical case was the rent reduction 'struggle' led by the peasants association. In the rent reduction struggle at Ma-tien-chen in the winter of 1942/43, the peasants association started the struggle with a small discussion meeting about the rent reduction problem. This was followed by a similar meeting for women only, convened by the women's association. The main struggle meeting for rent reduction was then called by the peasants association, which summoned the representatives of the village government and the troops stationed in the village to the meeting and asked them to express determination to support the peasants association's struggle for rent reduction. While the village administration and the troops expressed support, they did not in their official capacity have anything to do with the struggle itself. It was

¹ Mu Ch'uan, "I-yūeh-lai ti Pao-teh tong-hsiāh kung-tso" (Winter School Work at Pao-teh Hsiān in the Last One Month), K'ang-ch'an jih-pao, 29 January 1945.
² Another example is seen in CFJP, 20 December 1943.
the peasants association that decided on the steps to be taken, and which led the tenant masses to the landlord's house and forced him to pay back rent which he had collected illegally. It was the peasants association cadres to whom the peasant masses came to inquire about the struggle.¹

In this case, the peasants association apparently shared power with the village government, and recognised by its members as the promoter of the struggle. Apparently, the women's association assumed power to protect its members' interests often with violent measures.² The CCP used the mass organisations to represent their members' class interests, and did not mind them applying even violent measures, particularly after 1942, for the 'struggle', to cut the members' vertical ties with the old society, and made them identify with the new organisations. Thus, mass psychological breakthrough at the basic level was made possible, and the CCP attracted more people who were loyal to the new society.

The third task of the mass organisations was to protect the interests of the masses, to help them solve their difficulties, and to speak for them and represent their opinions and demands. This task was implemented in part through the process of the election, in which every mass organisation had its own candidates; but it was also a continuing process facilitated by the close relations between the mass organisations and the local government during the period between the elections. In special cases involving the young and women, the mass organisations often had to use their power to protect their members' interests against suppression within the family.

Chou Erh-fu gives two examples in his report on the Chin-ch'a-Chi

¹ "Ma-tien-chen chien-tsu tou-cheng," CFJP, 14 December 1942.
² See, for example, Belden, op.cit., pp.275-311.
Border Region. In one of them the head of the Youths Association told a grandfather to stop punishing his grandson for disobedience by refusing him meals. The grandfather was told: "Your grandson is yours, and you are responsible for his education. But, at the same time, he is a member of our association. You should not refuse to give him food. If he gets sick from hunger and cannot work, our country will sustain losses. This is not good."¹

As a result of the third task of the mass organisation, protection of their members' interests, the traditional Chinese family or clan authority was replaced by a point of view which stressed nationalism and organisation. When lateral communication was established on the basis of identity of interests among the inferiors and downtroddens within the traditional social system, the weak ties of vertical communication were weakened still further.

Other tasks assumed by the mass organisations were consolidation of the multi-class united front, and mobilisation of the masses for war service, that is, organising members into teams for production, washing,² tai-kēng, stretcher bearing and so on. In theory, the CCP expected the mass organisations to play a supplementary role to the local government in carrying out policies which aimed at effective mobilisation of the largest possible number of the masses.³ In practice,

¹ Chou, op.cit., pp.90-91.
² This was washing uniforms for the regular troops without payment. The regular army depended on non-military people in miscellaneous services such as washing uniforms, shoe-making, and when the troops were moving and fighting, preparing food and hot water, carrying the wounded to the rear and carrying ammunition.
³ "Ch'ün-chung t'uan-t'i tsen-yan kai-tsao," op.cit., Nieh Fu "Cheng-fu yü ts'an-i-hui ch'ün-chung t'uan-t'i ti kuan-hsi" (Relations between the Government and the Assembly and the Mass Organisations), CFJP, 1 July 1942.
however, the government was quite willing to share power with the mass organisations, particularly in cases of mass psychological transformation which was the basis of the CCP's social mobilisation. It happened, therefore, as a result, that the mass organisations were more powerful than the government.

The CCP called the government an organisation of political power, but in practice, political power was shared by the government, the mass organisations and the Party. The Party, however, restricted itself from interfering in the process of policy implementation, although its leadership was maintained in political power through its members working in the government and the mass organisations. As policy-implementing institutions, the mass organisations enjoyed a more advantageous position than the governments, as they controlled the masses directly as their members, whereas the government's grip of the masses was indirect. Mass mobilisation for implementation of the CCP policies was, therefore, carried out almost invariably through the mass organisations. The government assumed the role of coordination between the policies carried out by various mass organisations by providing a place for discussion and communication between the mass organisations and between them and the Party.

The 'better troops and simpler administration' campaign extended also to the mass organisations, as did the rectification campaign. Despite successful recruitment of great majority of the masses into the mass organisations, the organisations were not sufficiently consolidated. In the campaign, the executive bodies of the mass organisations were reduced to half or less than half of their original size, and there was

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1 For example, in the northwest Shanxi region the staff was reduced by 65 percent. CFJP, 19 November 1942.
serious criticism of 'formalism', in the form of forced participation in the organisations simply to give the appearance of a larger membership. Since most of the cadres were Party members of intellectual origin, the masses had difficulty in accepting them as their own, and tended to fear them as 'officials'. The Communist mass organisations had weaknesses which are universal in mass organisations organised from above. Moreover, in China, due to poor communication between the government and the people in the old society, the weakness was even more serious than in western societies.

The rectification, which called on cadres to 'enter deeply into the masses', was necessary for the full implementation of the 'simpler administration' policy, because the movement gave them political training to free themselves from the arrogance of 'officials', which came from a long Chinese history of intellectual-official domination and also from the CCP's quick success in expanding its areas in 1937-1940. In turn, as the 'simple' executive body could not afford bureaucratic inefficiency, it was easier for cadres to realise the difficulties they faced in working for 'simple' administration. The 'better troops' campaign also affected the militia in the same way, through the reorganisation and retraining campaign in 1942. Thus, in the campaigns of rectification and 'better troops and simpler administration' the government and regular army intended that the mass organisations should assume more power, while at the same time, within the mass organisations, the leaders intended that members should take a more active part in their work.

1 "Ch'ün-chung t'uan-t'i tsen-yang kai-tsao." For 'formalism' in making membership list longer, see Chapter II, p. 77.
The Militia

The militia, which was known variously as the self-defence corps and the peace preservation corps, and which included the anti-Japanese youth pioneer corps, was an armed mass organisation. It was armed usually with old and primitive weapons such as swords, spears and obsolete rifles, and was given tasks supplementary to those of the regular army and local guerrilla troops. It was composed of volunteers of both sexes between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, and was divided into three groups according to the standard of armament. Included in the first groups were the skeleton self-defence corps and the youth pioneer corps, which comprised the best armed, best trained and most able-bodied young men, and which often engaged in campaigns by themselves or side by side with full-time guerrillas and regular troops. The second group was the ordinary self-defence corps or militia, which was armed with primitive weapons and was expected to help the guerrillas and regular troops in destroying the enemy's communication lines, making and carrying arms and ammunition, working for the intelligence services, checking enemy spies, bearing stretchers and other supplementary work, and was seldom involved in actual fighting. The third group was the peace preservation corps which worked primarily for policing within the locality. The militia, although it had its own system of command,

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1 The age varied from fifteen to nineteen at the lower limit, and from forty-five to fifty at the upper limit.

2 In some of the base areas, only the skeleton corps was called 'militia' (min-ping). For example, Fang Chi, "Ti-hou wu-chuang tou-cheng chung-yao ti i-huan - ming-ping" (An Important Part of the Armed Struggle behind the Enemy Lines - Militia), CFJP, 13 June 1942.

3 The size of the skeleton corps was supposed to be from 25 to 35 percent of the local population, while everybody qualified was expected to join the ordinary militia. In some areas behind the Japanese lines, it seems that social pressure was applied for recruitment of every healthy person into the militia. The tasks assumed by the militia are described in detail in Tada Corps, op.cit., pp.92-99.
belonged to the basic local government entity, the hsiang, while the guerrilla corps' basic unit was the hsien.

The militia was trained by regular troops stationed locally, or by retired officers and men. At the end of the training period, there were large scale inspection and demonstration meetings, with contests in military techniques. The meetings elected and praised 'model militia corps' and 'militia heroes' for the preceding year, particularly after 1942.

Militia training by the regular army helped to bring it close to the masses, and the meetings held as a great occasion of the villages in winter worked for raising the villagers' concern with military work, arms, military techniques and the militia. The elections of militia heroes were designed to improve the military techniques of the militia, and also to find out and bring up basic leaders from among the masses, as was the labour hero election. In fact, the militia hero system was one of those hero systems in various fields which were extended from the labour hero system after the CCP realised its effectiveness in encouraging the people for hard work and better methods and also in raising political leaders at the basic level of society, who had close links with and prestige among the masses and was loyal to the new society.

The background against which the campaign for reorganisation and retraining of the militia launched in 1942 was the 'better troops'

1 The local governments at all levels had an elected 'popular armament commission' which assumed responsibility for the militia's operation, training, explosives production and other war services.
2 Particularly after the 'better troops' campaign, many retired soldiers were among militia commanders and even among the peasants. But from Chieh-fang jih-pao reports, it seems that militia training by retired soldiers was not common.
3 For example, see the report on the militia inspection meeting in Yenan Hsien on 18 July 1943, CFJP, 28 July 1943.
campaign and the strategic changes necessitated by the Japanese three-all policy in North China. The size of the skeleton militia was roughly doubled in 1941, and it developed new tactics using homemade hand grenades and mines against the Japanese mopping-up campaign. A prominent tactic to prevent small enemy units from looting grain and stock animals was the 'empty house and clear field' (kung-shih ch'ing-yeh) policy for which a well-organised and trained local militia was essential. Since the training of militia was normally done in the winter slack season, the Chieh-fang jih-pao campaign for militia reorganisation, retraining and inspection in May and June 1942 reflects a new concern on the part of the CCP to depend heavily upon militia for defence of the base areas.

In early July 1943, units belonging to the forces of the KMT commander, Hu Tsung-nan, which had been stationed on the west bank of the Yellow River in south Shensi, moved westward and threatened the SKN Border Region. The CCP feared an all-out attack by Hu's army, which blockaded the Border Region with about 400,000 troops. Since the Communists could only command 20,000 regular troops in SKN, they could defend the Border Region only with popular forces. It was the weeding season and the militia corps had to carry out both military and agricultural work simultaneously. In other words, the 'unity of labour and arms' had to be put into practice; the military situation forced

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2 The number of KMT troops around the SKN Border Region has not been published. A figure 400,000 to 500,000 was widely believed by foreign observers in China at that time, although an American diplomatic report from Sian gives the figure of 11 divisions and 2 brigades (approximately 165,000) which is apparently from a KMT source. Stein, op.cit., p.32; Forman, op.cit., p.74; Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, China, (Washington: 1957), p.315. For the number of the Communist regular troops in SKN, American diplomatic and Japanese military sources agree on 20,000. See Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, China, p.372 and Johnson, op.cit., p.76.
the SKN Border Region to combine military and production organisations. In the full-scale production drive, the slogan adopted by the militia in the SKN Border Region was 'Defend our lives of abundant clothing and sufficient food' (pao-wei feng-i tsu-shih ti sheng-huo) which had been achieved under the Communist government.¹ In the areas behind the Japanese lines the protection of life was more critical because of the Japanese 'kill all, burn all, loot all' policy, which aimed at elimination of the people in and around Communist territory on whose support the Communist guerrillas depended.² Both in SKN and behind the lines, defence of the Communist government also meant defence of the life of the ordinary people themselves.

Another important aspect of the militia was the fact that it changed the people's ideas on armed force and armed struggle; arms were now close to them, and armed struggle became part of their lives. The CCP succeeded to make war part of the masses' lives through the militia, and thus enabled a protracted war to be fought along with socioeconomic transformation, which in turn was supported by their confidence in their own forces with arms. The 'unity of labour and arms' was a typical expression of this process in which armed struggle and revolutionary transformation of the villages were symbolically unified.

'Unity of Labour and Arms' (lao-wu chieh-he)

The 'unity of labour and arms' was first introduced in northwest Shansi by Chang Ch'u-yüan, a militia leader, reflecting the difficult

¹ For a typical example, see a news item about the militia inspection meeting at Hsi Hsien, CFJP, 3 August 1943.
² See, for example, Yu Min, "We sheng-ts'un erh chan" (Fight for Existence), CFJP, 5 December 1943.
situation during the Japanese three-all campaigns.\(^1\) It seems, however, that this new method of organisation spread more quickly in the SKN Border Region, where military conditions were rather more secure, than in the other areas including the Northwest Shansi base. One reason for this was that SKN apparently had to rely more on militia than did the other areas, particularly when attacked by KMT forces, because it had only a small garrison and could not expect to recall regular troops fighting the Japanese in other areas of North China. But it seems that the basic reason was the long-established position of the SKN as a Communist base, with a much longer history of mass organisation than the other areas. In other words, in 1943, after about ten years of Communist social revolution, there were enough leaders among the masses in the SKN Border Region to organise the people into a new and sophisticated organisation which could serve both production and defence.

Examples in the Chieh-fang jih-pao indicate that where both war preparation and production work were most effective, the militia corps was well organised. This meant that there was a highly conscious and hard working native leadership. These leaders were not of intellectual origin, but peasants who had come to the fore through revolutionary struggle or administrative and production work in the village; typical examples were the labour heroes. When they had a sufficient number of high calibre leaders at the lower levels, as SKN had, the bases behind the Japanese lines followed SKN in organising militia in close combination with production teams.

Chang Ch'yu-yüan was elected as a militia hero in 1944, because he

\(^1\) "Ti-hou ch'un-min ti tao-lu - chan-tou yu sheng-ch'an chieh-he ch'i-lai" (The Way to Be Taken by the Army and the People Behind the Enemy Lines - Unite Fight and Production), editorial, CFJP, 2 March 1944.
had introduced the organisational unity of labour and arms in the Northwest Shansi Region. He divided and mixed the militia corps of his natural village into pien-kung brigade. The advantage of his reorganisation was, according to the Chieh-fang jih-pao, that militia and pien-kung members were easily able to look after each other when the enemy launched an attack. At the same time, the pien-kung team was reinforced by young militia members, and as militia men were also pien-kung members, the work in their fields was carried on even when they engaged in military activities. This system also made it easier to select out militia men for sentry and patrol duty around the village.

In this 'organisational unity' at the natural village level, in the case of Chang, 720.5 cattle work days and 253 man work days were saved, and the quantity of grain looted by the enemy was reduced from 50 in 1942 to 2 piculs in 1943.1

In addition, the Chieh-fang jih-pao stressed the educational effects of the unity of arms and labour; the morale of the militia and the villagers was heightened, and they became more concerned for each other's work and property.2

The unity of arms and labour was one of the most far-reaching organisational achievements of the Communists in the war; and it was extended to all Communist bases in China during and after the war with Japan.3 It was revived by the Communist leaders in the 'everyone a soldier' campaign at the time of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, when

1 "Ti-hou chün-min ti tao-lu - chan-tou yü sheng-ch' an chieh-hô ch'i-lai".
2 Ibid.
3 The CCP selected a model worker and launched a campaign in his or her name. In the case of the unity of labour and arms, the 'Chang Ch'u-yüan movement' was carried out in northwest Shansi in 1944.
production organisation in China was extensively militarised; and it has been again taken both by militia corps within the people's commune and by the PLA. In the above revival of the 'unity of labour and arms', one can see the CCP leaders' concern with its political and educational effects on revolutionary transformation of the basic people. By weaving arms into the web of daily life of the people, the CCP could expect them to be involved further in the Communist political process, and bring about further revolutionary transformation in their everyday life organisation and also in their own ways of thinking.

Unlike the Party and the army, the primary concern of the mass organisations was with the interests of their own members. They were concerned not only with the livelihood and educational standards of their members, but also with how far their members' human, political and social rights were asserted and protected in practice. Although the CCP sought to indoctrinate the general masses, both the intention and substance of political education of the masses were quite different from that of Party and army members. The most distinct feature of popular indoctrination was the Party's attempt to impress upon the masses that the revolution, or the CCP's policy, was bringing them tangible benefits. In other words, the Party tried to convince the masses that their interests and those of the CCP were identical. The mass organisations were the institutions through which the masses expressed their opinions, and, through the implementation of Party and the government policies, formulated with the assistance of such expressions of mass opinion, advanced their own interests.

It was as members of the mass organisations that the masses participated in the political process of the Communist government system, and were constantly encouraged to further participation. Furthermore, once involved in the political process as active members
of an organisation, and as a result became conscious of interests beyond their own or those of their organisation, such as those of 'the people', 'the nation', 'the public' or 'mankind'. Thus, the mass organisations also provided activists among their ranks for recruitment into the Party, and it was through a series of mass movements that the mass organisations created the activists who provided leadership for the Communist revolution at the basic level.

The mass organisations were the keynotes for the whole Communist government system, which concentrated on mass political and social mobilisation, since they linked the other institutions to the masses in the process of mobilisation. The Party and the army took the lead, but it was the mass organisations that actually mobilised the masses for a new commitment, while at the same time providing mass leaders who were fully confident in and actively loyal to the new system.

The role allotted to the mass organisations by the CCP was one of political, social and military education and mobilisation of the masses. The CCP's aim was a society composed of highly conscious, active and mobilised people, joined in the common cause of nationalism and social justice. In the process of replacing the traditional value system centred on the family by the new cause of nationalism and revolution, the CCP had to show the basic masses that the new system was not only beneficial to the Chinese nation but also to the broad masses themselves. The mass organisation was a useful and efficient device for cutting ties with the old social and economic system, protecting the people's interests, and thus also mobilising them for war service. The interests of the oppressed majority in the old system and of the CCP were essentially the same, and to survive the war, the CCP had to rely on the

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1 See Chapter VI, especially on labour heroes.
efforts of people who were themselves seeking an escape from their alienated social and economic status in the old system. Mass organisations offered them the cause and the leadership to fight the old system.

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The Communist government system as a whole was designed to concentrate mass mobilisation for war and revolution. Relative importance was given to the army, which provided the whole system with physical security, under which alone the Communists could develop mass mobilisation. But the importance of the army was not only in its function as a fighting machine but in its vanguard role in the revolution. The mass organisations played the key role in organising and mobilising the masses. The Party, with its highly-disciplined membership, provided the mass organisations with leadership while at the same time nurturing new basic leaders among the masses who could then be recruited into the Party. The government played a relatively unimportant role, which was mainly to provide management for the whole system and coordination of the interests of various organisations and classes.

The whole government system was entirely new to rural society in North China, and demanded a new social order on which the system could rest. The war was destroying the old social system, by physically removing the richer people, those who could afford to flee. The war, however, offered nothing to replace the traditional authoritarian psychology rooted deeply both in the masses and also among the Party cadres. The Communists tried to design the whole government system so as to mobilise the peasants' activism by breaking down their fear of authority. The mass movements were assigned the crucial role of educating the masses and the cadres, to liberate themselves from the traditional Chinese system and its rigid distinction between leaders.
and led. In fact, mass movements and struggles were more effective in psychological breakthrough of the masses than all other efforts the CCP made to educate and indoctrinate them.

The mass movements were vitally important in the Communist revolution in the Yenan period not only because they were effective in mass psychological mobilisation but also because they affected significantly on the social and economic systems. They provided substantial assistance in changing the socioeconomic structure in rural North China. The following chapter examines one of the most important mass movements, the movement for rent reduction, as an example of breakthrough from political passivity to active participation of the masses in the political process set in motion by the Communists, as well as of changing socioeconomic structure.
CHAPTER V

RENT REDUCTION: THE CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE UNITED FRONT

The two mass movements discussed in this study, the rent reduction and the production movements, have been selected because of their outstanding importance among all the mass movements in this period. The importance of the rent reduction movement is readily apparent. The land question was one of the most critical and urgent in the Chinese economy, and land policy had been one of the basic points at issue between the KMT and the CCP. To the CCP, land policy was also directly concerned with the theory and practice of nationalism and the class struggle during the war of resistance. The rent reduction movement demanded, moreover, that the peasants confront the authority of the old ruling class, the landlords. This was one of the points of psychological breakthrough, eliminating, or at least reducing, the peasants' fear of the old authority, and giving them confidence in their own power and in the efficacy of Communists.

The significance of the production movement lay more in political organisation and leadership, quite apart from any economic benefits it produced. Because this movement was so closely bound up with the daily life of the peasantry, the production organisations set up during the movement had the advantage of enabling the CCP to carry out continuous political mobilisation of a substantial part of the population. At the same time, the practice of the selecting labour heroes provided the CCP with an effective body of leadership at the basic level, leadership which was already held in esteem by the masses and closely linked with their everyday life. The economic results of the production drive also had a political by-product, in that they gave the peasants confidence in their own strength and power.
The land policy of the CCP illustrates its concept of the relationship between nationalism and the class struggle, in a period when it gave priority to the former rather than the latter. A moderate land policy was one of the major Communist concessions to the KMT for collaboration in the anti-Japanese war. Even before the collaboration, however, the CCP had already modified its land policy in 1936, and it did not radicalise its 'rent and interest reduction' (chien-tsu chien-hsi) policy until 1946, long after its relations with the KMT had become 'strained', and long after the New Fourth Army Incident of 1941. Most writers, and the CCP itself, have argued that the CCP modified its land policy only for purposes of establishing the united front. But did the CCP have other reasons? Was the moderate land policy continued only in order to maintain what was left of the united front? If the united front was paramount, this implies that the CCP believed it could forego the essential confrontation of revolutionary class struggle, against the land-owning classes, and win the peasants to its side simply by appeals to this alleged 'nationalism'. But was 'nationalism' in itself really sufficiently meaningful to the peasants to enable the CCP to rely primarily on this appeal as a means of mobilising them for the war?

The fundamental question for the student of the Yenan period was also the fundamental question for the Chinese Communists; that is, what weight should be given to the class struggle and what weight to the united front. The CCP had to mobilise the masses for the war and revolution, but it also had to do so simply in order to survive extreme financial and military hardships. The Party actually gave up its radical land policy as soon as the Central Committee arrived in the north Shensi base in the last half of 1935, for its own economic and political reasons. It failed, however, to develop a theoretical basis for this shift in emphasis from the class struggle to nationalism against Japan.
This was one reason why the CCP suffered from 'rightist' and 'leftist' inclinations in the implementation of land policy, although it made great efforts to rectify such inclinations among the cadres.

Generally, the CCP does not seem to have been very enthusiastic in the implementation of its rent reduction policy during the Yenan period, particularly during the first part of this period. Its attitude to rent reduction contrasts clearly with its efforts in the production campaigns after 1943. It appears that the cadres were not sure how far they were permitted to carry the rent reduction struggle. It is certain, however, that even the moderate land policy helped to change the social system in the Chinese villages and to prepare the basis for Communist power.


The Chinese Communist land policy in the Yenan period can be divided into two stages; from 1937 to 1941 and from 1942 to 1945. In the first period the CCP announced the 'rent and interest reduction' policy and commenced its implementation. However, the cadres were occupied with establishing political power in the rapidly growing newly occupied areas, and they not only lacked the time, but in general were not eager to carry out the rent reduction policy in the villages. In the last two years of this period, the Party was confronted with a loss of momentum in the mass movement, and acute economic and military difficulties. In the second period, with the introduction of a clearly stipulated and detailed land policy by the Central Committee, rent reduction was carried out and its results began to affect the economy and the politics of the base areas.

The land policy of the Yenan period evolved gradually from 1935 to 1937, on the basis of the CCP's experience in implementing land policy in the Kiangsi and the North Shensi Soviet regions; it was not until
1941, however, that it was spelt out in detail, and it was only from January 1942 that the policy was translated into action. It is noteworthy that in land policy Mao Tse-tung, who established his leadership within the Party in 1935, had invariably been a 'rightist' opponent of the main current of the Party, and was attacked by the supreme Party leaders for promoting a 'rich peasant line'.\(^1\) It was to be expected, therefore, that he should try to moderate the land policy according to his 'rich peasant line' as soon as the Central Committee settled down in north Shensi, consistent with his other policies stressing the anti-Japanese struggle rather than the class struggle in contrast with the leftist main current of the Party. For Mao, however, these two struggles, national and class, were inseparable; the class struggle was an essential part of the national struggle, for the national struggle had to be borne by the masses.

The first moderation in the CCP's land policy in north Shensi, concerning the treatment of the rich peasants, was enunciated in Order No.2 of the Central Executive Committee of the Chinese Soviet Republic, issued on 15 December 1935.\(^2\) This order, which stipulated that the rich peasants' land, draught animals and farm appliances should not be confiscated except for land rented for "high rent of a feudalistic character,"\(^3\) was one of the products of the Wayaopo meeting of the Politburo in December 1935. Order No. 2 prohibited the imposition by local governments at all levels to guarantee the rich peasants' freedom to manage industry and commerce and to employ workers, although it still

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\(^1\) According to Hsiao Tso-liang, in the Kiangsi period, Mao was persistently in favour of a policy of preserving the rich peasants' productive power and was attacked by the Russian Returned Student group, who formed the leadership of the Central Committee, as a 'rightist'. Hsiao, *The Land Revolution in China 1930-1934*, (Tokyo: 1967), pp.20 and 49.

\(^2\) The text of this brief order on the rich peasant policy is given in *Mao Tse-tung chi*, Vol. 5, pp.13-14.

\(^3\) Ibid., p.13.
excluded the rich peasants from membership of the armed forces and denied them electoral rights. The major points of the new policy toward the rich peasants were mentioned also in the resolution of the Wayaopo meeting.

The rich peasant policy of this period corresponded with the Party's 'oppose Chiang and resist Japan' (Fan-Chiang k'ang-Jih) policy in the appeal for a united front against Japan. The CCP, however, had more practical reasons for its moderation toward the rich peasants. The 'anti-rich peasant' policy practised in previous years had damaged economic development in the soviet regions by depriving the rich peasants of the major part of their land, draught animals, farm appliances and capital which might be invested for production. Psychologically, the 'anti-rich peasant' policy antagonised the rich peasants and engendered in the middle peasants a sense of insecurity; particularly affected were the upper middle peasants, who feared being classified as rich peasants. The 'anti-rich peasant' policy undermined the rich and upper middle peasant economy.

In Mao's 'rich peasant line' there are two elements which are significant in relation to the later development of the Chinese revolution. One is economic; that is, Mao's concern to avoid destruction of the production power of the rich and upper middle peasants, the only potential for economic development in the Communist rural base.

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1 Ibid., pp.13-14.
2 The resolution, "Current Political Situation and the Party's Tasks" of 20 December 1935, written by Mao, was the first CCP document to show the general policy changes of the Party toward the formation of the anti-Japanese united front with the KMT. For the text, see ibid., pp.19-40, especially p.30 for the rich peasant policy.
areas. This concern stemmed from his experience of desperate economic conditions in the Kiangsi soviet regions. The other, related to the first, is political; that is, Mao's consistent desire to avoid isolation of the revolutionary force by winning over as many elements as possible in a given situation and attempting to isolate the primary enemy of the revolution. This was later developed fully into his theory of the united front. In December 1935, in his report to the Party activists' conference at Wayaopo, Mao denounced Party members who advocated:

The forces of the revolution must be pure, absolutely pure, and the road of the revolution must be straight, absolutely straight. Nothing is correct except what is literally recorded in Holy Writ. The national bourgeoisie is entirely and eternally counterrevolutionary. Not an inch must be conceded to the rich peasants.

He argued:

In order to attack the forces of the counterrevolution, what the revolutionary forces need today is to organize millions upon millions of the masses and move a mighty revolutionary army into action. The plain truth is that only a force of such magnitude can crush the Japanese imperialists and the traitors and collaborators. Therefore, united front tactics are the only Marxist-Leninist tactics. The tactics of closed-doorism are, on the contrary, the tactics of the regal isolationist....Its adherents' talk of the "pure" and the "straight" will be condemned by Marxist-Leninists and commended by the Japanese imperialists.

In these quotations one can see Mao's fundamental view of Marxism-Leninism; to him it was a revolutionary method. If his own methods or tactics were effective in promoting the Chinese revolution, they were Marxist-Leninist methods or tactics. Thus, Mao could claim that his tactics were 'the only Marxist-Leninist tactics' at a specific stage in the Chinese revolution. This is what is called Mao's 'Sinification of Marxism-Leninism'.

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3 Ibid., p.165. (My emphasis).
It may be assumed that the economic losses caused by the discouragement of the development of production by the rich and middle peasants were serious for the CCP. In north Shensi, one of the poorest and most backward areas in China, the CCP, controlling only about one million people, had to support 40,000 troops after the main part of the Red Army arrived from the south. The rich and middle peasants were, in fact, the only source on which the CCP could call for possible economic development. A policy shift to the 'rich peasant line', therefore, was not surprising in 1935-1936.

In May 1936, the CCP abandoned the 'oppose Chiang' policy in an open telegram to all partisans and armed forces in China, including the KMT; soon after, the Party called on the KMT to collaborate to fight the Japanese. The CCP's change in land policy thereafter was rationalised on the basis of its hope of reviving collaboration with the KMT, although it had other good reasons for wishing to correct the 'leftist' inclination in its land policy. The Central Soviet Government's Directive on Land Policy issued on 22 July 1936 stipulated that the rich peasants' land and spare production implements should not be uniformly confiscated; it made no mention of land or production implements rented for 'feudalist exploitation'. The rich peasants' land, however, was to be confiscated if the 'basic peasants' demanded it. The landlords and rich peasants were to be treated equally with other peasants in distribution after their land and other property were confiscated.

1 The English text of the major part of this open letter is given in Nao, I, pp.279-280.
2 See the CCP's open letter to the Second Plenary Session of the KMT Central Executive Committee in August and the CCP Central Committee's resolution in September 1936. The main part of these documents is given in English in Nao, I, pp.259-261.
3 Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 5, p.64.
4 Ibid., pp.63-64.
The directive indicated a significant change in CCP policy, and illustrates clearly the Party's aim of encouraging the rich and middle peasants. The definition of 'small holders' land, which was not to be confiscated, included land belonging to 'workers' (kung-jen) and obtained by their labour. But the surprising point was that 'worker' here did not mean 'factory worker', the usual meaning of this Chinese term, but 'all people who were working, no matter how much property they had'. The directive deliberately avoided the words landlord, land-owner or even land-holder, and substituted 'worker' instead. This is a significant change when one recalls that the CCP tried to eliminate the rich peasants in the Kiangsi period, regarding them as rural capitalists. The directive conformed exactly with what was called the 'rich peasant line' of Mao Tse-tung, and it later became one of the CCP's major policies in the production drive, typified in the 'Wu Man-yu campaign'.

In other words, the CCP changed its agrarian policy to provide an economic incentive for all classes, except for those living entirely on land rent and credit interest. A significant exception is made in the directive for 'national traitors' (han-chien), collaborators with the Japanese. The directive proclaims in its first article that all land and property of national traitors shall be confiscated, while the land of those who engaged in work for the resistance was not to be confiscated, regardless of class or the amount of property owned.

It should not be overlooked here that the CCP regarded this policy shift as a tactic to promote the revolution, the ultimate goal of which was communism. As Mao repeatedly stressed, "revolution always follows a tortuous road and never a straight one," and "[t]he alignment of

1 See below, Chapter VI, p.301.
forces in the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps can change," without any change of the ultimate goal of the revolution. The moderation of CCP land policy did not mean that the Chinese Communists had become merely 'agrarian reformers'.

The land policy of the CCP at this stage was limited to redistribution of land and other property. Equal distribution of land to former landlords and rich peasants was not really new, but had distinguished Mao's policy from that of the 'leftist' Russian Returned Student group in the Kiangsi period. What was new in the above directive of the Soviet Central Executive Committee was the simple distinction between the land of national traitors and that of resistance workers. In practice the CCP was at the same time moving to end all confiscation of land.

Wang Kuan-lan, Chairman of the Land Committee in the Northwestern Branch of the Central Soviet Government, told Edgar Snow on 20 July 1936:

At present estates are still expropriated, but the landlords are allowed to retain for their own use land sufficient to provide them an average income. Secondly, the land of rich peasants is no longer divided. Owners of farm enterprises are not expropriated as long as they remain on the land as managers or producer. In certain cases, if the peasants vote to confiscate a rich peasant's land, it will be divided. The Communists no longer emphasize this, however, and even if the peasants insist on it, the rich peasant family must still be allowed a portion to cultivate for its own needs.

In other words, the government will not encourage confiscation of any land except large estates, in this period. We are experimenting to see whether the poor peasants' support can be won without large-scale redistribution.

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2 Hsiao Tao-liang, op.cit., p.21.
3 Kawamura Yoshio argues that the non-confiscation policy towards landlords was an inevitable product of the CCP's adoption of a broad united front policy at the Wayaopo meeting, because the land revolution policy was contradictory to Mao's advocacy of a 'people's republic' which "may include those who are interested only in the national revolution and not in the agrarian revolution." Mao, I, p.166. Kawamura Yoshio, "En'an Jiki ni okeru Chūkō no Tochi Seisaku no Tenkai" (Development of the CCP's Land Policy in the Yenan Period), Ajia Keizai, Vol. 12, No.1 (January 1971), p.6.
Following the Sian Incident in December 1936, the CCP in its telegram to the KMT announced for the first time the policy of nonconfiscation of landlords' land, as one of four concessions to the KMT for the establishment of the united front. This telegram was both a basic document of the Second KMT-CCP collaboration, and the basis of the CCP's land policy in the Yenan period.

The policy shift from the confiscation of land to rent reduction was officially endorsed at the Lo-ch'uan meeting of the Politburo on 25 August 1937. This was an important meeting, in that it adopted the basic policies for the united front, which lasted until the end of the war, and which included what was known as the Ten-Point National Salvation Programme. According to Hu Hua, a Chinese Communist historian, this meeting decided to take the policy of rent and interest reduction as the basic policy for solving the peasants' problems in the period of the war against Japan.

Of the two changes in CCP land policy after the Central Committee's arrival in north Shensi, the first, the return to the 'rich peasant line' of Mao, was not necessarily a concession to the KMT, but the second, suspension of confiscation of land, apparently was a compromise for this purpose. It should be emphasised that not all landlords were the enemies of the CCP in the war period, partly because the forerunners of Chinese nationalism were intelligentsia and students, most of whom were from elite backgrounds, and the CCP needed to attract as many of these people as it could, particularly after the loss of so many young members in the battles against the KMT during the Kiangsi period and the Long March.

1 In a Central Committee telegram of 10 February 1937 to the Third Plenary Session of the KMT Fifth Central Committee. For English text of this telegram, See Mao, I, pp.282-283.
2 Hu Hua, op.cit., p.358. See also Mao, II, pp.23-28.
To the CCP, the losses it might suffer by giving up land redistribution were obviously outweighed by the potential gains. They could hope to encourage the rich and upper-middle peasants to continue to engage in production and to attract support from young intelligentsia and landlords, while at the same time making a concession which might please the Central Government. There were two main disadvantages. First, the middle and poor peasants' support for the CCP might be weakened, and secondly, the morale of the cadres might be undermined. It was possible, however, to overcome these disadvantages by education and propaganda. Particularly in the new areas which the Communists hoped to penetrate as a result of the collaboration, even rent and interest reduction together with progressive taxation, might be sufficient to attract support from the poor peasants.

The CCP took the Land Law of the KMT, promulgated by the Nanking Government in 1930, as the basis for its land policy. This Land Law limited rent on land to 37.5 percent of the crop yield. The CCP adopted the slogans 'Erh-wu chien-tsu' (reduce 25 percent of the original rent), and 'Fen-pan chien-shi' (reduce the annual interest to 15 percent). Although the CCP was sincere in introducing this policy, which in some parts of Communist-controlled areas and some hsien in the SKN Border Region, was actually put into effect, in the first three years the Party was rather more interested in expanding its influence in North China.

The shift in the CCP's land policy, therefore, involved two 'theoretical' questions. One was modification of the 'leftist' line for

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the Party's own advantage in pursuing the revolution, and the other was abandonment of the agrarian revolution for the sake of the united front. The former involved the question of class relations in the Chinese bourgeois revolution, and the latter, the status of landlords in the national liberation war. The CCP believed that these two problems had to be solved together in order to win over the broadest possible strata to the Communist side, and that to this end it was necessary to both 'leftist' and 'rightist' inclinations.

How, then, did the CCP implement its new land policy after 1937, particularly in the newly occupied areas? The policy was supposed to be acceptable to the tenants, and more tolerable for the landlords than land redistribution. But in the new rural bases in North China, which had never experienced any kind of land reform, many difficulties were encountered in the implementation, even of a moderate policy such as rent reduction. The problem was exacerbated by the CCP's indecision on land policy, reflected in the unsolved theoretical problem of the class struggle and the united front. In the first four years of the war, the Party fluctuated between the 'leftist' class struggle line and the 'rightist' united front line inclining more towards the latter. Accordingly, even the moderate rent reduction policy was not carried out rigorously throughout the base areas.


The land problem was understood by Mao Tse-tung in May 1937 to be one in which "the first question to be settled is whether China's land will be owned by the Japanese or by the Chinese." Here, Mao was implying that nationalism should be predominant over the class struggle. He did

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not mean, however, that the CCP no longer needed to do anything at all about the land-owning system. He continued:

Since the solution of the land problem of the peasants is predicated on the defence of China, it is absolutely necessary for us to turn from the method of forcible confiscation to appropriate new methods. It was necessary to solve the land problem, by methods other than forced confiscation.

The evidence tends to contradict a widely-held opinion, that the CCP 'abandoned' the class struggle by its shift from land redistribution to the rent reduction policy and the collaboration with the KMT. What the CCP changed was the method of attacking the problem of land, while still adhering to its ultimate commitment to transform the land-owning system. As Donald Gillin has observed, there were many ways for the CCP to carry out the class struggle other than land redistribution.

Significantly, Mao did not suggest what 'new methods' might be taken. According to Li: Po-ch'ü's report in 1939, the SKN Border Region government suspended the confiscation of landlords' land as early as March 1937. In May 1937, therefore, when Mao delivered the above report, he must have known what kind of 'new methods' were to be undertaken. But Lin's report also omits any reference to methods. It simply emphasises the arguments in favour of the suspension of land confiscation, and refers to the joint proclamation of the Government and the Rear Headquarters of the Eighth Route Army of May 1938 on protecting the "rights already secured by the people."

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1. Ibid. (My emphasis).
4. See Chapter II,Section 3. For the full text of the joint proclamation, see Mao, II, pp.75-77.
It must be assumed, then, that by 1939 the Party had not yet really determined what methods would be adopted. There was a general principle related to the class struggle, but the Party lacked a unified and detailed land policy. The principle given in the Party's Ten-Point Programme for National Salvation in August 1937, that is rent reduction. But this Programme does not stipulate to what extent the rent should be reduced. One of the three principles of land policy outlined in Lin Po-ch'ü's report was government non-interference in tenancy matters so long as the rent was reasonable. Yet Lin did not state what was considered to be a 'reasonable' rent. The Land Regulations promulgated by the First Assembly of the SKN Border Region in January 1939 attempted to protect tenants by obliging both landlords and tenants to make contracts, which had to include periods of tenure and 'reasonable' rents. But the Land Regulations still did not give any direction as to specific amounts which might be considered 'reasonable'.

Between the two policies of land redistribution and preservation of the existing land-owning and tenancy systems, there was room for considerable fluctuation, which continued for the first few years of the war. In fact, there is evidence that in the first few months of the war, possibly until as late as June 1938, the CCP tried to continue redistribution, at least of land belonging to 'national traitors'. Exemplifying the uncertainties in the specific implementation of land policy in this period are the two articles by Liu Shao-ch'i already discussed in part in Chapter II.

1 Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.15.
2 Ibid., p.15. See Chapter II, Section 3.
3 For the full text of the Regulations, see Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, pp.59-61. The article concerning tenancy is Article 17, p.61.
4 Liu Shao-ch'i's first article, op.cit., K'ang-chan i-lai chung-yao wen-chien hui-chi, p.27.
Although this concession [of confiscation of landlords' land] was correct and necessary, it cannot be said because of this that we do not advocate solving the land problem of the peasants in the stage of the war of resistance. We ended the policy of violent and direct confiscation of landlords' land, but we do advocate that the government should adopt laws and ordinances to solve the land problem of the peasants, to enable the peasants to obtain land and to make the tillers have their own land.

In the base areas of the guerrilla war, we have the following proposals on the peasant and land policy:

1. Confiscate national traitors' land and distribute it to the landless and small landowning peasants.
2. The land of landlords who have fled should be distributed to the peasants to cultivate without payment of rent.
3. The local public land should be distributed to the peasants.

Since Liu was in a position to implement these policies, it is probably the case that the Party tried to put them into practice at least in the bases the Party controlled in Shansi and Hopei Provinces. During this period of implementation the peasants became radicalised, with the result that the richer class came to fear the newly established Communist governments. This period, however, did not last long. The Party could not afford to fight the war without the support of the educated class, when its help was needed to establish and run new administrations.

In another article on the same subject in February 1938, Liu Shao-ch'i expressed a different opinion, which showed a retreat to a position which stressed appeasement of the landlords rather than improvement of the peasants' livelihood. He wrote:

In order to mobilise and organise the broadest masses to join the war of national salvation against Japan, ... the implementation of the policies to improve the masses' livelihood (such as reduction of excessively high land rent, ...) by the government is absolutely necessary. In the circumstances of guerrilla war, however, in the villages the stipulation of the highest limit of rent and guarantee of permanent tenure on land for the tenants ... could not be implemented for the time being.  

Liu's second article, cited above, K'ang-chan i-lai chung-yao wen-chien hui-chi, p.47.
Liu does not mention distribution of land to the peasants. He also asserts that it is necessary to win over the armed forces and staff of local puppet administrations rather than attacking them as national traitors, on the ground that most of them were forced into the service of the puppet administrations without any effective protection by the Chinese armed forces or the government. ¹

Liu Shao-ch'i justifies these departures from his earlier article by stating that the general principles proposed in the first article were generally correct. "But, on the ground of recent experiences, minor corrections should be made on several concrete questions." ² Although he does not explain what are general principles and what are not, he seems to be implying that the policies outlined in his first article are 'general principles', and their 'suspension' 'under the circumstances of guerrilla war' is a 'concrete question'. Alternatively, from a Cultural Revolution point of view, one might venture the suggestion that the indefinite line of the Party in land policy in this period was a reflection of the fact that Liu regarded land policy itself as a 'concrete question'.

Liu's second article suggests concern that radical mass 'struggles' against landlords and capitalists in the initial months of the war had made them antagonistic to the newly established guerrilla administration. It implies also that these 'struggles' made the local KMT elements suspicious of the CCP's goals. Repeated emphasis in the second article on the "unified command and leadership of the Central Government" and the "difficult circumstances of the guerrilla war in North China" also suggests the existence of serious disputes between the CCP and the KMT.

¹ Ibid., pp.48-49.
² Ibid., p.45.
on the question of radical mass 'struggles'. Liu's intention was to settle these disputes by adopting more moderate policies, including "strict avoidance of the struggle method." Surprisingly, he seems to have believed that the richer people could be made to cooperate with the Communists by the use of "methods of persuasion and mediation."

The general tone of this article implies that for the masses, mobilisation for the nationalist war necessitated some prospect for improvement in their material livelihood, but for the richer elements mobilisation could be effected simply by appeals to nationalism.

There is no evidence that either the CCP Central Committee or Mao disagreed with Liu specifically on the content of this second article, which outlined the establishment of a broad united front, to include even puppet military and administrative personnel, by temporary abandonment of the class struggle. But at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee in October 1938 Mao Tse-tung delivered a lengthy report entitled "On the New Stage," which took the same approach as Liu had done in the first of the above two articles, although Mao does stress the need for the united front and recognise KMT leadership in it. Mao does not mention redistribution of land in this report, but emphasises the improvement of the masses' livelihood by rent and interest reduction, increases in the workers' wages and so on, even in the war areas and behind the enemy lines.

The apparent differences between Liu and Mao may have derived from the different situations in which they worked, and from the different

1 Ibid., p.47.
2 Ibid.
3 The report consists of eight chapters, of which only Chapter 7 is included in Mao's Selected Works. For the original text, see Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 6, pp.162-263.
times at which their articles were written. Liu was engaged in setting up new army bases and administrative organisations in rural North China, where there had never been any rigorous attempt to carry out agrarian reform, and the power of the landlord-gentry had been preserved. Mao, on the other hand, was in the SKN Border Region which, as a result of ten years of Communist rule, no longer had a dominating landlord-gentry class. In February 1938 when Liu wrote his second article, the Japanese were still rapidly expanding their occupied areas and the KMT troops were fighting them in some parts of North China. In October 1938 when Mao delivered the report to the Sixth Plenum, Japanese expansion of occupied areas in China had reached its limit, the KMT troops had almost been swept from North China, and Mao was able to see the prospect of a protracted war within the Japanese-occupied areas.

Even to Mao himself, it seems that the contradiction between the national revolution and the class struggle was not solved at this stage. He emphasised the necessity of subordinating the class struggle to the national revolution; but at the same time, under this principle, the independence and initiative of the parties and classes and their essential rights "must be upheld within certain limits." He wrote in his concluding speech at the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee in early November 1938:

In a struggle that is national in character, the class struggle takes the form of national struggle, which demonstrates the identity between the two. On the one hand, for a given historical period the political and economic demands of the various classes must not be such as to disrupt co-operation; on the other hand, the demands of the national struggle (the need to resist Japan) should be the point of departure for all class struggle. Thus there is identity in the united front between unity and independence and between the national struggle and the class struggle.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Mao, II, p.215.
If one recalls that the significance of the Sixth Plenum lies mainly in the settlement of the long-standing dispute between Mao and Wang Ming, who was accused of being the promoter of the 'rightist line of everything through the united front', in favour of Mao's 'class struggle line', Mao's adherence to the class struggle line is to be expected. But in the context of the national crisis at this time, 1938, when the Japanese appeared to be invincible, it is surprising to find how very firmly Mao, now the chief theoretician of the CCP, held to the class struggle line. Even during a grave national crisis, he was reluctant to give up the class struggle altogether.

Mao's opinions on the class struggle and the national struggle in the above article, however, do not indicate what was to be done for the united front policy in practice at the village level. This left room for Liu, or anybody else, to 'sacrifice' the class struggle in the interest of maintaining the united front.

The Land Regulations of the SKN Border Region adopted in January 1939 were the first Communist land law in the Yenan period. The emphasis in this land law was on the protection of land ownership by proper registration of land, and on avoiding discouragement of cultivation. It contained only one article, already referred to above, dealing with tenancy, which decreed that landlords and tenants should make tenancy contracts bilaterally rather than unilaterally, that contracts should guarantee fixed periods of tenancy, and that rent should not be too high. The Regulations stipulated that land owned by national traitors should be confiscated and placed under the management of the hsiang govern-ment, which implied that it should not be distributed to the peasants.

1 Article 17, Shen-Kan-Ning pien-chü t'ü-ti t'iao-li, Shen-Kan-Ning pien-chü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.61.
2 Article 11, ibid.
In practice, however, it is reported that in SKN public land and national traitors' land continued to be distributed to the peasants, although this did not necessarily mean legal transfer of ownership.¹

Despite the evidence of Liu Shao-ch'i's later article and Mao's report to the Sixth Plenum, in which he says "[We should] start reducing rent and interest reasonably in the war areas and behind the enemy lines,"² it would be wrong to assume that the Communists did not reduce land rent and debt interest, even if their first concern was with establishing their guerrilla bases.³ According to Hsü Ti-hsin, a Communist economist, the Chin-Ch'a-Ch'i Border Region government decided in February 1938 to reduce land rent by 25 percent, and to prohibit landlords from obtaining any additional rent from their tenants other than grain rent. For the reduction of debt interest, the Chin-Ch'a-Ch'i Border Region Government ordered creditors not to demand more than 10 percent annual interest on all credits, irrespective of whether they were old or new.⁴ There is little source material on how the CCP implemented rent reduction policy in the newly occupied areas in these early years. The only available

¹ Hsü Ti-hsin, "Finance and Economy in the SKN Border Region and Anti-Japanese Base Areas behind the Enemy Lines" (Japanese translation from Chinese written in early 1940), Tōa Kenkyūjo, op.cit., p.116.
³ The CCP's concern with setting up new administrations in increasingly large regions is illustrated by the following statement from a Communist-compiled history of the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region: "In this period (1938-1939) the emphasis was basically on starting the war of resistance and on mobilising for the tasks of the war. Improvement of welfare and the struggle for democracy were still treated as a subordinate question." Chi'í Wu, op.cit., p.117. The CCP documents of this period put great emphasis on the nationalist task of maintaining collaboration with the KMT in order to continue the resistance to Japan.
⁴ Hsü Ti-hsin, op.cit., p.117.
article on land policy in the *Chieh-fang chou-k'an*,¹ "The Urgent Problem of Rent and Interest Reduction in Southeast Shansi," however, stated in March 1940 that two years had already passed since the Communists had begun to reduce rent and interest in Shansi.² They had at least tried to carry out the policy, but "had not yet been able to implement rent and interest reduction based on an upsurge of enthusiasm for the resistance among the masses in the base area, and had not mobilised or organised the broad masses."³

According to this article, rent reduction in this period depended mainly upon persuading landlords to reduce rent voluntarily. Although the article laid stress on eliminating fear of landlords among the peasants, it did not state what measures should be taken when landlords refuse to reduce rent. Emphasis was given to keeping the landlords within the united front for the war of resistance.⁴

On 1 November 1939, as the armed conflicts between the KMT and the CCP became increasingly serious, the Central Committee of the CCP distributed a "Decision on the Work of Deep Penetration into the Masses" to every leading organ of the Party.⁵ The purpose of the decision was to warn Party members of the probability of armed attacks of the KMT or Yen Hsi-shan on the CCP's administration. In order to ensure extensive Communist influence among the local masses after the Party's withdrawal, Party organs were asked to carry out rent and interest reduction

¹ The *Chieh-fang chou-k'an* was the central organ of the CCP until it became the *Chieh-fang jih-pao* in May 1941. A complete set of this magazine is unavailable.
² No. 102, 31 March 1940, p.12.
³ Ch'i Wu, op.cit., p.117.
⁴ The same article referred in Note 2 above, pp.13-14.
⁵ Ch'i Wu, op.cit., p.117. See Chapter II, pp.
immediately where they had not undertaken it, or, where they had already reduced land rent and debt interest, to examine the degree of its implementation.¹

The decision illustrates the point that in many areas under communist control rent and interest reduction had not been implemented at all, or else the cadres had been satisfied with only nominal implementation. The Central Committee was unhappy with this situation, particularly when the Party contemplated the outbreak of open hostilities with Yen and the KMT.² After this decision was taken, and with the impetus of the West Shansi Incident, the class struggle became radical at the basic level. According to Ch‘i Wu, the mass movement at this time, particularly in Shansi, fell easily into 'leftist deviation' through the vengeance of the peasants against the landlords, who were the basis of the Yen’s power. Another cause of 'leftist deviation' in the mass movement was a lack of experience on the part of most of the cadres, who had only recently been recruited and were impatient to act. Consequently, the united front at the village level was threatened with collapse in certain areas in Shansi.³

The more important fact is that when the CCP faced a crisis of survival, the united front, or the national struggle, was put aside and emphasis was given to the radical land policy, or the class struggle, to mobilise the masses and keep them on the Party’s side. This suggests that the Party was aware that, ultimately, it could not depend

¹ See Chapter II, pp. 72-74.
² The decision called on Party organs to arouse the masses and eliminate from the local administration the landlord elements who tried to interrupt political, social and economic reform for the improvement of the masses’ livelihood.
³ Ch‘i Wu, op.cit., pp.117-118.
on the united front, even in the period of nationalist war, and that it believed that a politically mobilised populace was the only reliable means by which the Party could ensure its own survival and drive the revolution forward.

In April 1940, the North Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP held a conference at Li-ch'eng in southeast Shansi for the purpose of correcting the 'leftist deviation' in the mass movement. The restraints on 'leftist deviation' imposed by the Li-ch'eng conferences resulted in the suppression of the mass movements in the Chin'Ch'a-Chi and the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Regions, although the conference called on the Joint Administrative Office of South Hopei and T'aihang, which was preparing to establish the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region, to implement rent and interest reduction. The Office enforced a rent reduction decree in August 1940.

It is interesting that the Central Committee wanted to arouse the masses to implement rent reduction in the base areas, whereas the North Bureau was rather more concerned with the problem of 'leftist deviation' than with rigorous mass work. This may reflect the uncertainty of the Party's attitude toward mass mobilisation, especially in land policy, although in 1939 and 1940 Mao himself became increasingly suspicious of the KMT's resolve to fight the Japanese, and began to suggest that the CCP and the proletariat should assume leadership in China's 'new democratic' revolution.

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 The change in Mao's concept of the leadership in the Chinese revolution is seen clearly in his two works, "On the New Stage," October 1938 and "On New Democracy," June 1940. Mao had repeatedly expressed his Party's willingness to accept Chiang Kai-shek and his leadership in the united front in 1937 and 1938. At the end of 1939, he began to advocate proletarian (in effect, CCP) leadership in the 'new democratic' revolution.
The apparent difference between the Central Committee and the North Bureau and land policy implementation, and on the general policy of mass mobilisation, is illustrated by the discussion of the Party documents above. The reasons for this difference are not clear from the evidence released so far, but it does at least exemplify the uncertain direction of the CCP's land policy in this period, and its fluctuation over time and even between different areas. Even in the SKN Border Region, where the Central Committee was located, the landlord-gentry power had been considerably undermined, "no official effort was made to implement rent reductions."¹

It took the CCP another two years from the Sixth Plenum to determine finally the course of its land policy in the resistance war, and in these two years, 1940 and 1941, the Party was to experience another and far more severe KMT armed attack, and the depredations of the Japanese 'three-all' policy. The promulgation of the Central Committee decision on land policy in January 1942 was also made against the background of the CCP's failure to reduce rent and interest rigorously, a failure which resulted partly in the Party's own difficulties in 1941 and 1942.


The date of issue of the Central Committee Decision on Land Policy in the Anti-Japanese Base Areas, ² 28 January 1942, indicates its relation to the Party rectification campaign which launched on 1 February of the same year. Having faced the onset of a crisis in 1941, the Central Committee seems to have concluded that something had to be done to

¹ Seldem, op.cit., p.230.
stimulate mass mobilisation as the only means by which the Party could survive the crisis. For this purpose, full implementation of rent and interest reduction was essential, and reeducation of cadres was also necessary in order to eliminate what was described as arrogant 'formalism' in mass work. The Party found it difficult to make young cadres, who wanted to fight the Japanese, understand the importance of mass mobilisation, which could not be achieved simply by issuing laws and decrees. But on the land problem, the first step the Party had to take was to formulate a clear and definite policy.

The decision makes an interesting observation which underlines the Central Committee's reasons for issuing such a directive at this time; that is, popular enthusiasm could be measured in proportion to the extent to which rent and interest reduction had been carried out:

In the areas where rent and interest reductions have been carried out more extensively, more rigorously, and more thoroughly, together with the guarantee of rent and interest collections, the enthusiasm with which the local people have participated in the anti-Japanese struggle and in democratic reconstruction (also) has been higher than elsewhere; furthermore, in these areas conditions of work are being kept up on a normal level, life is more stable and orderly, and the bases are generally firmly consolidated.1

The Central Committee now concluded that class struggle, or class relations, must form the basis for all other tasks and movements. This decision provides further evidence that the most critical factor, in the CCP's view, for mobilising the masses during the nationalist war was not nationalism, but class struggle as it related to the basic problem of production relations in rural China, the land problem. The Party later saw a similar correlation between land reform and the anti-KMT struggle (civil war) in 1946.2

1 Ibid., p.277.
The 1942 decision was the first official document outlining the CCP's land policy in detail since the Land Law of the Chinese Soviet Republic in 1931, which had adopted the anti-rich peasant line. By the 1942 decision, the Party officially changed this line into a so-called 'rich-peasant line', which meant that the production of rich peasants was to be protected, and the middle and poor peasants were to be encouraged to raise themselves by hard work to become rich peasants. This moderate 'rich peasant line' was an indication of Mao's confidence in the economic basis of the revolution, also in his united front theory which he appears to have completed working out in 1940. It embodied two targets, an attempt to bring about an increase in agricultural production while at the same time winning over both rich peasants and landlords.

The second guideline laid down by the decision was assistance to the peasants in reducing 'feudal exploitation' by the landlords, in carrying out reductions of rent and interest rates and in guaranteeing the civil liberties, and the political, economic and land rights of the peasants. In implementing this policy, the CCP did not want to enforce rent reduction from above, as much as it wanted the peasants to secure the reforms by their own efforts. The Party was only to assist them in reducing 'feudal exploitation'. This was an expression of the CCP's idea of how a mass movement should evolve. The masses themselves should 'transform the objective world, as well as their own subjective world, through a great mass struggle'. The struggle must come from the masses, since a favour bestowed from above cannot change their 'subjective world', even if it might change the 'objective world'. The CCP also believed that by only giving 'assistance' it could ensure that reforms gained by mass struggle could better withstand counterrevolutionary

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1 The full text of the Land Law of 1931 is available in English in Issao Tso-liang, op.cit., pp.186-190.
upsurge. This is why the Party left the promotion of rent reduction to the peasants associations, and insisted that the government itself should take a position of 'approving neutralism'.

Thirdly, the decision offered a compromise policy in which 'feudal exploitation' would be reduced but not eliminated entirely.\(^1\) The exceptions were 'stubbornly unrepentant traitors', against whom the policy of eliminating 'feudal exploitation' was to be adopted; that is, their land was to be confiscated.\(^2\) The decision adds that after the reduction of rent and interest rates, the collection of rent and interest and the landlords' civil liberties, and political, land and economic rights must be guaranteed.\(^3\)

The CCP's dual policy on land contained many difficult problems. On the one hand, the Party attempted a thorough execution of rent and interest reduction for the peasants, while on the other, it tried to guarantee rent and interest collection for the landlords. The Communist government was to force the landlords to reduce rates of rent and interest, but was also to force the tenants and debtors to pay rent and interest, even if at a reduced rate. The stated purpose was to enable the Party to win over both peasants and landlords.\(^4\) But the difficulty was that if the Party inclined either to the 'right' or to the 'left', it tended to lose the support either of the peasants or of the landlords, and in practice policy tended to veer to one side or the other. Avoidance of 'left' and 'right' inclinations depended very much upon the cadres who were in charge of actual implementation. And the decision admits

\(^1\) Brandt, et al., op.cit., p.278.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
that in many areas where rent reduction had not been implemented, the
main reason was not landlord resistance but the indifference and bureau-
cratic attitudes of the cadres.¹

The last two paragraphs of the decision are devoted to directives
to the cadres:

One must realize that there generally exists a wide gap between the
promulgation of laws and slogans and the implementation of such
laws and slogans. If bureaucratism is not punished harshly and
rightist tendencies unopposed, we shall not be able to implement
our laws and slogans.

The guarantee of rent and interest collection and the protection
of the landlord's civil, political, land, and economic rights are
the second aspect of our Party's land policy....We must explain
clearly the Party's policy, both within the Party and among the
peasant masses in order to ... enable them to understand that the
land policy of the Party in the anti-Japanese national united front
differs in certain basic respects from the land policy of civil
war days.²

While adherence to the decision was mandatory, it did not impose
rigid criteria for the implementation of rent reduction. In an appendix,
the decision allowed the guerrilla areas to take more moderate measures
according to different conditions, such as rent reduction by 20, 15 or
10 percent of prewar rent on all land in all the areas under Communist
control, irrespective of the status of landowners or the form of tenancy.³
Significantly, the Party did not allow any exemption from rent reduction,
unlike the Directive of the CCP Central Committee on Land Policy in 1936,
which listed a number of categories of land which were not to be
confiscated.⁴ Perhaps more significant is that, contrary to the belief
of the Central Committee, the peasant masses in the guerrilla areas were
even more radical than those in the old and well established bases; the
North Bureau, in fact, had to calm them down to keep the united front going.

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¹ Ibid., p.280.
² Ibid., p.281.
³ Ibid., p.282.
⁴ Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 5, p.64.
The decision adopts a moderate line on the land of public and national traitors. Land belonging to 'most criminal and notorious traitors' was to be confiscated and rented out, not distributed, to the peasants to farm, under the management of the government. But land owned by those who were 'forced' to become traitors, and land belonging to landlords who had fled, was not to be confiscated.\(^1\) Mao's concept of unity was applied here, as it was in the 1942 Party rectification campaign; that is, one should unite with 'sick' people, and not to liquidate them, by 'curing their disease'. To Mao, however, unity did not mean abandonment of the class struggle, but a broad united front to carry out the class struggle more effectively, by uniting with the middle elements to isolate and weaken the primary enemy.

It does seem, however, that non-distribution of land owned by the government, which included confiscated land, was not strictly observed by the land laws enforced in the base areas following the 1942 decision. For example, the Land Use Law of the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region which was amended in October 1942 in accordance with the decision, allowed public land to be distributed to disabled soldiers and their families, the poor dependants of anti-Japanese servicemen and poor peasants.\(^2\) The land rights law of the SKN Border Region in 1944 also allowed for distribution of public land to landless soldiers, their families, disabled soldiers, landless national minorities, refugees and migrants.\(^3\)

The decision was intended as the basis for the land laws of all base areas in China. It set forth principles for the reduction of rent

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3 Article 9, Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü ti-ch'üan t'iao-li (Regulations on Land Rights in the SKN Border Region), December 1944, Shen-Kan-Ning Pien-ch'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, pp.239-240.
and interest rates: "Rent should be reduced by twenty-five per cent from the pre-war rate for rent." At the same time it attempted to provide protection of tenure against predictable recapture of land by the landlords: "Both parties shall be encouraged to sign long-term contracts, for example, for five years or more, to enable the peasants to increase production with a feeling of security." The guarantee of the landlords' right to collect rent is stated in the following form: "If a tenant gives up cultivating the land for two years without reason or deliberately refuses to pay rentals even though capable of doing so, the owner of the land has the right to take the land back."¹

In these stipulations, one can see the point the Central Committee was driving at. The aim was not so much to protect the landlords' right to collect rent, even at reduced rates, as to reduce land rent and protect tenure for the tenants on a long-term basis. If they observed the above stipulations strictly, it was nearly impossible for landlords to recover their land. They had to wait for their tenants to give up cultivation for two years without reason, which practically never happened, or for them deliberately to refuse payment when capable of doing so, which, given the land hunger in North China, was extremely rare.

The principle of interest reduction in the 1942 decision is that "one and one-half per cent (per month) is to be the rate in calculating interest. If the total payment of interest exceeds the amount of the original capital of the loan, interest is to stop; (only) the capital is to be repaid. If the total payment of interest is double the amount of the capital, payment on both capital and interest are to be suspended."²

¹ Brandt et al., op.cit., p.283. (My emphasis).
² Ibid.
In a situation in which the majority of the rural population was indebted and interest-paying, the social impact of this stipulation can hardly be exaggerated. The problem of rural loans was part of the land problem, because payment of debt interest at extraordinary high rates was one of the major reasons for loss of land and other major property by the peasant masses.

Following the 1942 decision, every base area produced or amended its land law along the lines laid down in the decision. In February 1942 the SKN Border Region Government Council passed the Regulations on Land and Tenancy of the SKN Border Region. The Shantung Region enforced the Provisional Regulations on Tenancy of Shantung Province; the Amended Provisional Regulations on Land Use of the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region were enforced in October; and in February 1943, the Regulations on Tenancy and Rent and Interest of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region were promulgated. The purpose of these laws was partly to give an economic incentive for agricultural production by reducing rent and interest rates, as was that of the Central Committee decision itself, although their main purpose was socioeconomic transformation at the crucial level of 'production relations', land ownership. These purposes are stated explicitly in Article 1 of the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü land use law:

These regulations are enacted for the sake of consolidation for the resistance, of increasing production and improving the people's livelihood, based on the existing land relations, the circumstances behind the enemy lines and the Programme of the Resistance and National Reconstruction.¹

By the Central Committee decision, the CCP had established a land policy for the period of the united front, for the first time in four and half years of resistance war. It is significant that the land policy

¹ Amended Provisional Regulations on Land Use in the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region, Ch'i Wu, op.cit., p.310.
put more emphasis on implementation of rent reduction rather than on appeasement of the landlords. In other words, the line it represented is more one of class struggle than of 'nationalism', even though the rent reduction policy itself represented a compromise for the national struggle. The evidence seems to suggest that in the face of a serious military, economic and political crisis in 1941 and 1942, the Party realised that unless the peasants were mobilised for economic development and political participation, the Party would be unable to survive.

In the practical process of rent reduction, it is clear that the CCP carried out its land policy systematically only after the 1942 decision. In T'aihang-T'aiyüeh and south Hopei, for example, the Party began to implement the land policy in May 1942. It was, however, only after the enforcement of the Amended Provisional Regulations on Land Use in October 1942 that rent and interest reduction developed into an extensive mass movement, involving what is known as fan-shen or 'turnover', as part of the series of the mass movements in the same period throughout the Communist base areas. A similar process to that in Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü took place in the SKN Border Region. No editorial on rent reduction appeared in the Chieh-fang jih-pao until 5 December 1942, and news items on the subject before this date were more 'formal' than in the later period. This suggests that the Party had not yet given serious attention to the concrete process of rent reduction implementation at the basic level, or that the policy had not yet been carried out rigorously and that the concrete questions which normally emerge in the implementation process had not yet arisen.

Ch'i Wu, op.cit., p.120. Fan-shen in the context of the Communist revolution means that people change the social, economic and political order as well as their own way of thinking. In practice, it means that the people gain the 'fruits' of the struggle, in the form of tangible economic benefits, and that they eliminate their fatalism and fear of the old ruling class.
From the last half of November 1942 some advanced areas in the SKN Border Region introduced the policy at the village level. In other base areas the 'struggle' (the word struggle had been avoided in previous years in relation to rent reduction) for thorough implementation of the rent and interest reduction policy began in the same autumn, in a much more radical way than in the SKN Border Region. The Chieh-fang jih-pao of 14 December 1942 gave an example of Ma-t’ien-chen in Liao Hsien,\(^1\) the centre of the Communist stronghold in T’aihang Region in south Shansi. The rent reduction struggle there was sparked by the fact that drought had reduced the crop yield that autumn to 50-60 percent of that in a normal year, but the landlords still tried to collect rent on the basis of a normal harvest year. The tenants could not afford to pay the rent and, not surprisingly, became more enthusiastic about rent reduction than they had been before.

In this example at least, no indication of previous rent reduction was evident. Moreover, it seems that if it had not been for the bad harvest, the 'struggle' might not have even taken place. Even in the centre of one of the oldest Communist base areas, land policy seems not to have been widely implemented before 1941. Consequently, rent reduction in the base areas was necessarily a 'struggle'. Mass mobilisation in this particular area in the four year period when rent reduction was not carried out depended, presumably, on what Gillin calls "other reforms which revolutionized the existing social structure in Shansi by undermining profoundly the power of the rich."\(^2\) The main component of these 'other reforms' was taxation reform, which imposed heavy taxes on the richer 20 percent of village households which supplied nearly all economic

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\(^1\) Liao is now Tso Ch’üan which was renamed after one of the Communist military leaders who was killed in the war in 1942.
resources for the war and administration. This reform was carried out with the assistance of armed mass organisations consisting of young villagers.\footnote{See ibid., pp.282-286. See also the following section on taxation.}

Rent reduction and refunds in the case of Ma-tien-chen were carried out by the peasants themselves, organised by the peasants (national salvation) association. The Central Committee decision stipulates the task of the peasants association as:

to assist the government in carrying out the laws concerning the reductions of rent and interest rates. After the rent and interest rates have been reduced, its major task is to assist the government in mediating rural disputes and increasing agricultural production. It shall not, however, substitute its own decisions for government laws and orders, nor take the place of the administration.\footnote{Brandt, et al., op.cit., p.280. (My emphasis).}

In spite of this, the government and the army in Ma-tien-chen do not seem to have done more than promise their support to the peasants association in the rent reduction struggle. Apparently, however, the Party still assumed leadership within the association, because a member of the rent reduction committee was referred to as 'comrade' in the Chieh-fang jih-pao. The main 'struggle' by the peasant masses took only three days. None of the leaders was concerned to avoid violent struggle, and all leaders of mass organisations, the administration and the armed forces sought to carry out the struggle by any means possible. The case of Ma-tien-chen is worth discussing further, because it illustrates many aspects typical of rent reduction struggles in the base areas after the Central Committee decision.\footnote{The description of the struggle below is based on "Ma-tien-chen chien-tsou tou-cheng" (Rent Reduction Struggle at Ma-tien-chen), CPJP, 14 December 1942.}
Against a background of bad harvest in 1942 and greater concern among the peasants for the new rent reduction law than had been the case in previous years, the peasant association convened a small meeting of cadres to discuss the significance of a 25 percent rent reduction and a rent of 37.5 percent of the crop. The women's association also held a tenant women's meeting. On the day after these meetings, the peasants association called a meeting of peasants in and around Ma-tien-chen to demand a reduction and refund of rent. Eight hundred peasants arrived with empty grain bags to show their resolution to take back the excess rent they had paid over the years. The chairman and the district chief of the peasants association addressed the meeting in turn, the latter demanding to know what the government would do to assist in rent reduction. The peasants present demanded that the village headman be brought to the meeting to answer this question. The headman stated that, since the government had promulgated the rent reduction law, the excess rent collected by the landlords should be refunded: "If they won't give it back to you, the government will immediately punish them in accordance with law." The representative of troops stationed at Ma-tien-chen also declared support for the law of the resistance administration.

The peasants, now confident of victory in the struggle, demanded that the landlords be called to the meeting and decided to set up a rent reduction committee to calculate excess rent and to prevent deception by the landlords. When the landlords came to the meeting, they accepted all the demands of the peasants, agreed with the rent reduction committee's calculation of excess rent, and promised to refund it immediately after the meeting. After the meeting, however, some landlords fled, some refused to see the tenants at all and some threatened their tenants. The struggle now entered a new stage. The association decided to concentrate its forces on attacking the most powerful landlord, one called
Kuei Hê-cheng, in the belief that the other landlords would postpone action until they saw what Kuei was going to do. About fifty of Kuei's tenants led by the committee went to his house and told him that they would be there till he refunded the excess rent. After a day of stalling and prevarication, Kuei agreed to the peasants' demands. Having heard about Kuei's capitulation, some landlords went immediately to the peasants association office to announce that they would refund and reduce rent voluntarily, while the peasants, more confident than before and realising the extent of their power and the landlords' impotence, were able to complete the rent reduction struggle. In the process of this movement, the prestige of the peasants association and the government was heightened, and the relationship between the army and the peasants was improved.

The writer of this report, presumably one of the peasants association cadres from the district or hsien level, seems to have had little concern for the united front with the landlords; nor does he report that anyone tried to protect the landlords' interests for the sake of the united front, even though no landlords at Ma-tien-chen appears to have been a traitor. The report does not even mention the landlords' right to collect rent at reduced rates. The fact that this report appeared in the Party's central organ means that the Central Committee wished to propagate the example of Ma-tien-chen as one which embodied the necessary elements for success and which should be taken as a model for the rent reduction struggle elsewhere. This emphasis on reduction of rent rather than the united front runs throughout the articles and reports on rent reduction struggles in the Chieh-fang jih-pao after the Central Committee decision. The Party was far less concerned with maintaining the united front than it had been before, even in the base areas confronting the enemy.
It seems, therefore, that the Central Committee had determined to strengthen class struggle at the basic level, in the knowledge that this meant giving up to a certain extent support of the landlord class. Several reasons for this can be deduced. First, this time the KMT hostility to the CCP had erupted in numerous armed clashes, including the New Fourth Army Incident, and the CCP was forced to stand by itself. Secondly, Communist power in the base areas had been consolidated more firmly than in the early period of the war. Thirdly, the CCP had to mobilise the peasants to increase production by offering them certain economic incentives. Finally, if Liu Shao-ch'i was personally responsible for the policy of appeasement towards the richer class, it might not be coincidental that in 1941 he was sent to Central China to rebuild the New Fourth Army, as a consequence of which Mao's influence was strengthened within the North Bureau of the Central Committee.

In other words, the CCP had now established its policy of socio-economic transformation as preeminent, and taking precedence over the policy of uniting with the landlord class. The class struggle line was now more openly pursued. As the example of Ma-tien-chen indicates, in the process of the struggle the peasants became increasingly radical as they faced the recalcitrance of the landlords. By overcoming the landlords by violent measures backed by the moral support of the government and the army, the peasants became more confident of their power and freed themselves from the traditional fear of the landlords. Mass struggle, therefore, had been demonstrated as the best means of mass education and mass involvement in a new way of thinking and a new value system. In November 1945, when the CCP was more explicit about the class struggle, Mao wrote in an inner-Party directive:

Rent reduction must be the result of mass struggle, not a favour bestowed by the government. On this depends the success or failure of rent reduction. In the struggle for rent
reduction, excesses can hardly be avoided; as long as it is really a conscious struggle of the broad masses, any excesses that have occurred can be corrected afterwards. Only then can we persuade the masses and enable them to understand that it is in the interest of the peasants and the people as a whole to allow the landlords to make a living so that they will not help the Kuomintang."

In the SKN Border Region, the situation was somewhat different: rent reduction did not necessarily need to take the form of struggle, especially in those areas where the land revolution had been carried out. More landlords were cooperative with the Communists than in other base areas where they might expect the Japanese or the KMT army to defeat the Communists and protect their interests. In SKN, the main problem was not with landlords who resisted the reduction of rent, but with those who tried to repossess their land after the reduction. In other words, the SKN Border Region was an advanced region in respect of this land policy. Fewer landlords thought they could resist the reduction itself, but some tried to interrupt the process by utilising the guarantee of their legal land rights. The editorial in the Chieh-fang jih-pao for 6 December 1942 emphasised that the peasants could not be expected to campaign for a reduction of rent if they feared that they might next year lose the land they tilled. Therefore, it argued, the guarantee of tenure was the key to thorough implementation of the policy. An editorial arguing the same case appeared in the Chieh-fang jih-pao again on 28 December 1942. Both editorials referred only to the SKN Border Region.

The main measures adopted in SKN were meetings and 'persuasion'. There were 38 items on rent reduction in SKN in the Chieh-fang jih-pao in November and December 1942, and only a very few, which are reports from areas where land redistribution had not taken place, mention

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1 Mao, IV, p. 72.
violent struggle. Many of them refer to enlightened landlords who offered to refund or reduce rent voluntarily. Some of these enlightened landlords joined the rent reduction examination committees. Tenancy problems were settled mainly by joint meetings of landlords and tenants sponsored by the peasants associations. It is significant, however, that even in the SKN Border Region, radical rent reduction struggles were reported from some areas. As Mark Selden states, the emphasis on 'unity and stability' during the years from 1937 to 1941 favoured persistence of the old power relations, particularly in those relatively new areas of SKN where the land revolution had not been carried out.

The Central Committee decision on land policy brought an end to the fluctuations in the Party's land policy, and thereafter the CCP retained this document as the basis for its land policy, until the 'May Fourth directive' on land policy of the Central Committee in 1946. It seems, however, that the Party still found it difficult in practice to reduce rent 'rigorously and extensively' within a short period. A Communist survey reveals, for example, that in 1944 in the First District of P'ing-shan Hsien in T'aihang Region, in the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region, the rent on only 13.2 percent of rented land was less than 37.5 percent of the crop yield, whereas rent ranging from 40 to 80 percent of the crop accounted for 80 percent of rented land, and the remaining 6.8 percent

1 CFJP, 23 November, 18, 23, and 27
2 For example, 24, 25 and 27 November, 1 and 13 December, and so on.
3 CFJP, 25 November 1942.
4 A typical meeting is described in the CFJP, 3 December 1942, "Chi Ching­yang Hsin-pu ch'ü i-kō tsu-tien hui-i" (On a Meeting on Tenancy at Hsin-pu District, Ching-yang Hsien).
6 Ibid., pp.234-236.
of rented land was rented at more than 80 percent of crop yield. This was not an exceptional case, at least in the T'aihang Region; in many other hsien such as He-shun, Li-ch'eng, She and Ts'an-huang, rent of about 60 percent was quite common. It should be noted that these hsien were old Communist base areas where Communist power was supposed to have been firmly established since 1938. This suggests that even though the CCP adopted a defined land policy and attempted to mobilise the peasants for the class struggle, deep rooted fears of the landlords were not easily swept away. Implementation of a radical land policy was one of the most difficult tasks faced by the Party, because it required that the long-oppressed people should stand up and face directly their still-powerful oppressors.

Nevertheless, after 1942 mass campaigns for rent and interest reduction were carried out every autumn and winter when rent was paid. 'Speaking bitterness', which later became one of the most powerful weapons of the CCP in the prosecution of mass movements, was an increasingly popular device. Persuasion, or 'talking reasonably' (shuo-tao-li or shuo-li) to the landlords to reduce rent, which had been practised widely before 1942, was now transformed into persuasion 'struggle' (shuo-li: tou-cheng), by which landlords were frightened or forced to accede.

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1 T'aihang tang-wei yen-chiu-shih, "T'aihang ch'i she-hui ching-chi tsa-ch'a ti-erh-chi" (Social and Economic Investigation in the T'aihang Region), (n.p.: 1945), quoted in Ch'i Wu., op.cit., p.122.
2 Ibid.
3 'Speaking bitterness' (su-k'u) is a technique by which the people talk at meetings about hardships and sufferings, with the purpose of airing personal resentments and stirring up class hatred. This technique was used extensively in the Civil War period. Jack Belden notes its psychological effect on the poor peasants, who had never before expected to talk at meetings. See Belden, op.cit., pp.162-163.
4 Ch'i Wu. op.cit., p.121.
5 Ibid.
Furthermore, an 'examination of rent reduction campaign' (ch'a-chien gên-tung) was introduced where rent had already been reduced, in order to check on landlords' attempts to raise rent, to repossess rented land, to demand secret additional rent, or not to reduce actual rent in spite of formal reduction. In effect, rent reduction became a mass movement or mass struggle after 1942. This new resolution on the part of the Party seems to have reduced the fear of the landlords among the peasants and to have increased their trust in the Communist government. It has been claimed by CCP sources that in roughly two-thirds of Communist-controlled areas, rent reduction had been implemented thoroughly before the Japanese surrender.

Although the CCP's land policy did not aim at redistributing land, the rent reduction policy, together with progressive taxation and the production campaign, helped to change the pattern of land ownership. Given below are two examples of shifts in land ownership in the base areas.

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1 The SKN Border Region carried out ch'a-chien campaign in the winter of 1942/43. In the winter of 1944/45, the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Border Region launched a campaign of ch'a-chien, which contributed to transforming land ownership relations in the Region. Ch'i Wu, op.cit., pp.126-127. See Table 1 below.

2 Meng hsien-chang, Chung-kuo chin-tai ching-chi shih chiao-ch'eng (Textbook on Modern Chinese Economic History), (Shanghai: 1951), p 207.
TABLE 1  Land ownership before and after rent reduction: 15 villages of the 12 Hazen in T'aihang Region in the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yu Border Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before May 1942</th>
<th>After May 1942</th>
<th>1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent-</td>
<td>Percent-</td>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>age of house-</td>
<td>age of land</td>
<td>amount of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>holds</td>
<td>owned in</td>
<td>held owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>average</td>
<td>in average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>23.40</td>
<td>99.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Landlord</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>37.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Peasant</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>18.68</td>
<td>30.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Peasant</td>
<td>37.80</td>
<td>37.02</td>
<td>11.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Peasant</td>
<td>48.95</td>
<td>18.98</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired Farmhand</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The point which emerges strongly from examination of the CCP's post-1942 land policy and is confirmed by these figures is that in practice the CCP did intend to change land ownership by its rent reduction policy. In practice, the government encouraged peasants to buy land, and gave the tenants priority if they wished to purchase the land they actually tilled. Because tenancy was not now so profitable as before, landlords were discouraged from maintaining land ownership and the price of land fell, giving the peasants a better chance of purchasing land.

The Central Committee decision on land policy contained a stipulation on the priority accorded to the tenants:

When a landowner, at the expiration of rent contract, wants to re-rent his land, mortgage, or sell it, the

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2 This was reinforced by progressive income-property tax which landlords had to pay on their income from rent and their land rented out. See the following section on taxation system.
original tenant has the priority, if other
conditions are equal, in renting, buying,
or taking the mortgage on the land in
question.

In circumstances where the benefits derived by the peasants from
Communist leadership might be lost if Communist rule was overthrown,
the peasants naturally saw it in their own interests to prolong
Communist rule. To the extent that the CCP's policy brought to the
peasants economic and political benefits which neither of its rivals
provided, the CCP identified itself with the peasants, even though
its policy may have been ambiguous.

The policies and campaigns of the CCP must be seen as inter-
related, but generally speaking, the CCP was concerned less with rent
reduction itself than with the production campaign, particularly after
1943. The 1942 Central Committee decision on land policy indicates
that one of the major purposes of rent reduction was to provide the
peasants with an incentive for increasing production. The improve-
ment of the peasants' livelihood under the Communist regime depended
more upon their own efforts in the production drive than on rent
reduction: the production drive did not require the solution of
theoretical questions of the national and class struggles. Until
1946, it seems that Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues in the Central
Committee had given little thought to going beyond the 1942 decision.

Nor were they happy with resort to violent measures to force the

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1 Brandt et al., op. cit., p.283.

2 The Japanese did not intend to make any change in the Chinese social
or economic system, although their military operations unintention-
ally liquidated what they wanted to preserve. But they were too busy
with military campaigns and with establishing puppet administrative
systems to be concerned with the livelihood of the basic people.
In the areas under the KMT, rent was actually raised during the war,
because of the increased land prices caused by the flight of capital
from the coastal cities, which was invested in land. Additional
taxes for the war, imposed on a limited number of people in relatively
small areas, lowered living standards among the peasants. Above all,
the KMT did not believe that its social and economic reform programmes
could be implemented under war conditions.
landlords to reduce rent, even though new circumstances after 1944 seemed to require such measures. When the war situation turned in favour of the CCP in the spring of 1944, the CCP had to face a real problem of vigorous class antagonism in the areas newly captured from the Japanese. 'Anti-traitor accounts settling' (fan-chien ch'ing-suan) struggles, accompanied by violence, were often beyond the control of the Communist cadres.

The landlords themselves were also the victims of war and therefore could be allies of the peasants in the anti-Japanese war. As a class, however, they were reluctant to give up, without resistance, the economic benefits they had held for centuries. The class struggle was necessarily more visible and more acute in the guerrilla areas, where the two political forces, one of which favoured giving some economic and political benefits to the peasants at the expense of the landlords, and the other which favoured preserving the old economic and social relations, were engaged in a military struggle to defeat each other. It was to be expected, therefore, that more radical class antagonisms appeared in the border areas and also in newly occupied areas. The CCP was to experience this phenomenon over increasingly larger areas in 1945, and it was finally pushed to introduce more and more radical land policies in 1946 and 1947. The theoretical dilemma between the national and the class struggle was resolved in favour of the latter on the basis of the identity of interests between the CCP and the peasants.¹

4. The Taxation System

In the Yenan period the CCP tried to solve the contradiction between the united front and the class struggle, in the rent reduction policy, and also in its fiscal policies, particularly in the progressive taxation system which was officially based on the KMT principle 'yu-ch'ien ch'u-

¹ At the end of the war, Mao's recognition of the economic and political significance of the peasants' improved livelihood for the Party's survival became clear, even though he wanted to maintain the rent reduction policy and the collaboration with the KMT. See "On Coalition Government," Mao, WJ, especially pp. 299-301.
ch’ien’ (those who have money must contribute money [for the resistance]).

Although progressive taxation was no more than a moderate 'bourgeois democratic' system of finance, it was quite revolutionary in rural China. But it was still a compromise. By the progressive taxation system, the Party attempted to ease the heavy financial burden on the peasants as well as to appease the landlords by imposing tax on 80 percent of the people. However, as in the process of the rent reduction 'struggle', mass political mobilisation in the process of tax collection allowed the Party to go beyond the simple objective of progressive taxation to involve the peasants in the political process.

The CCP's use of taxation illustrates its practice of exploiting every opportunity for mass politicisation and transformation of class and human relations at the basic level of society. A feature of the Communist taxation system, particularly after 1941, is that the argument presented to the peasant masses to persuade them to accept reasonable taxation were primarily socioeconomic. Chalmers Johnson's argument about mass nationalism does not work here. Nationalism does not appear to have been a factor in the peasants' response, nor did the CCP use the nationalist cause in taxation programme.

The CCP started to modernise the taxation system as soon as the base areas were established. In the SKN Border Region the Communists abolished 43 kinds of taxes and levies, and had adopted a unified taxation system by 1937.1 The Border Region government issued a taxation decree every year, in which it stipulated the total amount of tax to be collected in grain, mainly millet and wheat, twice a year after harvest, which was assessed on property and income.2 Before 1941, when the CCP could depend on Kuomintang financial assistance, and the taxation system in the base areas other than SKN was not well established, tax tended to imposed only on the richer 50 percent.

1 Lin Po-ch'u's report in 1939, Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü ts'an-i-hui wen-hsin huí-chi, p.25.
2 For the amounts of the grain tax collected in each year from 1937 to 1945 in the SKN Border Region, see Selden, op. cit., p.182.
This was a reflection of Communist radicalism in the early war period, but the main reason was that the Party could impose a lighter burden on the people because of the Central Government subsidy and the CCP's simple 'guerilla' type administration.

In Shansi Province, for example, where in 1935 Yen Hsi-shan had unified taxes into one property-income tax and adopted a policy of 'reasonable burden', the CCP was able to build on this system in 1938 when it set up the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region and other bases in Shansi. The village office was made responsible for assessing the villagers' economic conditions, on the basis of property, income, the number of family members, daily expenses, etc. In practice, under this system a heavy allocation of tax fell on the richer people, in accordance with the Kuomintang slogan 'yu-ch'ien ch'u ch'ien' and by giving power to the armed mass organisations in the village. Gillin, for example, states:

In areas occupied by the Eighth Route Army, taxes were reduced drastically, and frequently were abolished altogether. This policy endeared the Communists to the average farmer because in an effort to raise capital for his ten-year plan of economic development, Yen Hsi-shan had taxed his subjects unmercifully and these taxes had been collected, for the most part, from the peasants rather than the gentry. Then, the 'mobilisation committees' requisitioned from the gentry what was needed in the way of supplies for the armed forces or funds to support their own operations. This means that the rich were forced to bear virtually the entire cost of the war against Japan.

... Gentry who refused to sacrifice their wealth were denounced in public and subjected to intense pressure from mass organisations. If they continued to resist, their belongings were seized by the armed peasants who made up the 'People's Self-Defence Corps'. This whole process had profoundly revolutionary overtones.

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1 For the KMT subsidy to the CCP, and the impact of its cessation in 1941 on the SKN economy, which was accompanied with other difficulties, see Selden, op.cit., pp.139 & 177-181.
A Japanese military source confirms the burden of taxation on the rich, citing the example of San-ch'i Village in the Fourth District in Hé-shun Prefecture in Shansi, where 21 richer families were levied 60 percent of the tax for the whole village, 96 ordinary peasant families paid about 40 percent, and 60 poor peasant families were not only exempt from taxation but obtained a subsidy from the government.\(^1\)

A contemporary article by a Communist economist also confirms that in the early years of the war the Communist guerrilla administrations tended to impose heavy taxes and levies on the landlords and rich peasants. This article gives figures for the Central Hopei base; only 40 to 60 percent of the rural population paid taxes, and the remaining 60 to 40 percent of poor people were exempt from taxation.\(^2\) According to Gillin, moreover, in Shansi at least 'traitors' often included those rich people who refused to pay the heavy taxes and requisitions imposed on them.\(^3\)

As Gillin has demonstrated, this radical taxation system was presumably the main factor in the Communist success in the base areas in the early period, assisted by the disciplined and cooperative behaviour of the Communist army\(^4\) and despite the failure to implement rent reduction policy.

By 1940, however, faced with the increased hostility of the KMT and the intensified Japanese campaigns, the CCP had difficulties in maintaining the 'guerrilla' type taxation system. A contributing factor was increased government expense as new administrative institutions were established and expanded.\(^5\) Inflation was serious, and in the SKN Border Region the Communist government had to 'borrow' 50,000

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2. Li Ch'eng-jui, op. cit., p. 102.
4. Ibid., pp. 276-277 and 282-286.
piculs of grain from the people in addition to the 90,000 piculs of
grain tax collected in 1940, which was already more than double that
collected in the previous year.¹

According to the Border Region Assembly Resolution on the Taxation
question in January 1941, the SKN Border Region government was aware of
the shortcomings in its taxation system. There were inequalities in
the allocation of tax because of the lack of correct information on
property and income. Some former landlords were still subject to
heavier tax in spite of the fact that they were no longer rich after
land reform. Some taxation officers made private profits from their
collection. In some areas, undue burdens were imposed on a small
number of the people.² These shortcomings indicate that in SKN
the same 'leftist' taxation policy was executed before 1940,³ and also
that the Party had to contend with the problem of corruption.

To correct these shortcomings, the same resolution of the Border
Region Assembly proposed a unified agricultural taxation, on the
following principles:

1. Investigation of public and private property and income
   should be carried out in order to lay a rational basis for
taxation

2. Irrespective of occupation, at least 80 percent of the
   people should share the burden, on the basis of progressive
taxation on their property and income.

3. The rate of progressive taxation should be suited to
   the actual economic situation of the people of all strata.

¹ "Lun cheng kung-liang kung-ts’ai" (On the collection of Public
Grain and Public Hay), editorial, CFJP, 15 October 1941. The figures of
90,000 and 200,000 piculs for grain tax collected in 1940 and 1941 res-
pectively, given by Li Ch‘eng-jui and also Mao Ts-tung, should be read
140,000 and 150,000 piculs respectively. For the government in practice
collected a total of 140,000 piculs in 1941, and 50,000 piculs out of
200,000 piculs of grain tax collected in 1941 were repaid to the people.
² Selden, op. cit., p. 182 and Mao, III, p.113.
³ In Fo-ch‘u’s government report in 1941, Shen-Kan-Ning pien-oh’ü ts’an-i-
lien hsien hai-chi, p. 102
4. In the village only the village assembly and villagers' meeting should have power to impose the tax.
5. Corrupt public servants should be punished by law.
6. Without Border Region Assembly approval, there should be no increase in tax.
7. The government should be responsible for all requisitioning of property and goods.¹

The first three points were designed mainly to spread the tax burden to more people and to raise the sliding scale of progressive taxation, which reflected the economic difficulties of the Border Region.² At the same time, this reform of the taxation system embodied other objectives, i.e., unification of tax collection, elimination of corruption, consolidation of the united front, and above all, carrying administration and mass political mobilisation into the village. For the first time, the CCP sent work teams to each level of local government down to hsiang level. The purpose might have been the collection of drastically increased taxes, but it also worked for the penetration of Communist policies into the basic level of rural society.

Reform of the taxation systems occurred in other base areas at the same time as in the SKN Border Region. The 'Tentative Measures for Unified Progressive Taxation in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region' were issued in November 1940. Communist newspapers wrote that since the 'reasonable burden' system was based on the village unit, there were

¹ Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'u ts'an-i-hui wen-hsien hui-chi, p.103.
² For the Communist efforts to fill the gap left by the cessation of the KMT subsidy, see Selden, op.cit., pp.183-184.
inequalities in the amount of tax levied on each village. 1 Michael Lindsay, who was in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region from early 1942, reports that during 1942 "the exemption limit lowered and the rate on high incomes [was] reduced." He reports also that it was at this time that the administration gained "a great deal of statistical material hitherto unavailable in China" by collecting assessment forms on agricultural land filled out by the taxpayers themselves. 2

The principles of the 'Tentative Measures' of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region were direct taxation; taxation in currency, grain or flour once a year; exemption of public property, stock animals and investment for industry, irrigation and cooperatives; exemption of income from manual and intellectual labour; subsidies for soldiers' families and the wounded in war; exemption of income of public enterprises, property, income of government and other organisations; and a 12 grade division of property and income, with a progressive rate of 10 percent for grades 1 to 6 and 20 percent for grades 7 to 12. Besides these measures, income from newly reclaimed land was exempt from taxation for three years, and the owners of industrial enterprises were exempt from taxation on wages and food for workers. 3

According to A Lecture on the Unified Progressive Taxation by the Po-yeh Hsien Inspection Committee for the Unified Progressive Taxation, the merits of the new taxation of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region were the abolition of more than twenty kinds of tax, and the unification of the tax collection organs. Apart from the single income-property tax, only export-import tax and contract tax remained. Tax was imposed once a year and collected twice a year after harvest, and only the

1 Tada Corps, op. cit., p. 299.
3 Quoted in Tada Corps, op. cit., pp. 300-303.
Border Region government and the village office had responsibility and power for collecting tax. In reality, however, this reform had a purpose not mentioned in the Communist document cited above; that is, as in SKN, the aim was to collect more taxes from an increased number of people. The sliding scale starting from 10 percent was the same as that in SKN, which was increased from the original one percent in 1941. If one recalls that the poorer half of the population had been virtually exempt from taxation from 1937 to 1940, the CCP's intention in collecting tax from a broader section of the people is readily apparent.

In the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yu Border Region in April 1940, the Li-ch'eng conference of the North Bureau of the CCP adopted a programme of tzu-li keng-sheng for economic and financial work. Under this programme, the conference decided to set up a unified financial system, in which taxation should be below 30 percent of the people's income. The conference decided to collect export-import taxes on trade with areas outside the Border Region. In September 1940, P'eng Teh-huai presented the unified progressive taxation to the senior cadres conference of the North Bureau. This system was implemented in the T'aihang Region from 1941 and the guerrilla bases implemented a simple and temporary method of progressive taxation.

The government report of the Central Shantung Region in July 1945 describes three undesirable characteristics of the taxation system in the period until 1940:

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1 Quoted in ibid., pp.303-304.
2 Ibid., p.154. Although no source material is available for the taxation system in the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yu Border Region, it was presumably similar to that in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region, because of integrated control of the North Bureau over these regions.
1. The troops levied supplies directly from the people.

2. The burden on the people was not fixed and finances were in chaos.

3. An unfairly heavy burden was imposed on the rich people.

In 1941-42, the administration system was gradually consolidated and taxation was organised first into a temporary 'reasonable burden' system and later into a 'unified progressive taxation', while at the same time the CCP intended to impose taxes on the great majority of the people.

The process of tax collection in these difficult years presents an interesting example of the CCP's practice of turning policy-implementation into a mass movement. Adequate source materials are available only for the SKN Border Region and the description below is drawn mainly from the Chih-fang jih-pao.

In SKN, from 1941 the process of tax collection was divided into three stages: investigation and propaganda, tax collection and concentration of grain into store houses. Normally, the first stage took about twenty days while the second and third stages took fifteen days each. In the first stage the Border Region government sent work teams, consisting of several cadres who were members of financial department of the Border Region government or the Party, to the subregion and hsiem for publicising the taxation decree and helping the hsiem

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1 'The troops' here probably mean local non-Communist guerrillas.
2 Lu-chung hsing-cheng kung-shu, op. cit., p. 36.
3 According to Michael Lindsay, in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region, the grain was stored locally and issued to the army supply department or government organisation against grain tickets given out by a special government department in control of the system. Under normal conditions in the base areas the army was supplied its grain through the local supply department, but in the guerrilla areas or during a Japanese offensive each unit carried its own grain tickets and was able to get supplies from almost any village. North China Front, p. 18. This local storing system seems to have been adopted throughout the Communist areas including SKN.
government in the work of investigation and propaganda. The subregion and hsien administration also organised and sent work teams to lower levels.

Investigation supplied the administration with information about the people's property and income, while propaganda was meant to convince the people of the significance of and justification for taxation. Investigation had two phases: formal and informal. In the former, the taxpayers made reports on their own assessment of their property and income, which was usually lower than the actual amount. The latter was intended to find out how accurate the taxpayer's own assessment was, and to correct it when it was not accurate by seeking information from various people. A system by which villagers made their reports at the village meeting was regarded as the best way of ensuring that their own assessments were honest and accurate. At the meeting, the village government first explained the importance of an honest and accurate assessment and the government's taxation policy and decrees. Party members and cadres were then supposed to make 'good' reports for use as models by the other villagers.¹

It was an entirely new experience for the villagers to be consulted by the government on the tax they were to pay. The government asked them to report their economic situation for purposes of assessing taxation. More important was that the villagers had to describe their own economic conditions in front of the government cadres and their fellow villagers. This was significant psychologically. The family still remained the basic production unit in the village, and revealing their situation to the whole village required, first, that the villagers should trust the government not to impose an unbearably heavy tax on them or allocate inequitable tax, and secondly, that they should trust their fellow

¹ P'eng Hsieh-chung, "Ts'en-yang tiao-ch'a ts'ai-hui cheng-chieh?" (How Can the Investigation be Accurate?), CPJP, 12 November 1942.
villagers. By revealing their economic situation openly to the government and the other villagers, the peasants perceived themselves as part of the social and political system. This was one of the ways in which the CCP strengthened the peasants' horizontal and vertical ties with their fellow peasants and with the Communist authority. If the work team could convince the peasants of the need for heavy taxation, the peasants would be willing to share their hardships with the government and might be more easily available for later mobilisation because of the improved relationship between them and the government.

The village taxation board, which was composed of cadres from the village office, the Party branch, mass organisations, and some active and 'respectable' villagers, inspected the assessment reports, and decided the amount of tax to be paid by each household in the village. According to a Directive Letter of the Finance Department of the Border Region Government of the Autumn Tax Collection, the village taxation board was supposed to assume power for tax collection, and the work teams from the higher level administration were supposed only to help them. The board had to publicise the assessment of tax on each household and collect the villagers' criticisms and opinions. A new assessment, corrected by the board on the basis of criticisms and opinions, was presented to a village mass meeting, when the final assessment was made.

In the meantime the taxation workers, including the work teams from the higher level administration, collected information about the property

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1 "Wan-chung fen-ch'ii cheng-liang chin-kuo" (Tax Collection Process in Kuan-chung Subregion), CFJP, 26 December 1942. In 1944 the Border Region government warned the lower level administration that the members of the village board should represent all strata and not be selected simply because of the ability to write and calculate. CFJP, 26 November 1944.

2 "Ts'ai-cheng t'ing ch'iu-cheng chih-shih hsien," No. 3, dated 30 November, 1942, CFJP, 6 December 1942.
and income of every family in the village; this was the informal 
phase of the investigation. Although the process of tax assessment 
illustrates the government's concern to be fair to the taxpayers, 
the government still assumed the possibility of collective deception 
by the villagers and incorrect reports based on personal grievances. 
According to one report, the most reliable source of informal 
information was native cadres, but other useful sources were farm 
hands on the subject of their employers, loafers who usually knew the 
financial situation of the richer people, shepherds who were simple- 
minded, and older villagers who had more time to talk about others. 
The taxation workers collected information by chatting with people they 
encountered as they went about the village, and by helping villagers 
solve difficulties in their daily lives, for example, by settling 
quarrels among the villagers or by giving medicine to the sick. 1 
There were also inspections of the harvest on the spot, of the daily 
consumption of families, and of haystacks, which indicated the scale 
of cultivation. 2

The Chieh-fang jih-pao repeatedly reminded the taxation workers 
that the investigation was for fair taxation, which meant that the 
assessment of tax resulting from the investigation had to be convincing 
to the villagers. The most preferred method of summing up the 
investigation was a joint conference of the village headmen and the 
work team members at the hsien level. The joint conference studied 
and discussed the investigation, and decided standards and methods for 
tax collection. 3

The taxation programme was accompanied by special propaganda. The

1 Ch'eng Mu, "Tiao-ch'a ti fang-fa fang-shih" (Methods and Manners of the 
investigation), CPJP, 2 December 1942.
2 Ibid.
3 "Ts'ai-cheng t'ing ch'iu-cheng chih-shih hsin," No. 3.
basic task of this propaganda was to provide the peasants with an answer to the question 'why do the people have to pay tax?' The answer given by the Northwest Bureau of the CCP was as follows: Without taxation neither the war against Japan nor the defence of the Border Region against the KMT could be maintained. Once the Border Region fell into Japanese or KMT hands, not only would taxation be several times heavier but the people would also suffer under a dictatorship. Propaganda also had to answer specific questions raised, for example, about the reasons why tax had doubled from the previous year and why hay was levied for military and transportation purposes.

The government sought to convince the people that the Border Region needed that amount of grain and hay for maintaining the war and for defence. It also argued that the tax in the Border Region was still not heavy by comparison with the period before the Communists came or with KMT-controlled areas, or in relation to the economic development under the Communist government.

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1 The Chieh-fang jih-pao gives material for comparison of taxation in the Border Region and in the KMT area. See Ch'en Hua, "Pien-ch'ü jen-min ti fu-tan chiu-ching chung-pu-chung" (Is the Burden on the People in the Border Region Virtually Heavy?), 10 & 11 November 1941.
3 In SKN, the major method of transportation was still vehicles pulled by stock animals. Transportation of military supplies and salt, which was the most important export commodity from the Border Region, was vital, and the government wanted hay for stock animals at every station along the highways for rapid transportation. CFJP, 15 October 1942.
4 See Ch'en Hua's article cited above. Besides these, the tasks of propaganda were to convince the taxpayers of how fair and reasonable the taxation was, of how important honest and accurate reports of income were, and of the fact that private human relations should not be reflected in the report or allocation of tax, etc. "An-sai ssu-ch'u ssu-hsiang tiao-ch'a" (Investigation for Tax Collection in the Fourth Village in the Fourth District in An-sai Hsien), CFJP, 24 December 1943.
Propaganda methods included convocation of villagers’ or block residents’ meetings, short plays at the village assembly, mass organisations, primary and winter schools, and talks by activists and enlightened gentry. According to the Northwest Bureau, it was most important in propaganda work to select concrete examples for explaining plainly and sincerely the government’s difficulties and demands, and the identity of interests between the government and the people. The propaganda workers had to convince the peasants that they were being consulted and were not being ordered or coerced.¹

At this stage of the taxation process, 'democracy' was emphasised. The village taxation board, which assumed power and responsibility for taxation, was appointed by the village assembly. It first assessed tax on its own members and on the village cadres, who were expected to pay tax first as an example to other villagers. It had to publicise the assessment of tax on every household at least three days before the villagers’ meeting at which the final assessment was decided.² The taxation board members could be recalled if they were considered to have worked improperly.³ Moreover, the Border Region government required the cadres and the village board to explain ‘patiently’ to the villagers the contents of the taxation decree, and to teach them how to calculate the progressive rate for themselves.⁴

Numerous directive letters of the Border Region government and articles in the Chieh-fang jih-pao indicate the CCP’s desire to convince the taxpayers of the necessity for heavier tax than in previous

¹ "Hui-pei chu kuang-yü cheng-liang cheng-ts’ao chung ti hsüan-ch’üan chung-ho kei k’ü-chi tang-wei chih-shih hsin."
² Article 27, Tax Collection Regulations 1942, SKN Border Region Government, CFJP, 13 August 1942.
³ Article 21, ibid. The village taxation board was required to tell the villagers about this Article. "Ts’ai-cheng t’ing ch’iu-cheng chih-shih hsin," No. 3.
⁴ "Ts’ai-cheng t’ing ch’iu-cheng chih-shih hsin," No. 3.
years. The Party seems to have been particularly anxious to avoid giving the peasant masses the impression that the Communists were the same as the KMT and warlord rulers in squeezing them as much as they could. If the Party successfully convinced the taxpayers, it would be able not only to achieve its goal of collecting double the amount of tax but also to involve them in Communist politics and the transformation process. The role of propaganda was, therefore, critical, and assessment had to be accurate.

Following the final assessment came stage two, the collection and transportation of grain. Even at this stage the assessment could be changed by the village assembly. The Border Region government required the work team members to check the assessment on all taxpayers who were reluctant to pay, and to adjust the assessment if it was unreasonable; the government asserted that it was bureaucratic to consider individual phenomena as unimportant and 'to be afraid to be bothered'. The emphasis in this stage was on collection of good grain and collection of the total amount assessed. The taxation workers were responsible for intensive propaganda and education among the villagers in order to make them pay good quality grain. 'Urging grain payment' work teams were organised in the villages to assume responsibility for collection. They called the villagers together every evening to plan the next day's collection and transportation, and they organised the villagers and their stock animals into transportation teams in order to complete grain collection as soon as possible.

The whole process of tax collection does not appear to have worked.

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1 "P'ie-ch'ü ts'ai-cheng t'ing ch'iu-cheng chih-shih hsǐn," No. 4, dated December 1942, CPJP, 18 December 1942.
2 Ibid.
The peasants resisted the government by submitting false assessment reports, by sabotage or the postponement of sending grain. Even the Chieh-fang jih-pao admitted to these problems. Not only the general peasants but also cadres were guilty of failing to carry out tax collection work properly. The most common problem was that the work teams from higher levels did everything for the local administration instead of simply assisting it, ignoring local conditions, and assessing tax without proper investigation of the financial conditions of individual peasants or listening to the opinions of native cadres and local people.

This phenomenon was partly the result of the problems of cadres. In SKN, 90 percent of the hsiang cadres were virtually illiterate, although they had revolutionary experience of land redistribution struggle and good knowledge of their native villages. In the 'unity and stability' period of 1937-41, to use Mark Selden's terminology, their lack of education and administrative skill tended to overshadow their other abilities. The efficiency of the cadres from the higher levels with their education and over-enthusiasm, tended to result in the work teams taking over all the work of the village administration. The Party was alerted to the problem. If the work teams failed to mobilise the masses through the local cadres or to respect local conditions, they would become tax collectors from above, imposing heavier and heavier taxes.

It seems that the work teams were given broad powers. They were able to change the progressive rate and the exemption limit when they felt that this was necessary. In 1941, for example, the Border Region

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1 For example, the two letters of the Finance Department of the Border Region government, op. cit., CFJP, 6 and 8 December 1942.

2 Ibid.
work team for tax collection in Sui-teh Hsien decided that if the Hsien wanted to complete the collection of assessed grain tax, the progressive rate had to be 1 percent higher on each grade and the exemption limit had to be one tou lower than stipulated in the decree of that year, because the Hsien was poorer than had been expected. To this conclusion, however, the Border Region government responded that the exemption limit could be lowered but the progressive rate could not be raised because the government wanted most of the people to bear the burden of the war in accordance of the principle of the united front.

The taxation system, in which the amount of tax and collecting methods were decided year by year, not only caused restlessness among the peasants but was also a burden on the administration. Twice a year the administration lost the services of large numbers of cadres for a total of almost four months. When the CCP was about to launch the all-out production drive, the Party recognised that the property-income tax imposed on actual crop yields in a particular year had detrimental effects on production. In his report to the SKN Senior Party Cadres Conference at the end of 1942, Mao Tse-tung proposed a fixed progressive taxation on land rather than on production, assuming that the Communist government had enough statistical materials to classify land and that the base areas were sufficiently stable to carry out remeasurement and recategorisation of land. Another assumption which if correct

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1 Hai Feng, "Cheng-liang kung-tso t'uan ts'ai Sui-teh" (Tax Collection Work Team in Sui-teh Hsien), CPJP, 1 December, 1941.
2 "Kuan-yü cheng-liang cheng-ts'ao wen-t'i k'ai k'o-hsien cheng-liang kung-tso t'uan he cheng-fu ti hsin" (A Letter to the Hsien Tax Collection Work Teams and Governments on the Problems of Tax Collection), CPJP, 5 December 1941.
4 For this conference and Mao's report, see Section 1 of the following chapter.
would have facilitated the attempt to implement a fixed taxation was
that the peasantry had been trained for proper payment of tax and
could do so without annual investigation and propaganda.

In 1943 all base areas commenced re-examination of their financial
policies. In January, the SKN Border Region government set up a special
committee for replacing the 'public grain' taxation with a 'unified
agricultural progressive taxation.' Nan Han-ch'en, Head of the
Finance Department of the SKN Border Region, summarised the important
points of the new system:

1. Encouragement of production by a fixed and reduced
taxation on land,
2. Protection of tillers by a 10 percent exemption for
production expenditure, and by decreasing taxation on
income from side jobs, and
3. Investigation once in several years to save the time and
energy of both cadres and people.

This system was a reflection of the fact that the CCP had basically over-
come its economic difficulties by 1943 and could not afford to talk
about tax reduction.

The SKN Border Region government, however, was slow and cautious
in changing the taxation system. On 30 August, after a seven month
study by the special committee for this problem, it decided to implement
the agricultural progressive taxation only in Yenan, Suithe and Chingyang
Salen as an experiment which could also serve for training cadres. It
was to be expanded later to the whole Border Region. It seems that
the Communist leaders found the task more difficult than they had
anticipated. Land registration, which was to be the basis of the new

1 CP/P, 16 January 1943.
2 Nan Han-ch'en, "Kuan-yü nung-yeht'ung-lei-shui ti shih-hsing" (On the
Experimental Implementation of the Unified Agricultural Progressive
Taxation), CP/P, 10 October 1943.
3 Michael Lindsay reports the tax reduction and its reasons in 1943 in
the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region. See "The Taxation System of the Shansi-
4 CP/P, 31 August 1943.
system, was not an easy task. In the remeasurement and classification of land the peasants tried to register their land as smaller or poorer than it was. In some areas remeasurement and classification of land was successful, but these must have been exceptional cases, because in 1944 only two other hsien were added to the 'experimental implementation' instead of the whole Border Region.

There are some reasons to doubt Michael Lindsay's statement that in 1942 the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region government was able "to obtain a fairly accurate and complete new survey [on land] for tax purposes with minimum of skilled personnel" by delegating the work to the village councils on the basis of a sample survey from the centre. He also claims that Chin-Ch'a-Chi seems to have been the only base area which actually implemented the new 'unified progressive tax' system because of its 'specially high' standard of administration. Lindsay's observations about Chin-Ch'a-Chi may be true, because he was actually an eyewitness in this period in Chin-Ch'a-Chi. It is difficult to believe, however, that the standard of administration in Chin-Ch'a-Chi, which had a population of 25 million and in which there was still widespread fighting, was better, or even as good as, that in the SKN Border Region, which had a population of 1.5 million, which had experienced a much longer period of Communist control and which had never been invaded by either the Japanese or the KMT. Yet SKN apparently failed

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1 For example, see "Yen Hsien Liu-lin ch'ü shih-hsing nung-lei-shui ti chung-yen" (Experience of the Experimental Implementation of the Agricultural Progressive Taxation in Liu-lin District, Yenan Hsien), CEJP, December 1944.
2 The two successful cases were reported in detail in the Chish-fang pao, 27 and 30 December 1943.
3 Han Han-ch'en's talk at the Border Region Assembly, CEJP, 10 December 1943.
5 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
to obtain an accurate and complete survey on land, nor could it implement the new tax system completely. The Chin-Ch' a-Chi Border Region may have been more advanced than any other base areas behind the Japanese lines, but not more than SKN. 1

In the Central Shantung Region, meetings for financial work were held at all levels of government in the spring of 1943 and these established a new financial policy. The taxation system was, as in SKN, based on newly remeasured and reclassified land, not on the actual crop yield. The exemption limit was set at households which had 0.4 mou per head. The highest tax rate was lowered and could not exceed 35 percent, and hired hands were numbered as members of the employer's family to encourage rich peasant production. Rented land was calculated as half to protect the interests of the landlords and the tenants.

In guerrilla areas, where there was constant fighting, the burden was one-third or on-half that of the base areas. 2

In the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yu Border Region, taxation was assessed only on the basis of land owned, and it was stipulated explicitly in the law that movable incomes from labour could not be calculated for taxation. 3 Land was classified into 11 grades with around grade 6 as the standard. 4

Thus, property-income tax became a simple land tax from 1943 on, and the economic situation in the base areas benefited from a good harvest in autumn of 1942 and from the 1943 production drive. The CCP

1 Lindsay describes the unified progressive tax system of the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region in detail. See ibid., pp. 5-10.
2 Lu-chung hsing-cheng kung-shu, op. cit., p. 38.
4 Article 7, ibid.
5 Article 11, ibid.
and attempted to lighten the tax burden on the people by the 'better 
war and simpler administration' campaign and the production movement 
by the army and the government, while at the same time attempting to 
encourage the peasants to increase production by the introduction of 
a simple land tax.

It is significant, however, as Michael Lindsay states, that the CCP 
attempted to use even the new unified progressive tax system as an 
instrument of social policy. Large land-ownership became more of a 
burden than a profitable investment. Landlords had to pay property 
tax on their land and also income tax on land rent, which was now 37.5 
per cent or less of the crop yield. Naturally this encouraged landlords 

to sell their land to their tenants and invest their capital in trade 
or industry, in which they could get much more favourable treatment under 
the same tax system. 1

In the SKN Border Region, as well as the other regions, financial 
conditions were improved rapidly in 1943 and 1944. Both the army and 
the government had fewer financial difficulties and were partly self-
sufficient in food and some basic goods as a result of the production 
and self-sufficiency campaign. In 1944 less than half of the admin-
istrative and military expenses in SKN came from the taxpayers, the rest 
being derived from the production of government staff and armymen. 
Consequently, the government became less concerned with tax collection 
than in previous years. 2

1 Lindsay, "The Taxation System in the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Border Region, 

2 In 1944, the Chihs-jiang jih-pao did not conduct a tax collection cam-
aign and no editorial on taxation appeared. This contrasts with prev-
vious years, when it carried at least three editorials on taxation each 
year, plus numerous articles, directives and news items; in 1942 
particularly it gave one whole page out of four every day for the campaign 
during the tax collection seasons.
The CCP tried to make tax collection a mass movement, and to a certain extent it was successful. From 1943, however, when the party launched the production movement, it seems to have believed that 'production and self-sufficiency' within the army and the administration would be more effective in improving government finance and government-people relations than the more limited tax collection campaigns. The fact that the base areas launched the all-out production movement before the completion of the changes in the taxation system and achieved 'good results' suggests that Mao's observation that prior taxation reform was essential for the production drive was not necessarily correct.

In sum, as with its land policy, the CCP pursued a radical taxation policy in the early period of the base areas, imposing heavy taxes and military requisitions on the richer class, and exempting the broad masses of poorer peasants from taxation. In 1941/42, the CCP had to impose a drastically heavier burden on from 80 to 90 percent of the people to support its expanded administration and army. It introduced progressive property-income taxation system, and tried to make use of it for purposes of the united front. From 1943, however, as the economic situation improved, taxation became less important. The Party seems to have been reasonably satisfied with the existing progressive taxation system, although it did attempt to reform the system, to reduce the people's burden and to create a more stable taxation.

If one were to regard the official primary objective of the radicalisation of rent reduction after 1942 as evidence of the Party's determination to give the peasants greater incentives for production, the Party's attempt to reform the taxation system in 1943 could also be explained in the same terms. The primary concern of the CCP in 1942 could be said to be the economic crisis in the base areas, with all policies directed primarily to overcoming the crisis. Mass political
mobilisation could thus be interpreted as being designed to serve economic purposes, and social and political transformation could be regarded as a by-product rather than the aim of the policy.

This point of view, however, does not take sufficient account of actual policies and their actual implementation. The production drive, discussed in the following chapter, is one clear example of a policy aimed at economic development but deliberately utilised by the Party to achieve radical sociopolitical transformation at the basic level.
CHAPTER VI

THE PRODUCTION MOVEMENT

ITS POLITICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

It is unquestionable that the production drive in the Yenan period accelerated social and political transformation in rural China under Communist control. This has been widely recognised by China scholars, and the organisational basis of the movement and its relation to agricultural collectivisation after 1956 has received considerable scholarly attention. Although the economic aspects of the production movement cannot be ignored, the concern in this chapter is with the political and organisational effects of the movement and not with strictly economic problems. That is, for purposes of this study, the interest lies in how the movement was exploited by the CCP as another means of mass political mobilisation, and in the extent to which the Party was successful.

The Japanese occupation meant that the coastal cities of China could no longer supply the Chinese people in the hinterland with industrial goods. The fertile plain was also under Japanese control. The CCP had to draw its funds from agricultural production, in an area of extremely low productivity and primitive technology.


2 Chao Kuo-chun, Agrarian Policy of the Chinese Communist Party, (Bombay: 1960), pp.1-3. "...[F]arming in modern China, by modern standards, was both backward and stagnant. It never broke out of the traditional framework...[T]he general level of agricultural technology in China three decades after 1905 remained very low. In farm implements, for example, Professor Ch'iao Ch'i-ming of Nanking University writing in 1944 described the 43 basic farm tools used by the Chinese peasants as 'undeniably primitive' and remarked that 'the agricultural technology in China has had little significant change since the T'ang Dynasty.'...[I]n the period from 1929 to 1933, the average yield of rice in China was only 60 percent of Italy's, that of wheat 48 percent of Japan's, and that of potatoes 40 percent of Great Britain's. As to the labour efficiency of Chinese cul-
After it had established more border regions and guerrilla bases, the CCP was not able to capture industrial cities or the vast fertile plains of Hopei, Shantung or Honan. In this situation the only way for the Communists to survive was through the development of agricultural productivity and small-scale industry for the supply of daily essentials within their territory. In order to mobilise the peasants, it was essential also to raise their standard of living.

As long as the CCP had to rely solely on manpower for increasing production, there were only two courses open to it: one was to intensify labour and the other was to minimise wastage of manpower. Both depended upon the leadership of local cadres in the organisation of labour. Under conditions of primitive agrotechnology, the relative over-population of rural China favoured the CCP; the existence of a landless and half unemployed peasantry offered a source of manpower for military recruitment and collective labour.

The production movement was designed, first of all, to increase production to meet the economic crisis of 1941 and 1942, described by Mao as confronting the Party with the question, "Are we going to starve to death or disband ourselves?" Secondly, however, it was planned that the production movement should serve the political education of both cadres and masses. For without political education, full mobilisation in

Footnote 2 cont'd

"... it was estimated that in the 1930's one adult male working one year on a Chinese farm produced an average of 3,080 lbs. of grain, while his American counterpart was producing 44,000 pounds, or 14 times as much." 1

On the difficulties the CCP faced in the production movement, Johnson states: "The basic problem of border-area production was that there were very few skilled engineers, technicians, or craftsmen. The party had to rely on makeshift methods, discovered and taught to each other by the people themselves, and it had to motivate the population to undertake experiments and try new techniques. Many organisational devices were employed, including work-study schools, functions to individual units, using masses of manpower in place of machinery, and employing the army to do production and land reclamation work." Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou, ed., op.cit. pp.422-423.

1 Mao used these words in his report to the Senior Cadres Conference of SKN at the end of 1942, to describe the situation the Party had been facing since 1939. The Party had been discussing this problem since 1939. Mao Zedong zhizhi, Col. 8, p.261.
production work could not be expected, and at the same time, successful full-scale production movement would actually facilitate political education and advance the cause of the revolution. The Party was particularly concerned with the political education of the cadres, therefore, in the rectification campaign which was at its height at the end of 1942 when the all-out production drive was launched.

Before discussing the movement itself, it is useful to examine the Party's perception of the economic and political aspects of the crisis which prompted it to launch the production drive. The following section is concerned with the important Party conference in the SKN Border Region in the winter of 1942/43, especially the lengthy report by Mao to the conference on economic and financial problems in the base areas, which laid the groundwork for the all-out production movement.

1. The Basic Situation and Plan for the 1943 Production Movement: Mao's Report, "Economic and Financial Problems".

Efforts to improve production, of course, were made throughout the Yanan period, and in this sense the production movement cannot be said to have started on a particular date. The Party had been in very similar circumstances in the Kiangsi period, and had had some experience in carrying out a production movement in rural South China. Until the end of 1942, although it continued its efforts to increase production in the old border regions, the CCP concentrated its attention on the military situation, on the united front with the KMT and on the establishment of the government system in the newly occupied areas.¹


² Mao Tse-tung rarely mentioned the economy or finance until his lengthy report to the Senior Cadres Conference at the end of 1942, a part of which was included in the Selected Works as "Economic and Financial Problems in the Anti-Japanese War." Subsequently, however, five articles out of nineteen written before the end of the war were on economic questions. This contrasts with the period before the conference, when he did not write any articles specifically on economic or financial matters.
It seems possible that the Party did not even appreciate until 1941 the possibilities which a full-scale production drive might offer for mass political involvement. Even in 1941 and 1942, the Party still appeared to consider that a full-scale production drive would be possible only after a series of campaigns had laid the basis for mass mobilisation, and to discount, or at least underestimate, the fact that the production drive itself might generate such mobilisation.

The Senior Party Cadres Conference of the SKN Border Region, which lasted eighty-nine days from 19 October 1942 to 14 January 1943, provided guidelines for the production movement in all base areas in China. Although this was a local Party committee conference for the SKN Border Region, its special significance derived from the importance and model role of SKN. Mao, who held no position in the Border Region Committee or in the Northwest Bureau, not only prepared a lengthy economic and financial report for the conference, but also delivered both the opening and closing addresses, as well as two days of lectures on Stalin's Bolshevisation of the Russian Communist Party. Other leading Central Committee members who delivered lectures at the conference but who held no position in the Border Region Committee included Liu Shao-ch'i, Chu Teh, Jen Pi-shih, K'ang Sheng, Ch'en Yun and P'eng Chen.

In addition to the production movement, the conference discussed two further problems, the history of the Party in the Border Region and the unification of the leadership, both of which were a part of the rectification campaign to replace the urban-intellectual-'leftist' line by the 'Nost-rural-peasant line at all levels of the Party in local governments, the army and mass organisations.¹

The extraordinary length of the conference suggests that the confront-

much between the 'leftist' and the 'rightist' factions was still sharp
even after one year of rectification. It indicates, in terms of
production work, that the cadres were not fully prepared to 'move their own
hands' for production, since the 'leftist' cadres preferred more showy
'revolutionary' work to steady, if more dull and routine, efforts to
increase production. It was, in fact, one of the major difficulties in
launching an all-out production drive, as Mao pointed out, that cadres
were reluctant to serve work that was not directly connected with national
salvation. Many of the Party and government cadres were from elite
backgrounds: they knew nothing about agriculture, and the traditional
Chinese contempt for manual labour had not been eradicated from their
thinking. As a result, the cadres' attitudes toward the implementation
of the Party's agrarian policy were more bureaucratic and the economic
crisis was more serious than it should have been. One explanation for
the unusual length of the conference may have been the necessity for
indoctrination of the cadres before the full-scale production campaign
could begin.

It is significant also that the Chien-fang jih-pao did not report
this conference until 31 January 1943, half a month after it finished.
The Chien-fang jih-pao does not even give the full schedule of the
conference, but, as is usual in such Communist reports, claims that
every participant was extremely enthusiastic in the lectures and dis-

1. See, for example, "Spread the Campaigns to Reduce Rent, Increase
Production and Support the Government and Cherish the People in
the Base Areas," Mao, III, pp.133-134.
2. Chao Kuo-chun mentions this point as one of the difficulties in
the programme for rural development. "...Another important factor
was that the programme in modern China which aimed at improving
rural economy lacked practical leadership. The planners and ex-
cutives of the projects, being mostly urbanites, often lacked un-
derstanding or experience regarding the specific needs, capacities,
sessions, and that the conference solved all the important problems and closed successfully. From Kao Kang's report on the history of the Border Region Party, however, it is obvious that confrontation was serious and discussions and criticisms were severe.¹

The conference adopted Mao's proposal to make 'production and education'² the primary tasks of the Party from 1943 onwards. Although the conference was convened mainly for settling the dispute between the 'rightist' and leftist' lines and for unification of Party leadership in the rectification campaign, the conference also confirmed Mao's principle that 'production was the material foundation for all work'. The significance of the conference was that it set forth clearly the direction which the full-scale production drive should take and the specific measures to be implemented in all Communist bases in China.

The SKN economy seems to have developed remarkably after the Central Committee settled in north Shaanxi, particularly after 1939.³ In that year the SKN Border Region Government introduced such measures as the election of Labour heros, agricultural exhibitions, the mobilisation of women for production, and the drive for self-sufficiency in government organs.

¹ See Kao Kang's report, "Pien-ch'ü tang ti li-shih wen-t'i chien-t'ao" (An Examination of the Questions Concerning the Party's History in the Border Region), (Yenan: 1943).
² "Education" here had a broad meaning which included Party rectification, political training or thought reform of the masses and elimination of superstition, as well as school literacy education.
³ The SKN Border Region launched the first production movement in 1939. Li Fu-ch'un summarised the movement as 'successful'. See his reports, "Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü sheng-ch'üan yün-tung ti ch'u-pu tsung-chieh" (Tentative Summary of the Production Movement of the SKN Border Region), Chieh-fang chou-k'm, No. 85, 30 September 1939, pp.7-9; "Sheng-ch'üan yün-tung tsung-chieh yü hsien ti jen-wu" (Summary of the Production Movement and New Tasks), No. 106/7, pp.12-15. See also Mao's retrospect of the 1939 production movement in "Ching-chi wen-t'i yü yü-ch'ü-cheng wen-t'i" (Economic and Financial Problems), Mao Tse-Tung chii, Vol. 8, pp. 261-262.
and schools and by rear garrison troops. These measures later became common in all Communist bases in the 1943 production drive.

In this report Mao analysed the factors which helped the Party in the development of agricultural production in SKN in 1939-42, particularly in 1939 and 1940. The Party had corrected its 'leftist' economic policy and introduced a policy of 'rest and conservation' (sheng-ho) which offered the peasants economic incentives and as a result of which the peasants started to invest for the development of production. Secondly, the Party had exploited every opportunity to call on the peasants to develop production. For example, a number of meetings in 1939, such as the cadres meeting for mobilisation for production convened by the Central Committee, the Second Congress of Border Region Party Representatives, the First Border Region Assembly and the First Exhibition of Agricultural Production, were all said to have had a favourable effect on the will of the people to develop production. Thirdly, the Party had implemented, apparently successfully, a migration policy which was designed to encourage landless peasants in densely populated areas to migrate to and reclaim areas of wasteland. The government gave the migrants loans for the purchase of farm implements and draught animals, exempted them from taxation for the first three years, and encouraged the local peasants to lend them houses, tools and cash. Mutual aid teams and labour cooperatives, both among the migrants and in conjunction with the native people were also encouraged.

The fourth factor, in Mao's analogy, was the Party's policy of 'awards'
Migrant peasants were exempt from taxation in the first three years; incomes from growing cotton were exempt from taxation. The election and commendation of labour heroes at the exhibitions of agricultural production were part of this 'award' policy. Fifthly, the Party's attempts to reduce wastage of manpower, to organise labour into mutual aid teams, and mobilise 'loafers' (erh-liu-tzu) and women to join production work helped greatly to increase production. Sixthly, and finally, agricultural loans by the government were increased. Approximately one-third of the peasant families lacked oxen, farm implements and grain, and had to be assisted with loans. 1

These policies were all developed further in the 1943 production movement. The fourth and fifth were most important in producing radical political and organisational changes at the basic level of rural society. New social organisations and leadership emerged out of everyday production work and these were maintained deliberately, as a means of bringing about revolutionary social transformation. 2

In his report, however, Mao presented these policies in terms only of production increase, and made no mention of their political and social effects. This was unusual for Mao, who has been generally more concerned with social, political and military aspects of revolution. Another unusual feature of the report was that it included many figures, statistics and tables; this is quite exceptional in the whole body of Mao's writings. The reason seems to lie in the extreme nature of the economic crisis, and it may not mean that Mao ignored the political

1 Ibid., pp. 192-195.
2 Chalmers Johnson appreciates the relevance of the Yanan production movement to the later rural collectivisation and cooperativisation: "One measure of the organizational success of Mao's Yanan mass line is to be found in the accomplishments of the so-called Great Production Movement of the later years of the resistance war. This movement ... has great relevance to the second and third five-year plan periods because it provided more economic precedents for later years than any other specific campaign of the revolutionary era." Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou, ed., op.cit., p.421.
and social aspects of the production movement, because he later stressed these aspects when discussing the progress of the movement.

With the lessons the CCP had derived from production work up to 1942, Mao announced that the policies to which he had attributed success before 1942 would be continued. Firstly, he stressed flexibility and the use of different production policies and methods for different places and times, and warned cadres who did not know local conditions against pursuing uniform policies and methods for production. Secondly, he said that a rigorous and extensive implementation of the rent reduction policy was an essential foundation for production increase, for the peasants would not take an active interest in increasing production if the increase was to be taken by the landlords.

The third lesson the Party had learned from its experience in production work was that heavy taxation affected adversely the peasants' enthusiasm for production, and taxation according to actual crop yield lowered both capacity and investment and willingness to work hard. Taxation, therefore, was to be lightened and based on land owned, so that the peasants themselves would benefit from any increase in production. Fourthly, the privilege of tax exemption promised by the government was to be applied without exception, for the sake of the government's own prestige and to forestall adverse effects on the peasants' activism. Finally, the organisation of labour, if carried out properly, was seen as a powerful tool to develop agricultural production. The Party had to organize the peasants into production organisations, but this should not be done simply by bureaucratic directives from above.1

Mao's main concern in these five 'lessons' was with providing the peasants with economic incentives as a means of increasing production.

In other words, he believed that the peasants would make little effort to increase production unless they could be convinced that they could retain the major part of the increase in production. He wrote in 1943:

"The Party and government personnel at the county and district levels should devote nine-tenths of their energy to helping the peasants increase production, and only one-tenth to collecting taxes from them. If pains are taken with the first task, the second will be easy."  

Mao did not believe that the peasants would be convinced of the necessity for increased production merely by political indoctrination or education; on the contrary, he believed that it was essential first to improve their livelihood as a means of establishing a foundation for mass political mobilisation. It is significant that Mao perceived that even after a considerable improvement in the peasants' livelihood and after widespread sociopolitical reform it was still essential to provide the peasants with economic incentives.

In his report, Mao proposed an eight-point policy for developing agricultural production. With the exception of reclamation of waste-land, each of these points is concerned with increasing yields from existing farms and with the existing manpower. Reclamation of waste-land was the only available shortcut to increased agricultural production, since conditions were such that major technological improvements could not be expected.

Since Mao's plans for the development of production all depended on manpower, the organisation of labour was the key point.  

1 "Mao, III, p. 132.
2 Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 8, p. 209
3 After one year of the production movement, Mao confirmed this point: "In the present circumstances, the organization of labour power is the key to increasing production. In each of the base areas, even under present war conditions, it is possible and altogether necessary to organize the labour power of tens of thousands of men and women in the Party, the government offices and the army...Communist Party members must attain a full grasp of all the principles and methods of organizing labour power." "Mao, III, p. 134."
In addition to the fact that north Shensi was sparsely populated, the war effort had diverted labour to the army, and to transportation and construction work. Women, therefore, were mobilised for spinning and weaving and also for supplementary work in the fields. Loafers were also persuaded or forced to participate in production work. The local garrison troops had to help in the peasants' work, especially in the busy seasons. One of Mao's eight points, 'right work in the right season', meant that all manpower and livestock should be mobilised for agricultural work in the busy harvesting and planting seasons. This required well-organised labour to avoid wastage.

Mao did not ignore technological improvement, although he recognised its potential as being extremely limited, and what he actually meant by this term was:

1. Construction and repair of irrigation systems;
2. Promoting the spread of better strains;
3. Reclaiming wasteland, and tilling the fields in the autumn to reduce pest damage, to weather the soil, and to maintain water in the soil;
4. Weeding once or twice more each year;
5. Holding agricultural exhibitions for the exchange and dissemination of better methods, and carrying out a campaign for 'new rich peasants' through hard work, after the example of Wu Man-yu;
6. Propaganda by the newspapers for producing many people like Wu Man-yu;
7. Courses on basic agricultural knowledge in primary and secondary schools, and the provision of a textbook for the winter schools which would include practical agricultural information.¹

These methods are almost too simple to be described as 'technological improvements', and some of them are not really concerned with technology. Technological improvement was, therefore, a supplement to production development, although the low standard of Chinese agrotechnology meant

that even these simple improvements could be effective. An interesting point is that what Mao called 'technological improvement' rested primarily on intensive cultivation, which required either intensified labour or more manpower or both. Here again, the organisation of labour was of supreme importance. Indeed, organisation of labour was the key to the success of the production movement, just as it was also the key to impact of the movement on the socio-political transformation at the basic level.

At the end of December 1942 the Senior Cadres Conference began discussion of the production problem on the basis of Mao's report. After about half a month's discussion, the conference apparently accepted his proposals without criticism or amendment, although no Communist document refers to formal approval or adoption of Mao's proposals. The conference confirmed that the primary work of the Party from 1943 on would be in production and education, including rectification. Since the CCP attempted to develop production without major improvements in technology, it had to extract the maximum amount of labour from the people. The Party could not use coercion, because this would undermine the activism, and consequently the efficiency of the people. Indoctrination was thus important for rousing the peasants' and workers' activism for the production drive.

The CCP made the decision to carry out a full-scale production drive after one year of the rectification campaign. The CCP had launched the rectification campaign both to overcome the economic crisis and to lay the groundwork for a production drive. The production drive itself aimed primarily at preventing the recurrence of an economic crisis.

The *Chihsiang jih-pao* (31 January 1943) simply treats the report as if it were an authoritative document of the Party. Most probably, the report was approved by the Politburo and leading Central Committee members before the conference, as the CCP leaders customarily did in this period. The report was regarded in the 1943 production movement as a kind of 'sacred text', and the conference itself was acknowledged as an event of outstanding importance.
by building up reserves of grain.  

It was also a continuation by other means of the rectification campaign. As the mayor of Yenan told Gunther Stein in 1944, "We ... get much closer to the people we serve; for we know now what manual work means and respect it more than we used to do." Another significant aspect of the production drive as a means of mass political mobilisation was the constant 'discovery' of activists among the masses, who provided fresh political leaders for the masses and for the Party. The most important result of the movement, however, was that the life style as well as the way of thinking of the masses were transformed through organised labour in everyday production work, while at the same time labour organisation, being managed and led by the new village leaders, ultimately undermined landlord-gentry influence in the villages. Improved economic conditions also undermined the economic basis of landlord-gentry power.

The production movement, the most important mass movement in the Yenan period, was carried out along the lines laid down at the conference, or rather, on the lines of Mao's report to the conference. The nature of the production movement after 1943 was quite different from the production drive before 1943, particularly in its organisational and political aspects. It was in the course of the production movement that the CCP finally established its power firmly among the peasant masses.

2. Organisation of Labour

The production drive meant mobilisation of all available manpower and equipment in the most efficient way for the development of production

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1*Ch'ung-shan yü-tê* (surplus grain for four months' consumption from one year's cultivation), propagated as a target of the production drive, illustrates the Party's intention of using the drive to accumulate grain reserves.

2 Stein, op. cit., p. 105.
in the base areas. Every participant had to adapt to a planned and organised system of production, which was quite new to rural North China. The key measure for mobilisation of the masses for production was the organisation of labour; other measures were made possible or facilitated by collective labour. If the organisation of every individual into labour mutual aid teams was achieved, it would be possible to introduce measures which would provide for the most rational use of human and animal power and farm appliances. At the same time, organised and planned labour would link the masses with the government and the Party in their daily work at the basic level of the society. In the production movement, the daily life of the masses could be linked with the Party's nationalist and revolutionary causes through organised production and the economic benefits it brought. The CCP challenged the long-standing rural production structure, consisting of family units which the Party had not been able to change in its earlier production drive.

In addition to the Party decision at the Senior Cadres Conference, in December 1942 the Third Session of the Government Council of the SKN Border Region decided that priority in government work was to be given to production, especially agricultural production, and education, particularly cadre education. According to a Chieh-fang jih-pao editorial, in order to survive the war the CCP had to concentrate manpower and capital for developing agricultural production; education of the cadres in which they were to overcome 'leftist' and 'rightist' inclinations, was

1 In November 1943, Mao Tse-tung stressed in his talk at the reception for labour heroes of the SKN Border Region that the purpose of production organisation was to mobilise all labour in the Border Region, and production organisation was the only way to develop production and gain victories over the Japanese. "Get Organised," Mao, III, pp. 153-160.

2 CFP, 23 November 1942.
essential for the most efficient production. The establishment of mutual aid teams was the first and major means of achieving more effective use of the existing human and animal power. Traditionally, there had existed small-scale mutual aid systems for agricultural production in North China to compensate for the shortage of stock animals and large farming appliances.

The SKN Border Region had had two major forms of mutual aid labour, pien-kung (exchange of labour) and cha-kung (collective labour). The former was a system of exchange of different labour techniques, different production measures and different kinds of work. This was organised by poor peasants who lacked sufficient draught animals and farm implements, and by some middle peasants who had enough draught animals and farm appliances but lacked sufficient labour and could not afford to hire farm hands. Usually the scale of pien-kung was small, varying from two to five families who were relatives, friends and/or neighbours. The organisation was also temporary; for example, if A worked with B for spring ploughing it did not mean that A would do pien-kung with B again for the autumn harvest, although it was comparatively regular in the cases of close relatives.

Cha-kung was a system by which labour teams worked mainly on others' land. It was most common in areas where the population was less dense and more agricultural land was available. It did not include draught

1 "K'ä-fu ssu-hsiang chang-ai chi-chung li-liang yü liang-ta jen-wu" (Overcome Obstacles in Thought and Concentrate Power on the Two Great Tasks), editorial, CPJP, 23 December 1942. In this context education meant political education, as a continuation of the rectification campaign.

2 On the traditional mutual aid system for agricultural labour in China, see Chung-kuo nung-yeh hê-tso-hua yün-tung shih-liao, pp. 3-72.

animals or farm appliances. Its scale was often much larger than "pien-kung," varying from five to one hundred labourers in a team, although most consisted of about ten people. The members were landless and poor peasants who had to sell their labour to support their families, in addition to tilling their own or rented land. Since cha-kung teams had to 'sell' collective labour as temporary help to the rich peasants or landlords, they had an organizer, a manager and an accountant. As Mark Selden points out, exploitation of these three people, particularly the first two, was obvious. Cha-kung was a much more well-organised and stable means of organisation than pien-kung. A certain degree of discipline was required in order to maintain the organisation and employment.

Traditional mutual aid labour in rural China was generally unstable, short-term, loosely organised, voluntary and lacking leadership and planning. It was a product of the polarisation of the peasantry; the concentration of land in the hands of a small number of landlords on one side, and a great number of poor peasants with little or no land on the other. Another condition which necessitated labour mutual aid was dispersed and small-scale agricultural management, a result of repeated equal inheritance and high land rent. Voluntary mutual aid labour in the traditional Chinese village existed for the minimum objectives of maintaining agricultural production and for the survival of the peasants not for expansion of production or raising living standards.

The conditions which necessitated mutual aid labour were at the same time obstacles to development of labour organisation. Extreme poverty and dispersed small-scale management of agriculture were

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2 Sato, op. cit., p. 25.
3 Ibid., pp. 52-53.
difficult to change and impeded the development of large and stable mutual aid labour. Traditional voluntary mutual aid labour was essential for maintaining agricultural production, but to the extent that it was based on traditional economic and social conditions, it was not able to develop into large-scale and highly organised mutual aid labour. That is, it was incapable of bringing about a rearrangement of the land owning system, which had been the basis of economic and social conditions in Imperial China.¹

The organisation of agricultural labour in the Yenan period was based on these traditional forms of labour mutual aid and the Communist experience in the Kiangsi soviet period.² Although the CCP had recognised the efficacy of collective labour before 1943, it was not until January 1943, when the Chieh-fang jih-pao carried an editorial entitled "Let's Organise the Labour Force!", that the Party started to organise as much as possible of the work force in mutual aid for the full-scale production drive. It was at the Senior Cadres Conference that the policy to develop mutual aid labour was adopted as an 'important lever for completing the task of production.'³

The CCP recognised that the existing system of mutual aid was "suited to the concrete conditions of villages in the border regions." "If they can be effectively utilised and directed, and organised and led in a planned way, then they can be transformed into organisations

¹ ibid.
² On collective agricultural labour in the Kiangsi period, see ibid., pp. 72-98; Chung-kuo nung-yeh hê-teo-hua yûn-tung shih-liao, pp. 79-144.
³ "Chieh-shao Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü tsu-chih chi-t'ı lao-tung ti ching-yen" (Introduction to the Experience of Collective Labour Organised in the SKN Border Region), CPJP, 21 December 1943. The editorial of the Chieh-fang jih-pao, 25 January 1943, was later regarded as the first appeal to organise, made by the CCP Central Committee to the masses. See introductory comments on the editorial as printed in the compilation, Chung-kuo nung-yeh hê-teo-hua yûn-tung shih-liao, pp. 143-144. English translation of this is in Schurmann, op. cit., pp. 419-422.
for developing productivity and raising production." According to this editorial, the merits of collective labour were:
1) 'right work in the right season' (pu-wei nung-shih), 2) more economical use of labour, 3) increased work enthusiasm and efficiency, 4) education of the masses and an increase in the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity among the masses. Primarily, the CCP gave attention to labour efficiency. "Experience proves: the mutual-aid collective form of production organization saves labour power; collective labor is better than individual labor. Thus: one laborer can plow and sow fifteen shang of land each year. But if three laborers work together, each year they can plow and sow seventy shang of land and four laborers can plow and sow one hundred shang. Two men and one ox can complete the task in three days; three men and one ox can complete it in two days. Not only this, a mutual-aid and collective form of production organization can greatly stimulate work enthusiasm and increase production efficiency. Because everyone works together, life is active, morale is high, and there is mutual stimulation, mutual competition, and no one wants to be behind the others." 2 The usefulness of labour mutual aid for the CCP was not limited to economic benefits. The last virtue of collective labour organization stated in the editorial was: "It educates the masses, and increases the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity among the masses." 3 Although political benefits were not stressed in this editorial, collective labour organisation had the potential to be the basic organisation for the political mobilisation of the masses in the Communist cause.

If the poor peasants who needed mutual aid labour comprised 70 percent

1 Editorial, CPJP, 25 January 1943. Translation Schurmann's, op. cit., p. 420
2 Schurmann, op. cit., 420-421.
3 Ibid., p. 421.
of the population in rural China, the CCP was in a position to organise
the major part of the rural population by attracting them with promises
of economic gain. Once organised into mutual aid teams, they could
provide the basis for Communist power.

In order to take full advantage of the value of labour mutual aid,
however, according to the above editorial, the labour force "organisation
must be grounded on a basis of voluntarism of the masses, in order
to prevent formalism, in whatever way they may arise, such as forcibly
issuing orders or 'compiling name lists.' Another instruction to
cadres in charge of organising labour mutual aid was that organisations
"must not be too large ... Because if organisation is too large, it can
waste a great deal of labor power and a lot of time. It is best to
take the natural village as a unit. Where there are villages which
have more population and need more mutual aid, don't just organise one,
but organise several (brigades); and don't restrict them just to one
village, but have them transcend the scope of the natural village, put
through mutual aid between villages."  

As Franz Schurmann points out, it is significant that the CCP
realised the importance of the natural village as the basic unit of
production organisation. This means that the Party had to penetrate
the natural village in its own work of labour organisation. This was
the first time in Chinese history that a government officially recog-
nised the natural village as the basic unit of rural life and set out to
weave it into the web of the government system, as a result of which the
CCP finally was able successfully "to create an organization loyal to
the state which was also solidly imbedded in the natural village."  

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1 Ibid., p. 422.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 416. See also Schurmann's discussion in p. 423.
This was not, however, an easy task for cadres from outside the village. In spite of many reports in the Chieh-fang jih-pao of good examples of organisation of labour, cadres apparently had to contend with a reluctance on the part of the masses to join mutual aid labour. An article in the newspaper summarising the experiences in organisation of labour in 1943 in the SKN Border Region indicated that many peasants doubted that mutual aid was of benefit to them. Even the cadres who tried to organise the peasants into mutual aid were not always very confident that mutual aid would result in economic benefits for the peasants. The article suggested that cadres, Party members and activists should themselves be made confident of the benefits of mutual aid to those who participated in it before they tried to persuade the peasants to take part.

After having joined mutual aid teams, many members were unhappy with mutual aid labour because of their conflicting interests, a problem which emerged particularly in differences in quality and quantity of both labour and land. On this point, the article in Chieh-fang jih-pao cited above stated that as nobody wanted to obtain less than others, the leaders had to be very careful to coordinate the interests of the members. The peasants' selfishness was an obstacle to the development of organised labour, even in such small matters as the different quality of meals served by different families or the order in which the members' fields were worked. Disputes over these points were to be solved by persuasion. The article suggested that those who could afford to serve good meals should be made to understand that the financial situation of the poorer members forced them to serve poorer quality meals. On the order of work, the leaders were expected to make the team work on their land last, and

1 "Chieh-shao Shen-Kan-Ning pien ch'u tsu-chih chi-t'i lao-tung ti ching-yen."
to persuade richer members to work on the poorer members' fields first. 1

The Chieh-fang jih-pao reported an example of mutual aid teams in a village in which trouble had arisen between migrant members and native members. The latter were not interested in reclaiming waste-land necessary for cultivation by the former. Both groups were dissatisfied with distribution of the rewards in 1943 and all the teams in the village were about to be dissolved, even though mutual aid between the two groups was beneficial to the village as a whole. In order to settle this problem, the village headman and a cadre helped the migrant members privately to solve their material difficulties, and on this ground they persuaded both groups to continue the mutual aid team while at the same time readjusting the organisation and the method of calculation of labour days and distribution of the rewards. 2

The example indicates that the leaders, who were expected to put their own interests last, assumed the key role in organising and maintaining mutual aid labour. If the village headman and the responsible cadres were not able to take proper measures to solve problems among the members, the members refused to listen to them and the teams could not be maintained. Only by a willingness to help others and ignore their private interests could they command respect from the masses and make organised production possible. The Party did not demand that the masses sacrifice even a small part of their own benefit for the sake of organised production, but tried to convince them that they could obtain greater tangible benefits from mutual aid labour than from individual

1 ibid.
2 "JHP," 6 April 1944.
The party did not hesitate, however, to demand from its members and cadres economic stoicism in mutual aid labour to secure respect from and leadership among the masses. The above mentioned article in the Chieh-fang jih-pao stressed the importance of obtaining suitable persons for leaders of mutual aid labour. It stated that "only those who have prestige and are able to help the masses would be able to cope with command of a pien-kung brigade." 2

The process of organisation was usually as follows. Following a meeting of Party members, cadres and activists at which the virtues of organisation of mutual aid labour were discussed, a meeting of villagers was convened, at which the Party members, cadres and activists tried first to convince at least some of the villagers of the merits of the system so that they might wish voluntarily to organise a mutual aid team.

Villagers who wanted to make up a team were to select people with whom they could cooperate. As in all other mass movements, voluntarism was emphasised and coercion was strictly prohibited. Once one or a few teams were organised, the leaders tried to demonstrate the merits of labour mutual aid to villagers who were still doubtful, and to convince them to join the team. 3 The Party told village cadres to organise mutual aid labour 'gradually', "relying on the spirit of 'shih-shih ch'iu-shih' (due consideration of facts): careful consideration should be given to the realistic situation of development of production, private

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1 An article in the Chieh-fang jih-pao emphasised that collective labour was conditioned by the private property system and manual labour, and aimed to develop them; it was a 'leftist' deviation to go beyond these conditions. Ting Tung-fang, "Lan chi-t'i lao-tung" (On Collective Labour), CPD, 9 February 1944.

2 "Chieh-shao Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'i tsu-chih chi-t'i lao-tung ti ching-yen." In many cases the leaders of mutual aid teams were Party members. This article gave an example of Yenan Hsien where out of 2,340 members of mutual aid labour 803 were Party members and about half of them assumed leadership of pien-kung and cha-kung brigades.

3 Ibid.
property and the peasants' political standards.\(^1\)

In organising mutual aid labour, political mobilisation of the masses was an end which the CCP deliberately sought. Firstly, by working together and improving their livelihood by themselves without relying on the landlord-gentry class the masses gained confidence in the power of solidarity. This was assisted by changes in class composition in the villages. Many poor peasants raised themselves to the level of middle peasants, while some middle peasants became rich peasants by the government policies of progressive taxation and rent reduction, and increases in their production in the production movement. The traditional village leaders gradually lost their power and prestige, which had rested on their economic power, their education, and their good relations with the old state or provincial government.

Secondly, the masses became more willing to trust the government and the Party. Working with the cadres in mutual aid labour, the peasants came increasingly to regard them as having interests identical to their own. Agricultural production by cadres helped the masses to identify with the CCP, making a significant departure from the situation in which government officials and the peasants made up two different worlds which had little communication politically, economically or culturally.\(^2\)

Thirdly, as a result of mutual aid labour the CCP was able to call

\(^1\) Ting Tung-fang, "Lun chi-t'ı lao-tung."

\(^2\) When the two worlds had come into contact with each other, it had usually meant trouble for the peasants. Richard Solomon quotes P'eng Pai's difficulties when he tried to organise peasants in Kwangtung in 1920's, when the peasants were suspicious of him, an intellectual - another name for a government official, whom they could easily identify as their enemy by his face, body, dress, and way of talking and behaving. Solomon, "Communication Patterns and Chinese Revolution," p. 85. The same difficulties confronted the students from Peking who in 1936 went into rural areas to propagate the nationalist cause against Japan and to organise the peasants. See John Israel, op. cit., pp. 135-137.
on the peasant masses to defend their economic gains in the production drive, while at the same time the production brigade provided an organisational basis for political and military mobilisation. After 1943, the CCP often used the slogans 'Pao-wei chia-hsiang, pao-wei feng-i tsu-shih ti shang-huo' (Defend your own home, defend your life of abundant clothing and sufficient food) for mobilisation of militia and self-defence corps in the villages. Moreover, the peasants were prepared to work systematically in organisations when they had to defend their villages. This linked them effectively with the nationalist cause for which the CCP were fighting.

The last and the most important political gain from mutual aid labour in the context of the Chinese Communist revolution was what was known as its 'educational' value: that is, the peasants allegedly overcame their selfishness, and became more willing to communicate with each other and to help others at some sacrifice to their own interests. Collective labour produced its leaders among the members, who worked hard, created new methods of production, helped other members in their daily lives, and most important of all, who were loyal to the Communist government. These leaders, newly produced from among the masses were rewarded by the government and the masses with honour and respect, and with the fruit of their own hard work. They provided the Party with an enormous reservoir of potential cadres with close links with the masses.¹

¹ See the section below on labour heroes.
Thus, the CCP was able to penetrate the natural village through the agency of the new leaders and the production organisation. The everyday and all-year-round nature of production work helped the Party to maintain its control over the villages. The Party attempted to maintain mutual aid labour permanently, against the more traditional temporary mutual aid. Once organised for spring ploughing, for example, mutual aid was kept going successively for weeding, for the summer harvest, summer ploughing, elimination of pest damage and grasshoppers, for the autumn harvest, autumn ploughing, irrigation repairs, reclamation, and winter side jobs such as transportation, charcoal-making and spinning and weaving.

In collective labour, the peasants gradually acquired the habit of cooperating with others, as well as identifying their interests with the fate of the Communist government and developing an organised and planned pattern of production from the viewpoint of the village as a whole. Production planning was an important part of the organisation of labour for both the peasants themselves and the Party and the government.

Production Planning

The production movement actually began with propaganda on the subject of production plans, which were to be drawn up by all production units at all levels, right down to the family unit. Production planning was designed to have similar effects to labour mutual aid on political and organisational transformation of rural society. For the Party, production planning provided detailed information on the economic and financial situation of the basic units of production. And by helping the village government and the peasants to draw up production plans, and by controlling the operation of these plans, the Party obtained invaluable insights into everyday work in the village. For the peasant masses,
on the other hand, planning was a significant step towards psychological breakthrough. Firstly, production planning made them realise that their production work was inseparably linked with the whole economy of the base area. Secondly, through the process of plan-making with assistance of cadres, and by publicising their plans, the peasants were encouraged to take less account of their own interests and thus belief in the family as a self-contained economic unit, as well as to increase their trust in the Communist government. Thirdly, planning served the organisation of labour by enabling the masses to understand their position in the village, and ultimately the border region, economy, and the uses of organised production in achieving planned targets. Another 'educational' effect of production planning was that it advanced solidarity through the process of publicising plans and notifying each others' economic and financial situation.

It was not easy, however, to make all rural families draw up detailed production plans, since the major part of the population was illiterate and the peasants were reluctant to disclose their financial situation to others. For the spring ploughing in 1943, the government and the Party dispatched cadres to organise labour mutual aid to encourage every unit of production to draw up production plans. The basic plan was made at the hsiang level and was determined by geographical conditions, the availability of human and animal power and of capital. The reason for making the hsiang the basic unit for planning seems to have been administrative convenience and the necessity of coordination between natural villages which were the basic units of production and organisation of labour. The hsiang plan was drawn up after discussion among the hsiang administrative cadres, Party branch secretary and activists in

1 Kao Kang, "K'ê-fu ch'un-kêng yün-tung chung ling-tao shang ti jo-tien" (Overcome the Shortcomings in our Leadership for the Spring Ploughing Campaign), CRJ, 17 April 1943.
production, led by cadres, from the higher levels. The production plans for the natural village and virtually every family were made in accordance with the hsia̍ng plan.

Normally, a plan was divided into three parts: the general situation of the hsia̍ng, the production plan for the year, and the methods for achieving the planned target. The first part was simple and short, while the second and third parts had to be clear, concrete and detailed, and to include every aspect of the production movement.

Shown below is an excerpt from a typical production plan for a hsia̍ng - the Sixth Hsia̍ng in the Ch'uan-k'ou District in Yenan Hsien - for the year 1943:

Part 2 - Plan

2 Organisation of labour force:

For spring ploughing: 5 cha-kung -- 10 people each.
For weeding: 25 cha-kung -- 10 people each.
Pien-kung would absorb 200 people.
500 women, aged people and children were to be organised:
200 women for supplementary work in the fields,
60 aged men and children for raising cattle and sheep,
240 aged men and children for carrying lunch to the fields and other miscellaneous work.

7 Spinning and weaving:

30 spinning and 5 weaving teams of women were to be organised.
30 hand spinning machines, 1 large weaving machine and 1 large spinning machine were to be supplied by the cooperative.
Comrades Wu and Yuan would teach spinning and weaving and also lead the spinning and weaving teams.
After the development of spinning and weaving production, a cooperative for clothing production and sale would be opened by joint ownership and management of the government and the masses. Mr. Yang, Hsia̍ng Head, would be responsible for preparation for the cooperative.

Part 3 - Methods

1 Propaganda and mobilisation:

a. Meetings of the cadres of the Party branch and activists for discussing the significance of this year's production and production plan of the hsia̍ng were to be called.
b. Six production mobilisation meetings for the whole hsiang would be held in order to call on the peasants to develop production and to praise the labour heroes Wang, Kao and so on, and punish the loafers Hui and Sun.

c. Wu Man-yu campaign would be launched.

d. The Party members and cadres should talk with the masses individually and explain the production movement to them.

e. Performances should be prepared for production propaganda at the Chinese New Year.

Organisation:

a. Based on the hsiang production plan, the production plan of every natural village and household should be drawn up. The Party cell chiefs and the natural village headmen would be responsible for making the plans properly.

b. Every Party member would lead and urge the peasants to achieve the planned targets.

c. The Party cell would observe its chief and the Hsiang Head in their production work.

d. The number of meetings would be reduced. Mass meetings of the whole hsiang should not be called unless a special accident occurs. The conference of the natural village headmen and the administrative village chairmen should be held twice a year in the spring and the autumn.

Party members as good examples:

a. Party members should get up early in the morning.

b. Party members should make sure to achieve the planned target in production; accept the masses' criticisms of their production work.

c. All Party members should join pien-kung or cha-kung. The Party cell in the natural village should organise a cha-kung team.

d. Party members who would not stop smoking and gambling should be strictly punished by the local government and the Party.

e. Party members should mobilise all their wives for production.

f. Party members who were middle peasants and above should help the immigrants by giving them grain, lending them houses, getting them jobs and so on.

Mobilisation of loafers for production:

a. Loafers were to be persuaded and 'struggled' at mass meetings.

b. They would be given specific pieces of wasteland to reclaim.
c. All the duties and burdens borne by the villagers should be equally put on them.
d. The whole village should be mobilised not to allow them to eat unless they work.
e. A sign reading 'loafer' would be hung on the gate of every loafer's house and removed when he is reformed.
f. The same measures should be taken for magicians, fortune tellers, and so forth."

This example shows clearly how heavily the production movement depended on the organisation of labour and the activism of the masses, and also the important role of cadres and Party members in mobilising the masses for production. In effect, the CCP depended solely upon its members and cadres for the success of the movement. Party members could not lag behind the non-Party masses in any aspect of the movement, and they had to be willing to give up private benefits and to subject themselves to criticism by the masses. The Party expected its members not only to lead the masses in production but also to assume model roles for them to emulate. The point may seem obvious, but it cannot be over-emphasised that in this, as in all other mass movements in the Yenan period, success depended to a critical extent on the calibre and performance of the cadres.2

Household plans were made, on the basis of the hsia:ng production plan. The peasants traditionally had annual plans for agricultural production, although they had not been well organised, publicised, or detailed. The task of the cadres was to help them to draw up well organised and detailed plans, and to encourage them to increase production, so that they could use better methods.3 Because of the limited

1 CP/P, 8 February 1943.
2 Mao had pointed to the importance of cadres in his speech to the Sixth Plenum of the Party in 1938: "Cadres are a decisive factor, once the political line is determined." "Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," Mao, II, p. 202.
3 Huang Ching-po, "Tso nung-hu chi-hua ti i-hsieh ching-yen" (An Experience of Drawing Production Plan of the Agricultural Households), CP/P, 10 June 1943.
number of literate cadres available for this work, household plan-making was not carried out extensively in all areas. But in the greater part of the base areas one or two districts or hsien, or several households in a hsien, were selected as typical for the purpose of drawing up household production plans. The selection of these models was usually based on good production results, one purpose being to encourage others to emulate their example.

Before undertaking to make plans for their family production, the cadres were required to convince the peasants that the purpose of the plan-making was to increase their incomes and improve their own living standards, and not for future taxation. The peasants tended otherwise to understate the amount of land, stock animals and farm implements they owned.

The method of making household production plans was the same as that used for tax collection: the peasants were required to present their own plans and the cadres corrected these in accordance with their investigation of the conditions of the peasants' land, labour and other means of production. Before a final decision was made on the plans, the cadres had to obtain the peasants' consent. Coercion was strictly prohibited, and it was argued that to use coercion would be to make the plans useless. However, the fact that the Central Committee had to tell the cadres repeatedly not to use coercion indicates that this must have been fairly widespread.

The Party exploited this opportunity for political education. In helping the peasants to draw up production plans, the local government was able to discover in detail the circumstances, and the difficulties, of every family, while at the same time publicising government policies

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1 "Chief-shao Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü tso nung-hu chi-hua ti ching-yen" (Introduction of Experience of Production Plan-Making for Agricultural Households in the SKN Border Region), CPJP, 13 December 1943.
among the peasants. It was essential for the cadres to persuade the peasants to allow them to examine in detail their financial situation and production capacity. An article in the Chieh-fang jih-pao written by a hsien Party secretary emphasises that because the plans had to be based on such detail, plan-making was also a form of propaganda work which penetrated the masses. ¹

The educational function of planning included giving the peasants an idea of the production movement as a whole. The arguments put forward by the cadres were based on the prospects for improvement in the peasants' livelihood rather than on nationalism, even though the ultimate aim of the production drive was victory over the Japanese. In order to develop production and improve their own living standards, the peasants were required to publicise their financial conditions and production plans, to cooperate with other peasants, to mobilise their wives, children and parents, and to help the village loafers to engage in production.

Almost inevitably, the Party met with suspicion, and reluctance on the part of the peasants to report their financial conditions to the cadres and publicise everything in front of the villagers. The above-mentioned article by a Party secretary gives an example of a peasant who believed that the report on the number of his stock animals and the process of production planning were to provide the basis for future taxation. ² Rumours to the effect that the production movement itself was aimed only at heavier taxation seem to have been widespread among the peasants, and tc have become one of the main obstacles to propagation of production planning. The emphasis of the propaganda on this point indicates the difficulty of the cadres in their planning work among the masses.³

¹ Li Tsu-ch'uan, "T'an nung-hu chi-hua" (Talking on Planning of Peasant's Household), CPJP, 13 April 1943.
² Ibid.
³ Huang Ching-po, "Tsu nung-hu chi-hua ti i-hsieh ching'yen."
This suggests two important factors. One is the depth of the peasants' suspicion of the aims of government policies. Even after a decade of Communist rule under which they had obtained considerable gains, both economic and political, the peasants in the SKN Border Region retained their distrust of the 'government'; that is, their deep-rooted belief that a 'government' could not do anything which was ultimately beneficial to the people. The second factor suggested by the peasants' worries about taxation is that the tax imposed in the previous two years, 1941 and 1942, had been so heavy as to make them suspect almost all government policies.

On the part of the cadres, not all of those who were responsible for drawing up household production plans worked as they were instructed. The Ch'ieh-f'ang jih-pao reports an example of a village headman who drew up the plans for all the households in his village, sitting in his house and without consulting the villagers, by putting down 'approximate' or estimated figures. Consequently, the figures in the plans bore no relation to real conditions, and the plans were useless.1

This kind of problem was uncovered in the examination (ch'ien-ah't'a) of the actual production work which followed every major task in the rural calendar. The object of such examinations was to check on whether the work had been done as planned, and if not, to identify the problems and to solve them. Two copies of the household production plans were made, one to be kept by the household and the other by the hs'iang or district office and used for the examination.2 This meant that the local government could scrutinise the production work of the people under its jurisdiction on a continuous basis. The government was now involved in the daily life of the peasant masses, and both

1 Chang Pei, "Ch'ien-ch'a an-nu chi-hua" (Examination of Household Planning), CHF, 7 April 1944.
2 "Ch'ieh-shao Shen-Kan-Ning pien-ch'ü tso mung-hu chi-hua ti ching-yen."
sides shared the same concern with production work.

In spite of its shortcomings, production planning helped in the implementation of the Party's economic and financial policies, involved the peasants in organised labour and the political process, and stimulated them to develop production. Together with organised labour, plan-making helped to impress on the peasants the fact that their production work was a part of the whole Communist state economy. Moreover, the psychology of participation made the plan-making an effective means of mobilising the individual peasants and other production units for competitions for achieving planned targets.\(^1\) Mobilisation, assisted by plan-making, was extended to those who had not taken part in production before, such as women, aged people, children and 'loafers'.

'Reform the Loafers'

The mobilisation of loafers was of special importance because of its social and political significance. It is an illustration of the CCP's attempt to reform man's thought and transform the individual into a person who could participate in the revolution.

Organisation of labour made it easier for the Party to control the general population, including 'loafers'. In the Party's definition 'loafers' included gamblers, opium smokers, drunkards, magicians, fortune tellers and priests. They could be mobilised for production work only after the organisation of labour.\(^2\) Mobilisation of loafers had both an economic and a political, or social, purpose; it was part of the Party's

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Mao gives statistics on the mobilisation of loafers in Yanan Hsien in the SKN production movement launched from 1939 to 1942 in his report to the Senior Cadres Conference, according to which 1,338 loafers out of an original 1,700 took part in production work. See the table in Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 8, p. 205.
general design to mobilise all manpower in the base areas, and it represented an attempt to remove what was an unstable factor in society. loafers could affect the morale among the masses, and there were the social ill-effects of their unhealthy 'occupations'.

A Chieh-fang jih-pao editorial enumerated the benefits of reform of loafers as follows: first, an increase in the labour force, second, raising the peasants' morale for production, and third, reform of rural customs and habits and preservation of local order. The editorial suggested methods to reform loafers. Firstly, the village should give them land to till, because even if they wanted to work in the fields, most of them had neither land nor farm implements. Secondly, the villagers were to use patience in 'persuading' and educating them, so that they might be brought to a point where they would want sincerely to engage in production. Thirdly, if persuasion was not effective, the local government was to assign them a certain production task, appoint a proper supervisor, and periodically inspect their work. Fourthly, the village government was to force them publicly to promise the villagers that they would give up such habits as opium smoking, gambling and drinking, and do a certain amount of productive work. They should be made to swear to pay fines if they did not keep these promises. Finally, women and children were to be mobilised to 'struggle' against them, as were their own parents, brothers, sisters and friends. As suggested by the

1"Kai-tsaO erh-liu-tzu" (Reform the Loafers), editorial, CPJP, 14 February, 1943.
2Ibid. A description of a mass meeting for production mobilisation at which a loafer was accused, and forced to promise to stop smoking and reclaim 6 shang of land is given in Liu Mo-p'ing, "Wuch'i Shih-cheng hsiang sheng-ch'an tung-yiian" (Mobilisation for Production at Shihcheng Hsiang, Wuch'i Hetan), CPJP, 11 April 1943.
production plan cited above, tremendous social pressure seems to have been applied for mobilisation of loafers to a point where they could not avoid working.

The basic idea underlying the CCP's methods for reform of loafers was that they were not born loafers, but had become so because of social conditions, and therefore, they could be reformed and made to work if social conditions were changed. Thought and behaviour were regarded as a reflection of social environment; and if the people's ideas and behaviour were changed, this in turn accelerated social change. This has been one of the basic ideas underlying the approach of Mao and the CCP to the question of man and society, and they have always always seized opportunities to educate the masses for further social change. An important aspect of the 'reform the loafers' campaign was the Party's concern with transforming the ways of thinking and lives of the peasant masses. The unhealthy life styles of loafers had to be eliminated, not by liquidating the loafers physically, but by winning them over to the new value system, or 'curing their disease'. The 'reform the loafers' campaign was an essential part of the Communist revolutionary transformation of society.

3. The Labour Heroes

Organisation of labour in the production movement involved the peasant masses in the revolutionary process in their daily work all

1 "Kai-tao erh-liu-tzu."
2 Chalmers Johnson touches on this point, although from the following quotation it is clear that he regards it as a revolutionary tactic and not as part of the essence of Mao's revolutionary thought: "As a revolutionary strategist, with this own basic values and goals thoroughly compartmentalized, Mao Ts-tung recognised the need to exploit opportunistically any political issue that might bring about the desired level of mass organization. Tactical flexibility with regard to matters of Marxist ideology is the most fundamental attribute of Mao's theory of people's war." Ping-ki Ho and Tang Tsou, eds., op. cit., pp. 407-408.
year round. The labour heroes were mass leaders of these production organisations, who emerged from the process of the production movement and assumed key roles in the revolutionary process not only for production but also in other aspects of sociopolitical transformation. In fact, in the whole process of transformation at the village level, the CCP relied heavily on the labour heroes. They were the symbol of the Party's success in its mass line technique.

The labour hero system was not a new innovation in 1943, at least in the SKN Border Region where in 1942 Wu Man-yu became the first labour hero. Wu was elected as an example of hard work, loyalty to the government and help with other people's production. ¹ A Wu Man-yu emulation campaign was launched in May 1942. ² The campaign stressed both his political virtues and his economic achievement in intensive cultivation. ³ In early 1943, when the CCP was about to start the production drive, Wu Man-yu became the model for emulation by all production units; the SKN Border Region government and the Northwest Bureau of the CCP issued directives to carry out a 'Wu Man-yu campaign'. ⁴

During the 1943 harvest, when the first year of the production movement was nearing completion, all production units were asked to select labour heroes (lao-tung ying-hsiung), who had to be active producers who had contributed to the production work of the unit as a whole, and model production workers (mo-fan sheng-ch'an kung-tso-ah).
who had to be cadres who had worked particularly hard and obtained outstanding results in leading production work. The local governments issued a list of 'standard qualities' for labour heroes. The following example gives the standard qualities for the election of labour heroes and model workers issued by the Suiteh Subregion Office in SKN. Labour Heroes had first of all to be hard working and to have produced a large amount of goods of high quality. Secondly, they had to have demonstrated that they were adopting and creating new and better production methods. Thirdly, they had to be willing to pay tax and obey the laws; and fourth, they had to be willing to help others and to influence others, not only in production but also in many other ways.\(^1\) For model production workers, the following four qualities were essential. Firstly, they had to perceive production work 'correctly'\(^2\) and carry out their tasks of production 'correctly'. Secondly, they had to assume active responsibility and to have outstanding work results. Thirdly, they had to have planned and creative methods in production work and, finally, to have close links with the masses.\(^3\)

What is noteworthy is that two of the four essential conditions for labour heroes were political, namely, they should be good citizens, willing to pay tax, to obey laws and help others, in addition to being outstanding producers of goods. For the CCP, an isolated petty producer was meaningless, no matter how much he produced; he was not able to increase production very far, nor to affect other people's enthusiasm for production. In order to mobilise fully all resources for economic

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1. Directive of the Suiteh Subregion Office, the SKN Border Region, of 22 October 1943, CPJP, 24 October 1943.
2. 'Correct' perception of production work by cadres means that they have realised the importance of production work in the war and the revolution, and respected it in their daily service as cadres.
development, everything had to be planned and organised for systematic use, and everyone had to be indoctrinated to keep morale high.

It is worth noting some examples of 1943 labour heroes to see the qualities which the CCP sought in them. Wu Man-yu was once more elected a labour hero because he had organised his whole village into production teams, helped the villagers with financial and technical difficulties at his own expense, and also helped the 359th Brigade when it had started to reclaim land at Nanniwan, close to his village. Wang Chen, the Commander of the 359th Brigade, which by non-CCP accounts achieved remarkable success in attaining substantial self-sufficiency in food and basic goods in 1943, was elected a first class hero, for his effective leadership both in production work in the Brigade and in political work such as in the development of good relations with the villagers around Nanniwan. Shen Chang-lin was honoured as a Border Region labour hero for his long and successful efforts to give financial and technical aid to immigrants and to organise them together with the native villagers into mutual aid teams to reclaim wasteland. Liu Chien-chang, the leader of the successful cooperative of the Southern District in Yenan Hsien, which had organised 90 percent of the households in the district, and expanded its business from commerce to production, transportation and credit, as well as making profits for its members, was elected a labour hero of the SKN Border Region because of his excellent management and leadership of the cooperative. Chang Ch'iu-feng became a first class honour labour hero of the Northwest Shanhsi Base, because he had improved techniques in the repair and production of weapons, saved materials, taught young workers his skills and trained them as skilled workers, gained prestige among fellow workers, who had elected him union leader, and performed leadership functions very well in implementing the policies of the Party.
It can be seen, then, that labour heroes were both leaders of production organisations and at the same time outstanding productive workers. But they seem to have been appreciated by the Party more for their leadership qualities than for their personal achievements in production. Helping others and developing organised production at the expense of personal interests were other highly commended qualities.

In collective work, the CCP tried to eliminate selfishness. A concept of 'new citizen' grew out of the organisation of production. The concept that 'a good citizen must help others' was entirely new to rural China. The labour heroes were, in a sense, new citizens who placed 'public' interests above self-interest. What the Party expected of the labour heroes was that they should lead their fellows to organise labour mutual aid and cooperatives and raise the level of production in a village as a whole. Accordingly, the labour heroes who attended the First Labour Hero Congress of the SKN Border Region were all leaders of production organisations, although the organisations they represented varied in size and type.\(^1\)

It was for this reason that Mao Tse-tung called for further organisation of production at the Labour Hero Congress in November 1943. He wrote:

Labour heroes and model workers in production! You are leaders of the people, you have been very successful in your work, and I hope you, too, will not grow complacent. I hope that when you get back to your organisations, schools, army units or factories, you will lead the people, lead the masses and work still better, and first of all get the masses organised on a voluntary basis into co-operatives, get them even better organised and in even greater numbers.\(^2\)

\(^1\) "FojP, 27 November 1943.
Labour heroes were apparently expected by the CCP to organise and lead the masses for mass movements, not only in economic matters but also in political, military and educational fields. For example, when the Shan Border Region was threatened by the KMT army in July 1943, it was the labour heroes who organised the villagers into militia corps and drew up mobilisation plans. In the 'reform the loafers' campaign, labour heroes assumed model and leading roles. When the government called for a 'private school' (min-pao hsiao-hsiao) movement in 1944, the labour heroes responded promptly by setting up primary schools in their villages, by giving financial assistance and persuading the villagers to promote the movement. A typical case of leadership by a labour hero covering fields other than production is the example of Yuan Ch'ien of Pao-ten Haian in northwest Shansi, who assumed the head of the winter school of his village and made use of the winter school for organisation of tax payment, rent reduction, militia training and assistance to the regular army.

The convocation of labour hero congresses at all levels at the end of 1943 was a significant event in the history of mass mobilisation by the CCP at the basic level. These congresses honoured the heroes, whose achievements and methods were praised and reported through all communications media. At the congresses, the labour heroes exchanged experiences...
on better methods and techniques of increasing production and organising more people. Usually the labour hero congresses were accompanied by production exhibitions (sheng-oh'an chen-lan-hui) at the corresponding levels, which displayed outstanding achievements in production as well as better production methods, including the form and practice of organisation.

The labour hero congress at the Border Region level was covered by the Chieh-fang jih-pao as widely as the National Congress of the CCP. This is one clear indication of the significance attached by the CCP to the role of the labour heroes and of the congress in the economy and the politics of the Communist system.

In fact, the labour hero congress linked the basic masses politically to the supreme central organ of state. In a society with poor communications, the villagers rarely travelled to the capital city; other governments in Chinese history had had little success in controlling effectively the basic unit of rural society, the natural village. The CCP was the first government to attempt to achieve effective control over the basic mass of the people through political and economic mass movements. The convocation of the labour hero congresses elected by the masses was one of the most effective ties between the CCP central leadership and the basic level of the people. They were notified that the labour heroes from their villages went to Yenan, the capital of the Communist state, and were received by the supreme leaders of the state, and held meetings with labour heroes from other parts of the country, and moreover, were coming back with honour and heightened morale to their villages to work with them. This seems to have given the masses

1 Particularly after 1942, implementation of almost every policy of the CCP was designed to be a mass movement—such as an election, rent reduction, education, marriage law, tax collection, production, and so on.
a sense of integrity and solidarity with the whole Communist state and its leaders.1

The labour heroes were typical cases of the 'activists' whom the CCP expected to assume the role of linking the Party and the government with the masses, to mobilise them by providing the basic leadership in the mass movements. The labour hero system was designed to make methodical use of the capability and prestige of the 'activists' among the masses as mainstays of the Party.

The labour hero system helped also to transform the value system of the society. 'Labour' had never been connected with 'hero' before in Chinese history, even though the virtues of hard work, helping people, sacrificing one's own benefits and leading people in production had been appreciated by people within the village. Now appreciation of these virtues was shared by the villagers and the government. This worked as another tie between the masses and the government and encouraged the masses to recognise these virtues.

The labour hero system was so successful, both politically and economically, that from 1944 the CCP extended the 'hero system' to other fields; to study (hahsh-hsi ying-hsiung), fighting (ochen-tou ying-hsiung) and militia (min-ping ying-hsiung). These heroes were elected from the basic units up to the border region level, and held heroes' congresses as did the labour heroes, although the Chiah-fang jih-pao reported them with less enthusiasm than the labour heroes congresses. The fact that the CCP adopted the 'hero system' in other fields indicates that the activists in all the mass movements were expected by the Party to assume leadership in the movements, and the 'hero system' was one of the most

1 Apart from send-offs and welcomes by their own villagers, the labour heroes who went to Yenan to attend the Congress were welcomed with respect and excitement by the villagers on their way to and from Yenan. On their way back, they gave talks about the Congress and Yenan at the villages they passed through.
effective way to mobilise them as basic leaders. These heroes were the people who gave organisation and leadership to the basic units for economic, military and political mass mobilisation. For the Party, the heroes were a source of new cadres of non-intellectual origin which the Communist regime badly needed in order to defend its system of government against bureaucratisation, and to link it with the mass of the people.

The production movement provided a social foundation for Communist power by organising all the peasants under native leaders loyal to the new regime. With the improvement in living standards of the masses and the social and political change which resulted from the production drive in 1943 undermined the landlord-gentry rule in the villages. The cooperatives movement, launched as a part of the production drive, accelerated this process by cutting the old dependent ties of the members with merchants and usurers. Democratic rule within the cooperative helped to give the peasant members political training and a sense of participation.

4. The Cooperatives

Like the Japanese- and KMT-controlled cooperative, the cooperatives led by the CCP started as consumers' cooperatives. Until 1941, they were regarded as part of the government, and the 'members' regarded their contribution as a form of tax, because the cooperatives were organised by local governments and depended mainly on them for investment; they managed buying, selling and the production of goods

2 All Communist bases in North China were reported to have achieved the target of 'feng-i t'au-shih' through the 1943 production drive, although the T'aihang base was still suffering from a locust plague. The production campaigns in 1944 were launched for another target, 'keng-san yu-i'.
required by local governments and there was no profit for the shareholders.\(^1\) It seems that the cooperatives had become a burden to the government, at least during the period of economic and financial difficulties in 1941. In January 1942, the CCP suggested the transfer of the cooperatives to non-government management in order to eliminate bureaucratism in the cooperative movement. This was intended also to make people regard the cooperatives as their own, and to raise their enthusiasm for the cooperative movement for development of production and commerce.

This plan for transfer to non-government management followed the successful experience of the Southern District Cooperative of Yenan, which had been managed exceptionally well by non-government cadres.\(^2\) It had organised over 90 percent of the inhabitants in the district as share-holders and expanded its business from commerce to production, transportation and the provision of loans.\(^3\)

Although the Chieh-fang jih-pao reported good results from the transfer to non-government control in 1942, it seems that the elimination of bureaucratism among the cooperative cadres had not been accomplished within this short time. In September 1942 the Chieh-fang jih-pao editorial called on the cooperatives to reform themselves in the following ways. Firstly, the cooperatives had to strengthen the education of their cadres and make them recognise that cooperatives

\(^1\) See Mao's report, "Economic and Financial Problems," *Mao Tse-tung chi*, Vol. 8, p. 230; Ch'en Huan, "Pien-ch'\(\u01c0\) jen-min ti fu-tan chiu-chin chung-pu-chung," *CPUP*, 4 November 1941. The latter admits that the people regarded the contribution to cooperatives as a burden, because it never brought them any profit.

\(^2\) 'A non-government cadre' is not a 'cadre' in the strict sense. But those who worked for the mass organisations and cooperatives were also called 'kan-pu', although they were not employees of the government or the Party.

\(^3\) On development of the Southern District Cooperative, see "Yenan Nan-ch'\(\u01c0\) hs\(\u01c7\)-tsao-shie li li-shih" (History of the Southern District Cooperative), written by its leader Liu Chien-chang, *Mao Tse-tung chi*, Vol. 8, pp. 234-245.
were an economic organisation of the masses. Secondly, all cooperatives which had not yet been transferred to non-government management should reform themselves, call general meetings of share-holders and elect a board of management. Thirdly, the cooperative cadres should not coerce the masses to join the cooperatives.¹

In addition, at the end of 1942 Mao suggested that the Party would have to separate the cooperative cadres from the government and pay them wages; cultivation of the cooperative cadres' fields by the peasants had to be stopped, so that it might be made clear that the cooperatives were not part of the government or the Party, both in the eyes of the people and in the minds of the cadres themselves. Mao also called for reform of the cooperative organisation. The organisation of the cooperatives had to be simplified and made into a 'business', not a government organ, and the number of cooperative workers and the amount of expenditure had to be reduced.²

Communist sources reveal two interesting points. One is that the cooperative movement was started from above, as a government directed operation, and around 1942, like other Communist policies and movements from above, it became sluggish, mainly because of bureaucratisation. The other is that the purpose of the Communist cooperative policy was not collectivisation of production, but development of the 'private' sector of the border region economy. These two were inter-related. 'Bureaucratism', which had appeared in the form of giving priority to the government at the expense of the people, had prevented the cooperatives from increasing their members and absorbing small capital. In order to develop the cooperative movement, cooperatives had to be profitable for

¹ "Kwa-n-ch'ü hé-tso-shé min-pan cheng-tso" (Rigorously Implement the Policy of the People's Management of the Cooperative), editorial, *Min-Ch'ing* (Mi), 8 September 1942.

the people. As stated above, the CCP aimed to develop the framework of 'capitalism' and 'bourgeois democracy' defined by the Party as 'progressive' in rural China, where production relations were still dominant. The CCP believed that the peasants at this stage, with a few exceptions, were prepared to accept only political or ideological incentives for production.

'Bureaucratism' should be overcome, according to the education of the cooperative cadres, in addition to the organisation. Liu Chien-chang, the leader of the success District Cooperative in Yenan Hsien, wrote that the first mass ownership was the election by the masses of a man for management of the cooperative. He should be ideological fair in practice, and understand the significance of the therefore, should be merely an employee of the people without

The CCP’s design was to make the cooperative an organisation and managed by the people and profitable for the people. It tried to appeal to the masses' self-interest for organisation of the cooperative. In other words, by showing them the cooperative could benefit them, the CCP hoped to do

1 See the Central Committee decision on land policy of Jan Brandt, et al., ed., op. cit., p. 278.
2 The period of the cooperative reform policy coincided with of the rectification campaign.
3 "Kuan-yü hæ-tso-she ti chi-kæ wen-t'ì" (Several Questions Cooperatives), CFJP, 12 June 1943.
4 For an example of Communist propaganda on the benefits see a news item on the Tzu-chang Hsien Cooperative, in jhã-pao, 17 November 1943. It emphasises that the Coop enormous profit for the members, and many people wanted because they had come to know the cooperative was profi
full the peasants’ capital and manpower, for self-sufficiency of the border regions. At the same time, the Communists developed the ‘public sector, especially in secondary industry for basic goods. But it was not able to supply enough basic goods for the demands in the base area and the Party had to depend upon private capital for secondary industry which became the main field of the production cooperatives.

Production of Basic Goods by Cooperatives

In Liu Chien-chang’s article in the Chieh-fang jih-pao quoted above it is shown that the CCP tried by all means at its disposal to collect even the smallest amount of capital from the masses. Replying to the question of how to recruit members and collect capital for the cooperative, he writes: First, the cooperative had to accept local products as capital instead of cash, such as grain, stock animals, timber, fuel, Chinese medical materials, etc. Second, the cadres should not force the masses to join cooperatives, but should carry out propaganda on how beneficial it was to be a cooperative member. Third, investment in the cooperative had to be exempt from taxation. Finally, the cooperative should absorb local small merchants’ businesses which could not run by themselves. 1 The CCP mobilised not only small cash savings but also manpower which had not so far been used. A typical example was mobilisation of women for spinning and weaving cooperatives. By lending raw cotton and equipment, teaching spinning and weaving, and buying the finished products, the cooperative tried to mobilise women’s labour for local self-sufficiency in clothing. 2

1 "Kuan-yü hê-tso-she ti chi-kê wen-t’i."

2 See, for example, Kao Tzu-li, "Hsiang Nan-ch'ü hê-tso-she hsüeh-sih (Learn from the Southern District Cooperative), CFJP, 20 February 1943; A Report on women’s cooperative in the SHN Border Region, CFJP, 8 June 1943; Mun Ming, "Wei ch’ü-chung fu-wu ti Yuan-liu-shih hê-tso-she" (The Yuan-liu-shih Cooperative Serves the Masses), CFJP, 29 October 1943; CFJP, 17 November 1943.
The CCP's ultimate target in economic development in the Yenan period was the achievement of self-sufficiency within each base area. Even within the base areas the supply of basic goods had to be locally self-sufficient at the hsien or district level because of lack of modern transportation. The cooperative movement was designed to fulfill the demands of local small industry; industries run by the cooperatives clearly showed this. For example, in 1942 the Liu-lin Hsiang Cooperative, a branch of the Southern District Cooperative in Yenan Hsien, had a weaving factory, a leather mill, a wool weaving factory, an oil mill, and a flour mill.\(^1\) In the case of Ling-shu Hsien Cooperative, Peiyao Region, the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region, there were 6 oil mills, 9 water mills, 3 farm appliances factories, 5 dyeing factories, 1 ceramic factory, 28 sheep meadows, 300 mou of rhubarb fields for Chinese medical material, 200 flour mills, 10 medical factories and 10 mou of vegetable plots.\(^2\)

In the economically backward Communist bases, the role of the small scale cooperative industry was crucial. According to the report of the Chin-Ch.-Lu-Yü Border Region Inspection Group on the cooperatives in the Pai-Yao Region, the cooperative movement in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region had resulted in the following achievements:

1. It damaged the puppet currency and strengthened the Communist currency, pien-pt,\(^3\) by providing abundant products. It had systematised exports and imports through the organised control of commodities. In particular, it had educated the people in the Border Region and made them use pien-pt for all trade; thus, even the people in the guerrilla and Japanese-occupied areas had become willing to use pien-pt. Since the Japanese had executed a rationing system, the people in the Japanese-occupied areas were not able to buy goods even if they had money. If they had pien-pt, they were

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2. K'è Chang-lin, "Chin-Ch'a-Chi ti hê-tso shih-yeh" (Cooperative Work in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Border Region), *ChJP*, 5 January 1943.
3. Pien-pt is an abbreviated term for pien-oh'ù ying-hang pi which means border region bank note, issued by each border region bank in the base area which was called a border region bank.
able to buy goods from the Border Region.

2. It controlled inflation and regulated grain, because it organised and controlled local products, and, by establishing the central organ of the cooperatives, it adjusted maldistribution of grain and other goods, and balanced supply and demand.

3. It greatly developed production. The cooperative movement involved a great amount of manpower and property for development of production, and made every effort to achieve self-reliance. The cooperatives helped to develop many side jobs and handicrafts. The people's livelihood was raised and at least food and clothing were sufficient now.

4. It was combined with other work. The cooperative usually gave gifts and entertainments in acknowledgment of the service of the anti-Japanese army and gave special treatment to soldiers' families. It played an important role in recruiting new soldiers; for example, the cooperative of a district of the Peiyao Region mobilised thirty new soldiers, on an entirely voluntary basis to join the army.

Both the economic and political significance of the cooperatives are obvious in this report. The first and main achievement of the cooperative movement was economic, i.e., an increase in output; this helped to control inflation and strengthen the position of the Communist currency in the monetary war with the Japanese-sponsored currency. For the CCP an organised private economy was most desirable. The Party was able to plan and control production, and internal and external trade, in addition to avoiding waste of capital and manpower, and developing industrialisation. This 'guerrilla' way of industrialisation was later expanded to the whole of China under the slogan of 'tsu-li keng-sheng'.

Political Advantages of the Cooperatives

Toward the end of 1943, Mao Tse-tung began referring to mutual aid labour organisations as cooperatives, quite apart from the normal cooperatives described above. These two were distinct from each other,

1 K'ao Chang-lin, "Chin-Ch'a-Chi ti hé-tso shi-yeh," CFJP, 5 January 1944.
2 For a full discussion of the Yanan way of industrialisation, see Selden, op. cit., pp. 254-262 and 264-267.
although they were in some cases superficially similar. For example, transportation work, carried out by the peasants in the slack season, was organised both as a form of labour mutual aid and as a part of the cooperative; and in practice it was organised both by the cooperatives and by the peasants themselves as mutual aid labour. But the cooperatives originated from commerce, to supply consumer goods, while mutual aid labour was designed to serve production. The former later expanded to include transportation and production, but, with a few exceptions, never became an organisation for agricultural production until the 'Socialist High Tide' in 1955. The exceptions were mainly in the agricultural work of the army and of cadres who were not natives and did not own private land where they worked. Other exceptions were the 'cooperative farms' established by landless migrants for reclamation of wasteland.

To the extent that the CCP established its economic policy on the basis of private ownership of land, the 'land cooperative' was regarded as a 'leftist' deviation in the Yanan period. The exceptional cases mentioned above were not referred to as cooperatives by the CCP. The only two Communist documents which do refer to all mutual aid organisations as cooperatives were Mao's "On the Cooperatives" and "Get Organized." It is interesting that Mao was the only one to suggest the possibility of unifying mutual aid labour and cooperatives into 'land cooperatives' or collectivisation of land and agricultural work, anticipating the socialist stage of economic development when at the same time the Party deliberately avoided mention of this possibility.

In practice, however, the CCP stressed the educational function of

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1 See Section 2 on mutual aid labour.
2 This article is not included in the Selected Works. For the full text, see Mao Tse-tung chi, Vol. 9, pp. 75-78.
the cooperative both for its members and for the cadres. The members were entitled to equal participation in the management of the cooperative irrespective of the amount of their investment, whereas profit was distributed proportionately to the amount of investment. The members were called together for meetings for election of managers and staff, for management, for distribution of profit, and so on. At these meetings they were encouraged to take an active part in the process of 'democratic centralism'; that is, the masses were to assume leadership in the cooperative movement. Participation of the masses in the management and work of the cooperative involved them in the political process, and the cooperative tried to assist in the implementation of the government policies on taxation, school and adult education, self-defence and security, migration, employment and assistance to the poor. The members were inculcated with the idea of the identity of interests between them, and also between them and the government. In the guerrilla bases cooperative work was directly linked with nationalism against the Japanese troops and puppet administration.

The cooperative cadres were expected to work hard and to adopt informal procedures. They were paid in proportion to the profit the cooperative gained, so that they could identify themselves with the cooperative and its members. There were apparently corrupt cadres who were criticised by their colleagues and the members, although they were rarely mentioned in Communist sources.

The cooperatives were another organisation through which the CCP sought out and brought up activists among the masses, and replaced the

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2 Kao Tzu-li, "Hsiang Nan-ch'iü hê-tso-she hsüeh-hsi."
3 Hsu Wen, "Wang En-teh t'ung-chih yü 'Chin-t'ai-tien'" (Comrade Wang En-teh and 'Chin-t'ai Store'), K'ang-ahan jih-pao, 5 February 1945.
4 Liu Chien-chang, "Pan hê-tso-she ti chi-ke ching-yen."
5 Hsu Wen, "Wang En-teh t'ung-chih yü 'Chin-t'ai-tien'."
old cadres of intellectual origin from outside. Liu Chien-chang wrote:

According to our experience, the cooperative cadres at all levels
should be people who are selected from rural areas and linked
with the masses. The people who are trained in practical work
of the cooperatives are better for these cadres know the local
situation, are conversant with popular feelings, and related to
the lao-pai-hsing (ordinary peasants) they are relatively
trusted by the lao-pai-hsing.1

This also suggests that, as in other fields, there were conflicts and
lack of communication between the outside cadres and native villagers
in the cooperatives. In liu's opinion even though they had some
educational background and management skills, outside cadres were
inferior to native ones in developing good relations with the villagers.
Since the villagers' distrust would ruin the whole work of the cooper-
atives, it was much better to train native cadres. It seems that the
peasants' distrust and suspicion of outsiders or 'officials' was still
strongly-ingrained even under the enlightened rule of the CCP.

The cooperatives were another example of Mao's concept of leadership,
in which the government machine must be effective in mobilising the masses,
must be prevented from backsliding into bureaucratisation, and must be
linked with the local masses. By this kind of leadership, Communist
policies, the nationalist cause, and social reform, could be carried to
the basic level of society and could evoke a positive response from the
organised masses. The fact that the CCP stressed profit-making in the
cooperatives illustrates its belief in economic advancement as the pre-
requisite for mass mobilisation. It is true that the defeat of Japan was
propagated as the ultimate goal in organising and reforming the cooper-
atives. But by comparison with the publicity given to the economic
gain which would accrue to the share-holders in the cooperatives,
propagation of the nationalist cause was almost negligible.

1 Liu Chien-chang, "Pan ê-tso-she ti chi-ke ching-yen."
In other words, the CCP saw the cooperative movement as directed more to social revolution than to advancement of the nationalist war. Economically, the Party sought to raise even the smallest capital from the masses for primitive industrialisation, to supply sufficient quantities of basic goods within the base areas and to stabilise the plan, while at the same time, raising the living standards of the peasants. Socially, by expanding the 'business' of the cooperatives from commerce to production and finance, the movement was designed to reduce or eliminate the peasants' dependency on merchants, usurers and capitalists, and this undermine the economic dominance of the old ruling class. Politically, the cooperative movement again served to link the Party to the masses through the economic lift of the peasants. In turn, organisation of the cooperatives offered another opportunity for the Party to seek out and train activists and cadres from among the local masses, who could provide local leaders loyal to the new system of government but with close links with the masses.

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The CCP launched a number of campaigns together with the production drive. Of special significance was the education reform campaign. It was aimed at the spread of primary education at the villagers' own initiative. The CCP wanted the peasants to set up, run and provide curricula for primary schools, so that they would feel that the school was their own and ensure that their children went to the school. Another purpose was to avoid financial expenditure for primary education. Apart from regular primary education and adult education, newspaper reading teams were organised on the basis of production organisations. By informing the peasants what happened at the front, what were the policies of the government and the Party, how their fellow peasants

1 For a full discussion on this movement, see Seybolt, op. cit., pp. 656-664; Selden, op. cit., pp. 267-274.
from other parts of the base areas were engaging in the same mass move-
ments as they were engaging in, the newspaper reading widened their
horizons, and brought them closer to the whole Communist system of
government. The CCP claimed that as a result, the peasants were
stimulated to improve their production methods and to develop further
loyalty to the Communist regime.\(^1\) Wall newspapers in the villages
were also encouraged and assumed a similar role as did the newspaper
reading teams.\(^2\)

The anti-superstition campaign in 1944 was in itself made possible
by the improved living standards resulting from the 1943 production drive
and by the medical and hygiene policies of the government, and illus-
trates the change in the source of authority at the basic level of society.
Through the production drive, the CCP had, in fact, succeeded in estab-
lishing its authority among the peasants by 1944.

The production campaign was the most important and all-embracing
mass movement in the Yenan period, involving not only the masses but the
army, the government and the Party. Although its primary purpose was
to supply enough food and basic goods and to obtain reserves of grain for
the army and the people in the base areas, the political and educational
effects of the movement both on cadres and the masses were immense. Mutual
aid labour brought the government and Party cadres close to the masses,
while economic mass organisations introduced a new pattern of commu-
ication between the leaders and the led, and among the led.

While deriving immediate and tangible benefits from the production
movement, the peasants were also indoctrinated by the CCP towards
acceptance of an entirely new prospect of society and a new concept of
'society'. Politicisation of the peasants, in turn, gave more discipline

\(^1\) "R", 24 March 1944.
\(^2\) Chang Chung-shih, "Yang-chia-ling ti ch'iang-pao" (The Wall Newspaper
of Yang-chia-ling Village), CFJP, 3 April 1944.
and vitality to the Party cadres who worked among the masses, exposing them to the masses' criticisms. The success of the mass movement for production in 1943 laid the foundation of Communist rule in North China. The Communist political strategy of mobilising every individual through organisation and striking at individual selfishness, was established in this period and is still applied to the mass movements in the stage of 'socialist construction'.
CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL MOBILISATION OR NATIONALISM?

THE YENAN PERIOD ASSESSED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CIVIL WAR

The preceding chapters have examined the methods by which the Chinese Communist mobilised the masses in the Yenan period and prepared the foundation for their accession to power. From this examination, it is clear that the critical factors in the Chinese Communist revolution both during and after the Yenan period were the mass movements launched after the Party rectification campaign, and the 'mass line' technique which the CCP finally was able to apply successfully in these mass movements. Mass nationalism provoked by the Japanese invasion was an important element in Communist mass mobilisation, but should not be overestimated. The CCP certainly propagated anti-Japanese nationalism in accordance with its united front policy, and the immediate goal of Communist policies was the defeat of the Japanese. The united front policy, however, should be viewed in a broader context of the Communist strategy in the Chinese revolution; it is a strategy for minimising hostile elements and maximizing friendly elements in a specific situation.

The experience of the Yenan period should be evaluated as a part of the Chinese Communist revolution. Of particular importance in assessing the causes of the CCP's ultimate victory was the Party's continuing success in mass mobilisation after the Japanese surrender, over much larger areas and to a far higher degree than in the Yenan period. This cannot be explained only by mass nationalism. Chalmers Johnson has concluded that the key to the question of why the CCP was successful in mobilising the masses in the Yenan period when it had not
been able to do so in the Kiangsi period, is mass nationalism. He attempts to explain the CCP's success after the resistance war in terms of the Party's 'authority', which he argues was established among the masses primarily because of the Party's own nationalism, demonstrated in the resistance to Japan. Is this sufficient explanation for the CCP's remarkable success in mass mobilisation in the subsequent civil war? Did the masses follow the Party simply because it had upheld the banner of nationalism in the Yenan period?

It is instructive to look briefly at mass mobilisation in the early Civil War period, and particularly at the CCP's land policy, which indicates most clearly the Party's political strategy in the revolution. This should help to set the Yenan period in the perspective both of the Communist revolution as a whole and of the Communist victory in the contest for power.

1. Radicalisation of Communist Land Policy in 1945-47

The period of the civil war from 1945 to 1949 is generally regarded as quite distinct from the Yenan period. The civil war is, of course, a transitional period from 'Yenan' to 'Peking', from the national united front to socialist revolution. The basic policies of the CCP were rapidly radicalised, as the united front with the KMT gradually collapsed. This process was symbolised by two notable historical events; one was the outbreak of the open and all-out armed struggle between the KMT and the CCP in July 1946, and the other was the CCP's official return to land revolution in October 1947 after a decade of the rent reduction, or non-confiscation, policy.

In these two respects, the civil war period may seem to present a situation which is quite distinct from the Yenan period; but it is apparent that in many respects which were fundamental to the Chinese
social revolution, it was in fact a continuation of the Yenan period. Specifically, the CCP continued to develop and apply the mass mobilisation technique in this period, without any interruption between the two periods. Radicalisation within the mass movement forced the CCP to adapt its policy, although the mass line techniques were sufficiently well-developed to be readily adaptable to such radicalisation.

Contrary to the Party's assertion that in the newly liberated and fringe areas only moderate policies could be implemented, radicalisation emanated in fact from these very areas, and the Party was faced with difficulties in implementation of more radical policies in the old areas where the united front had been firmly established. This problem was exemplified in the Party's land policy. In the final stages of the anti-Japanese war, the CCP's intention was to continue the united front with the KMT in the period of national reconstruction after the war. Mao's proposal for a 'coalition government' for postwar China was not a temporary manoeuvre to deal with the KMT, still a powerful rival of the CCP. In the framework of 'coalition government' and protracted collaboration with the KMT, the CCP had no immediate intention of radicalising its land policy after the Japanese were defeated.

The CCP's plan to maintain collaboration with the KMT was not unconditional, nor did the Party trust the Central Government. The KMT also had become too suspicious of the CCP's intentions to be able to reach an agreement on coalition government. For the KMT, the Communists were threatening its 'legitimate' rule with military and political strength which had been built up 'illegally' during the resistance war. The CCP, in turn, mindful of the bitter experiences of the Shanghai coup in 1927, the extermination campaigns in the early 1930s and the New Fourth Army Incident in 1941, was determined to maintain its de facto rule in the areas where it had established control during the war.
At the time of the Japanese surrender, the Communist army was in a better position to accept the surrender of, and to disarm, the Japanese troops than was the KMT army, which was concentrated in the southwestern part of the country. The Communists promptly started to disarm the Japanese, ignoring instructions from Chiang Kai-shek to refrain from doing so. They also overcame resistance offered by Japanese troops on the orders of Chiang, and sent their own troops to Manchuria as soon as the Japanese surrender was reported. The vast region which had been controlled by the Japanese for about eight years thus became newly 'liberated', and much of it subsequently came under the category of 'fringe' areas contested by the KMT and the CCP in the civil war. It was in these areas that the CCP's radical land policy was revived, and from here the policy spread throughout the Communist territories.

Why was it in the new areas that radicalisation of the mass movement originated, areas in which there was no experience of social or political reform? What made these particular villagers radical, contrary to the Party's expectation? Why were they not politically passive as before. Johnson argues that the answer lies at least partly in 'nationalism', emphasising the use of the slogan 'Fan-chien ch'ing-suan' (Settle accounts with the national traitors), which was promoted extensively in the new areas immediately after the Japanese surrender.¹

As Johnson has noted, the 'ch'ing-suan' was superficially nationalist in character. It was 'fan-chien' (anti-traitor) struggle, in which those who had collaborated with the Japanese were accused, and its 'nationalist' character in this phase is undeniable. Yet there remains a critical question of whether compensation was demanded from the

¹ See Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power, p.198, Note 29.
'traitors' for their collaboration with the invaders or for their increased exploitation under Japanese protection. It might be argued that this question is irrelevant, since the Japanese simply demanded larger taxes and military levies through village administrations than the Chinese rulers had done before, and it was customarily a right of the persons in charge of collecting taxes and levies to add a percentage for their own pockets.

The question is directly relevant, however, to the problem of whether the peasants were motivated by nationalism or class struggle. If compensation was demanded primarily because the traitors had served the Japanese, then it was a manifestation of peasant or mass nationalism. It may be, however, that the peasants felt entitled to compensation because they considered the exploitation by the more wealthy classes, in the name of the Japanese, was excessive. Since the traditional behavioral pattern of the ruling group was that every opportunity for making private profit was taken, the higher the taxes and levies imposed by the rulers, the more opportunities the village rulers obtained to exploit the villagers for their own gain. In other words, irrespective of the nature and degree of collaboration by individual 'traitors' with the Japanese, the situation in the areas which had been controlled by the Japanese was one in which there was heightened class antagonism within the rural Chinese population. For this reason, the villagers became radical and often violent once mobilized by the Communists.

Under the slogan of 'fan-chien ch'ing-suan', in fact, a class struggle was launched. The peasants demanded that the 'traitors', who were often identical with the landlords and richer people, had to pay compensation for their exploitation during the Japanese occupation. Peasant resentment against the 'traitors' was due not simply to their collaboration with the enemy, but to their exploiting practices in the
name of the enemy. In fact, in all the Chieh-fang jih-pao reports on
the 'accounts settling' movements, no 'traitor' was accused simply for
collaboration with the Japanese. The 'traitors' were denounced and
required to pay compensation for their personal exploitation and 'crimes',
for which they attempted to excuse themselves by pleading the demands
of the Japanese or the puppet administrations.

This is not to argue that 'nationalism' had no effect on the
'accounts settling' campaigns, but to point out that in the militant
response of the peasants 'nationalism' was secondary to the primary
motive of class struggle. In other words, the primary concern of the
masses was with the increased burden imposed on them during the war,
which often pushed them to the verge of starvation, and with the fact
that by contrast the village leaders who collaborated with the enemy
administrations had actually profited from their burden, or at least
had avoided any share in their burden. The fact that the ultimate
authority which imposed this heavier burden was non-Chinese does not
appear to have been of vital importance to the peasant masses; even
in those areas where it was important, where the villagers had borne
the direct brunt of the Japanese campaigns, it was still not the vital
factor. It is quite clearly the case that the 'accounts settling'
campaign was a class struggle in fact, although one launched under the
banner of 'nationalism'.

There is little point, however, in attempting to define the
'accounts settling' campaign as either 'nationalism' or 'class struggle',
because the fact that the foreign invaders had tried to maintain the
old socioeconomic order whereas the nationalist fighters sought to trans­
form it, meant that nationalist struggle was also a manifestation of
class struggle. The two were woven in the same cloth of the Chinese
revolution at that stage. But in the total perspective of the Communist
revolution, the class struggle, or socioeconomic transformation, was far more central than simple nationalism, and was the foundation on which mass mobilisation was based.

The 'accounts settling' was a class struggle, and because of that it could spark off more radical class struggle, land reform. The method of settling accounts led inevitably to land and property distribution. A su-k'u ta-hui ('speaking bitterness' meeting) at which the villagers spoke of what the 'traitors' had done to them and of how they had suffered at their hands during the Japanese occupation, was followed by a suan-chang ta-hui (mass meeting for settling accounts) at which the 'crimes' of the traitors were reported both by victims and eye-witnesses, and those present made an assessment of the amount which should be paid in compensation. Some of the traitors were ordered to pay enormous amounts in compensation, which often exceeded the total of their disposable property and meant that they were forced to give their land and houses to their 'victims'.

Thus the first redistribution of land by the CCP in eight years, that is since 1937, was begun without deliberate preparation by the Party for a change in land policy.¹ The CCP gradually became aware of the relationship between the anti-traitor struggle and land reform in the last quarter of 1945.² This awareness seems to have been due mainly

¹ Former Japanese-owned land distributed among the landless and land-short peasants particularly in Manchuria was exceptional. This seems to have been commenced immediately after the Japanese surrender, and officially directed by the Northeast Bureau of the CCP Central Committee in Manchuria in mid-April 1946.

² In the issues of the Chieh-fang jih-pao from 10 August to 19 December 1945, there are 30 reports and articles on the land problem in the new areas, of which only 8 are dealt with in relation to 'anti-traitor' struggles, and in the same period there are 31 reports on the 'anti-traitor' struggles, none of which mentions the land problem. These figures are not completely accurate because there are many missing issues and some sections are unreadable, but they do reflect a general tendency, particularly by comparison with the issues from January to
to the Party's perception of the serious financial conditions in the new areas in its experience of political work in the few months after the Japanese surrender. The Chih-fang jih-pao often drew the attention of the cadres engaged in political work in the new areas to the difference in conditions between the new and the old areas. In most cases, the economic difficulties of the villagers were too serious for the Party to be able to mobilise them immediately for entirely new political objectives, such as elections. Yet the 'anti-traitor accounts settling' struggle was launched with the dual purpose of improvement of the peasants' livelihood and political mobilisation. The Party seems to have learned from unsuccessful cases of mass mobilisation in the new areas, therefore, that the cadres had to try to help the peasants to solve their most urgent problems first, which were usually problems of food and production; political mobilisation could only come afterwards. Clearly, the Party found the peasant masses vengeful against the village rulers, and their primary demand was to 'settle accounts' in order to obtain both food and the means of production, in particular, land.

Accounts settling was generally regarded by the CCP as the most urgent demand of the peasant masses in the new areas, a demand which was both political and economic. It seems, however, that many of the cadres were afraid of the peasants' radicalism and tried to keep them within the bounds of a non-violent and moderate policy. The Central

Footnote 2 cont'd
June 1946 which include 98 reports and articles on the land problem, of which 40 relate to 'accounts settling'. These 40 are also out of 57 reports and articles on the 'anti-traitor' in the same period.
1 See several examples in CFJP, 17 September 1945.
2 A typical example is given in Fan I, "Lan hsien chih-fang hou fa-tung ch'un-chung chung ti chi-ke wen-t'i" (Several Questions in Mass Mobilisation After the Liberation of Lan Hsien), CFJP, 18 September 1945.
3 See for example the cases in T'aihang Region, CFJP, 3 October 1945.
Committee had to issue directives and circulars calling on the cadres in the new areas to mobilise the masses boldly, or fang-shou fa-tung ch'ün-chung.¹ This indicates a resolve on the part of the CCP to stand with the masses even at the risk of destroying the united front with the KMT. The May Fourth Directive of the Central Committee on land policy was issued against this background.

The May Fourth Directive, issued in 1946,² was vague in character, indicating a certain hesitation concerning policy changes on the land problem and the united front.³ Although the directive declared that the Party would resolutely support and lead land reform movements which had been developing in the liberated areas, the concrete methods of changing land ownership suggested in the directive, with the exception of the land belonging to 'big traitors' (ta-han-chien), did not include unconditional confiscation and distribution of landlords' land. Furthermore, about one half of the directive was devoted to stipulations on the protection of middle and small landlords, rich peasants and 'enlightened' landlords. The CCP appears to have been seeking an effective political strategy to maintain the multi-class united front, which included the landlords, to defeat the KMT in coming civil war. In July 1946, for example, when an all-out war with the KMT was considered inevitable, Mao Tse-tung stated in an inner-Party directive:

¹ See the two editorials of the Chieh-fang jih-pao on this subject, 9 January and 20 February 1946. The slogan 'fang-shou fa-tung ch'ün-chung' became the first concern of the cadres in charge of mass mobilisation work from 1946 onwards, especially in the new areas. This slogan was revived in the Cultural Revolution.
² This was an inner-Party directive and was kept secret; the full text has never been publicised officially by the CCP. For the text, see Li Ming-hua, op.cit., pp.208-214.
In order to smash Chiang Kai-shek's offensive, we must cooperate closely with the masses of the people, and win over all who can be won over. In the rural areas, on the one hand, we should resolutely solve the land problem, rely firmly on the farm labourers and poor peasants and unite with the middle peasants; on the other hand, when solving the land problem, we should distinguish the ordinary rich peasants and middle and small landlords from the traitors, bad gentry and local tyrants. In places where the land problem has already been solved, we should change to a moderate attitude towards the landlord class, as a whole, with the exception of a few reactionaries. In order to reduce the number of hostile elements and to consolidate the Liberated Areas, we should help all those landlords who have difficulty in making a living and induce runaway landlords to return and give them an opportunity to earn a living.

In other words, Mao's view was that the multi-class united front developed by the CCP during the anti-Japanese war would still be an effective political strategy in the civil war with the KMT. Admitting the necessity of land reform for mobilisation of the peasant masses, he attempted to avoid antagonising the rich peasant and landlord classes. All policies in the Communist areas were to concentrate on winning over the broadest possible section of the people, minimising the number of hostile elements, consolidating the liberated areas and destroying Chiang Kai-shek's offensive. This explains the vagueness of the May Fourth Directive.

In the last half of 1946, the land policy of the CCP became more radical and advanced toward the general land reform policy enunciated in the Draft Land Law enacted in October 1947. Radicalisation in this period again originated in the fringe areas, where the KMT and the CCP were competing. In the May Fourth directive, the Central Committee

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1 "Smash Chiang Kao-shek's Offensive by a War of Self-Defence," 20 July 1946, Mao, IV, pp.89-90. This was the first official document of the CCP that indicated the Party's decision to defend itself against the KMT's military actions.
2 To say that it is vague in character is not to deny the fundamental purpose of 'elimination of feudalist exploitation', that is land reform. The directive of the Central China Subbureau of the Central Committee dated 18 May 1946 states this point more explicitly.
asserted that it would be difficult to implement land reform policy in the new areas where political or economic reform had not been experienced by the inhabitants. The reality was quite the reverse. It was in the new and contested areas that radical measures in land policy were taken for the first time; the Central Committee ratified and followed the radical practices in these areas instead of suppressing them.

Even after the May Fourth directive, the rent reduction policy was not abandoned, but its significance was drastically reduced because rent reduction was intended to apply to land which remained the property of landlords and rich peasants after the accounts settling struggle. After the civil war started, however, rent reduction became virtually redundant in the process of radicalisation of the land struggles. It was at this time that it became obvious that the peasants in the fringe areas were the most radical in the accounts settling and land reform struggles. The accounts settling (known now simply as suan-chang) after the beginning of the civil war had nothing to do with nationalism; it was no longer 'anti-traitor'. In the struggle meetings, the assessment of the landlords' crimes was not limited to the period of the war or Japanese occupation; it often went back through generations to the Imperial era.

In the first year of the civil war the KMT armies pushed the CCP back to the rural areas. In the fringe areas now called chieh-ti ti-ch'ü (front areas), the accounts settling struggles had to be completed within a short time and the peasant masses armed to carry on the

1 The SKN Border Region and some old base areas were once again exceptional. The land reform was carried out in the form of donation of land by the landlords to the peasants associations and also of government purchase of landlords' land.
struggle by themselves, since the regular Communist armies were not able to defend them from the landlords' private armed forces, huanshiang-t'uan (back-to-the-village corps) or from the KMT troops. The anti-landlord struggles in the front areas thus became directly linked with the civil war. To the peasants in these areas, the civil war was to all intents and purposes a class war or a nation-wide class struggle between the landlords and the peasant masses.

Towards the end of 1946, the Central Committee was prepared to encourage radical class struggle in the front areas, in the realisation that only radical land reform could mobilise the peasants effectively for the civil war. On 1 October 1946, Mao stated in his inner-Party directive:

In the coming few months all areas, no matter how they are busy with the war, must resolutely lead the peasant masses to solve the land problem and, on the basis of the land reform, make arrangements for large-scale production work next year. Account settling struggles on the battlefields do not seem to have been uncommon, and were approved and encouraged by the Central Committee.

In a Chieh-fang jih-pao editorial in December 1946 a variety of methods 'to take rifle in one hand and redistribute land with the other' were praised as representing the 'unity of self-defence war and land reform':

...They (the peasants in the front areas) created such methods as fighting guerrilla warfare on the one hand and 'settling accounts' in the shade of the kao-liang; fighting guerrilla warfare in the daytime and settling accounts at night; men fighting and women settling accounts; and fighting in turn and settling accounts in turn.

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1. Huanshiang-t'uan were organised by the landlords who fled the villages.
3. Kao-liang is a type of corn, one of the most widespread food grains in North China, which provided 'green curtains' for the guerrillas during the resistance. The Japanese forbade the peasants to grow it, particularly where the guerrillas were active.
4. "Hsün-su wan-ch'eng t'u-ti k'ai-kâ" (Complete the Land Reform Quickly),
The same editorial justifies the unity of war and land reform by pointing out that it was the masses who joined the army and their morale was high wherever land reform had been carried out well. Similarly, land reform was carried out well wherever the war had been fought well. It concludes: "The war of self-defence seriously demands vigorous revolutionary energy, and it is land reform that is the origin of such revolutionary energy."¹

There is no indication here of a desire on the part of the CCP to keep the multi-class united front going; rather, there was a determination to carry out a rigorous programme of land redistribution in order to defeat the KMT. The CCP's new concept of the unity of war and land reform represents an admission that the fringe areas had to be more advanced in class struggle and social reform if the war effort was to be maintained. In other words, mass mobilisation was linked directly to the class struggle in the villages; in effect, it was synonymous with land redistribution in the new areas in this stage. The fact that land reform in the new areas was mostly completed before the 1947 spring ploughing,² during which time the peasants had also been fighting the KMT troops, is an indication of how rapidly it proceeded.

In sum, the CCP's policy change in mass mobilisation in the Civil War period followed the radical practice of the masses in the newly liberated or front areas. In the last half of 1946 and the first half of 1947, the CCP suffered successive defeats at the hands of the

Footnote 4 cont'd
¹ Ibid.
² Rapid implementation of land reform resulted in malpractices in land redistribution. The mass line was not carried out correctly; bureaucracy was still a problem, and cadres often demanded privileges in land distribution. The CCP had to launch another mass campaign for correcting these 'erroneous' practices.
KMT and retreated to the rural areas. This war situation created new front areas throughout North China, and accelerated radicalisation of the land reform policy of the CCP. In the front areas in the Civil War, the thesis that the armed revolution fights the armed counterrevolution was put into practice; the class nature of the war was illustrated dramatically to the peasant masses.

It may be argued that the radicalisation of the mass movements in the new areas was caused by mass nationalism aroused by the Japanese presence during the resistance war. As shown above, however, in the anti-traitor mass movement, the 'traitors' were denounced primarily for their exploitation and the 'crimes' committed under the Japanese protection rather than for simple collaboration with the Japanese. The anti-traitor struggle was essentially a class struggle, reflecting the character of the resistance war itself, which was a class war fought over the socioeconomic system in rural China.

This is why the target of the mass struggle was easily extended from the 'traitors' to the landlords in general and to the gentry after the open armed rift between the CCP and the KMT, with the same mass mobilisation techniques such as 'su-k'u' and 'suan-chang'. Radicalisation of mass movements in the fringe areas in the civil war illustrates the class nature of the mass struggle more clearly. The fringe areas, which in 1946 and the first half of 1947 were expanded dramatically, to include even the old Communist base areas, saw the same radicalisation process in the mass movements. At this stage the Communists no longer hesitated to mobilise the masses for general land reform, since they had perceived that nationalism as a symbol did not work for mass mobilisation in the civil war, although they constantly protested about United States assistance to the KMT. This nationalist propaganda was directed mainly toward the educated people in the KMT areas. American assistance to the
KMT did not include the dispatch of field troops, and the American presence was not so obvious to the peasants as the Japanese presence had been in the resistance war.

The whole development of mass mobilisation in the civil war suggests that the Yenan mass mobilisation can be explained primarily in socio-economic terms, even though nationalism may have been one factor. In the following section this point is examined further, from the perspective of the Chinese Communist revolution as a whole.


The evidence of mass mobilisation in the civil war illustrates the point that the peasant movements were essentially a manifestation of class struggle, even though they were sometimes dressed with the slogans of nationalism. It has not been the intention of this study to argue that nationalism had no effect on mass mobilisation during and after the war. But there still remains the question posed above: how can the radical and often violent nature of land reform in the front areas in the civil war be explained, if mass mobilisation during the resistance was motivated mainly by nationalism? Why did the peasant masses so quickly turn the spearhead of their attack from the imperialist invaders to the class enemies? Chalmers Johnson argues that Communist success after the resistance rested on the fact that they had already established a legitimate authority during the resistance, through their uncompromising anti-Japanese nationalism. The peasants, therefore, accepted the Communists as the legitimate leaders of Chinese nationalism, and this justified and provided popular support for the leadership role assumed by the CCP during and after the war. The peasants cooperated with the CCP because they saw it as the legitimate leader.1

1 Johnson, op.cit., pp.9-10.
Johnson's argument still does not explain why the peasants in the fringe or front areas in the civil war became radical earlier than in the old and established Communist areas, or why their radicalism was spontaneous rather than inspired by the Communists. This is the fundamental question in the debate on the place of the anti-Japanese war in the history of the Chinese revolution. In the context of the development of the social revolution in China since the beginning of this century, this is not simply a question of a war between the two nations. Japan, which had followed the European way of modernisation, began her invasion as an ordinary war, in the belief that she could conquer China within a short period because of the superior training and equipment of her troops. For the Chinese Communists, however, war had long been a part of their experience, since 1924, and so could the resistance be. A war, whoever the enemy, could not interrupt the revolution but could accelerate it, because a war helped to liquidate the existing social system and, because it necessitated rapid mass mobilisation simply for survival, served the CCP's fundamental purpose of revolutionary mobilisation. The anti-Japanese war was no exception in working in this way simply because it was on a larger scale, both geographically and socioeconomically, than previous wars.

For the CCP, a common feature of all the wars in which it was involved was their class nature; the Party's enemies aimed, therefore, at annihilating it completely, and usually they were better equipped and numerically superior. The CCP had to adhere to its socioeconomic programmes, because they were the only means by which the Party could hope to muster support to survive the wars. All policies, strategies and techniques in the Communist revolution were designed to release mass energy from the bounds of the old social, economic and political ties, because the Party could not otherwise survive. In other words, the Party
needed socioeconomic reform, as did the suffering majority in China.

Mass mobilisation by the CCP also aimed, of course, at a more ambitious goal, at what the 1911 revolution and the KMT revolution in early 1920s had not been able to achieve, that is, socioeconomic transformation at the basic level. This was the essence of the Communist revolution, and an indispensable part of this was transformation of the social values and behaviour of the people. Mass politicisation was both a prerequisite for and a result of socioeconomic transformation; it was also an important step to the next highest stage of the revolution. This is why the Party strove so hard to develop methods and techniques of mass mobilisation, and the Yenan period coincided with the completion of its conceptualising of these methods and techniques.

The resistance period in Chinese Communist history has often been regarded by China scholars as a distinct or exceptional period, mainly because of the KMT-CCP collaboration and the CCP's moderate policies. To make such a distinction between the Yenan period and other periods of CCP history is to create considerable confusion in understanding these other periods, especially the civil war period. It is of the greatest importance, therefore, that attention should be focussed on policy implementation at the basic level of society, rather than on the general programmes and policies announced at the top, since the Chinese revolution has been a radical social revolution. From the actual practice and experience of the CCP at the basic level of society, there is more continuity than distinction between the Yenan period and the civil war period.

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1 The official policy of the CCP was not always identical to the practice at the level of implementation in the villages. For example, land owned by 'traitors' was first distributed to landless peasants and unemployed workers in the last quarter of 1945, despite the CCP's official land policy, which did not permit redistribution of land.
In the civil war period, it is clear that the same revolution was being carried on as during the Yenan period, if in a different form. The Japanese invasion gave the CCP an opportunity to mobilise nationalism among the educated classes, who were more conscious about their nation than the peasants, and, to a much lesser extent, among the peasants, especially in the contested areas. But, it would be misleading to overstate the nationalist cause. For example, in the CCP's most successful mass movement in the Yenan period, the production drive, the Chieh-fang jih-pao concentrated its propaganda efforts on appeals to material interests rather than to such a vague ideology as nationalism. Nationalism was propagated as an accompaniment to the material, and sometimes political, benefits gained by the peasants in the initial mobilisation. Even in the contested areas, the anti-Japanese war was waged by the local peasants as a defence of their lives and property.

For this reason, mass mobilisation did not lose momentum after the collapse of Japan. The class nature of the resistance war and the mass mobilisation carried on during that war, which had been partly obscured by anti-Japanese nationalism, was fully revealed in the civil war. The CCP was able to continue to develop mass mobilisation in the civil war, using the same techniques as in the Yenan period. The basic nature of mass mobilisation remained unchanged, but the enemy against which the peasants were defending the fruits of mobilisation was no longer the same. The nationalist cause could not be so effective as in the anti-Japanese war, since the new enemy was not a foreign invader even though it was helped by another foreign power. In sum, the revolution was a social revolution changed at the Japanese surrender.

Relevant to this point is Mao's concept of the united front; that is, the CCP, the vanguard of the Chinese revolution, should unite with the secondary enemies of the revolution to isolate and destroy the
primary enemy. During the Yenan period the primary enemy was Japan and the KMT was one of the secondary enemies which had common cause to fight Japan with the CCP. The KMT subsequently became the primary enemy, to be isolated and destroyed. At the village level during the resistance, the primary enemies were the traitors. As the CCP became increasingly hostile to the KMT and the civil war broke out, first the big landlords, and then the middle and small landlords gradually became the primary enemies of the revolution.

We should not, of course, overlook another aspect of the Chinese Communist revolution, anti-imperialism. The CCP maintained that Chinese society was semi-feudal and semi-colonial, and that the character of the revolution was anti-feudal and anti-imperialist. The resistance to Japan was a typical anti-imperialist revolutionary war. To the CCP, however, anti-imperialism was not merely a nationalist demand to free China from the economic and political control of the great powers; the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist tasks of the revolution were closely interrelated. Foreign control over China rested on the feudal social system, and the feudal rulers of society had been profiting from foreign control. Neither imperialists nor feudalists wanted powerful central government supported by the people. Mass mobilisation was the only way in which the two objectives could be pursued at the same time and an integrated and powerful nation-state of China could be established.¹

The dual tasks of the revolution were integrated in practice in mass mobilisation. Anti-feudal revolution, that is, a drastic change in production relations in rural China, was necessary to mobilise the basic peasants. The mass production movement was important in bringing

¹ It is matter of course that Mao put "building an independent, free, democratic, united, prosperous and powerful new China" in his "On Coalition Government" as the postwar task of reconstruction.
about a change in production relations. The anti-imperialist task, during the Yenan period, was represented by the defence of the political and economic gains obtained by the peasants in the mass movements against the Japanese 'imperialists'. The benefits to be defended included the Communist government system, in which the peasant masses were now involved.

Psychological involvement was the crux of mass mobilisation. The series of mass movements launched in the last three years of the war was designed to involve everyone in the rural population in the Communist areas. Although all the mass movements were not usually 'class' in nature, mass participation itself represented the class interests of the basic peasants. As a means of sustaining in the peasants a sense of participation, the production campaign and the organisation of production were ideal: they were continued all-year-round and involved the daily life of the people, as distinct from short-lived movements such as election campaigns.

Although the CCP generally avoided propaganda on the class struggle, mass mobilisation in the Yenan period was essentially of a class nature. For example, the most immediate purpose of the production drive was not to change social relations, but to raise living standards in the Communist areas. Nobody mentioned its class nature. But in practice, the basic peasants, who were deeply involved in the network of production organisations, became closer to the government and the Party, as well as active both in production and politics. Organisation and economic activities gave the peasants enormous confidence in their own power and in the Communist government. The economic and political power of the basic peasants undermined the landlord-gentry rule in the villages. Psychological revolution, or transformation of the peasants' value system, inevitably followed. We should not overlook an important
aspect of the production drive, the tangible economic benefit to the peasants. In other words, they obtained something to defend in the war, and the CCP used this fact, symbolised by the slogan 'Pao-wei chia-hsiang, pao-wei feng-i tsu-shi ti sheng-huo' (Defend your home, defend your life of abundant cloth and sufficient food), for military mobilisation after the commencement of the production drive.

Although the Communists maintained that the national contradiction between China and Japan was great and urgent and the class contradiction within China was subordinate, the national contradiction did not eliminate, nor did it even reduce, the class contradiction. Nor did the Communists ignore the class basis in mobilising the peasants; mass mobilisation would not have been possible if they had ignored class contradictions. It is important not to misinterpret the role of the Japanese invasion, or the CCP's vocal promotion of nationalism and the united front, since this may result in underestimating the class nature of the resistance and of the CCP's mass mobilisation.

The legitimacy of Communist authority was established in the resistance, as Chalmers Johnson has argued, but it was not merely because of the CCP's uncompromising nationalism. For urban intellectuals, CCP nationalism may have been crucial in persuading them to transfer their support from the KMT to the CCP. Among the basic peasants on whose energy the CCP finally came to power, however, the primary reason for supporting the Party was its line of social revolution or class struggle. This is why mass mobilisation continued to be successful in the civil war, and also why the Yanan spirit was deliberately revived and propagated even after 1949.
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