

**CHANGING FACES IN THE CHINESE COMMUNIST
REVOLUTION:
PARTY MEMBERS AND ORGANIZATION BUILDING IN
TWO JIAODONG COUNTIES
1928-1948.**

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(History)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

December 2013

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Abstract

The revolution of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from the 1920s to the late 1940s was a defining moment in China's modern history. It dramatically restructured Chinese society and created an authoritarian state that remains the most important player in shaping the country's development today. Scholars writing to explain the success of the revolution began with trying to uncover factors outside of the party that helped to bring it to power, but have increasingly emphasized the ability of party organizations and their members to direct society to follow the CCP's agendas as the decisive factor behind the party's victory.

Despite highlighting the role played by CCP members and the larger party organization in the success of the revolution studies have done little to examine how ordinary individuals got involved in the CCP at different stages and locations. Nor have scholars analyzed in depth the process of how the CCP molded millions of mostly rural people who joined it from the 1920s to the 40s into a disciplined force to seize control of China. Through a study of the CCP's revolution in two counties of Jiaodong, a region of Shandong province in eastern China during this period my dissertation explores this process by focusing on their local party members. It also expands on the subject of how the CCP became a cohesive organization by looking at how the party dealt with the issue of localism. This latter subject is very pertinent to understanding the CCP's development, since the party managed to become an effective national organization in a country whose populace was heavily divided by regional and local ties.

My study concludes that local ties were major impediments to cohesion in the CCP, and that the party's central leaders imposed their authority in Jiaodong by weakening these ties down through purges, ideological education and class struggle. These programs made the CCP in Jiaodong a top down organization that was dependent on the directions from Mao Zedong, the CCP's paramount leader and his loyalists. They also sowed the seeds for the next thirty years of constant Maoist political campaigns.

Preface

This dissertation is an original and unpublished work. It is the product of years of research that I have conducted in three archives in China as well as several other institutions, such as the United States National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, the Harvard Yenching Library, Hoover Institution of War and Peace in Stanford University and the National Library of China in Beijing. All figures and maps in my dissertation are either original creations that I made or modifications of maps found in works published in the People's Republic of China or Taiwan, which are not subject to copyright restrictions.

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Glossary

Changjiazhuang 常家庄

Chang Zijian 常子健

Chen Xizhou 陈锡周

chudeng wenhua 初等文化 basic literacy

Dasongwei 大嵩卫

Date Junnosuke 伊達順之助

Daze 大泽

Dazhongbao 大众报

Ding Futing 丁緯庭

Duan Chengzhai 段成斋

Fang Yongchang 方永昌

Fengcheng 凤城

funong luxian 富农路线 rich peasant line

Gao Ziming 高子明

gonganyuan 公安员 Public Safety Officer

Haiyang 海阳

Han Fujun 韩复榘

huaidan 坏蛋 bad egg

Huangxian 黄县

Hujiacun 胡家村

Jiang Dongsheng 姜东升

Jiang Futang 姜福堂

Jiang Zunyi 姜尊一

Jiaodong tewei 胶东特委 Jiaodong Special Committee

jijifenzi 积极分子 activist

Ji Shouzhi 纪守芝

Kang Sheng 康生

kongsu 控诉 accusation

Kunyu 昆崙

Laiyang 莱阳

Laiyang zhongxin xianwei 莱阳中心县委

Laiyang Central County Committee

lianzhuanghui 联庄会 Village Federation

Li Boyan 李伯颜

Li Jianwu 李建吾

Li Junde 李俊德

Li Qi 理琪

liumang 流氓 wandering young men, troublemakers

Li Yu 黎玉

Li Zhongxiang 李仲祥

Lin Hao 林浩

Liu Jingsan 刘经三

Liu Mengxi 刘梦溪

Liu Zhennian 刘珍年

Liu Zhongyi 刘仲益

Luo Ronghuan 罗荣桓

Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风
Ma Baosan 马保三
Muping 牟平
Penglai 蓬莱
Pingdu 平度
poluo 破落 economically fallen
poxie 破鞋 broken shoe
qiuling 丘陵 dirt hills
qu 区 ward
Rao Shushi 饶漱石
Rongcheng 荣城
Rushan 乳山
shan 山 rock hill
shehuibu 社会部 Social Affairs Department
Shen Honglie 沈鸿烈
Shidao 石岛
Shimatantou 石马滩头
Shi Zhongcheng 施忠诚
Song Haiqiu 宋海秋
Song Haiting 宋海艇
Song Hechu 宋合初
Song Jixian 宋继先
Song Sikun 宋四坤
Song Xuanwen 宋煊文
Song Zhuting 宋竹庭
suanjiuzhang 算旧账 settling old accounts
suku 诉苦 speaking bitterness
Sun Jiesan 孙杰三

Sun Mingrui 孙明瑞
tuoli Shandongsheng gongwei 团山东省工
 委 Shandong Provincial Youth League
 Work Committee
tuoli shengchan 脱离生产 left production
Wang Jingsong 王景宋
Wang Ruowang 王若望
Wang Wen 王文
Wang Zhifeng 王之凤
Wang Zhongshan 王中山
Wendeng 文登
Xiaze 夏泽
xidamen 西大门 Big Western Gate
Xin Ruiting 辛瑞亭
Xu Shiyou 许世友
Xu Yuanpei 徐元沛
Xu Yuanyi 徐元义
Ya 牙
Yang Shuping 杨叔平
Yexian 掖县
Yu Dianjun 于典君
Yu Jianzhai 于俭斋
Yu Mei 于眉
Yu Xingfu 于醒夫
Yu Yunting 于云亭
Yu Zhenxi 于振西
Zhan Zhuoyun 战倬云
Zhao Baiyuan 赵百原

Zhao Baoyuan 赵保原
Zhao Sentang 赵森堂
Zhang Jialuo 张加洛
Zhang Jianan 张健庵
Zhang Jianxun 张健勋
Zhang Jingyuan 张静源
Zhang Jinming 张金铭
Zhang Liangzhu 张连珠
Zhang Weizi 张维兹
Zhang Zongchang 张宗昌
Zhao Guodong 赵国栋
Zheng Tianjiu 郑天九

List of Abbreviations

Corporate Authors and Names of Organizations

HDFB	Haiyangshi dangshi fangzhi bangongshi
HDSBW	Haiyangshi difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui
HJW	Haiyangxian jiuji weiyuanhui
HMA	Haiyang Municipal Archives
JDDY	Jiaodongqu dangwei diaocha yanjiushi
PSDY	Penglai shiwei dangshi yanjiushi
RDB	Rushanshi dangshizhi bangongshi
RJW	Rushanxian jiuji weiyuanhui
RMA	Rushan Municipal Archives
SHXBW	Shandongsheng Haiyang xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui
SPA	Shandong Provincial Archives
SRDSBW	Shandongsheng Rushanshi difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui
USDSCC	United States Department of State, Chefoo Consulate
ZHX	Zhonggong Haiyang xianwei
ZHZ	Zhonggong Huadong zhongyangju
ZLKSDY	Zhonggong Longkou shiwei dangshi yanjiushi
ZLSDY	Zhonggong Laixi shiwei dangshi yanjiushi
ZRX	Zhonggong Rushan Xianwei
ZRXZ	Zhonggong Rushan xianwei zuzhike
ZSSDY	Zhonggong Shandong shengwei dangshi yanjiushi
ZYSDZZYW	Zhonggong Yantai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhui

Abbreviated Titles of Works

<i>JZSSTG</i>	<i>Jiefang zhanzheng shiqi Shandong de tudi gaige</i>
<i>SGLWH</i>	<i>Shandong geming lishi wenjian huiji</i>

SJJ *Shandong de jianzu jianxi*
ZJDD *Zhonggong Jiaodongqu dangshi dashiji*

Acknowledgements

I would like to express special thanks to several people for their role in my dissertation writing process. My deepest appreciation goes out to my supervisor, Dr. Diana Lary, for her encouragement of my work, insightful suggestions on its development, tireless advocacy for my career and personal benefit and critical support in helping me mature as a scholar over the years. Dr. Lary always saw the potential in me and tried to nurture it, and I owe my recovery from a long physical illness and the completion of my program in two years after it to her efforts. I am also very grateful towards Drs. Steven Lee and Jeremy Brown, my other committee members, for all their valuable comments on my dissertation and critical role in editing and proof reading it for defense submission. Also playing important roles in my dissertation are Drs. Alexander Woodside and Bruce Rusk, my examiners, and I am very thankful for their thoughtful questions and comments during my dissertation defense and suggestions on turning my work into future publications. I would, in addition, like to thank Dr. Ronald Suleski, my external examiner for his detailed reading of my work and many useful directions for preparing it for publication.

Research for my dissertation would not have been possible without financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Canadian Graduate Scholarship it has awarded me. This grant has allowed me to travel the world to carry out my research, and I am deeply appreciative towards the council for its generous contribution. My work has also been funded by various scholarships from UBC, to which I am also very grateful for. I would also like to thank my friend and fellow UBC graduate Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang for sharing his insights on dissertation defense and preparing my work for final submission. Last but not the least, I would like to express profound appreciation towards my parents, Joe and Grace. Their years of self-sacrifice and dedication towards my wellbeing has helped me reach this point.

To my parents

Chapter 1. Introduction

Liu Zhongyi, Yu Xingfu, Song Zhuting and Zhang Weizi were not famous figures in Chinese history. Born in the countryside of Haiyang and Rushan, two counties in Jiaodong (Shandong's eastern peninsula), they often came from impoverished backgrounds, died in obscurity, and are remembered only in local histories that few people even in their native places have read. But these men, along with tens of thousands of others, played a major role in shaping the course of China's 20th century developments. Early members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), they founded party organizations both in their home counties and in Jiaodong and used them to mobilize hundreds of thousands for the party's cause from the 1920s to the 1940s, something that played a critical role in the CCP's seizure of national power from its Guomindang (GMD) rival in 1949. Implementing and interacting with the policies of Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Kang Sheng and other major Communist party figures, they also helped to create and shape a party state that dominated Chinese society in the next few decades, and remains in control of China to today.

How the CCP came to power in China is a topic that has fascinated historians, particularly in the English speaking world, for decades. Scholars, seeing the Communist party-state in China survive even after abandoning its revolutionary ideology over the last thirty years, have also become increasingly fascinated with the issue of how it emerged and became a major instrument of change in China's modern history. A factor that is central to both these issues is the party's network of members and leaders (also known as cadres), particularly at the regional, county and sub-levels. Party members, their relationships with each other and society, as well as the power they built up in local areas, have often been seen as a critical force in how the CCP came to power and how it has maintained it. The lower members have, at the same time, been seen as a liability for the party. Central leaders of the CCP have often viewed lower members as lacking ideological commitment and have accused them of not properly carrying out the party's larger agendas. Lower members, rightly or wrongly, have often been the first to be blamed by society for problems in the party state.

Scholars are still trying to understand the CCP's party structure; much of its inner workings are unknown. In looking at the stories of men such as Liu, Yu, Song and Zhang, the local party organizations that they set up, and their interactions with higher CCP levels, my thesis explores the origins of this system, its early evolution, its role in bringing about the party's victory in 1949, and the people involved in this process. Recently available sources, such as archival materials from Rushan, Haiyang and Shandong, have allowed party organizations and members to be examined in ways not previously possible, from a more human-centered perspective. My study analyzes a number of questions related to these subjects, which have been raised by scholars but never thoroughly explored: How was the system of party members, with levels extending down from the CCP's top leadership to grassroots society, established? Who were the people who staffed each of these levels? How did senior party leaders assert control over the myriad of local and regional networks in this apparatus? Did the backgrounds of members at different levels influence interactions within the party-state and its cohesion? Was party organization the decisive factor in the CCP's victory in 1949? Did the evolution of that party prior to 1949 influence the policies of central leaders towards lower members later on?

1.1 The Evolution of a Party Member-Based View of the CCP's rise to Power in China

By looking at the CCP victory from a membership-centered perspective, I seek to approach a subject that has not been adequately addressed. Research on the CCP's victory in China has viewed the issue of how the party came to power from two angles: whether the party succeeded because of external factors favoring it; or if internal factors gave it a critical edge over the GMD. Early works, such as Chalmers Johnson's *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: the Emergence of Revolutionary China* (1962) and Mark Selden's *The Yen-an Way in Revolutionary China* (1971) viewed the subject from an external perspective, arguing that there were developments in China that helped the party and its agendas, and that it adjusted its policies successfully to take advantage of them. Johnson argued that China's 1937-1945 war against Japan, often known in China as the War of Resistance, was a crucial catalyst for CCP victory. The war, Johnson contends,

broke down the structure of society in rural China through the damage and social dislocation it caused. It also induced a nationalist mind-set amongst Chinese, who began to link the fate of their nation with their personal survival. Johnson asserts that the CCP won because it successfully appealed to this sentiment with its propaganda, and presented itself as a better way for peasants to resist the Japanese than the GMD.¹

Selden, from a similar assumption but with a different focus, argues that war with Japan was not the decisive factor in the CCP's success. He asserts that the party's victory was driven by widespread poverty in the countryside in the early 20th century and the party's ability to alleviate it. Selden contends that the CCP won over peasants because of its class-based economic policies, such as progressive taxation, rent reduction and engaging peasants to form labour cooperatives had revitalized the rural economy. He also argues that the CCP rallied large numbers of peasants because it was more responsive to their economic needs than its rivals.²

These explanations were questioned almost immediately after they were made. Scholars raised doubts on Johnson's claim that war with Japan in 1937 created widespread social breakdown in China. Voicing skepticism on Selden's rural poverty argument, some have also noted that he chose to study the party's activities in northern Shaanxi, one of the poorest regions of China and a place whose economy was distinct from many other parts of the country. These critiques are in many ways encapsulated by Tetsuya Kataoka's 1974 work, *Resistance and Revolution in China: The Communists and the Second United Front*. Kataoka challenges Selden's assertion, noting that many areas where the CCP was successful in building power and organizing large numbers of peasants did not have significant economic decline. Contradicting Johnson's point on social collapse and the emergence of peasant nationalism, he also notes that the CCP co-opted traditional organizations, such as secret societies and Red Spear local defence groups, in many places during the war with Japan. These groups, part of the old social structure, were only interested in protecting their native areas rather than fighting to defend the Chinese nation. They were not swept away by the social dislocation of war as

¹ Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 2-14.

² Mark Selden, *The Yanan Way Revisited* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 220-221.

Johnson alleged. Kataoka points out that peasants turned to them first in the wake of Japanese attacks rather than the CCP.³

Kataoka, instead, argues that the CCP succeeded because it had built a more cohesive administrative and party and government apparatus than the GMD. Though he does not discount the benefits of the CCP's economic programs for peasants, Kataoka contends that their main purpose was to strengthen the party's control over rural society, weakening old elites who might challenge the party through attacking their economic power. Kataoka asserts that the war with Japan did create the basis for CCP victory in 1949. The Japanese invasion, he argues, collapsed GMD power in large parts of China but did not replace it with an alternative government. This created a political vacuum that allowed the CCP to take over and consolidate its power in many areas, and to build up military forces to defeat the GMD after the war. However, Kataoka argues that the CCP's success in this was not guaranteed, and depended on the war and the political vacuum it created lasting long enough for the party to generate sufficient military and political power to ensure national victory. Kataoka contends that the advantageous political situation that the CCP enjoyed nearly collapsed several times prior to 1942, as the Japanese and the GMD pondered a peace that would have allowed both sides to target the Communists, but was upheld by the failure of the two to reach an agreement. Successful political maneuvering by the CCP helped to ward off such a peace, as did the outbreak of war between Japan and the US.⁴

These arguments raised more questions than they answered, and pushed research of the subject in several directions. Kataoka challenged Johnson and Selden's assertions of widespread social breakdown and rampant poverty in rural China and offered counter evidence in many places. This motivated a number of scholars to engage in more localized studies of CCP activities, to test the applicability of Johnson and Selden's explanations of CCP success in different areas of China. Though noting that the CCP co-opted traditional groups in many places, Kataoka was ambiguous on their overall relationship with the party, and whether these groups supported its agendas. This led to

³ Tetsuya Kataoka, *Resistance and Revolution in China: The Communists and the Second United Front* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 101-114, 310-311.

⁴ Kataoka, *Resistance and Revolution*, 141-142, 143-228, 240-260, 308-310.

studies that pursued the interactions between the CCP and the traditional structure of Chinese society further. By pointing out that the CCP's fortunes were constantly threatened by the prospects of a GMD/Japanese peace during the first few years of the war, Kataoka also raised the prospects that external events had at best a contingent relationship with CCP victory, providing the party with opportunities at certain times but also threatening at others rather than paving way for Communist victory. More importantly, by noting that the CCP built stronger organizations than the GMD, he suggests that this might have been a critical factor in the rise of the Communists to power.

Research, moving along these lines over the next twenty years largely supported Kataoka's arguments, stressing superior organization as a crucial factor in the CCP's victory. Scholars began with the relationship between the CCP and rural society, and the question of whether old social organizations were receptive to the party. They also examined whether the war with Japan had produced conditions favorable to it. Some scholars, such as Ralph Thaxton, in his 1983 and 1997 works *China Turned Right Side Up* and *Salt of the Earth*, have argued that there were developments favorable to the CCP. Thaxton contends that some areas of rural China were experiencing a community-based rebellion against the GMD state and local elites affiliated with it, and that a shared enemy forged an alliance between the CCP and old community organizations against the GMD. Fitting his observations in to the framework of James Scott's "moral economy" model of social behavior in modernizing societies, Thaxton argues that the onset of modern state building broke down the relationship between the GMD-led government and the rest of society. It led the former to abandon a long-accepted tradition of governance in China, which called for low taxes and respect for the right of peasants to survive in favor heavy taxation to fund modern bureaucracies and armies. State-building, Thaxton contends, united villages in defence against the predations of government forces and their allies, and led many to form coalitions with the CCP, which had economic and tax policies that were similar to old practices of governance in China for survival.⁵

⁵ Ralph Thaxton, *China Turned Right Side Up* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 220-233; Thaxton, *Salt of the Earth: The Political Origins of Peasant Protest and Communist Revolution in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 319-332.

Thaxton's studies, however, were based on a small area of China that covered only five counties. Most works on the issue, such as Elizabeth Perry's 1980 book *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945*, David Paulson's unpublished Stanford University dissertation, "War and Revolution in North China: The Shandong Base Area, 1937-1945" and Odorick Y. K. Wou's 1994 study, *Mobilizing the Masses: Building Revolution in Henan*, have noted that traditional social organizations in rural China were inherently conservative, insulated from outside influences and reactive to larger events shaping the country rather than actively responding to them. They were also led by elites who were often hostile to the CCP's class-based economic programs. Perry, Paulson and Wou contend that the CCP were largely unsuccessful in forging long term alliances with such groups, and often attacked and destroyed them if it had a military advantage.⁶

Rather than being motivated by a sense of nationalism or won over by the appeal of the CCP's economic programs, studies, such as Kathleen Hartford's 1980 dissertation "Step by Step: Reform, Resistance and Revolution in the Jin-Cha-Ji Border Region", Ch'en Yong-fa's 1986 book *Making Revolution: The Chinese Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China*, and Wou's work have noted that peasant behavior was often unpredictable and fluctuated according to circumstances. They were not necessarily moved by the appeal of CCP policies, even when seeing the benefits of such. Neither were peasants always inclined to support the party after receiving benefits from its programs. Hartford, Ch'en and Wou also point out that Japanese attacks on the Chinese countryside, rather than creating a desire for national resistance, often discouraged peasants from supporting the CCP for fear of provoking retaliation from the invader. The three works also argue that the unpredictability of peasant behavior meant that the party never had complete, committed support from them, and that it was often very difficult for it to control peasants and steer them towards the CCP's agendas. Perhaps most importantly, they point out that the areas that the party was successful in prior to 1949 were a complex patchwork of economies, some of which were wealthy or did not stand to

⁶ Elizabeth Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 208-247; David Paulson, "War and Revolution in North China: The Shandong Base Area, 1937-1945" (Ph.D dissertation, Stanford University, 1982), 26-30; Odorick Y.K. Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses: Building Revolution in Henan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 371-386.

benefit much from the CCP's economic policies. The war with Japan often affected different areas in different ways, raising further doubts about the notion that it created a universal impact that fostered widespread nationalism.⁷

These observations shifted the focus of research on how the CCP took power in China from external to internal factors. Scholars abandoned the search for larger developments supporting the party's victory. They also argued that the CCP's economic policies and patriotic appeals were not enough by themselves to win peasant support or secure its victory. Studies, instead, turned to the party's management techniques, its ability to survive in different environments and gain compliance from society through means other than simple appeals. Many, in doing so, have concluded that CCP organization, namely its party networks, was the decisive factor in its success. Hartford, Paulson, Ch'en and Wou argue that the party won because its organizations were highly active in people's lives, and penetrated their control deep into society. Party organizations overcame social antipathy to the party by developing a range of tactics, from gentle persuasion to group pressure and outright coercion, and applied them constantly to channel peasants into participating in the CCP's agendas and to neutralize and eliminate elites and other potentially hostile elements to the party. They were also highly effective in artificially generating appeal for the party's economic policies, adapting them to suit different economic environments and linking them to unrelated local issues in many places to induce popular cooperation. CCP organizations, more importantly, responded effectively to changing political developments in different areas, taking advantage of opportunities presented in some of them to build political and military power while carrying out measures that minimized loss during difficult times.⁸

The emphasis on CCP management techniques assumes that the party was a force independent of rural society, and studies have often highlighted the urban, intellectual origins of the CCP and of its higher leadership. Scholars behind this approach also saw

⁷ Kathleen Hartford, "Step by Step: Reform, Resistance and Revolution in the Jin-Cha-Ji Border Region" (Ph.D dissertation, Stanford University, 1980), 35-39; Ch'en Yong-Fa, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 500-517; Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 371-386.

⁸ Hartford, "Step by Step," 41-43; Ch'en, *Making Revolution*, 500-505, 515-516; Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 371-386.

the party as a unified entity. These perceptions, however, were challenged by Joseph Esherick in the 1990s. Esherick, in his 1994, 1995 and 1998 articles, "Ten theses on the Chinese Communist revolution", "Deconstructing the construction of the party-state: Gulin County in the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region" and "Revolution in a "Feudal Fortress": Yangjiagou, Mizhi County, Shaanxi, 1937-1948", supports the argument that the organization was the crucial factor behind CCP success. However, he questions the separation of internal party and external factors behind it and most other explanations of Communist victory. Esherick, instead, argues that the CCP was a historical and social construction. It was able to survive and consolidate control in many areas because it recruited local inhabitants, who understood their native places and were able to adapt larger party policies to better manage society. Esherick argues that the CCP was not insulated from the uneven commitment of rural society for this very reason, since many of its leaders were peasants whose interests did not always align with those of the party. Esherick also points out that the party was not one entity, but had a number of levels, ranging from Mao and central leaders to grassroots members, and hypothesizes that levels of commitment to the CCP's larger agendas became less and less from the highest level downwards because members at lower levels were more connected to society, less ideological and further away from the disciplinary reach of higher leaders.⁹

Understanding CCP success, Esherick argues, entails an examination of the interactions between different levels of the party, the backgrounds of people who staffed it at each level, why they joined, and how top-down discipline needed to carry out the party's larger policies was established. Esherick links this latter question to another issue, how the CCP fostered commitment amongst its members, linked them to its agendas, and proposed a framework for exploring these subjects. He called on scholars to "deconstruct" the CCP party-state, uncovering how its hierarchy of levels was created. Esherick also emphasized a need for studies to conduct a "political anthropology" of the CCP, charting how members at different levels were recruited and how rituals and

⁹ Joseph Esherick, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Communist Revolution," *Modern China*, 21, no. 1 (1995): 61-69; Esherick, "Deconstructing the Construction of the Party-State: Gulin County in the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region," *China Quarterly* 140 (December 1994): 1052-1079; Esherick, "Revolution in a "Feudal Fortress": Yangjiagou, Mizhi County, Shaanxi, 1937-1948," *Modern China* 24, no. 4 (1998): 339-377.

relationships binding them together and fostering a collective party identity were formed.¹⁰

1.2 An Approach in Need of Study

Esherick's works were intended mainly to outline a method for studying how the CCP came to power in China; they left much unanswered. His studies did not specifically discuss what rituals and relationships made the party a cohesive entity, only suggesting that rectification, a process involving ideological study, mutual-and self-criticism and threat of punishment for those who did not conform to tenets of the CCP's ideology, was crucial in enforcing intra-party discipline. Esherick also argues the CCP fostered loyalty and commitment amongst its members by recruiting many of them during the most radical stages of its class programs, and targeting those who were the biggest beneficiaries of these policies.¹¹ These assumptions, however, have not been tested by in-depth studies. Research, on the whole, has ignored this important subject. This lack of attention is likely due to a number of reasons. Scholars did not yet have a wide range of internal party documents on members and on CCP policies regulating them. Interest in the subject of revolution was also fading as China was shifting into the high gear of a rapid capitalist economic boom, something that in many ways contradicted the goals of the revolutionary-era party. China's revolution was largely a rural one, and scholarly attention on China by the late 1990s was moving towards the cities and the great urban expansion in the country since reform.

However, an important legacy of the Communist revolution in China is the extensive system of party officials and members it created. Corruption and abuse of power by this group are becoming endemic problems in present-day China. They dominate speeches of party leaders at the CCP's 18th congress, and are in danger of undermining the country's economic growth. The source of corruption is the power and connections of party cadres. They are forcing the higher CCP leadership to critically assess the role of party members in society, their relationships with each other and measures the party's senior echelons has taken to regulate them. How the CCP deals with

¹⁰ Esherick, "Deconstructing the Construction," 1079.

¹¹ Ibid., 1066-1068, 1072-1073.

these issues could affect both its future and that of China, and it is critical that scholars gain a better understanding of the inner workings of the party, its different levels and the people who staff them. The CCP is shaped by its past. Much of its history is about members trying to draw lessons from previous experiences or retreating from past extremes; decisions on policy issues are also influenced by events from earlier times. To understand the state of relationships, norms and disciplinary control in the current day CCP, it is necessary to explore their development over the long run, starting with the party organizations that helped to bring the CCP to power over six decades ago.

1.3 My Study and its Treatment of Party Members and Organization Development

These issues add importance to Esherick's approach. My work will apply and expand on its framework of analysis through a case of party organizations and members in Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong. Esherick's works provide a good start on how to understand the formation of relationships, roles and disciplinary measures in the CCP, but they are limited in their analysis. These studies do not deal with the relationships between the party centre and local organizations across China. Esherick bases his observations on northern Shaanxi, an area where central party leaders such as Mao Zedong were present during the mid 1930s to the late 1940s, and were in a position to closely watch over and direct local party development. The situation was very different in most of the areas where CCP organizations developed, which were often long distances away from the party centre, and had limited contact with it. It is from these places, rather than northern Shaanxi, that the CCP mobilized enough men and resources to take over China. The interactions between them and the party centre need to be studied.

Carrying out such a study requires doing several things. The means of communication between the party centre and areas beyond its Shaanxi base, and how much central leaders were able to interact with them over time, need to be examined. Researchers must also consider the issue of regionalism and localism when looking at interactions between the party centre and different parts of China. This issue is important because local identity has always been a part of Chinese culture, and shapes social ties in many ways. Local and regional connections and solidarities, politically, have often

created insider/outsider tensions that hampered integration between different parts of China; governments over the country's history have constantly had to deal with them in their administrative strategies. Understanding how the CCP handled local and regional identities prior to 1949 may also shed light on the party's later developments. While scholars have acknowledged that the party won because of its local and regional organizers, research by some, such as Keith Forster, have noted that the higher CCP leadership became increasingly suspicious towards them during the 1950s, and ultimately carried out purges that replaced many important native cadres in different parts of China with outsiders.¹² Was this phenomenon already happening prior to 1949? Did experiences from the party's rise to power, and the attempt by Mao and other central cadres to draw lessons from them create a distrust towards native CCP leaders?

I chose Rushan, Haiyang, their region and Shandong specifically to answer these questions. Shandong has a strategic military significance in China, and its CCP organizations played a major role in bringing the party to power in 1949. Traditionally seen as connector between the north and south of the country, the province saw two important railways built in the early 20th century.¹³ Its eastern coastline also provided quick access to Manchuria, China's most industrially developed and resource rich region during the republican period. Men from Shandong were also known for their martial prowess, and often formed the core of successful armies. CCP organizations in the province also played a critical role in the party's rise to national power. They mobilized over eight million men, women and children for military service or support duties in the party's final conflict with the GMD from 1945 to 1949, more than any other place in China, and sent them to fight not only in Shandong but also in Manchuria during the early stages of the war.¹⁴ Large numbers of Shandong troops allowed the party to build a stronghold in Manchuria, and CCP forces in the province itself also tied up more GMD

¹² Keith Forster, "Localism, Central policy, and the Provincial Purges of 1957-1958: The Case of Zhejiang," in *New Perspectives on State Socialism of China*, ed. Tony Saich and Timothy Cheek (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 113-125.

¹³ James Z. Gao, "From Rural Revolution to Urban Revolutionization: A Case Study of Lu Zhongnan," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10 no. 27 (2001): 235-236.

¹⁴ Wang Dongming, *Shandong renmin zhiyuan jiefang zhanzheng shi* (History of the Shandong People's Support of the Liberation War) (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1991), 58.

troops than anywhere else during the civil war.¹⁵ Victory by these same forces in HuaiHai, an area that covers parts of southern Shandong and neighboring Jiangsu province in late 1948 and early 1949, effectively sealed Communist victory. It isolated GMD forces in northern China, leaving them to be picked off by Communist forces, and left the GMD's political centre in central China exposed to CCP attack.

Shandong also serves as a good case study of interactions between the party levels before 1949 and their role in the CCP's victory in China. The province, due to its location, was considered a major area of concern by Mao Zedong. Central party leaders paid close attention to Shandong, and frequently sent key figures there during this time to oversee party and policy development. Kang Sheng, one of Mao's most trusted confidants, for example, was sent in 1947 and ultimately took over leadership of the province. However, the party centre had not been able to assert control over the CCP in the province before the 1940s; organizations there had developed largely without its guidance. Shandong, due to this absence, provides a good case study of how the highest reaches of the party interacted with fairly autonomous local organizations.

The CCP built an extensive network of party organizations across Shandong during the 1930s and 1940s. My study will focus on Jiaodong and two counties in it for several reasons. David Paulson, in his thesis, has argued that Shandong is actually several regions, each with their own distinct geographies, economies and social structures rather than a coherent entity.¹⁶ Jiaodong is one of these regions. Shandong, prior to the late 1930s, did not have a strong provincial party leadership. Organizations in the various regions of Shandong were frequently left on their own, and developed independently. Studying one part of Shandong will provide a more detailed analysis of localism in CCP organizations and their influence on interactions within the party. I chose Jiaodong because the region contributed the most to the CCP's rise to power. Party organizations in the Peninsula recruited 285,839 soldiers and more than a million labourers during the CCP's final conflict with the GMD from 1945-1949, more than any part of Shandong.¹⁷

¹⁵ Xiang Lanxin, *Mao's Generals: Chen Yi and the New Fourth Army* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), 135.

¹⁶ Paulson, "War and Revolution," 9-15.

¹⁷ Wang, *Shandong renmin*, 95, 154.

Rushan and Haiyang are important to my study in several ways. Originally one county, they were the first places in rural Jiaodong to have communist activities. Members from the two counties helped to found regional party organizations that brought the CCP to other parts of Jiaodong, and became leading figures in them. Those who remained at home were also instrumental in the CCP's rise to power. They created large local party networks, and organized most of the population in their native places to support the CCP's military efforts. In Haiyang alone party organizations sent 170,000 individuals, nearly half of its population, to fight for or carry out logistical services for CCP forces from 1945 to 1949.¹⁸ Rushan's contribution was less spectacular, but it also played a crucial role in supplying the party with critical manpower and resources for its national victory. The development of the CCP membership in the two counties is a window into how the party in the region emerged, how it spread, the type of people that joined it, and how a hierarchy of levels reaching deep into society was created. It also offers a look at how the authority of the party centre was asserted to regional levels of the CCP hierarchy, the interactions of higher party agendas with local ties and identities, and what types of intra-party relationships were behind the CCP's 1949 victory.

1.4 Methodology, Sources and the Layout of the Thesis

A study of the CCP membership in Haiyang and Rushan is first and foremost an examination of the people who joined the party. My thesis will begin with what Joseph Esherick has called a "political anthropology" of the CCP, looking at the personal backgrounds of Haiyang and Rushan members, why they joined the party, and how it evolved over time as the CCP networks in the two counties expanded. This analysis runs throughout my thesis. I will also slowly trace the formation of party levels and organizations in the two counties and Jiaodong, their linking up with higher CCP levels and the development of norms and disciplinary measures in them. Since party members are also members of society, they and their entrance into the CCP was also influenced by events outside the party. My thesis will address the impact of larger developments in

¹⁸ Shandongsheng Haiyang xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (hereafter cited as SHXBW), *Haiyang xianzhi* (Haiyang Gazetteer) (Haiyangxian: Shandongsheng xinwen chubanshan guanliju, 1988), 120.

China, such as the war with Japan, on the behavior of members. The role of these events on CCP development has long been dominated by the theories of Chalmers Johnson and other earlier scholars. My thesis will engage with them, but will also explore the specific impact of greater events on the Jiaodong region.

For my analysis I have assembled a large number of sources, some of which have never previously been available to scholars outside China. The most important of these are CCP archival materials. In 2006 and 2007 I visited the archives of Rushan and Haiyang and the Shandong Provincial Archives in Jinan, and gathered several thousand pages of inner party documents from the two counties, as well as the Jiaodong CCP prior to 1949. These records, a mixture of inner party directives, reports, personnel records, and correspondence between organizers, give insight into how the CCP in Jiaodong functioned, the interactions between its different levels, how the higher party attempted to impose its agendas on regional and local organizations, and how CCP organizations have tried to regulate their members. To further explore the workings of the CCP in Jiaodong, I have supplemented my archival sources with a large number of published documentary compilations from the People's Republic of China on the Shandong party, which contain additional materials from the period.

I use the archival materials mainly to explore the development of CCP organizations. In order to examine the backgrounds of the people who staffed them I gathered a large number of written personal recollections by party members from Haiyang and Rushan. These sources are not without their flaws. They give a distorted telling of historical events. Most of the important party figures in the two counties had passed away long before I began my study, and many of their recollections were written during the Maoist period. These works were often composed according to an ideological narrative praising the CCP's revolution, and portray the history of the party in the two counties, particularly in the early stages, as a heroic struggle against oppressive government officials, elites and the Japanese. The revolutionaries who wrote them also tend to exaggerate support among the residents of Rushan and Haiyang for their activities, their roles in certain events; they portray early members as either martyrs or traitors.

However, these sources contain a good deal of personal information, such as the education level of members and comments about their families, which are often told in a

non-politicized way. They, along with many of the archival documents I have collected, are also written in a crude style, with poor grammar and word usage; these provide fascinating insights into the type of people who joined the CCP in Jiaodong prior to 1949. I use these sources mainly to uncover the personal backgrounds of members, and have supplemented them with unpublished memoirs, found in local archives, which are less ideological in their recounting of personal history and party activities. My work also uses documents from the Haiyang and Rushan's organization departments, the branch of the local CCP in charge of registering and regulating members, which gives often critical assessments of the activities of party members to gain a more balanced understanding of the people who joined the CCP over time.

Since my study is about a small part of China and some of the sources on the CCP that I use contain strong biases, it is important to develop a good understanding of the social structure, history and economic context of Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong in order to more objectively examine party development in them. To do so I have consulted several types of materials. One is official revolutionary histories and gazetteers produced by local governments in Jiaodong. Such works were commissioned by CCP authorities, but they are also reflections of local identity, and record events that the populace in different parts of the Peninsula felt strongly about. They often pay lip service only to party ideology, and include a great deal of information that either does nothing to praise the CCP or even negates its efforts. My thesis taps official CCP histories and gazetteers for background knowledge of Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong. I supplement them with non-CCP sources to verify the information that they provide. Among them are local gazetteers produced prior to 1949 and dispatches from the American consulate in Yantai, a major port in the Jiaodong area, which made constant reports on the political situation and economic conditions of the Peninsula from the 1920s to 1941. I also looked at *Shandong wenxian* (Shandong memorabilia), collected recollections of Shandong inhabitants who fled to Taiwan in 1949, which contains many personal reflections by people from Jiaodong.

My study is divided into three sections and six body chapters. Its three sections each cover a period in the CCP's history in Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong prior to 1949, and have a different focus. The first is composed of Chapters Two, Three and Four and

looks at the years 1928 to 1941. It is centered on exploring how the CCP in Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong emerged and the types of people who became its initial party members. The second section, made up of Chapters Five and Six covers the years 1938 to 1945, and focuses on the establishment of intra-party discipline in the Jiaodong CCP, from higher levels of the Peninsula's party to organizations in the village, the lowest level of society. The third section, containing Chapter Seven, explores how the CCP used its organizations in Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong to mobilize rural society for war during its military struggle for control of China. It covers the years 1945 to 1948.

I chose this periodization and division of chapters for several reasons. CCP organizations in Rushan, Haiyang and most Jiaodong were largely without sustained contact with higher levels of the party prior to 1941, and functioned essentially as autonomous groupings. A study of party development from 1928 to 1941 gives a good insight into the people who made up the CCP membership during the 1940s, their motivations for entering the party and the issues that higher leaders had to deal with when they tried to impose discipline over this group. Leaders from the party's centre began to arrive in Jiaodong from 1938 on, and they slowly asserted their authority and tried to foster discipline over organizations in different parts of Jiaodong, reaching to the lowest levels of the CCP in the Peninsula by 1945. This makes the years 1938 to 1945 a distinct period in the Jiaodong CCP's development. The years 1945 and 1948 were the most crucial for the CCP in the pre-1949 period. It was a time when the party was engaged in a life and death struggle with the GMD for control of China. Studying party organizations in this period provides an in-depth analysis of whether organization was a decisive factor in the CCP's national victory in 1949.

The different chapters of my work are arranged to explore these issues. Chapter two covers a short period from the summer of 1928 to mid-1929 and examines the conditions that helped the CCP in Rushan and Haiyang emerge. It also explores what types of people were motivated to join the party through a focus on one person, Yu Xingfu, an early party member. The third chapter looks at the rise and fall of the CCP in Haiyang, Rushan and Jiaodong from 1928 to 1936, and examines problems in the party caused by its early membership. My fourth chapter looks at the role of China's 1937-1945 war with Japan in shaping the CCP's fortunes in Rushan and Haiyang, and the type of

party members it created. Chapters Five and Six take a different tone, and focus less and less on actual party members. They cover a time when the CCP membership in Jiaodong dramatically expanded, making members more faceless, only statistics in party sources. The 1938 to 1945 period also saw a significant effort by leaders from the party centre to assert discipline amongst party members in Jiaodong at the expense of the individual. The two chapters focus more on the policies of the party, particularly its mechanisms for controlling and fostering cohesion amongst party members, but they also explore the impact of these measures on individual party members through a few case studies.

Chapter Five analyzes the assertion of discipline at higher levels of the Jiaodong party. The sixth chapter looks at how the party created a more cohesive and disciplined membership at the lower levels of the CCP, and uses Rushan and Haiyang as a case study. It also explores how the CCP began to strengthen the control its organizations had over society. I argue that this was closely connected with fostering intra-party cohesion, since doing both involved breaking down old social ties in society and establishing new class identities in rural society. The last chapter of my thesis analyzes the role played by party organizations in the CCP's national victory. It explores how the newly reorganized party in Rushan and Haiyang mobilized society to support the CCP's military actions in both Shandong and Manchuria during the 1945 to 1949 civil war.

My study uses two theoretical frameworks to study party members in Jiaodong and the efforts of higher leaders to discipline them. In carrying out a "political anthropology" of the CCP in Rushan and Haiyang I use a specific framework of analysis, Martin C. Yang's concept of intersecting circles in rural society. First articulated in his 1945 study *A Chinese Village: Taitou, Shandong Province*, an anthropological work on a village in Jiaodong, Yang argued that rural society in the area was held together by several layers of circular networks of relationships and associations, with the family household being the primary and most tightly knit circle, and lineages, status and religious groups, and villages and market towns forming ever larger, increasingly less cohesive networks.¹⁹ I use Yang's framework for several reasons. It is based on research of rural society near my area of study. Yang's model is also flexible. Many later scholars,

¹⁹ Martin C. Yang, *A Chinese Village: Taitou, Shandong Province* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), 2-3.

such as William Skinner and Prasenjit Duara, have used his model loosely to construct theories on rural marketing and religious networks in rural China. I plan to modify and add to Yang's framework to build a new understanding of the CCP's development in Jiaodong.

Yang's model also argues that its various circular networks and their cohesion were in constant flux, breaking down over issues such as personal rivalries and economic decline sometimes but also becoming stronger again over time.²⁰ This latter assertion is very valuable to understanding the formation and spread of the CCP in Jiaodong. The Peninsula, for much of the first half of the 20th century, was a dynamic and unstable place. Intrusion by foreigners into northern and eastern China from the end of the 19th century on led to the sudden development of two modern cities, Qingdao and Yantai, and brought new forms of education, technology, transportation and trade to what had previously been a less populated and economically backward part of both Shandong and China. Foreign intrusion also provided economic opportunities for Jiaodong residents by stimulating the development of Manchuria, something that prompted many of them to go to the nearby region as migrant labourers. Jiaodong also bore the brunt of political instability in China during the period, such as militarist struggles, Japanese intrusion and invasion, and a succession of governments from the 1920s to the 40s, which fostered constant disorder as well as social and economic breakdown in its rural areas.

These developments had several effects on society in the Peninsula. They periodically broke down important circular networks linking rural inhabitants and the authority and social order they fostered. The emergence and expansion of cities, modern education and travel also brought radical political ideas into the Jiaodong countryside, and spread them to those who felt most alienated by the disruption of key circular networks. CCP revolutionaries emerged out of the interaction between social breakdown and the spread of political radicalism, and they used still cohesive circular networks, such as lineages, to expand their numbers. The surviving circular networks had a strong influence on revolutionaries, producing local sentiments and insider/outsider tensions which hampered intra-party cohesion and made the establishment of discipline and collective norms by higher CCP levels a difficult task.

²⁰ Yang, *A Chinese Village*, 133-142, 157-172.

In examining how the larger national party fostered commitment amongst party members in Jiaodong I draw some insights from political scientist Kenneth Jowitt and his writings on Leninist parties, of which the CCP is a variant. Jowitt analyzes mainly Leninist parties in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but I chose him because he is specifically focused on the question of how Communist parties make people devoted members, and the means that they use to do so. Many of Jowitt's assertions also apply to the process of how the higher CCP leadership imposed discipline on party members in Jiaodong. Jowitt contends that Leninist parties, despite their differences, have one similar quality. Most of these parties emerged and took power in countries where society was organized into corporate groups, such as kinship organizations, communities and families. He asserts that Leninist parties foster commitment among their members by breaking down their attachment to these groups and ultimately weakening the influence of these groupings over society in general. Jowitt argues that Leninist parties do so through two steps, imposing "impersonal" organizational procedures, formal practices in an organization that reject personal favouritism between its members, and class struggle in wider society. Both these concepts, Jowitt asserts, were new to societies where Leninist parties emerged, since they were mostly organized along corporate group lines rather than economic ones, and were held together more by informal ties between kinsmen, family members and friends rather than by impersonal procedures. However, Jowitt contends that Leninist parties used the two concepts in a distinct and creative way that broke down old identities and placed its members and society into new corporate groups and identities, such as the party organization and class groups led by the administrative apparatuses of the parties.²¹

These assertions apply in many ways to society in pre-1949 Jiaodong, which was based on kinship, community and family units. The larger process in which higher CCP leaders fostered commitment amongst party members in the Peninsula is also in many ways a conflict between existing social identities and the imposition of impersonal norms and class conflict. My thesis will explore in detail this conflict through an analysis of

²¹ Kenneth Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 10-21, 27-29.

party evolution in Haiyang, Rushan and Jiaodong. It also looks at the precise mechanisms that party leaders used to foster commitment to the CCP and impose class identity.

Analysis of CCP development in Jiaodong using these two frameworks builds up to the conclusion of my thesis, where I discuss the implications of my findings for understanding CCP evolution prior to 1949 and how intra-party discipline and cohesion were established between the party's central leadership and organizations in different parts of China. I will also examine how my case study relates to the development of the CCP and its larger treatment of party members during the Maoist period.

Chapter 2: Violent Beginnings: Young Men and the Emergence of Revolutionary Politics in Haiyang/Rushan

On the night of June 17, 1928, Chen Xizhou (陈锡周), a member of the local elite in eastern Haiyang (海阳) woke up to noises. Chen was grabbed by several young men who had climbed the wall of his home and was beaten to death by them shortly after. Over the next few days these young men attacked and ransacked several police stations in Haiyang and two surrounding counties, with several groups of others. Armed with a small number of firearms captured from the raids, they made three attempts to seize the county towns of Haiyang and Muping, the county bordering it from late June to early July.¹

2.1 People Behind the Attacks: The Story of Yu Xingfu

These incidents were the start of several months of rebellious violence by a group of disgruntled young men in Haiyang and Rushan. The rebellion was the product of a turbulent time in the Jiaodong Peninsula during the early 20th century, in which bad weather and political turmoil were creating economically fallen families with frustrated sons. Rebels organized themselves through traditional ties, but they were influenced by a radical disrespect for all forms of authority in their communities, which was caused by their marginalized social status and detachment from their families through long distance work and study. Work and study in faraway places was a fairly new phenomenon in Jiaodong, and they exposed some young men to revolutionary ideas that made them express their frustrations through violence. The rebels took action during a time of extreme political instability and collapse of local order in Jiaodong. Their actions, along with the consequences of turmoil in the Peninsula would turn some rebels into

¹ Cao Zhongmin, *Bandao fenghuo* (Tales of the Peninsula) (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2004), 68, 70-79.

communists and pave the way for the spread of the CCP to Haiyang and Rushan. The rebellion began with the attack on Chen, but its roots go back a year earlier, when Yu Xingfu (于醒夫), a main figure in the killing of Chen Xizhou, returned to his native village after eight years of work in Manchuria. Yu, according to a recollection of his life written prior to his death in 1979, was born in a village in eastern Haiyang in 1904. His family was once prosperous and give him six years of traditional education, but had to send him off as a labourer to Manchuria at the age of 15 because of poverty.



Figure 1 Yu Xingfu

Source: Cao Zhongmin, *Bandao fenghuo* (Tales of the Peninsula) (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2004).

Yu left in a year when Haiyang was in the grip of a major drought, but with help from family members in Manchuria was able to find a variety of work in eastern Liaoning Province. He notes that he was a coolie hauling ships upstream on the Yalu River, carted wood, earth and other materials for a workshop, and was finally employed in a bookstore in Dandong, a small city near the Korean border. Yu's story was not unique, and he was among the tens of thousands of men from Jiaodong who travelled to Manchuria in search of work each year during the 1910s and the 1920s. However, Yu was never happy during his time there. Nor was he interested in work. Yu notes in his recollections that he spent much of his time in the book store secretly reading books and

newspapers. He came back to Haiyang in 1927 even though his older brother had fled to Manchuria a couple of months earlier, claiming to him that it was impossible to survive in their native county.²

Yu wrote his story from the perspective of someone who later became a revolutionary. He argues that the experience of Manchuria led him to communism, and notes that he came into contact with the idea of revolution while secretly reading an article of *Shenbao* at work in 1926, which praised Sun Yatsen. Yu contends that he was drawn to Sun's principles, as well as his revolutionary vision for China "like a thirsty man to water" afterwards, and started on the path of revolution. We can only guess what he might have felt at the time. Sun's calls for revolution might have excited Yu's sense of adventure at a time when he faced nothing but the monotony of work. Studies of Manchurian migration, such as Thomas Gottschang and Diana Lary's 2000 work *Swallows and Settlers: The great migration from north China to Manchuria*, have argued that it was a part of family strategies for survival rather than individual choice. Migrants felt no sense of drama or opportunity and could only take pride in their ability to endure hardship. Perhaps Sun's vision of national unity also fed into Yu's search for belonging. Gottschang and Lary assert that most migrants accepted the experience of Manchuria out of a sense of attachment to their families, the only source of emotional comfort and social security in early 20th century China.³ Yu, however, didn't feel these sentiments. His parents had passed away while he was gone, and he was alone in his community after his brother fled. He had nothing but harsh words for his relatives, claiming that they usurped his inheritance, and accusing neighbours of encroaching on his family land and cutting down a tree on it. What ever the reasons, he returned home with several copies of Sun's works, including *The Three Principles of the People*, *Declaration of the First Congress of the GMD*, and the *Letters of the 76 Martyrs*, bought in Dalian.⁴

² Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," (Autobiographical tale of Yu Zhou) in *Jiaodong zhiguang* (Light of Jiaodong), ed. Zhonggong Weihai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhui (Weihai?: Shandongsheng xinwen chubanju, 1990), 337-338.

³ Diana Lary and Thomas Gottschang, *Swallows and Settlers: The Great Migration from North China to Manchuria* (Ann Arbor: Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000), 9-10.

⁴ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 338.

It did not seem that Yu was looking for revolution, or even knew where to find it. He returned to tend his family farm even though there was a revolutionary civil war going on in China. However, possession of books by Sun Yatsen, which Yu sometimes lent to friends, attracted several young men to his home. One of these was Yu Shoutang (于寿堂), a member of his lineage from a nearby village. Yu Shoutang, like Yu Xingfu, had also worked for many years in Manchuria, and had been a store clerk in Heilongjiang. He was more successful, earning enough money to start a business upon his return, but by 1927 he was falling on hard times. Yu Shoutang had been introduced to the GMD a year earlier by his cousin Yu Yunting (于云亭), who became a GMD member while studying in Beijing and brought Yu Shoutang into the party during a brief trip home. Another was Zhang Jianan (张健庵). Zhang, from the same village as Yu Shoutang, was introduced to the GMD by a lineage member who studied in Yantai. Yu Xingfu was subsequently made a GMD member by him.⁵

2.2 Yu Xingfu's Hometown

Yu Xingfu speaks of all this in idealistic terms, and notes that he and the other men formed a peasant association that attracted growing numbers of locals by the spring of 1928.⁶ However, his environment was hardly ideal. Established in 1735, Haiyang was formed out of a coastal defence outpost, the garrison town of Dasongwei (大嵩卫) and two nearby counties, Laiyang (莱阳) and Muping (牟平).⁷ The county, during the Qing and the early Republic, was shaped like a foot, with its heel and toes facing the sea, and its ankle in the north. It had a varied and complex geography, dotted with low rocky hills (山), large dirt mounds (丘陵), and patches of flatland with various small rivers running through them. Its southern, coastal areas were largely composed of plains, with the landscape becoming more hilly and mountainous further to the north.

⁵ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 339; Cao, *Bandao fenghuo*, 65.

⁶ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 339.

⁷ SHXBW, *Haiyang xianzhi*, 2 (see introduction, n. 18).

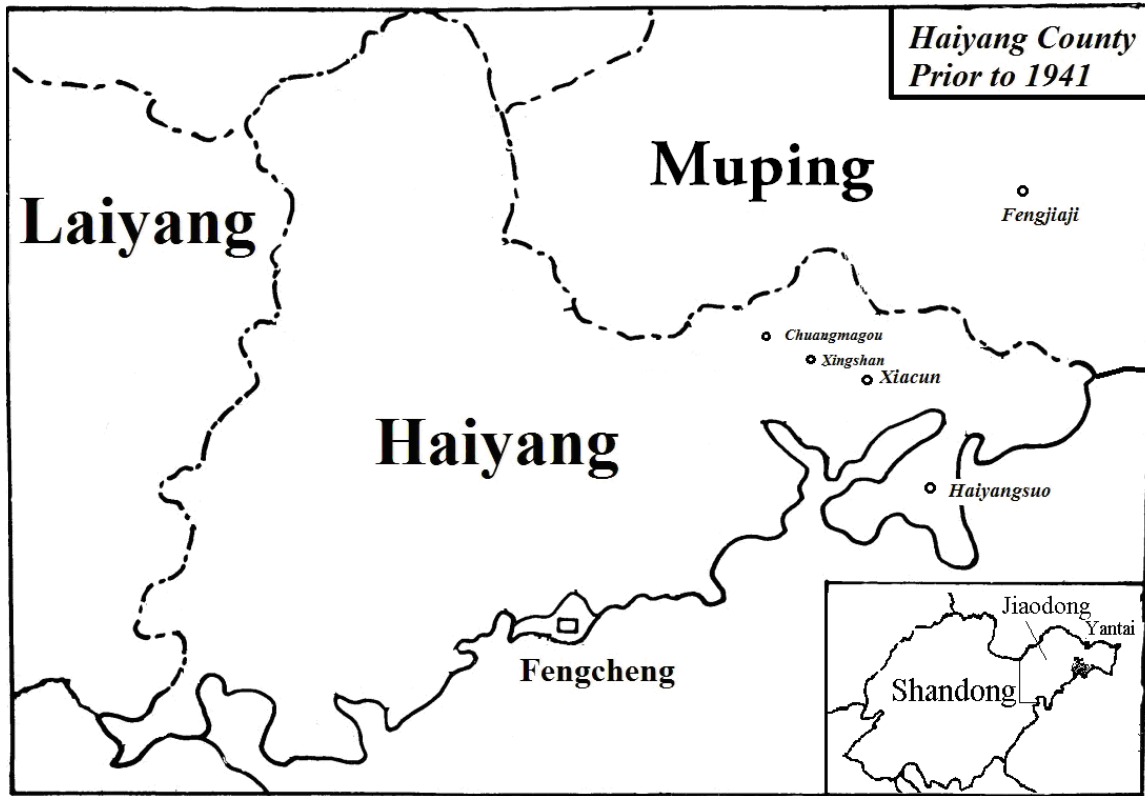


Figure 2 Map of Haiyang

Source: Created based on a map from: Haiyangxian minzhengzhi biancunzu, *Haiyangxian minzhengzhi* (Administrative Gazetteer of Haiyang) (Neibu, 1987).

Though politically under one territorial boundary, life in Haiyang was actually organized along commercial, geographical and other divisions. The county can be separated into four main landscapes, east, west, north and south. Its east and west, formerly belonging to Muping and Laiyang, were composed of patches of flatland surrounded by hills and some small rocky outcrops. Its northern section was rugged and made up of chains of large, rocky hills, and its south coast, where the county seat, Fengcheng (凤城) (formerly Dasongwei) was located, was largely flat.⁸ Western and eastern Haiyang shared a similar landscape with eastern Laiyang and southern Muping, and were further connected to these areas in commerce and kinship networks by main roads linking Fengcheng with the seats of nearby counties, which are divided into those

⁸ Ibid., 56-57.

going east, west and north.⁹ Eastern Haiyang and southern Muping, in fact, formed a natural geographical entity, being separated from other areas by rocky hills in the east and west.¹⁰ Geography, commercial ties and other differences in the county would influence later administrative divisions. Haiyang lost its east, where Yu lived, in a redrawing of county borders by the CCP in 1941, and a large part of its north in late 1944. Its eastern portion, along with southern Muping, were merged into a new county, Rushan (乳山), named after a landmark in the southern part of the area.¹¹

2.3 A Time of Turmoil

Haiyang, like much of Jiaodong, was normally prosperous. The county, located in a coastal area, had a temperate climate, with plentiful rain during the summers and mild winters. This beneficial weather pattern made Haiyang very productive agriculturally. A modern gazetteer for the county, published in 2004, notes an old local saying, that "All areas within nine *li* of a river are fertile, and frost never exceeds three *cun* during the winter." Haiyang was not the wealthiest part of Jiaodong, but its location and climate gave it a diverse and bustling economy. Many Haiyang products, such as soy and black beans, sorghum, black onions, tobacco and taro, were prized across Shandong. The county, like many other places in Jiaodong, was also a major centre for growing peanuts and producing peanut oil. Haiyang enjoyed busy sea trade with Manchuria and many places along China's eastern coastline because of its products, and developed over 30 major market towns by the late Qing/early republic.¹²

⁹ Ibid., 347.

¹⁰ Rushanshi minzhengju, *Shandongsheng Rushanshi dimingzhi* (Gazetteer of Place Names in Rushan City, Shandong Province) (Jinan: Shandongsheng ditu chubanshe, 2008), 3.

¹¹ Haiyangshi difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (hereafter cited as HDSBW), *Haiyangshi zhencun jianzhi* (Brief Gazetteer of Haiyang City's Townships and Villages) (Beijing: Zhongguo chubanshe, 2004), 5.

¹² HDSBW, *Haiyangshi zhencun*, 11, 13, 18, 20.

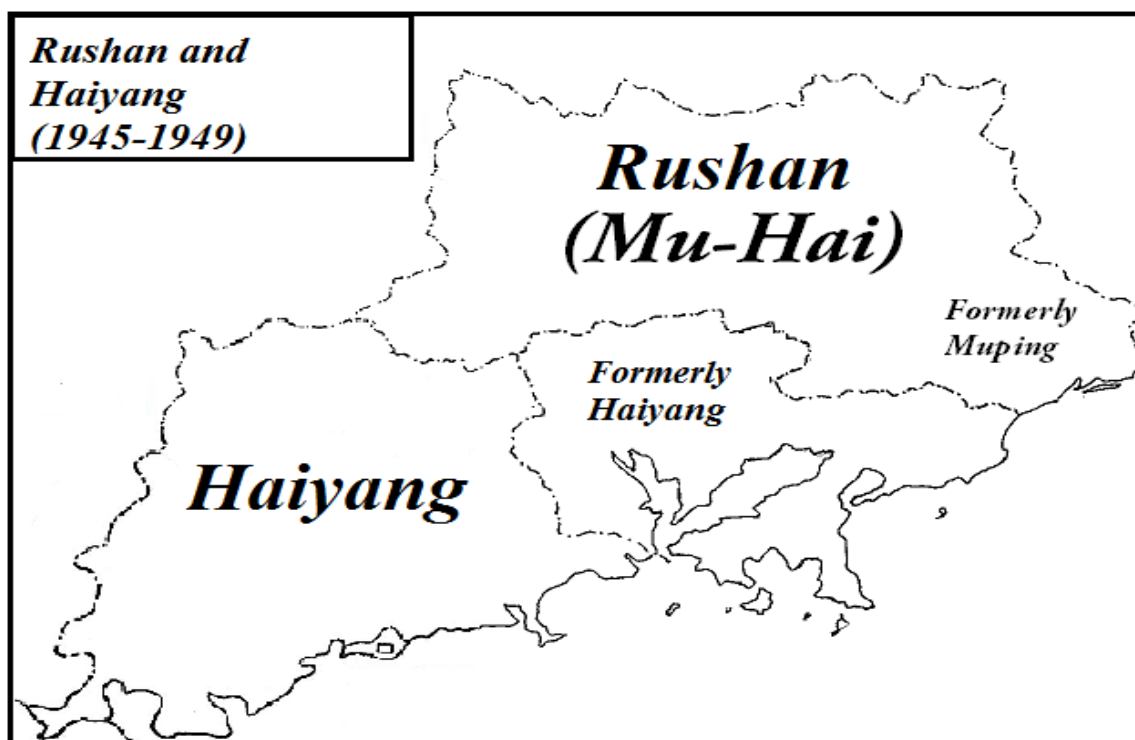


Figure 3 New Boundaries of Rushan and Haiyang

Source: Created based on maps from: Haiyangxian minzhengzhi biancunzu, *Haiyangxian minzhengzhi* (Administrative Gazetteer of Haiyang) (Neibu, 1987); Rushanshi dangshi shizhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Rushan difangshi* (CCP Local History of Rushan) (Xianggang: Tianma chubanshe, 2005).

Despite these conditions, however, life in Haiyang during the late 1920s was anxiety-driven and tension-filled. The county, as well as much of Jiaodong, was stifling under militarist Zhang Zongchang (张宗昌)'s rule, which fostered instability in many ways. One of these was taxes. The number of miscellaneous taxes and surcharges to the land tax in Shandong had been rising since the last years of the Qing, but the province under Zhang's governorship from 1925-1928 saw an explosion in their number. Seeking to support his vast army building program and for personal gain, Zhang added a growing list of surcharges to existing taxes. Surcharges on land tax alone went from three in 1924 to 15 in 1928, with 1928 surcharges exceeding by more than ten times the actual tax itself.¹³

¹³ Yu Qingpan and Song Xianzhang, *Muping xianzhi* (Muping Gazetteer) (Taibei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1936, 1968), 565-567.

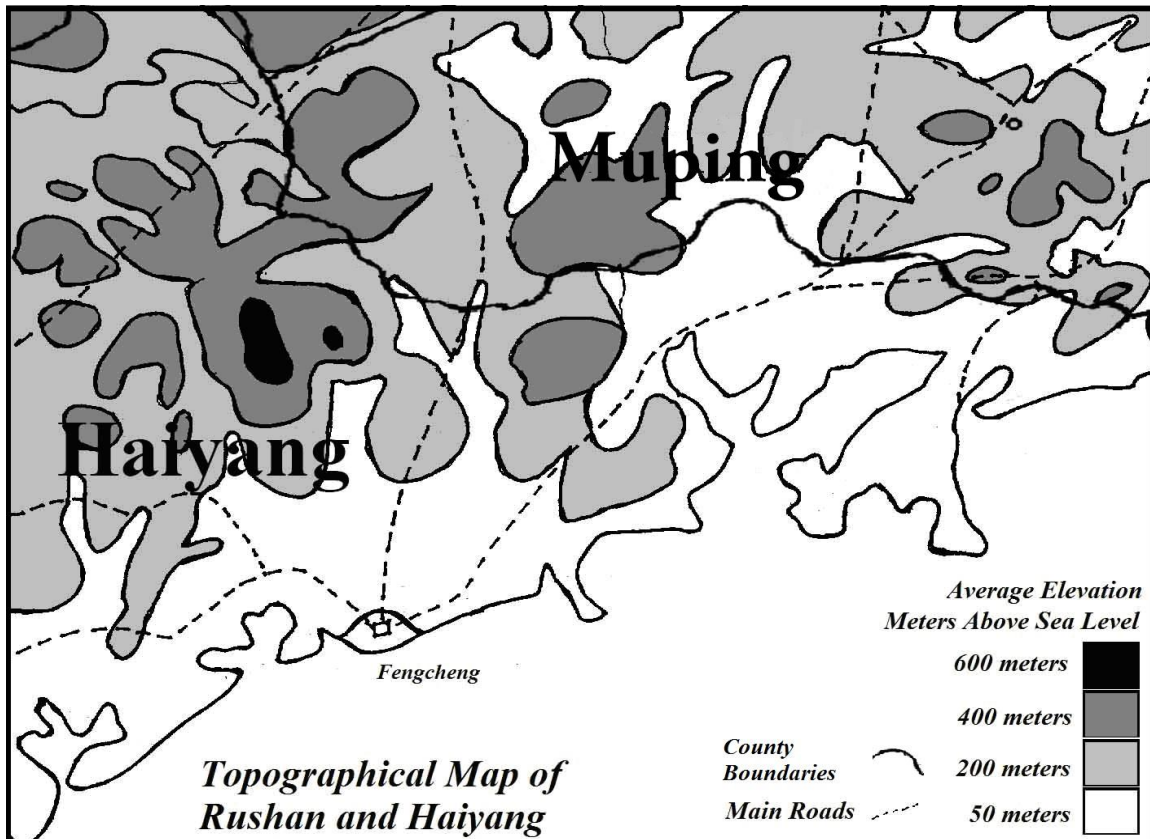


Figure 4 Topography of Rushan and Haiyang

Source: Created based on maps from: Yantaishi jiaoyu kexue yanjiuyuan, *Yantai dili* (Geography of Yantai) (Beijing: Xinchijie chubanshe, 2006); Royal Prussian Land Survey, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~chgis/maps/hist/sd_29.html>

Increased taxation did not create social tensions on its own, but did so in tandem with armed, ravenous state forces to be unleashed upon rural society. Rapidly expanding tax burdens, the growing inability and unwillingness of society to pay them and pressure from Zhang led governments to increasingly turn to the police to collect taxes, and to resort to ever more aggressive practices in using them. Such men, part of a formal government bureaucracy at the county level and above that emerged only during the early 20th century, brought a menacing presence previously unknown in rural society. They were quick to use force to achieve their aims. Often poorly paid, they frequently used their roles to prey on the local populace with fines and additional charges.¹⁴ This process bred popular resentment towards those in county government and people with

¹⁴ Cao, 34-35. Cao's work gives many examples of extortion by local police forces in Jiaodong.

connections to police and government officials. Some of the latter served in the new bureaucratic institutions, and were seen as either behind the police abuses, or evading taxes, being able to do so due to their connections. Predatory taxation also marginalized sub-county leaders and local elites without government connections. Such men had traditionally collected taxes and served as brokers between state and society. However, they were increasingly sidelined in the tax collection process, and often became the first victims of the police, who saw them as having wealth to be squeezed.

The growing police presence in the countryside did little to improve basic security. Bandits operated in much of rural Jiaodong. They had long been a problem in the area, where the abundance of rocky hills provided many places to hide, but banditry was made worse by Zhang Zongchang's erratic army-building from 1925-1928; he suddenly raised an army of as many as 400,000 men but just as quickly disbanded most of it. Large numbers of marginal young men were recruited, given military training and weapons, but quickly found themselves unemployed, causing many to turn to banditry.¹⁵ Bandits were not purely predatory. Phil Billingsley, in his 1988 book *Bandits in Republican China*, has noted that they naturally seek to create a viable environment for their activities, and often do so by integrating themselves into existing power structures.¹⁶ Jiaodong bandits were a parasitic group, adept at exploiting the weaknesses of their environment to achieve maximum gain while minimizing risks to themselves; they frequently shifted between the roles of brigands, state brokers and mercenaries. Many used the poor security in the countryside to establish extortion spheres, forming a new layer of power between state and society. Bandits often settled in temples, at times with the connivance of local religious leaders who sought to gain a cut of their earnings. They used brutal violence to intimidate surrounding areas into paying tribute, but were also known to take up legitimate functions later on.¹⁷ One bandit in southern Muping, according to an official

¹⁵ Ibid., 15, 25-26.

¹⁶ Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), xvii, 151.

¹⁷ Li Yuting, "Yi minchu Jiaodong shehui gaikuang" (Remembering Society in Jiaodong During the Early Republic), *Shandong wenxian* (Shandong Memorabilia) 12, no. 3 (1986-1987): 83. Examples of bandit strategies can be seen in the recollection of Li Yuting, a resident of the border area between northern Haiyang and nearby Qixia County who later moved to Taiwan. Li notes that a group of bandits first settled in a local temple, extorting

local history, developed good ties with the county's magistrate, and served as litigation agent for locals in law cases.¹⁸ Bandits punished communities as a whole for defiance, but often did not treat them as a whole when it came to extortion to avoid triggering backlashes from the entire population. Dispatches from the US consulate in Yantai in 1928 noted that bandits often targeted the rich, at times even dividing communities into different wealth groups, demanding higher amounts from those with more money.¹⁹ Bandits raided official forces for weapons when sensing that they were weak, but were also known to join them when promised arms and wages, sometimes even rising to senior political and military office. Bandits, like the police, added another menacing, exploitive presence in the lives of rural people, further raising tensions. Their collusion with official forces and different social groups also increasingly blurred the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate public behaviour, state and outlaw, and local leader and predator.

Man-made instability was compounded by natural calamity. Though normally good for agriculture, the weather was not kind to Jiaodong during the early 20th century. Haiyang saw five major droughts alone from 1904-1935, compared to seven in the previous two centuries combined, as well as numerous smaller weather disturbances on a near yearly basis.²⁰ Droughts in Jiaodong never caused mass deaths, since its close proximity to Manchuria and access to the sea facilitated migration to areas where jobs and alternative means of survival were available. However, they added to the hardships of its inhabitants, and created a constant angst about poor harvests which often affected the behaviour of locals more than the famines themselves.

money from nearby villages and demanding that they pay up within three days. They burned down two villages that refused to pay but spared others who gave in to their demands.

¹⁸ Cao, 69.

¹⁹ United States Department of State, Chefoo Consulate (hereafter cited as USDSCC), Political Report, April 4th, 1928, p. 2-3; Vol. 199, January 7, 1928 - December 31, 1928; United States Consular Records for Chefoo, China, 1854 - 1942; Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, 1788-1991, Record Group 84; United States National Archives, College Park, MD.

²⁰ SHXBW, 92.

2.4 Troubles: Convulsions of Violence

Fear of starvation and ruin, combined with an insecure and violent atmosphere created by taxation, predatory police, government officials and bandits often led to frenzied behaviour by rural communities directed at perceived oppressors. Sporadic violent anti-government outbursts had been common in many parts of Jiaodong long before Zhang's rule. Haiyang saw two major disturbances. The first of these, in the spring and summer of 1910 began when a group of village heads in the east of the county protested the growing number of miscellaneous taxes under the Xinzheng reforms. The group, using Song Xuanwen (宋煊文), a lower degree holder from the area as their representative, refused to collect taxes, and demanded a reduction of taxation in the county, which was in the midst of a major drought. They also accused several members of the gentry in the county who had close ties to the magistrate of tax evasion, placing fiscal burdens on the rest of society, and pocketing taxes that were collected to finance the new police force. Haiyang's magistrate first ignored the leaders, but in June of that year arrested Song. This response caused the heads to organize thousands of peasants to attack the county seat in early June. The group took the magistrate's forces by surprise, seizing the city and freeing Song, and went on a rampage over the next few days, looting grain from and destroying the property of suspected tax-evading gentry. The situation was eventually resolved by Song Xuanwen, who managed to negotiate an agreement with the magistrate for a temporary suspension of some taxes, and for the county gentry to collectively distribute grain to needy peasants. The fall of some rain in July of that year made many peasants feel that the drought was over.²¹

The second uprising, in 1919, also began in a drought year. It was a reaction to the establishment of salt police stations in the western part of the county, and was triggered by the shooting death of three local men by the police, who suspected that they

²¹ Che Jianji, "Song Xuanwen lingdaode Haiyang nongmin kangjuan douzheng" (Haiyang Peasant's Anti-tax Struggle Under the Leadership of Song Xuanwen), in *Xinhai gemingqian LaiHaiZhao kangjuan yundong* (Anti-tax Movement in Laiyang-Haiyang-Zhaoyuan Prior to the Xinhai Revolution), eds. Qi Qizhang, Liu Tongjun and Jin Fuzhai (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 1989), 401-407; Haiyang xianzhi bangongshi, "Nao xiangsheqi fengchao" (Ruckus Against Xiang and She Elders), in *Xinhai gemingqian*, 407-412.

were salt smugglers. Thousands of inhabitants from Haiyang and western Laiyang attacked and destroyed several salt police stations in the county. They killed more than a dozen policemen, along with several local elites that they saw as having close ties with the salt police. Rioters even fought off a police unit led personally by the Haiyang magistrate to rescue the salt police, but dispersed when rain fell on the county on June 10th.²²

2.5 Great Turmoil: 1928-1929

Instability created by Zhang Zongchang would produce a Peninsula-wide outburst of protest and violence in 1928-1929. Violence was triggered by a convergence of factors. In April of that year Zhang's forces were decisively defeated by the armies of the GMD. Zhang fled the province on April 30th, abandoning its western areas. GMD forces took Jinan, Shandong's provincial capital, on May 1st 1928, but were humiliatingly pushed out a week and a half later by Japanese forces, who feared that the GMD presence would harm Japan's interests in the city.²³ Chiang Kai-shek, stunned by the event, abandoned

²² SHXBW, 703-704; HDSBW, 10; Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao" (Report Regarding Jiaodong), in *Shandong geming lishi wenjian huiji* (Collection of Documents on Revolutionary History in Shandong) Volume 6, ed. Shi Lianquan and Xin Jundai (Beijing: Zhongyang danganguan, 1994-1996), 268 (hereafter cited as *SGLWH*); Wang, Pixu and Liang Bingkun, *Laiyang xianzhi* (Laiyang Gazetteer) (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1935, 1968), 1626-1627.

²³ Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: the Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 193-205; C. Wilbur Martin, "The Nationalist Revolution: from Canton to Nanking, 1923-1928," in *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 12, part 1, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 703-706. Scholars who have written about the subject in English, such as Akira Iriye and C. Martin Wilbur, argue that the incident was caused by two factors, nationalistic behaviour of GMD troops and an attempt by the Japanese army to hijack its country's foreign policy. GMD troops, during the northern expedition, had often attacked foreign interests, something that led Japan's government to dispatch an expeditionary force to protect its large civilian population and many businesses in Shandong in April of 1928. Japanese troops were ordered to safeguard the country's interests in Qingdao, but army commanders, acting on their own initiative, moved forces to Jinan at the end of the month, claiming to protect Japan's 2,000 civilians in the city. These troops quickly came into conflict with GMD forces in Jinan, something that played into the hands of the Japanese army. It launched an offensive against the Nationalists, and pressured the Japanese government to send reinforcements. Reinforced Japanese units quickly

Shandong. The province was left outside direct GMD control, something that would have disastrous consequences for Jiaodong over the next two years. Large numbers of Zhang's troops used the GMD withdrawal to move to the Peninsula where, in the absence of a master, they began to fight amongst themselves. A number of coups, mutinies, intrigues and small wars broke out during the summer and fall of 1928. Eventually Liu Zhennian (刘珍年), a subordinate of Zhang's, seized control of the Peninsula after defeating several rivals.²⁴ Liu pledged allegiance to the GMD, but was forced into a life and death struggle in early 1929, when Zhang launched an attempt to retake power in Jiaodong. With help from the Japanese, Zhang triggered major defections among Liu's commanders and brought many of the bandits in Jiaodong to his side. Using these forces Zhang launched two efforts to take back the Peninsula in January and March 1929, but was defeated by Liu by May.²⁵

All this was done with an utter disregard for local residents. Military commanders, caught in a bitter contest for survival and dominance following Zhang Zongchang's departure, began to extort "army contributions" and fines on top of already heavy taxes, leading to more predatory behaviour by local police. Political instability gave bandits free reign over the Peninsula. Many roamed around, searching for more profitable extortion zones, while others, exploiting the chaos further, claimed to be units of various warring factions or even of the GMD, demanding tribute in the name of military contributions and brutally punishing communities that refused their demands.²⁶ Fighting between Zhang and Liu Zhennian also devastated the county towns of several counties in Jiaodong; dozens of civilians were killed and hundreds of houses destroyed in Muping alone during twenty some days of fighting in March and April 1929.²⁷ These developments took place

delivered a humiliating defeat to the GMD. Wilbur and Iriye argue that the Jinan incident marked the start of the Japanese army's efforts to destabilize GMD China, something that led to Japan's seizure of Manchuria in 1931 and the outbreak of full scale war between the two countries in 1937.

²⁴ USDSCC, Political Report, June 2nd, 1928 - October 1st, 1928; Vol. 199, January 7, 1928 - December 31, 1928.

²⁵ Cao, 16-22; Lu Weijun et al., *Minguo Shandongshi* (Shandong History During the Republican Period) (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1995), 365-373.

²⁶ Wang Pixu and Liang Bingkun, *Laiyang xianzhi*, 1628-1634.

²⁷ Yu and Song, *Muping xianzhi* 1540-1541.

at a time when many parts of Jiaodong were facing drought, and spurred violent responses from aggrieved peasants, which led to even greater violence towards them.

The future Rushan area was the site of one of the largest uprisings in August 1928. Police from Muping, under pressure to meet the taxation demands of Fang Yongchang (方永昌), one of the military commanders vying for power in the Peninsula, began to round up village heads in the southwest of the county to hold them for ransom. On August 22nd they abducted 29 village heads. The police held the village heads in a market town, beat them repeatedly and demanded that their families or communities pay ransoms for their release. This act triggered a violent response by Duan Chengzhai (段成斋), one village head in the area. Duan had been arrested by the police a month earlier for the same purpose. Enraged by the arrest of so many leaders in one day, he first sent a messenger to Shi Zhongcheng (施忠诚), another former Zhang Zongchang subordinate whose troops were camped in northern Haiyang, asking him to arrest the Muping police. Shi agreed, but later demanded payment for the action, something that caused Duan to take action into his own hands. Working with a group of young men from his village and nearby areas, Duan launched a surprise attack on the police in the early morning hours of the next day. His group overwhelmed the police, rescuing the village heads. In a fit of rage he afterwards executed more than a dozen captured policemen.²⁸

Realizing what they had done afterwards, Duan and other leaders held a discussion in Fengjiaji, and decided that they had no choice but to rebel. In the last days of August they called on all able bodied men from Fengjiaji and surrounding areas to take up arms, and marched on the county town. The force grew to thousands upon reaching the city. They burnt the homes of and killed several local elites with close ties with government officials on the way, but found Muping under a new magistrate appointed by Liu Zhennian, who had just ousted Fang Yongchang's forces from the area. Liu, whose troops were still weak at the time, disassociated himself from Fang's policies, and promised the rebels amnesty and tax exemptions. Rebel villagers, hearing this, began to scatter, and Duan and other leaders also withdrew.

²⁸ Cao, 95-112; Yu and Song, 470-471, 1537.

However, they had been tricked by Liu, who was busy winning over remnant Zhang forces and securing his hold over Jiaodong. When this was accomplished in early October, Liu struck at rebel leaders. On the night of October 12th, Liu's forces raided the villages of Duan and several other leaders. They burned these communities down, destroying dozens of houses, killing over 60 villagers, and took 100 others to Fengjiayi for the purpose of torturing them into revealing the whereabouts of rebel leaders. Liu's forces left a few days later, executing eight of the captured men, and pillaging the market town. Duan managed to escape and fled to Manchuria.²⁹

2.6 Decline of Old Leadership, Rise of Young Men: An Analysis of the Protests

Rural protests in the Haiyang/Rushan have been viewed in various ways. CCP local histories presented them as part of the revolutionary tradition in the counties, for their opposition to government and elites.³⁰ Roxanne Prazniak, in her 1999 book *Of Camel Kings and Other Things: Rural rebels against modernity in Late Imperial China*, takes another view, placing them into a moral economy framework. Looking at the 1910 Haiyang outburst, she argued that it was an assertion of traditional moral concerns and community structures against modern state building. Prazniak argues that the protest was triggered by two issues, breakdown of the traditional support for peasant subsistence from the state and its affiliated elites, and the creation of a new administrative apparatus that was centered at the county town. The new governing structure, which included modern bureaucratic institutions such as the police, gave the handling of many local matters, such as the management of taxes largely to elites with affiliation to the magistrate and higher officials, with no input from other local leaders. It also encouraged corruption amongst these elites, which, along with high taxes triggered a collective

²⁹ Cao, 112-133; Yu and Song, 472-473.

³⁰ Rushanshi dangshizhi bangongshi (hereafter cited as RDB), *Zhonggong Rushan difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Rushan) (Xianggang: Tianma tushu chubanshe, 2005), 3-7.

backlash demanding adherence to old moral traditions, which was organized by disenfranchised sub-county leaders and village chiefs.³¹

Prazniak asserts that the protest represented the emergence of a collective, native place-based moral consciousness against administrative mismanagement and disregard for the right of locals to survive.³² However, an examination of protests in Haiyang/Rushan over the longer term points to change in another direction: the collapse of traditional native place leadership, moral concerns and community solidarity over time, and the replacement of traditional leaders in some places by a new, younger, more volatile type of leader. The uprising of 1910 was organized largely by men in their 50s and 60s, who had long held leadership positions in their communities.³³ They initiated the conflict by protesting against high taxes, refusing to collect them when demands were not met, and they turned to violence only when pushed. Protest leaders also organized through their communities, using their positions to demand collective participation in the unrest.³⁴

This is in sharp contrast to the 1919 and 1928 protests. Both of them were triggered by reactions to abuses by official forces rather than by social movements with clear demands. The 1919 unrest was largely spontaneous. Accounts, from Republican Era gazetteers to sympathetic CCP sources, mention no major leaders or demands. The differences between Duan Chengzhai's 1928 protest and its late Qing predecessor are even more startling. Unlike 1910 leaders, Duan was only 32 at the time of the protest, and had become a village head only a few months earlier. Duan led a revolt largely of young men, many of whom were only in their 20s. Many of them were only vaguely connected to their communities, and had spent years away in military service or other types of work. A number of older local leaders did take part in the uprising, but they played no central role, and some were coerced rather than willing participants. Duan, in one case, was said

³¹ Roxanne Prazniak, *Of Camel Kings and Other Things: Rural Rebels Against Modernity in Late Imperial China* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 10-11; 29-39, 79-84.

³² Prazniak, *Of Camel Kings*, 40.

³³ Qi, Liu and Jin eds., *Xinhai gemingqian*, 446, 452. Ages of the two main figures in the uprising, Song Xuanwen, who was 57 at the time, and Gao Qiwan, who was 62, reflect this.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 453.

to have had his followers forcibly occupy a local leader's house for three days, eating all his grain as a form of intimidating him and his community into joining the revolt.³⁵ His group had no well-defined agenda for the protest, and drifted around between rescuing captured village leaders, revenge and overthrowing the county government. They appealed to community solidarity in building up the rebel force, but did not rely on it as the main form of mobilization. Duan instead gathered his force through a variety of means, including recruiting young men from local martial arts schools and having other leaders call together youth from their lineage. The youth of the leaders, combined with the lack of a clear motive for the revolt, made it highly unstable. The unrest nearly turned on itself following Duan's decision to withdraw after hearing about Liu Zhennian's promise of amnesty. The move was highly unpopular with a group of the leaders, and caused them to seize some of Duan's close associates as hostages briefly, sparking a short standoff between the rebels.³⁶

These aspects of the protest suggest that they were not the emergence of a moral community trying to restore traditional moral behaviour, but simply ways of coping with the breakdown of such behaviour. Coping, which became increasingly aimless, violent and less based on old forms of organization, indicates that the decline of public concerns had spread down from government and elites to the lower levels of society over time. Jiaodong, by the late 1920s, was a very different place from 1910, becoming an increasingly Hobbsian world in which all previous social distinctions and roles were collapsing. Protesters in 1910 had faced a still stable state that had provided a working social order, and had traditionally aided rural society during hard times. This state, by 1928, had fallen into a variety of competing militarist factions, driven by both desperation and greed to plunder society mercilessly, and bandits who had in some cases become part of the local political order. Political instability especially targeted the local leadership. Leaders were subjected to predatory actions by official forces, and some of the functions they performed were even taken over by bandits. This, along with the unpopularity of collecting taxes, would have likely discouraged people with high social

³⁵ Du Xinghua, "Duanjia baodong shimo" (History of the Duan Family Village Revolt), *Muping wenshi ziliao* (Materials on History and Literature in Muping) 3 (1990): 130.

³⁶ Cao, 114, 124-125.

standing or any wealth to lose from either taking part in local leadership or playing an active role in it.



Figure 5 Duan Chengzhai

Source: Cao Zhongmin, *Bandao fenghuo* (Tales of the Peninsula) (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2004).

Not even elites with government connections, often vilified by society as being insulated from government abuses, were spared. Such men in 1910 had enjoyed a number of powers under the Xinzheng reforms, including the management of taxes and institutions like the police. However, they, by the late 1920s, were increasingly becoming victims of militarists who monopolized power. Unlike other parts of China, Shandong never had the practice of having locals as magistrates during the Republic. Influential Jiaodong elites had to deal with a succession of militarist-appointed outsiders, who were gradually abandoning any accommodation with local interests and often saw them as the best sources to extort wealth.³⁷ The years 1928 to 1929 were especially hard for elites, as political struggles led to quick turnovers of magistrates in many parts of the Peninsula.

³⁷ USDSCC, Political Report, June 2nd, 1928, p. 6; Vol. 199, January 7, 1928 - December 31, 1928. The American consulate in Yantai noted in June 1928 that newspapers in the city lamented the lack of locals in senior government positions in the Peninsula and demanded all government officials leave and give power to Jiaodong elites.

Magistrates increasingly became lackeys of militarist rulers, and they preyed on the wealthiest first to meet the demands of their masters. Duan Chengzhai, during his rebellion, had vowed to kill a number of Muping elites with strong government connections, including Yang Shuping (杨叔平), deputy head of the county's chamber of commerce.³⁸ However, Yang himself was already in trouble, and was bankrupted not long after Duan's unrest by extortion from Muping's Liu Zhennian-appointed magistrate, a former bandit.³⁹

Disorder affected not only individuals who had been traditional leaders, but also places that promoted collective solidarity, where leadership was exercised. Protest leaders in 1910 had organized their assault on the county town in a local temple.⁴⁰ Studies, such as Prasenjit Duara's 1988 work, *Culture, Power and the State*, have noted that temples were places where rural communities interacted with each other, formed multi-village associations, and worked out cooperation on matters of collective importance. Temple rituals gave social legitimacy to multi-village associations, their leaders, as well as cooperative activities between rural communities.⁴¹ These places, by 1928, however, were increasingly used as bandit lairs. As a further sign of the collapse of traditional order, religious figures who maintained them were at times also accused of colluding with bandits in the extortion and robbery of nearby communities.

These developments led to several things. Communities were increasingly without effective leaders and less able to organize in traditional ways. They were also frequently dominated by men with more physical power than authority, who asserted themselves largely through force. These included bandits and police, but also men from rural communities, who were younger, tougher, less rooted in their native place, and possibly due to this, more willing to confront their turbulent world and its risks. Duan was one such figure. It is not known if he had a family, and Duan was said by an official history to be largely uninterested in and barely doing any work at a joint business venture he owned with a friend in Fengjiaji. He was also hot tempered and rebellious, and had been kicked

³⁸ Cao, 121.

³⁹ Yu and Song, 915.

⁴⁰ Qi, Liu and Jin eds., 454.

⁴¹ Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China 1900-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 31-28, 40.

out of middle school in his youth for making trouble.⁴² The chaotic environment of late 1920s Jiaodong favoured the aggressive over the tame. It also made the distinction between different groups often hazy. Duan's activities, such as robbing and intimidating local leaders and punitive violence, though done for a different reason, were not unlike those of police or bandits.

Effects of the turmoil during the period, such as the weakening of the old order, the shifting of power from older to younger men, and the increasing use of violence were also having another effect, of empowering those who hated the traditional social structure and were influenced by radical political beliefs. Among those taking part in Duan's rebellion were some of the same men who were responsible for the violence described at the start of the chapter, who were GMD members. Duan, himself, according to some local histories, was also driven to embrace radical political ideas by his violent experience in 1928. According to these sources, he became a CCP member while in exile in Manchuria. Though it was never proven, he was arrested after coming back to southern Muping during the mid 1930s, and was executed for being a Communist party sympathizer.⁴³ It was from toughs like him that revolutionaries would emerge.

2.7 Aspiring Revolutionaries

Yu Xingfu makes no mention of these events, but evidence from his recollections and local party histories suggest that he and his associates were of the same breed of men that were dominating the countryside. They were young, mostly in their 20s, and loosely connected to their communities. Some, like Yu, had no family, while others were either estranged from their families or not under their control. Song Hechu, a member of Yu's group, for example, dominated his family after the death of his father in 1927, and would bankrupt it in the next few years by sending himself and his brothers to schools that he saw as having radical political leanings.⁴⁴ Yu's group did not share a similar background

⁴² Cao, 98.

⁴³ RDB, *Zhonggong Rushan*, 6.

⁴⁴ Song Zhuting, "Hanxin ruku yuxinren sheshen wangsi weigeming: ji wode yijia" (Endurance of Suffering Builds a New Man, Forgetting the Body and Death to Serve the Revolution: Remembering My Family), in *Qingdao qingyunshi yanjiu* (Research on the

of family wealth, but had a similar degree of education, having gone either to primary school, middle school, trade middle school or having some traditional learning. However, none of them was educated beyond a basic level, suggesting that they were not born into very poor backgrounds but were not very wealthy either. Like Duan Chengzhai, many were also idle, or like Yu, facing economic despair.

These shared qualities, despite differences in family wealth between Yu and other members of his group, were likely shaped by two factors: family decline, caused by partition of land and self-indulgent behaviour of members; and the larger political turmoil in Jiaodong. Yu was likely a victim of family decline, and he notes that other associates, such as Zhang Jianan, were also from "fallen" (破落) families. Some in his group, such as lineage member Yu Shoutang, had also owned small businesses.⁴⁵ Small merchants were hit particularly hard by the events of the late 1920s, and their predicament was noted by a report of the US consulate in Yantai in 1927. The report commented that the predations of Zhang's government, along with banditry, had affected businesses in a variety of ways. They caused a shortage of money and credit crucial to commerce, as money lenders and the wealthy often sent their money out of the province or hid it to avoid being extorted. Rampant banditry also led to constant transportation and trade stoppages, causing price fluctuations. These disruptions proved most harmful to small businesses, which lacked capital to stay afloat and were already hurt by heavy taxation. The 1927 US consulate report noted that many were either forced into bankruptcy or shut down to avoid losses.⁴⁶

Bankruptcy, along with the rebellious behaviour of some of the members of Yu's group, likely caused their idleness and poverty; the similarities between Yu and his associates suggests that they were a mixture of social misfits, semi-outsiders in their communities, and victims of circumstance. They were in many ways prime candidates for making trouble for the existing order. Some were among the unlucky and marginalized,

Youth Movement in Qingdao), Volume 1, ed. Qingdaoshi qingnian yundongshi gongzuo weiyuanhui (1988), 182-184.

⁴⁵ Yu Zhou, "Zai shibai he cuozhe zhong zhaodao gongchandang" (Finding the CCP in the Midst of Defeat and Setback), in *Jiaodong fengyunlu* (Recollections of Jiaodong Tales), ed. Yantai diqu xingzheng gongshu chubanshe (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1981), 55.

⁴⁶ USDSCC, Review of Commerce and Industry in the Chefoo District, September 30th, 1927, p. 5, 27; Vol. 190.

being not born poor but put into destitution by developments beyond their control. They were, due to the lack of family or estrangement from it, not subject to one of the most basic forms of authority in Chinese society, and a key institution for anchoring individuals to legitimate society.

Yu and his associates found a call for rebellion in the slogans of the GMD, but they were only vaguely ideological. The GMD in Shandong during the 1920s was a weakly organized and poorly integrated entity, whose ideology often varied between different groups. Its activists were also heavily persecuted by Zhang Zongchang and often on the run. Members of Yu's group began as individuals who had been introduced to the party by friends and kinsmen. They came into contact with a more organized GMD presence in early 1927, through the efforts of activists in Yantai. These men were Jiaodong natives who had received training from the GMD in Guangdong. They had radical political leanings, and began to expand into the Rushan and Haiyang area through several men from Muping they recruited in the city. GMD members from Muping contacted Yu Xingfu's associates and a number of other young men in southern Muping through friends and lineage connections, and gave them some training in GMD ideology. However, this training was rudimentary, and not long after contacting Yu's friends the Yantai party was broken up by Zhang Zongchang's police in the spring of that year. Most GMD activists from Yantai were arrested or fled.⁴⁷

Members of the Yantai GMD group who managed to escape arrest returned a couple of months later. One of them, Yu Zhenxi (于振西), came back to southern Muping and eastern Haiyang to recruit party members. This marked the real expansion of the southern Muping/eastern Haiyang GMD group, but the GMD in Yantai continued to suffer disruption of its activities. It was also devastated by two events in the summer of 1928.⁴⁸

On June 13th, Shi Zhongcheng, head of Zhang Zongchang's army in Yantai, declared his allegiance to the national GMD. Shi permitted the Yantai party to operate freely, something that prompted Yu Zhenxi to travel to the Muping county town and

⁴⁷ Ding Weifen, "Shandong gemingdang shigao, shiyi" (Draft History of the Revolutionary Party in Shandong, Part Eleven), *Shandong wenxian* 4, no. 1 (1978-1979): 155-157; Yu and Song, 469.

⁴⁸ Ding, "Shandong gemingdang," 157; Yu and Song, 470.

demand that the magistrate do the same.⁴⁹ He was arrested by the pro-Zhang Zongchang magistrate, and did not hear from his group until after calm had been restored to Jiaodong in the fall of 1929.⁵⁰ Yu's arrest led to the loss of a key go-between for the Yantai GMD and rural Jiaodong and severed contact between it and Muping/Haiyang members. Party activities in the county collapsed a month later, when Shi Zhongcheng was ousted from Yantai by a pro-Zhang Zongchang rival; this forced the GMD group in the city to flee for fear of persecution.⁵¹

Knowledge of the Muping/eastern Haiyang members about the GMD, under these conditions, was minimal. Yu Xingfu, in his memoir, states that he was brought in during the summer of 1927 largely because of the GMD ideological texts that he owned, since other members of the party in eastern Haiyang had poor knowledge of the party and wanted to learn more from these works.⁵² Accounts of members in Muping and Haiyang in local histories and recollections also suggest that the so-called GMD group and its peasant association was actually a loosely organized entity, whose rank and file were often temporary participants in its activities, recruited through kinship ties and martial arts schools; they were barely aware of its concepts and agendas. Peasant association members often shared a single surname, particularly in individual villages, suggesting that they were either related or members of the same lineage. Many men were skilled in martial arts; several were local instructors.⁵³ The looseness of their organization is perhaps best demonstrated by the description of Jiang Futang (姜福堂), a minor participant in the June 1928 unrest on the mobilization behind one of the raids,

On the afternoon of one day in the fifth month of the old lunar calendar my martial arts teacher Teng Zhenfang [a peasant association member] came to me in my village. He told me to organize people to join a "plain clothes squad". I didn't know what this meant or what the squad did, so I asked him. He said he didn't know what that was either. Only later did we find out. I gathered six men from my

⁴⁹ USDSCC, Political Report, July 2nd, 1928, p. 4; Vol. 199.

⁵⁰ Yu and Song, 473.

⁵¹ USDSCC, Political Report, August 6th, 1928, p. 1-3; Vol. 199; Ding, 157.

⁵² Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 339.

⁵³ Cao, 49.

village, Jiang Mingkai, Jiang Mingjun, Jiang Mingyou, Jiang Mingjie and myself. At the time there was Jiang Zhaolan, who was only fourteen or fifteen. We didn't want him, but he just kept on following behind us crying, and came along.⁵⁴

Loose organization, along with connections through martial arts schools, suggest that the eastern Haiyang/southern Muping group was more rooted in the values of local society, particularly those of young men, than any modern ideology. Martial arts was a major part of the culture of young men in traditional China, particularly in Shandong. Many young men in the province were practitioners, and men who were well versed in martial arts often taught classes to others. Martial arts was a tradition with many sides. Society in China celebrated prowess in the practice and linked it with social justice. Great martial arts masters were given honourable mentions in gazetteers, and stories of *wuxia*, virtuous men who used force against unjust government officials and elites, were a major part of popular culture.⁵⁵ Martial arts, however, also had a less legitimate side. Some who practiced it were *liumang* (流氓), wandering young men who were detached from their families and considered self-serving trouble makers by society. These men often used their martial arts prowess to prey on the weak and terrorize communities, and they were also mercenaries for hire to any cause.⁵⁶

Many of the young people involved in the upheaval of 1928-1929 in Haiyang and Southern Muping were somewhere between these two sides of the martial arts tradition. Duan Chengzhai and his followers, for example, were motivated by a sense of fighting injustice, but they also included a number of young men who were never closely attached to their communities and had once been wandering mercenaries. One of Duan's chief allies, for example, was a deserter from Zhang Zongchang's army who was well versed in martial arts and had spent a great of time away from home.⁵⁷ GMD rebels, such as Yu

⁵⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁵⁵ Wang Pixu and Liang Bingkun, 1046-1051. This was particularly the case in Jiaodong, as seen with Laiyang's gazetteer.

⁵⁶ Chen Baoliang, *Zhongguo liumangshi* (History of Liumang in China) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1993), 30-31.

⁵⁷ Cao, 95-112

Xingfu, were also alienated from their communities. Their activities, along with Duan's, also bordered between making trouble in society and rebelling against injustices.

2.8 "Revolution" in the Midst of Turmoil

Perhaps the breakdown of social order, personal frustration and a sense of adventure welded the more traditional values of the young men in the eastern Haiyang/southern Muping group to the glimmers of ideology spread by the Yantai GMD activists. Yu Xingfu's recollections and local histories suggest that they learned one message, to overthrow all forms of authority in the countryside, from militarists and local elites to "superstitious" beliefs influencing local people. Peasant association members spread slogans, and by the spring and summer of 1928 began to act on their message, desecrating local temples and taking some over for their own use.⁵⁸ Temples might have suited the initial rebellious urges of the group. They were places where the community leadership gathered. The actions of eastern Haiyang/southern Muping members alarmed Chen Xizhou, the local elite who was killed by Yu Xingfu and his associates, and whose death was the first act of Yu's rebellion. Chen, an older man with some official connections, might have sought to defend local religious practices, but likely also saw a parallel between the activities of the GMD/peasant association members and bandits, who were occupying temples at the same time.⁵⁹ He alerted county authorities, who launched a raid on the houses of Yu Xingfu and several other activists in mid June.⁶⁰

The raid missed the group, but this, along with Yu Zhenxi's arrest several days earlier triggered the attack on Chen and other episodes of unrest. Yu Xingfu, in his recollections, characterized the actions of his association as a failed "revolution." However, his descriptions and local histories from China suggest that they were a number of poorly planned outbursts by groups of young men. The revolutionaries did not have a coherent organization. Nor did they always work as one. Rebels were divided into two factions, one in eastern Haiyang composed of Yu Xingfu and his friends, and another in

⁵⁸ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁹ Yu Zhou, "Nanwangde suiyue" (Hard to Forget Times in My Life), *Rushan wenshi ziliao* 3 (1993): 4. Yu Xingfu describes Chen as a Xiucai degree holder during the late Qing, which suggests he was likely to be at least in his 40s.

⁶⁰ Cao, 67.

southern Muping who were been recruited separately by the Yantai GMD. They both agreed to rebel, but at first went their own way. Members in Muping, after seizing a number of weapons from raids on police stations, marched on the county town. They claimed to be representatives of the GMD, demanding to be let in to form a new government. Muping's magistrate, backed by a battalion of pro-Zhang Zongchang troops, scoffed at them, calling the association members bandits and warning them to disperse. In Haiyang, Yu notes that his group heard false rumours that the county's magistrate had fled due to the disorder in Jiaodong. They organized several hundred men and marched on Fengcheng, Haiyang's county town, in late June, but were turned back when several shots fired by the police garrison panicked the group.⁶¹

Rebuffed in both counties, the rebels agreed to work together, and spent the next two weeks preparing a more planned assault on Haiyang. They also allied with a group of Laiyang bandits who had wandered into Haiyang to increase their numbers.⁶² Peasant associations, backed by bandits, reached Fengcheng on July 10, 1928, and caused a great commotion. Nearby peasants, according to Yu, believing that the county's fall was imminent, flocked to join the fight or came as spectators, swelling rebel numbers to thousands. The attackers surrounded Fengcheng on the first day, but got no further due to the lack of any heavy weapons to breach the city walls. They attempted to use primitive cannon, but these did not have the range to even hit the walls. Cracks also emerged with bandits allied with the rebels, who were fearful that an attack on the city would be too costly, and the lack of progress caused many peasants to disperse. Haiyang's county government, seeing the rebels falter, sent representatives offering negotiation in an effort to weaken their resolve.

Two events on the third day of the assault doomed the whole venture. An accident involving the firing of a primitive cannon badly burnt a member of the Muping peasant association. Other members, concerned about their friend, left to find him medical attention. They departed without telling the Haiyang association members, creating confusion. Laiyang bandits taking part in the assault on Fengcheng were also enticed by

⁶¹ Cao, 68, 74-76; Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 341.

⁶² Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 341.

the county government into switching sides, and launched a sudden attack on the rebels with help from the county police, sending them fleeing in panic.⁶³

A number of rebels, including Yu Xingfu, were arrested in the aftermath of the rebellion. Haiyang's police, seeking revenge for the attack, also launched a raid into the eastern part of the county, burning some houses in villages where peasant association members had come from.⁶⁴ However, the repression was brief. County forces, having just witnessed a major revolt and seeing the disintegration of order in Jiaodong at the time, refrained from mounting further intrusions. The attack on the Haiyang county town, though a failure, had caused a retreat by government authorities in the eastern side of the county. The attackers were mixed with many local onlookers, and it was difficult for the county government to determine who was a rebel. Many arrested rebels, including Yu Xingfu, were quickly released because the police could not figure out if they had taken part in the attack.⁶⁵ Few peasant association members were killed in the attack, and they continued their activities in the countryside of Muping and Haiyang.

The sudden departure of the southern Muping rebels from the Haiyang assault created animosities between them and Yu Xingfu's group, and the two factions went their own ways afterwards. The Muping rebels answered Duan Chengzhai's call for revolt in August and September and marched on the county town with him.⁶⁶ In eastern Haiyang the disorder in Jiaodong and the destruction of local police stations left Yu Xingfu's group essentially in charge of the area. Eastern Haiyang rebels, according to Yu, confiscated the property of some elites and paraded local religious figures through the streets to humiliate them. The activities of the Haiyang group caused some members of the local elite to flee, and made others attempt to appease peasant association members by donating to their organization and even demanding to join the peasant association.⁶⁷ News of the exploits of Yu's group also spawned what seemed like a copycat movement in western Haiyang.

⁶³ Cao, 79-82; Yu Zhou, "Zai shibai," 52-53.

⁶⁴ Cao, 82-83.

⁶⁵ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 342.

⁶⁶ Cao, 69-70.

⁶⁷ Yu Zhou, "Nanwangde suiyue," 9.

These actions, however, produced a backlash in late 1928 and early 1929. In November 1928 Liu Zhennian's forces attacked villages that supported Duan Chengzhai's rebellion. GMD rebels in southern Muping were targeted for their role in Duan's uprising, and most were forced to flee.⁶⁸ In Haiyang, the actions of Yu and his associates also caused a reaction by local elites. In early 1929 Song Sikun (宋四坤), a wealthy peasant in eastern Haiyang, started a movement against the rebels. He was soon joined by a number of other socially-prominent men from the area. Song and his allies offered an alternative to the Haiyang GMD group, a new mechanism for community defence in the form of a Big Knife Society. They formed a militia, called on men from their home villages to participate, and united them using religious rituals that promised militia members invulnerability to weapons.⁶⁹ Song's society began to attack peasant association members in February 1929. They killed some, forced others to join the Big Knife Society or work towards rebuilding temples, and took over control of rural communities in many parts of eastern Haiyang. Big Knife Society followers caught the peasant association by surprise, collapsing it by April. Several leaders fled the county. Yu escaped to western Haiyang, making contact with the small peasant association there.⁷⁰

Yu did not mention much about what happened after this, only noting that he became the head of a ward militia in 1930, after crushing Song's Big Knife Society. However, a local history notes that he and others in the peasant association were saved by an unlikely source, Liu Zhennian. In the summer of 1929 Liu's troops swept into Haiyang as part of a larger effort to eradicate local resistance to his rule. Liu had already begun this effort at the end of 1928 but was hampered by Zhang Zongchang's comeback effort.

⁶⁸ Ding Weifen, "Shandong gemingdang shigao, shier" (Draft History of the Revolutionary Party in Shandong, Part Twelve), *Shandong wenxian* 4. no. 2 (1978-1979): 120.

⁶⁹ USDSCC, Political Report, February 4th, 1928, p. 4-5; Vol. 199. Big Knife Societies, or Red Spears, were often named after the weapons that they most commonly used. These groups emerged in Jiaodong during the breakdown of social order during the 1920s. Big Knife Societies followed rituals that were traditionally used by rebel groups who were either uprooted from or outside the bounds of community, such as the Boxers, but adapted them to give blessing to community and multi-village defence. A report by the United States consulate in Yantai in early 1928 gives a detailed description of such societies in Jiaodong.

⁷⁰ Yu Zhou, "Zai shibai," 54-55.

Forces belonging to Liu saw Song Sikun's Big Knife Society and other rural armed groups as a threat. They attacked and dispersed it, and arrested a number of Haiyang elites associated with the society. Yu and some remaining leaders of the peasant association offered their services to Liu's troops, helping them hunt down members of the Big Knife Society. Liu established a new system of rural administration, dividing the county into ward units (区), each covering three to four dozen villages. He made these the main form of administration and tax collection, and established a militia in each. The arrangement, meant to co-opt armed groups more sympathetic to Liu while keeping them under the watchful eye of the state, benefitted former peasant association leaders. With many of county's eastern elites either weakened or arrested by Liu, Yu became the head of a ward militia. He spent the last months of 1929 eliminating remaining Big Knife Society members who went into hiding after Liu's sweep, capturing and executing Song Sikun at the end of the year. Militia members, who included a number of former peasant association men, returned to the Big Knife Society members the treatment they had received earlier, robbing, beating, and holding some of them for ransom. Yu admits this, but claimed that it was done by others in the group, and that he quickly put an end to such actions.⁷¹

2.9 A New Order

The death of Song marked the end of an effort to reassert community solidarity in the Haiyang/Rushan area, backed by men who been traditionally prominent. Unrest in Jiaodong did not sweep away old leaders and the elite, and some would recover their power and positions in the community over the next few years. However, in the immediate term the destruction of the Big Knife Society marked the low point of a string of humiliations suffered by these older men. It ushered in a new political order in Haiyang and Muping. Liu Zhennian's power was based in Yantai, and he kept most of his forces in the counties immediately surrounding it, such as Muping. Forces loyal to Liu, along with several magistrates appointed by him, continued to harass locals with extortions and fines, much of which was paid by the wealthy and socially prominent.⁷²

⁷¹ Cao, 86; Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 345.

⁷² Yu and Song, 916-917. 1541-1542.

Viewing GMD members with suspicion because of their role in Duan Chengzhai's rebellion, Liu excluded them from the political order, and continually disrupted the party's activities in the county.⁷³ However, in Haiyang as well as many other parts of Jiaodong, the lack of significant garrison forces lead him to rely on newly created ward governments and militias. These were an imposed form of local authority, and in eastern Haiyang benefitted Yu Xingfu and other members of his GMD group. Yu remained a ward militia head in 1930, and his kinsman Yu Shoutang also became a senior official in his ward.⁷⁴ Others, such as Zhang Jianan, rose to become officials in the county government.

Yu Xingfu and his associates began as rebels, but due to a twist of fate caused by the chaotic environment of late 1920s Jiaodong, became part of the government establishment. They would lead Haiyang's GMD. Shandong's GMD became more cohesive under a pro-Chiang Kai-shek provincial organization by the fall of 1929. Representatives of the provincial GMD began arriving in Muping and Haiyang in the last months of that year, with a goal of purging radicals from local party ranks.⁷⁵ However, possibly because of the power positions acquired by Yu and some of the other key figures of the Haiyang GMD group, they kept all the local leaders in the party.

2.10 Shaping of Revolutionaries: Basis for CCP Development

We can only guess how the actions of the GMD rebels were viewed by society. Yu Xingfu and other leaders had taken a variety of roles, from revolutionaries, to protectors of communities from the forces preying on them to brutes and thugs for hire who allied themselves with these same forces. Despite this, they were no different from many other men who dominated society during the period. Political chaos and the desire for a better future had also stirred up another phenomenon: almost utopian rumours about a new order under the GMD. Yu Xingfu noted that during a brief police incarceration after his failed 1928 siege of the Haiyang county town that all the inmates with him kept on asking when the GMD would take charge of the county, believing that they would all be set free

⁷³ Ibid., 474.

⁷⁴ RDB, 294.

⁷⁵ Cao, 87.

and their crimes forgiven.⁷⁶ The GMD was a mystical hope for many in Jiaodong in 1928-1929, and this was corroborated by the recollections of some of the Peninsula's inhabitants who fled to Taiwan in 1949. In fact, even Liu Zhennian was seen as a saviour figure for his allegiance to the GMD.⁷⁷

The violent radicalism of Yu and his GMD group might have been accepted in a tension-filled, explosive and rumour-filled society. Many forms of authority attacked by Yu and his associates, such as government, elites, or religious figures, were becoming increasingly corrupt, destructive or feeble, and this likely made the actions of Yu and other GMD leaders in Haiyang/Muping seem justified. This chaotic world in Jiaodong, however, was fading by 1930. The Peninsula was now under the firm grasp of Liu Zhennian. Taxes, though still high, were also receding from the peak under Zhang Zongchang.⁷⁸ These developments, along with the absence of Liu's predatory forces from most parts of the Peninsula, cooled tensions. This was reflected in the decline of radicalism amongst most of the men in the Haiyang/Muping peasant associations. Few of the leaders and followers of the 1928-1929 movement continued with the radical and violent political activism they had engaged in during those years. They no longer found a justification for such behaviour, since the national GMD, by this time, had renounced all the political radicalism they had learned from party members in Yantai.

The experience of 1928-1929 had inspired a small number of individuals. For Yu Xingfu, chaos during those years must have stimulated his sense of adventure and contempt towards the existing order. A disgruntled, downtrodden young man, he had over a brief period attacked and destroyed literally all forms of authority around him. More importantly, he had not only survived, but risen to an important position in the

⁷⁶ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 344.

⁷⁷ Li, "Yi minchu Jiaodong," 84. Li Yuting, the former Jiaodong resident living Taiwan noted in his recollections that there were number of popular songs and slogans praising Liu Zhennian's forces in 1928-1929.

⁷⁸ Yu and Song, 567-569. While certain areas of Jiaodong still experienced extortion from Liu Zhennian's forces, official tax rates were dropping. Taxes varied per year depending on the needs of Liu Zhennian's government, but they were generally much lower than under Zhang Zongchang. The land tax and its surcharges, for example, fell to between half to one third of the 1928 rate from 1929-1932. Muping's gazetteer gives a full description of tax rates during the period.

political order. Perhaps this proved the validity of committing to a radical cause, and contributed to Yu's eventually becoming the first CCP member in eastern Haiyang/Rushan. The prospects of achieving a new order led by young men must have also seemed a real possibility to him and a few others in Haiyang who took part in the 1928-1929 movement. Yu, without necessarily knowing it in 1928-1929, had helped to create the basis for the spread of the CCP in Haiyang. The actions of his group, inadvertently, had also awakened a dormant communist group in the western part of the county. In Muping, Liu Zhennian's betrayal angered several key figures in the 1928-1929 GMD group who were forced into exile. Though they eventually returned to the county, anger and desire of revenge towards the government remained. Exile also fostered their rebellious natures, by taking them further away from home and established society. Yu and the story of the 1928 uprising also highlights the immaturity, unstable commitment, brute nature and even opportunism of would be revolutionaries. All this would impact the early history of the CCP in Haiyang and Rushan.

Chapter 3: Tough Start: A History of the Early CCP

3.1 Birth of the Party and Tensions in the Process

Song Haiting (宋海艇) (1892-1984), was a man with a mixed history of service to the CCP. Born in eastern Laiyang, Song came from a poor but educated family. He was pulled into radical politics after being sponsored to study in a specialized middle school in Jinan by a wealthy friend. Song joined the GMD while a student there in 1924, and the CCP in 1925. Under orders from the CCP's Shandong Provincial Committee, he returned to his native county at the end of the year, and worked as a teacher near its border with Haiyang. Song used this position as an opportunity to carry out activities for the party, and worked with the county's GMD members to build peasant associations. This cooperation, however, broke down in the summer of 1927, when the First United Front collapsed. Song's identity was discovered by county authorities, who issued a notice for his arrest. Frightened, Song fled Laiyang, never to return. He spent the next 11 years traveling across Shandong, working as everything from teacher to tree cutter, without contacting the party. Song joined the CCP again in 1938, and eventually became a senior party official in western Shandong. He retired from all positions in 1956, and spent the next three decades petitioning various levels of the party to recognize him as an active member from 1927-1938. Song finally received this in 1981, three years prior to his death.¹

Though his early involvement with the CCP was not one of heroic commitment, Song would help establish the first Communist organizations in Haiyang/Rushan. Song was only a fleeting figure in the history of the CCP in the area, but he was not unlike

¹ Haiyangshi dangshi fangzhi bangongshi (hereafter cited as HDFB), *Zhonggong Haiyang difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Haiyang) (Haiyang: Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2007), 333-334; Zhonggong Laixi shiwei dangshi yanjiushi (hereafter cited as ZLSDY), *Zhonggong Laixi difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Laixi) (Qingdao: Qingdao chubanshe, 2000): 17-19.

many of the members that followed him. Many of them, in fact, would take a path similar to his. The early history of the CCP in the two counties was not a story of determined, ideologically-driven figures committed to serving the party over the long term, but individuals whose understandings of, and adherence to communism, was poor, and who often came and went from local organizations. Early members, like Song, were mainly a group of economically-marginalized, somewhat educated young toughs, who were largely detached from their families and communities. Such men were driven to rebellion by their lack of family, or were estranged from their families due to personal conflicts and long periods away from home for work and schooling. This detachment from family and community is perhaps best seen by the fact that early members often came and went from their villages, at times never coming back. Detachment, along with the overall impoverishment and low standing of party members, also likely made them feel little obligation to abide by the rules of their communities.

The nature of the early party membership and the spread of the CCP into Haiyang and Rushan were the product of three developments. One of these was an increasing practice of travel for work and study by marginalized young men in Jiaodong during the early 20th century. Being away from home increased the detachment between these men and their communities. It also exposed them to radical ideas and individuals associated with the CCP, making them rebellious. Another factor shaping the outlook of early members was the pro-GMD unrest in eastern Haiyang and southern Muping during 1928-1929. Many leaders of the early CCP in the two counties were participants in the unrest. They were encouraged to join the party by their involvement in violent and radical political activities during the political chaos of 1928-1929, and ties between these men played an important role in shielding early party members from government persecution. Early party members were also influenced by the expansion of modern teaching, a profession that was fairly new in both China and rural Jiaodong during the late 1920s and 30s. Not all initial leaders in Rushan and Haiyang were teachers, and early CCP organizations recruited through a variety of ties linking rural society in Jiaodong, such as family, lineages, and market town activities. But nearly all leaders became involved in modern education during the early 1930s, and teachers served as both the nucleus of

party leadership and the main linkage between local party organization and higher CCP levels in this period.

3.2 Violent Teachers: Causes Behind the Rise and Fall of the Early Haiyang/Rushan CCP

Cong Xiaoping, in her 2007 article, "Planting the seeds for the rural revolution: Local teachers' schools and the re-emergence of Chinese Communism in the 1930's," has noted that CCP success from 1937-1949 was driven by rural teachers. Such men, Cong contends, were ideal revolutionaries. They had great knowledge of their local areas, and commanded respect through their status to rally society towards certain political causes. Teaching was also a profession that attracted moderately educated but poor young men without means of advancement or other job opportunities, but its low pay made many disgruntled with the status quo and predisposed towards radical causes like communism. Cong points to a correlation between the growth of rural teachers in north China during the 1930s and the increase of CCP members in the region during the same time, and attributes this to the educational reforms of the Nanjing decade, particularly the decision to transform all provincially funded county middle schools in China into teacher training facilities after the Second National Conference of Education in 1930. She asserts that teacher training schools formed out of this decision radicalized the teachers they produced. Entrance to the schools was highly competitive. They offered students free tuition and living stipends, but gave them little future other than low paying teaching positions, making many discontented with the existing order. Such schools also allowed leftist urban intellectuals, many of whom were Communist party members, to enter the countryside by serving as their instructors, and to convert students into party members.²

The experience of Haiyang and Rushan both validates and challenges Cong. Most of the young, marginalized men who formed the core CCP leadership in the two counties during the 1920s and early 30s were or became teachers. Entering the profession of teaching did not necessarily transform these men into communists, since many were already radicalized before becoming teachers. However, teaching positions, and

² Cong Xiaoping, "Planting the Seeds for the Rural Revolution: Local Teachers' Schools and the Re-emergence of Chinese Communism in the 1930's," *Twentieth Century China* 32, no. 2 (2007): 135-37, 141-149, 150-157.

relationships between educators and teacher training schools established during the 1930s provided them income and cover while they carried out communist activities. Ties between teachers and schools also played a major role in spreading the CCP in two ways. Schools, like martial arts associations, were places where young men congregated, making them sites for party recruitment. Teaching ties, as well as teacher training schools also allowed party members to interact with and recruit individuals who lived far beyond their native place. Early communists in Haiyang and Rushan were forged by the political turbulence in Jiaodong during the late 1920s, but their ability to organize was fostered by the expansion of the teaching profession in Jiaodong during the 1930s, a sign of the more stable environment in the Peninsula during the Nanjing Decade.

Cong, however, makes a simple linkage between teaching, marginalized men and CCP success. Though teachers were the core of local CCP leadership, they did not foster the successful spread of the party, or popular acceptance of communism, before or after 1937. Cong's argument does not take into account a number of local factors in party development. Many early communists in Haiyang and Rushan were not only poor and marginalized, but were also young men who were beyond many of the basic forms of authority in Chinese society due lack of family, estrangement from family members or long periods away from home. They were also influenced by a world in which social order was collapsing and violence was becoming the norm, particularly in asserting public agendas and settling disputes. Though early communists recruited through associations between teachers, which tied together people from large geographical areas, they also had a habit of banding together with people closer to their native place, such as friends and lineage members, forming subgroups within larger CCP organizations.

These aspects of the early party had a disastrous effect on its development. CCP members, being outsiders, were not used to authority being asserted over their behaviour, or were downright contemptuous of it in general. This made it difficult for them to accept authority within the party. Party members were also little connected with economic and social realities of their villages because of their estrangement from family and community, and their tendency to use violence to achieve radical political agendas often made them pariahs in society and damaged the CCP's public image. The forming of subgroups in the party along narrow lines, such as friendship, lineages and native place, also led to

frequent disputes between them, and the reluctance of members to accept leaders from outside their native areas or small group. Party members, conditioned by the chaos of the 1920s, were also violent and often opportunistic in their behaviour, quick to use force to enforce their aims on society and settle disputes with others in their ranks. Violence, disregard for authority and group tensions made the early CCP in Rushan and Haiyang a fragile and unstable network, frequently torn apart by deadly internal conflicts, whose members often participated according to their own personal interests and group agendas, and were prone to flight or betrayal when faced with risk. The early party, due to these factors, never expanded membership beyond marginalized young men.

3.3 Weak Ties with the National CCP, Growing Government Persecution

The instability of the local party was also shaped by its sporadic ties with higher CCP levels. The provincial party committee, the main link between local CCP organizations in Shandong and the party centre, was an organization that was repeatedly destroyed during the late 1920s and early 1930s. It suffered ten major disruptions from 1928 to 1933 due to defection and arrest, and completely collapsed by 1934, leaving the province without a central coordinating body for the next three years. (see Appendix 1.)³ Destruction of the provincial party was in many ways caused by the policies of the Comintern-directed CCP centre, which repeatedly pushed Shandong organizations to launch armed uprisings and large labour protests, and chastised them for the lack of action in these areas. Frequent attempts to engineer urban protests and rural uprisings brought organizers to rural areas like Haiyang and Rushan, and to a degree stimulated the expansion of the CCP in the two counties. However, these actions led to repression by militarist authorities in Shandong, and made the provincial party committee, which was located in places of urban protest like Qingdao and Jinan, particularly vulnerable to arrest. Frequent interruptions of the

³ An Zuozhang et al., *Shandong tongshi: Xiandaijuan* (Collective History of Shandong: Modern History Volume) (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1994), 482-487; Zhonggong Shandong shengwei dangshi yanjiushi (hereafter cited as ZSSDY), *Zhonggong Jiaodong difangshi* (CCP Local History in Jiaodong) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2005), 52-72, 78-82.

Shandong party made organizations in Rushan and Haiyang function largely as autonomous entities prior to 1937, only vaguely aware of larger policies and ideology.

Sporadic attempts by higher party levels to intervene in the affairs of the counties only added tensions to already unstable ties between local members. Higher party leaders were often unaware of the localized and unstable nature of CCP activists and their groupings, and made decisions on leadership and disputes that exacerbated tension between members. The Haiyang/Rushan CCP, by 1933, was facing an even greater problem. The local party was a product of social breakdown and disorder. It was also given cover in its activities after 1929 by Liu Zhennian's co-opting of revolutionary young men in Haiyang and its surrounding areas, many of whom joined the party. This situation, however, was changing by 1933, with the rise of Han Fujū (韩复榘). Shandong, following the 1928-1929 unrest, was divided between three factions, Feng Yuxiang's northwest army in the west, Manchurian militarist Zhang Xueliang in Qingdao, its most prosperous city, and Liu Zhennian in Jiaodong. Han, a subordinate of Feng Yuxiang, seized the western part of the province following the disintegration of the northwest army during Feng's ill-fated 1930 rebellion against Chiang Kai-shek. Taking advantage of developments elsewhere in China, he seized the whole of Shandong in 1932. Han used the weakening of Zhang Xueliang's forces after the Japanese takeover of Manchuria to force him into an agreement to jointly rule Qingdao, and in a quick military campaign in September and October of that year battered Liu Zhennian's forces and pushed him out of Jiaodong.⁴

Han's rule marked a dramatic change for Shandong. Unlike Liu Zhennian and Zhang Zongchang, Han was a formidable ruler who combined cunning and ruthlessness to achieve his aims with administrative savvy. He was credited with eradicating banditry, initiating a program to reduce the number of taxes and reassess local tax burdens, and engaging in a number of experimental programs to improve local security and governance.⁵ Han's administration was popular and he was even celebrated for his crude

⁴ Lu et al., *Minguo Shandongshi*, 380-388 (see chap. 2, n. 25).

⁵ Chen Zhen, "Han Fujū zhulu qinian zhi shuzheng" (Han Fujū's Seven Year Popular Rule), *Shandong wenxian* 14, no. 1 (1988-1989): 70-74; Prasenjit Duara, "State Involution: A Study of Local Finances in Rural North China, 1911-1935," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29, no. 1 (1989): 153.

humour. Rule by Han ushered in a greater degree of civility and order to Jiaodong, in many ways contradicting the violent and rebellious ways of the CCP and further discrediting the party. Han was also a leader bent on stopping all opposition, who constantly asserted himself in local matters and showed no mercy towards his enemies, something that would not bode well for CCP activists.

3.4 Beginnings of the CCP: Western Haiyang and the Background to the Party's Spread

The western Haiyang CCP began with Song Haiting. Song, during his short period in Laiyang during the 1920s, introduced several lineage members from his village and surrounding areas to the CCP. He also took up work at an advanced primary school in Wandì (万第), a town not far from his village. Wandì was one of the major market towns in eastern Laiyang and western Haiyang. Its school, a higher level modern educational institution, served many communities in the two counties, giving Song the opportunity to connect with the network of teachers in the area, and to recruit among them, their students and their family and kinsmen. Song brought a total of 20 people into the CCP prior to his flight in 1927, most of whom were teachers. Like Song, many of these men had only a brief flirtation with the party, and lost touch with it after he fled. Some were also GMD members in the county, who abandoned their CCP affiliations after the two parties split. However, several members, led by Song Haiqiu (宋海秋) a teacher in the Wandì school and a member of Song Haiting's lineage, remained interested in the party and actively carried on his work. The group maintained connections with Song Haiting's contact in the CCP provincial committee in Jinan after he departed, sending letters to the organization. Song Haiqiu also went to meet the committee in Jinan several times, bringing home various party propaganda materials.⁶

⁶ ZLSDY, *Zhonggong Laixi*, 17-19; Cao, 54.

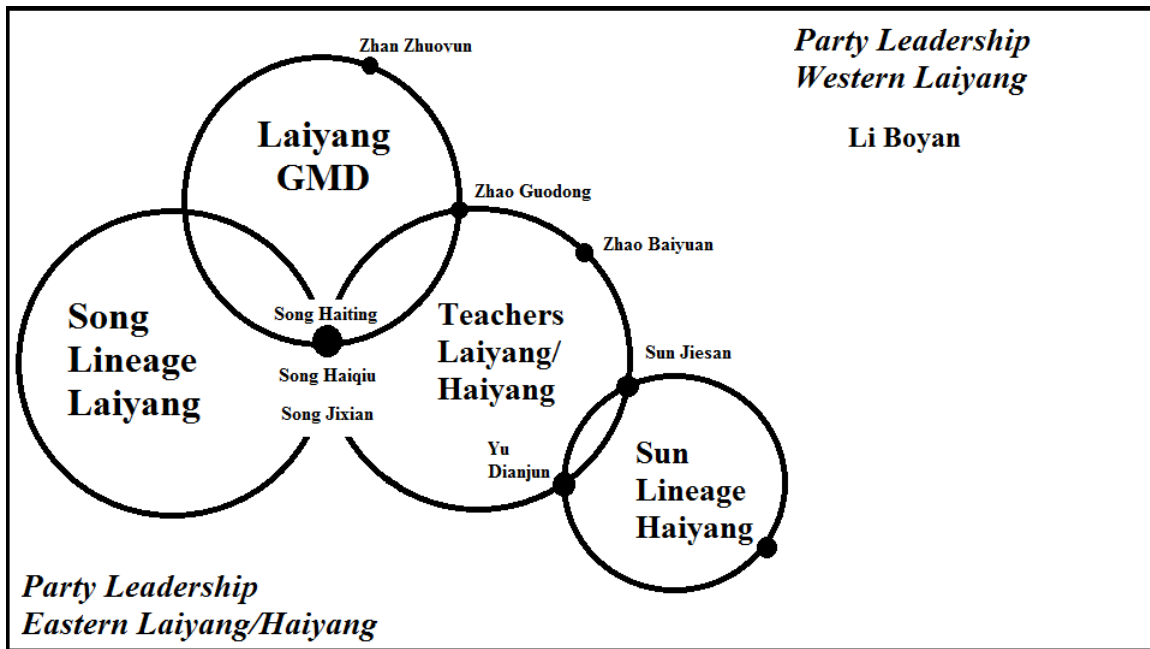


Figure 6 Early CCP Leadership (1928)

The group also expanded its activities beyond the network of teachers, students and their personal circles in Laiyang and western Haiyang. Taking advantage of the winter season, when the local populace was idle and flocked to Wandì for leisure activities, Song Haiqiu joined and later took over leadership of a local opera troupe in late 1927. He had the troupe perform plays and music with political themes in the market town, attracting a number of young men affected by the turmoil in Jiaodong. Song Haiqiu later transformed the troupe into a secret peasant association, which claimed some 150 members in 30 villages by the spring of 1928.⁷

3.5 Quarrels Between Young Men and the Implosion of the East Laiyang Organization

Members of Song Haiqiu's group blended these activities with violence against local elites and the wealthy. They began in the fall of 1927 with attacks in Song Haiqiu's village, burning the crops of six wealthy individuals at night in one case, and beating a local elite in another.⁸ However, these incidents, along with a conflict with another group

⁷ Cao, 54.

⁸ Ibid., 55.

of CCP members, doomed the eastern Laiyang party. In January 1928 the eastern Laiyang group made contact with a CCP organization in the western part of the county headed by Li Boyan (李伯颜). Born in 1905, Li became a CCP member while studying at a university in Shanghai in 1926. He came back to western Laiyang, his native place, with orders from the Shandong Provincial Committee to carry out the directive of the CCP's August 7th emergency conference, to organize armed uprisings across China and seize political power in any place possible. Li returned home in late 1927. He formed a small party organization near his village, and used his authority to integrate organizations in the east and west of the county into one party committee with himself as the head. He also met Song Haiqiu.⁹ Following the directive of the August 7th conference Li spent most of early 1928 trying to foment an armed uprising in Laiyang. Sensing the breakdown of order in Jiaodong in late May of 1928 he devised a daring plan. Working with two bandits in the area, Li planned an assault on the Laiyang's county town.¹⁰

This plan, however, went wrong immediately. On May 20th, 1928, Li arrived in eastern Laiyang to brief members of Song Haiqiu's group on plans for the attack on the county town. A tense debate soon erupted. Official party histories and memoirs of surviving leaders usually attributed this to the actions of a small group of eastern Laiyang members who were said to have opposed Li's plan out of cowardice. However, an unpublished recollection in the Haiyang archives, written by a party member who claimed to have heard from participants at the meeting, notes that Li was in dispute with many key eastern Laiyang members, including Song Haiqiu.¹¹ Leadership rivalries might have played a role in the disputes, since Li, a relative newcomer from the other side of the county, had suddenly taken over command of the eastern Laiyang party. Li also had an educational difference with the eastern party leaders. He was the only party member to

⁹ "Sun Kaishan 1960 nian guanyu Li Shuxin, Sun Yaochen he jianli qianbao Nushancun dangzhibu de huiyi" (Sun Kaishan's Recollections in 1960 on Li Shuxin (Li Boyan), Sun Yaochen and the Establishment of the Party Branch in Nushancun), in *Laixi dangshi ziliao* (Party History Materials on Laixi), Volume 2, ed. Zhonggong Laixi xianwei dangshi bangongshi (1988), 10; Sun Xiebang and Sun Xiefang, "Tan Sun Yaochen" (Discussing Sun Yaochen), in *Laixi dangshi*, Volume 2, 12.

¹⁰ ZLSDY, 29-30.

¹¹ Liu Zhongyi, "LaiHai bianqu dangde fazhan zhengshi" (Correct History of CCP Development in the Laiyang/Haiyang Border Area), Haiyang Municipal Archives (hereafter cited as HMA), 1-1-14.

have gone to university, and this could have made him unpopular or an object of jealousy. The meeting lasted into the early morning of the next day without yielding a consensus. In a sudden turn of events, Li went missing on the 21st.¹² His body was never found, but suspicions began to circulate that Zhao Baiyuan (赵百原), an eastern Laiyang member who was sheltering Li in his home, had murdered him.

Zhao had been a vocal critic of the plan to take the Laiyang county town, but western Laiyang members soon came to believe that Song Haiqiu and most of other key eastern leaders in the county were also responsible for Li's disappearance.¹³ Song was threatened with death by these men, and fled the county.¹⁴ This, along with Li's disappearance, had a sudden and detrimental impact on the CCP in Laiyang. Li Boyan, since late 1928 had been the county's main link with the higher party organization. Party members lost the only other person who had communications with levels above when Song fled. Adding to the CCP's troubles, Li Boyan's bandit allies, claiming to be communists, attacked the county town two weeks later, briefly seizing it before being driven out.¹⁵ This made local authorities hunt for communists afterwards, something that led many other leaders in Laiyang to flee. With all the main leaders of the movement gone, the Laiyang party effectively collapsed.

3.6 The CCP's Spread into Western Haiyang

The eastern Laiyang party, despite its dismal demise, would bring the CCP to western Haiyang. Song Haiting, before he fled Laiyang in 1927, had recruited Sun Jiesan (孙杰三), a teacher in western Haiyang as a CCP member. Sun briefly taught in the primary school in Wandu, where he met Song Haiting and was introduced into the CCP. He had a minor role in the activities of Song Haiqiu, Song Haiting's kinsman, and took part at the

¹² Song Yuncheng, "Tan Li Boyun" (Discussing Li Boyun), in *Laixi dangshi*, Volume 2, 19-21.

¹³ Song Xinuo, "Tan Li Boyan zuzhi Laiyang dang dui douzheng qingkuang" (Discussing the Situation of Li Boyan's Organization of the Laiyang Party in Struggle Against the Enemy), in *Laixi dangshi*, Volume 2, 18.

¹⁴ Liu, "LaiHai bianqu."

¹⁵ Ibid.

meeting at which Li Boyan disappeared.¹⁶ Expansion of the CCP into western Haiyang, ironically, was also helped by the collapse of the Laiyang party. Most party leaders from eastern Laiyang escaped to Manchuria, but one of them, Yu Dianjun (于典君), briefly hid in Haiyang. Yu came to Xiaze (夏泽), Sun Jiesan's village. A charismatic individual, Yu Dianjun worked with Sun to recruit locals from the village and its surrounding areas, and created a party cell of 16 people, who were mostly young men in the summer of 1928.¹⁷ One of these was Sun Mingrui (孙明瑞), a kinsmen of Sun Jiesan. Sun Mingrui was the son of a failed scholar. He was said by later CCP biographies to be a knowledgeable but rebellious man, versed in Chinese classics, May 4th literature and foreign poetry; he also had great martial arts training and despised authority.¹⁸ He became a major figure the early western Haiyang CCP.

3.7 Expansion of Followers and Radicalization of Party Activists During the Great Turmoil of 1928-1929

These efforts were unofficial, since neither Yu Dianjun nor Sun Jiesan had any connections with higher party levels at the time. Yu, like Song Haiting earlier, had an ambivalent relationship with the CCP. He, along with many other leaders who fled, did not re-establish contact with the party, and it is not known what happened to them after 1928. After a short stay in Xiaze Yu departed for Manchuria, and the party cell he set up in the village quickly fell apart afterwards.¹⁹ However, Yu Dianjun and Sun Jiesan's efforts radicalized a number men in western Haiyang, whose penchant for violent, revolutionary action were reignited by the activities of GMD members in eastern Haiyang in late 1928. News of the activities of Yu Xingfu's group in the summer and fall of that year acted as a call to action by these men. Sun Jiesan and Sun Mingrui reorganized their party cell at the end of 1928. They were joined by a similar movement set up by youths

¹⁶ ZLSDY, 18; Song Yuncheng, "Tan Li Boyun," 20.

¹⁷ HDFB, *Zhonggong Haiyang*, 19-20.

¹⁸ Yantaishi minzhengju, *Yongdui qianqu: Jiaodong liegan shijixuan* (Forever Immortalized: Collection of Deeds of Jiaodong Cadre Martyrs), Volume 2 (Neibu, 1991), 225-226.

¹⁹ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai dangde gongzuo jianjie" (Summary of Six Years of Party Work), 1 July 1944, HMA, 1-1-14.

from nearby villages, led by Wang Zhifeng (王之凤) (1911-1936). From Shimatantou (石马滩头), a village close to Xiaze, Wang came from a poor but educated family, and was introduced to the GMD in Jinan while studying at an advanced primary school in the city. Wang received training on establishing peasant associations; working with several local friends, he began to carry out radical activities in Haiyang in late 1928.²⁰

Compared to eastern Haiyang, activities of radical young men in the western part of the county were considerably smaller in scale. They were also quasi-legal. Government authorities in Jiaodong, following Liu Zhennian's takeover of the Peninsula in the fall of 1928, were in theory loyal to the GMD. Due to their pre-occupation with the turmoil in Jiaodong, they did not respond to the actions of the western group. Sun Jiesan, Sun Mingrui and other activists found cover by working with Wang Zhifeng, and were strengthened in their legitimacy by a brief stay by Yu Xingfu in their area in the spring of 1929, who gave many of the western Haiyang radicals GMD membership.²¹ They began their radical activities in late 1928 with an attack on the principal of Xiaze's primary school, where Sun Jiesan worked. The principal, an elderly local elite, was subjected to repeated criticism from teachers and class boycotts; he was intimidated into resigning in March 1929. Sun Jiesan became principal of the school, with Sun Mingrui as its manager. Xiaze's school became a centre for organizing radical actions.²² Sun Jiesan, Sun Mingrui and Wang Zhifeng followed their takeover of the school by holding rallies against superstition in the spring and summer. They gathered hundreds of students and young men from Xiaze and its surrounding villages, gave speeches denouncing religious worship, gambling, opium smoking, incense burning, kowtowing and even wailing during funerals, and went around enforcing this agenda. In Xiaze the radicals smashed the local temple, and dragged out and publicly humiliated two other members of the local elite in the village.²³

Activities in 1929 gave the group a fearsome reputation over the next few years. Sun Mingrui became a local power figure, and took the position of the head of the township encompassing Xiaze and several surrounding villages in 1932. Continuing in

²⁰ HDFB, 339.

²¹ Yu Zhou, "Zai shibai," 55 (see chap. 2, n. 45).

²² HDSBW, 712.

²³ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

his radical agendas, Sun sought to improve modern education in Xiaze and use it to combat traditional beliefs. He used this authority as township head to demand Xiaze residents pay for the construction of a new building for the village school, and began a more covert effort to expand support for his CCP group, by organizing local hired labourers to demand higher wages from their employers.²⁴

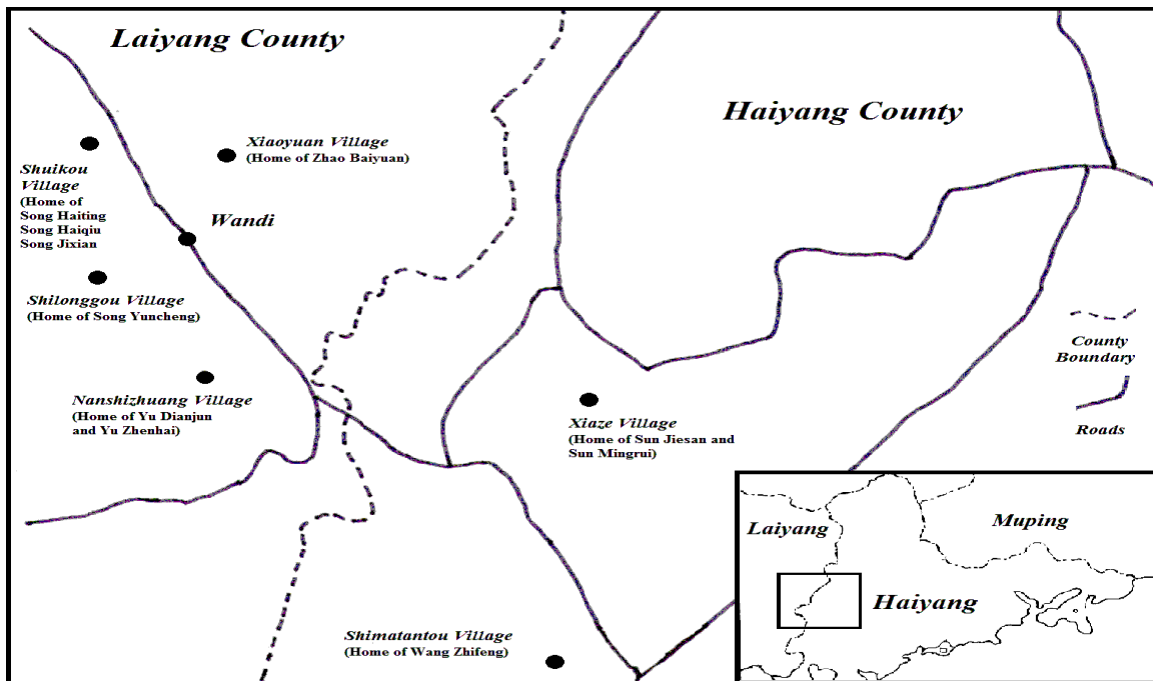


Figure 7 Area of Initial Party Development in Western Haiyang

Source: Created based on a map from: Haiyangshi dangshi fangzhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Haiyang difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Haiyang) (Haiyang: Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2007).

These actions, however, doomed the group. In July 1933 Sun Mingrui and several of his supporters were arrested by county authorities after Xiaze residents complained about their actions. Reasons for this were summed up in a document from the Haiyang party committee on local CCP history, written in 1944. It notes that Sun Mingrui had alienated the community through the tax levy he imposed to fund the new school building, which few people in Xiaze could afford to send their children to. Sun Jiesan, Sun Mingrui

²⁴ Yantaishi minzhengju, *Yongdui qiangu*, Volume 2, 227-228.

and their supporters, the document noted, had also abused their power. In one case, they arbitrarily cut down the tree of a man who lived near the new school site, and imprisoned him in the school after he complained. This led the man to commit suicide. Locals in Xiaze were also incensed by the anti-superstition campaign waged by the two Suns, and angered by the methods they used to organize labourers against their employers, which included burning the crops of employers who did not give into wage demands, and destroying their farm tools. This would have offended many labourers themselves, whose wages were dependent on the crop sales of their employers; they used the tools in their work.²⁵

Sun Mingrui was taken to a prison for suspected Communists in Jinan. Sun Jiesan escaped. He lived as a fugitive for two years in various parts of Jiaodong, but was caught and joined Sun Mingrui in prison in 1936. The two were not released until the outbreak of the war with Japan in 1937. Sun Mingrui would remain a Communist, but Sun Jiesan gave up on the party after being released. He went to find work in other places, and never returned to Haiyang. The outcomes of Sun Jiesan and Sun Mingrui's stint in radical politics were mixed. The CCP document noted that Xiaze inhabitants remembered them as "bandits", and accused the two and their supporters of leaving a bad reputation for the party in the village. To what extent they can be considered party members is also open to question, since Sun Jiesan and Sun Mingrui had operated for much of the 1928-1933 period without any contact with any party level. However, Sun Mingrui and Sun Jiesan, like Song Haiting, Yu Dianjun and Yu Zhenhai before them, had radicalized a group of young men who would be activated with the arrival new party organizers.²⁶

3.8 Beginnings of the CCP: Eastern Haiyang/Rushan

In the winter of 1930 Yu Xingfu, working as a militia head in eastern Haiyang, met someone he thought was a mercenary hired by the local government to train the force. The man, Zheng Tianjiu (郑天九), turned out to be a CCP underground worker. From southeastern Shandong, Zheng was a veteran of the Northern Expedition. Yu, in his life story, notes that Zheng introduced him to the CCP. Perhaps Zheng's military background

²⁵ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

²⁶ Ibid.

and revolutionary credentials excited the rebellious and adventurous side of Yu, who was now settled into an increasingly dull and routine job of maintaining local peace. He was made a party member by Zheng in early 1931. Zheng left soon after, but maintained contact with Yu through mail. Yu decided to follow Zheng in late 1931. He quit both the GMD and his post as militia head in eastern Haiyang, and went off to find his mentor, who was serving as a teacher in a middle school in Beiping. Under Zheng's tutelage, Yu spent a long time studying Marxism-Leninism and began to familiarize himself with the CCP. He would later return to his native county.²⁷

3.9 Teaching Ties: Connections and the Linking of Local and Provincial Parties: 1931-1932

The CCP presence in Haiyang, up to late 1931, had been a number of rebellious young men vaguely inspired by the party and having essentially no contact with its organizations and agendas. Two events around the end of that year changed this situation and brought local party activists into interaction with higher CCP levels. They were made possible by ties between teachers and participants of the 1928-1929 uprising in Haiyang. One of these occurred at a rural school in Qingdao. Song Jixian (宋继先), a young man from eastern Laiyang who had recently found work at the school, discovered that its principal, Zhang Jingyuan (张静源), was a CCP underground worker. Song was from the same village and lineage as Song Haiting, and had been one of the men given CCP membership by Song Haiting prior to his flight. He engaged in communist activities with Song Haiqiu and Song Yuncheng in 1928, but lost contact with the party after Li Boyan's disappearance that year. Song soon developed a friendship with Zhang.²⁸

²⁷ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 346-347 (see chap. 2, n. 2).

²⁸ Li Zhonglin, "Guanyu Laiyang dangde jianli yu fazhan qingkuang de huiyi" (Recollections on the Creation and Development of the Laiyang Party), in *Laixi dangshi*, Volume 2, 23.

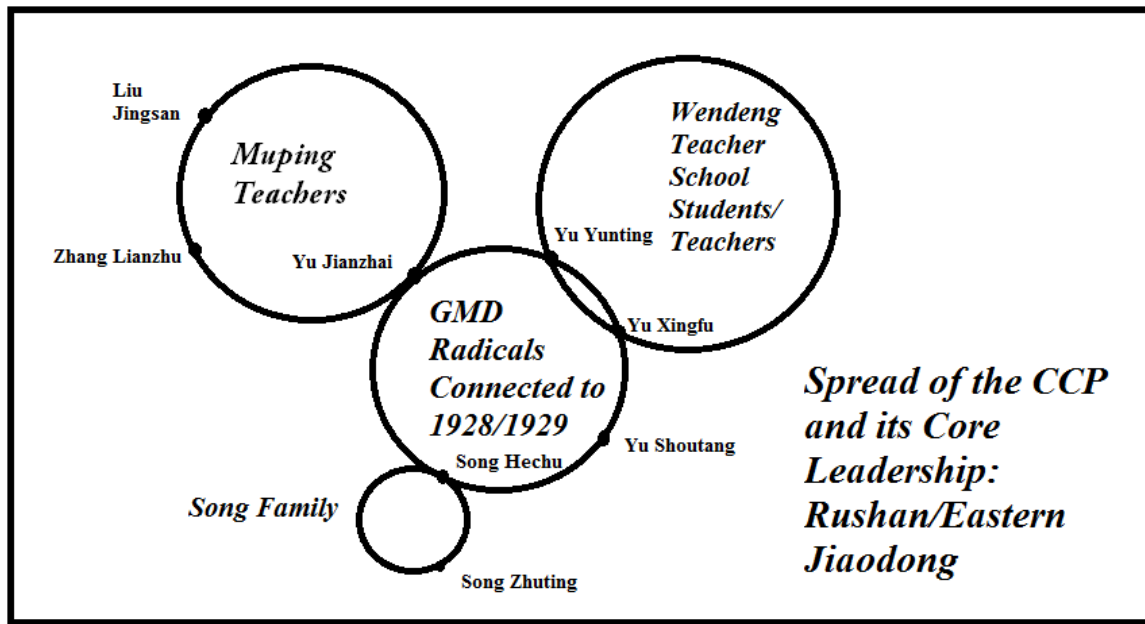


Figure 8 Spread of the CCP and its Core Leadership in Rushan and Eastern Jiaodong

The other event occurred in eastern Haiyang. Song Zhuting (宋竹庭), a young man from the area, met Yu Yunting (于云亭), the new principal of the Shandong Village Teacher's School Number Seven in Wendeng (文登), an institution in a county near Haiyang that had been created following the Second National Conference of Education. Both men were connected to the 1928 uprising in eastern Haiyang. Yu, a GMD leftist, had helped to give birth to the upheaval by inducting his relative Yu Shoutang into the GMD. Becoming a CCP underground worker later on, Yu was sent by the provincial party to build up organizations in eastern Jiaodong. Song was the younger brother of Song Hechu (宋合初), a participant in the uprising. Radicalized by his brother, Song became involved in patriotic demonstrations while studying at a middle school in Baoding, Hebei following the Japanese takeover of Manchuria in 1931.²⁹ He tried to continue these activities after returning home from his studies at the end of that year, organizing several anti-Japanese protests in market towns near his village with friends.

²⁹ Song Zhuting, "Hanxin ruku," 182-184 (see chap. 2, n. 44).

This caught the attention of Yu Yunting, who paid a visit to Song and soon made him a CCP member.³⁰

3.10 Linking of Radicals: Eastern Haiyang and Southern Muping

Yu tasked Song with recruiting members in eastern Haiyang and southern Muping. Song, through ties provided by Yu and his brother, began to rally supporters from two often interconnected channels, networks of teachers in the area and local GMD members. Among these were Yu Shoutang, Haiyang's GMD propaganda head, and Yu Jianzhai (于俭斋), an early Muping GMD member who had taken part in the 1928 revolt. None of the men officially joined the CCP, but used their influence in the GMD to shield members. Yu Jianzhai, a well known teacher in Muping, also found employment for party operatives, giving them money and cover to carry out their activities. Song became the main contact person between party organizers in the Rushan area in mid-1932. Through information provided by Yu Yunting he established regular correspondence by mail with the CCP Shandong Provincial Committee. Song's home, which was located near main roads in eastern Haiyang and Muping, became a resting place and safe house for party operatives in the area.³¹ With support from provincial party leaders he established a party committee in eastern Haiyang and southern Muping in August 1932 and served as its organizational department head.³²

³⁰ Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, "Hailai diqu dangde zaoqi huodong," (Early Party Activities in the Haiyang/Laiyang Area) in *Jiaodong fengyunlu*, 9.

³¹ Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, "Hailai diqu," 9-11; Song Zhuting, "Hanxin ruku," 184.

³² Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 11.

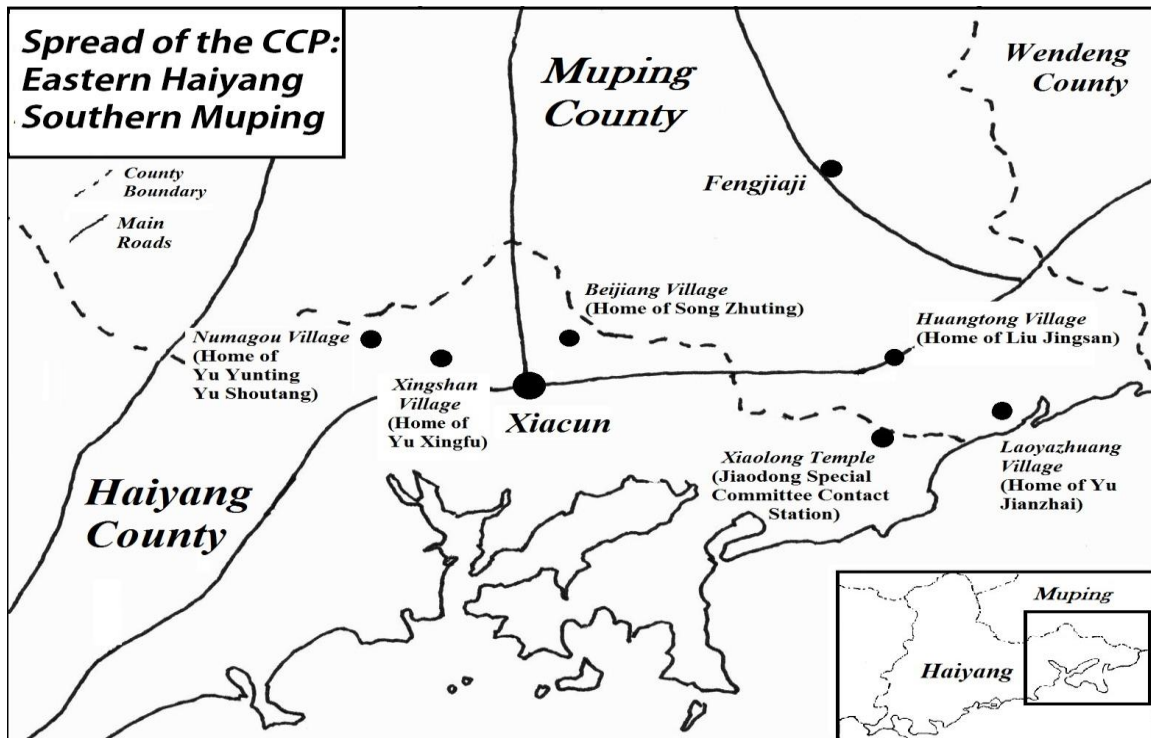


Figure 9 Spread of the CCP in the Rushan area

Source: Created based on maps and descriptions of pre-1949 roads in the counties from: Rushanshi dangshizhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Rushan difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Rushan) (Xianggang: Tianma tushu chubanshe, 2005); Yu Qingpan and Song Xianzhang, *Muping xianzhi* (Muping Gazetteer) (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1936, 1968), 705-707; Shandongsheng Haiyang xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Haiyang xianzhi* (Haiyang Gazetteer) (Haiyang: Shandong sheng xinwen chubanshan guanliju, 1988), 347-348.

3.11 Linking of Radicals: Western Haiyang

At the same time a number of events in Qingdao would lead to the expansion and rebirth of party organizations in eastern Laiyang and western Haiyang. In the spring of 1932 Zhang Jingyuan fled to Laiyang. Zhang had been involved in organizing a worker strike at a Japanese-owned factory in the city. The strike, ordered by the Shandong party in keeping with the party centre's line of organizing CCP-led labour movements and unrest across China to support rural soviets in the southern part of the country, dangerously exposed party organizations in Qingdao, leading to the arrests of many of its leaders

during May and June of 1932.³³ Zhang, his cover blown and wanted by the Qingdao police, fled to Laiyang at the invitation of Song Jixian.³⁴

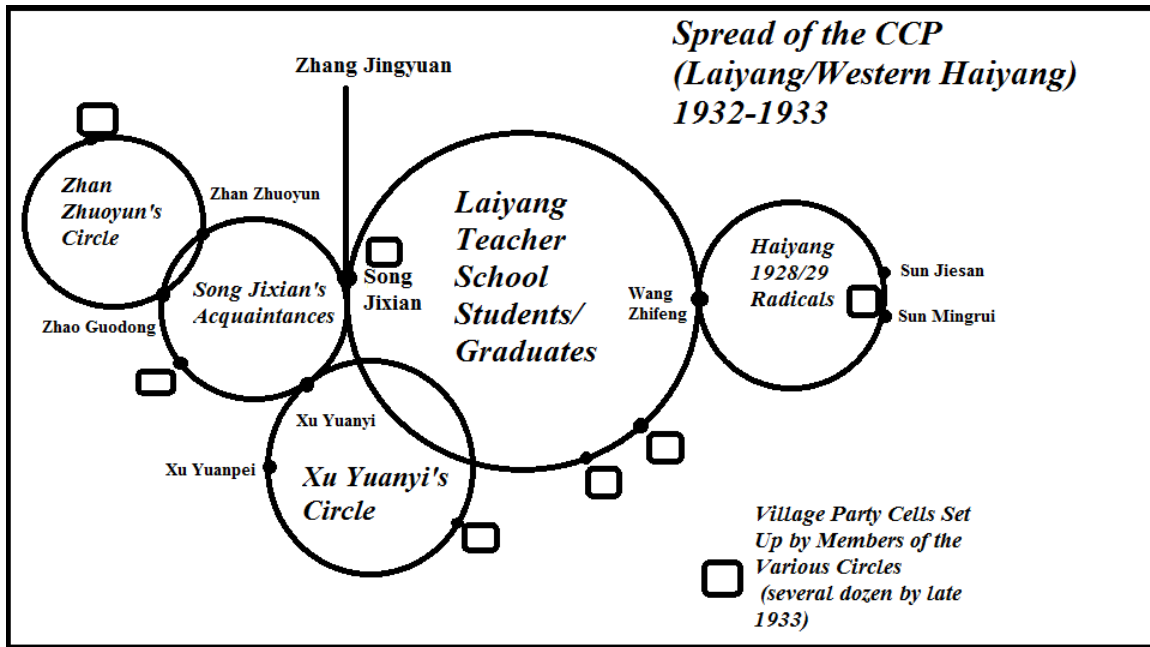


Figure 10 Key leaders in Laiyang and Western Haiyang and Their Relationship Circles

Song introduced him to Zhao Guodong (赵国栋), a member of Laiyang's GMD party committee. Zhao, a former teacher from the eastern part of Laiyang, was a man of mixed political leanings. A friend of Song Haiting's, he had worked with early CCP members to build peasant associations in the county in 1926 and 1927, and was given CCP membership. Zhao was caught in a dilemma after the CCP/GMD split. He at first considered siding with the CCP, but withdrew his support for Song Haiting after seeing most of the county's GMD reject Communists.³⁵ However, Zhao still held pro-CCP sympathies, and suspecting that Zhang was a Communist, quickly befriended him. Support from Zhao shielded Zhang and his activities from the suspicion of local

³³ ZSSDY, *Zhonggong Jiaodong*, 78-80.

³⁴ HDFB, 24.

³⁵ Sun Wenchen and Liu Yonglu, "Bosa geming huozhong de ren - Song Haiting" (Man Spreading the Flames of Revolution - Song Haiting), in *Bandao shuguang* (Dawn in the Peninsula), ed. Zhonggong Yantai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhui (Jinan: Shandong xinwen chubanj, 1989), 327.

government authorities, and Zhao also introduced Zhang to many teachers in the Laiyang area, some of whom were later recruited by Zhang to the CCP.³⁶

Zhang, with support from Song Jixian, also came into contact with another circle, students and graduates of the Shandong Village Teachers' School Number Two in the Laiyang county town. Song was a recent graduate of the school, and one of its students would bring Zhang to Haiyang. Attending School Number Two was Wang Zhifeng, one of the leaders of the 1928/1929 unrest in the western party of the county. Wang was soon inducted into the CCP by Zhang, and through a friend managed to find him a job in the advanced primary school in Shimatantou, his home village.³⁷ He also introduced Zhang to Sun Jiesan and Sun Mingrui in nearby Xiaze, re-establishing the link between radicals who had been formed by turmoil four years earlier.³⁸

3.12 Troubled Expansion: 1932-1933

Mid-1932 to late 1933 marked the highpoint of CCP activities in Haiyang and Rushan prior to 1937, but also the start of their decline. Shandong's provincial party committee, in July of 1932, had directed party organizers across the province to use anti-Japanese agitation to infiltrate and increase party membership among students, workers and soldiers in both rural and urban areas, and to organize rural guerrilla forces and uprisings to support Red Army units in the south.³⁹ Organizers on both sides of Haiyang attempted to fulfill the directive. In the east, Yu Jianzhai, following directions from the provincial party, took up the job of inspector of the education department in Muping's government, and used the position to recruit teachers and students in the county. In eastern Haiyang, Yu Shoutang used his position as head of the county GMD propaganda department to give Song Zhuting work in Fengcheng, Haiyang's county seat. Song was hired as a GMD propaganda worker, and worked secretly to produce and distribute CCP party materials

³⁶ Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 271 (see chap. 2, n. 22).

³⁷ Ibid., 271.

³⁸ Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 15.

³⁹ Zhonggong Shandong shengwei, "Guanyu bayi fandi zhanzhengri de jueyi" (Decision Regarding the August First Anti-Imperialist War Day), in *SGLWH*, Volume 6, 346-347.

using the county's GMD party press. He also recruited urban students and artisans in the city.⁴⁰

Compared to eastern Haiyang/Rushan, activists in western Haiyang were more rural-based and less reliant on GMD connections. Though some members, such as Wang Zhifeng had GMD membership, western organizers lacked connections with senior local GMD leaders. Zhang Jingyuan had a reluctant relationship with Zhao Guodong, his main GMD contact in Laiyang and Haiyang. Though reliant to a degree on Zhao, Zhang was suspicious of him on account of Zhao's senior position in the GMD and previous record with the CCP. He tried to keep Zhao in the dark about his activities and true identity, and relied mainly on students and graduates from Shandong Village Teachers' School Number Two. These young men recruited largely through friendship, family and lineage ties, and spread the party to a number of villages across Laiyang and western Haiyang. Among those they attracted to the CCP were a number of young men who worked as government functionaries or militiamen, something eastern members were unable to do at the time. The Laiyang/Western Haiyang group claimed among its members and sympathizers four ward government assistants, some of whom later became ward heads, and three ward militia members by September of 1932.⁴¹

A chance encounter in the summer of 1932 would establish contact between the two groups. Song Zhuting, on a trip to western Haiyang for the GMD propaganda department, met Liu Songshan, an erstwhile friend who was also a GMD member. Liu, a student at the Shandong Village Teachers' School Number Two, had taken part in the 1928-1929 unrest in western Haiyang, and was introduced into the CCP by Zhang Jingyuan. The two soon discovered each other's identities, and informed their groups.⁴² Organizers in eastern and western Haiyang communicated regularly after that, but worked separately. They were both receiving directions from the provincial committee through different contacts, and carried on independently from each other.

⁴⁰ Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 11-12.

⁴¹ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai"; Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 17; Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao", 272.

⁴² Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 14-15.

3.13 Failed Unrest in Eastern Haiyang: Late 1932

CCP organizers in Laiyang/western Haiyang and Rushan, up to the fall of 1932, had focused on finding recruits. This, along with their degree of cooperation, began to change in late September of 1932, when Han Fujun's campaign to seize Jiaodong reached Laiyang. Han's forces caused a panic among Laiyang's inhabitants, sending large numbers fleeing for fear of being caught up in the fighting. Liu Zhennian's remnant forces hunkered down in the county town, and began to rob and extort grain and livestock from areas of Laiyang they still controlled to prepare for a long siege. Han and Liu's war reached Haiyang on September 26th, when several hundred of Liu's troops from Laiyang went rogue and headed east. They burnt down a village in western Haiyang, and for a while terrorized parts of the county.⁴³

Party members from both sides of Haiyang received an emergency order from the provincial committee, calling on organizations all over Jiaodong to take advantage of the fighting between Han and Liu to step up propaganda work and begin guerrilla war.⁴⁴ In western Haiyang and Laiyang, members of Zhang's group began the first of a number of attacks, raiding local militias and wealthy households to obtain weapons and cash to fund the creation of a guerrilla force. Activists in eastern Haiyang planned something even bigger. Using the presses of the county's GMD propaganda department, they produced and distributed large numbers of materials denouncing Liu, Han and Chiang Kai-shek. On the night of November 6th they carried out an ambitious effort to coincide with the 15th anniversary of the Russian Revolution the next day. With a number of teachers and students in Fengcheng, party activists filled the city's streets with posters praising the CCP, and even managed to sneak large amounts of communist materials into the magistrate's yamen.⁴⁵

Organizers had gambled on Liu and Han's war to produce widespread disorder and political uncertainty. They sought to use this to create cover for their activities.

⁴³ Wang Pixu and Liang Bingkun, 1635-1636.

⁴⁴ Zhonggong Shandong shengwei, "Jinji tongzhi - fandui Han-Liu junfa hunzhan yu tusha minzhong" (Emergency Order: Oppose Han and Liu's Warlord In-Fighting and Slaughter of the People), in *SGLWH*, Volume 6, 390-392.

⁴⁵ Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 12.

However, local party leaders grossly miscalculated. In late October Han and Liu, through mediation by the national government in Nanjing, came to an agreement for the peaceful handover of power in Jiaodong; this called for Liu's troops to leave the Peninsula unmolested and for Han's forces to be pulled back to certain areas.⁴⁶ This agreement prevented the further spread of fighting to Haiyang, and left its government intact. The commotion caused by Song led the county government to launch a crackdown on Communists. Song's activities in the Haiyang GMD had also caused unease amongst some GMD leaders who were not sympathetic to the CCP. These men gave Song's name to county authorities, forcing him to flee.⁴⁷ Song would not return to Haiyang until 1937, and many of the people he recruited in eastern part of the county were arrested in the government crackdown, collapsing the party activities in the area. Though several members, led by Yu Jianzhai, continued to carry out party activities in Muping, operations in Rushan reached a low ebb.

3.14 Heyday and Collapse: Western Haiyang and Laiyang, 1933

The situation in Laiyang and western Haiyang, however, was different. Liu and Han's troops did not depart until early December of 1932. Though the two sides did not engage in serious fighting, damage caused by their pillaging and the dislocation to local society was great. This created a great deal of chaos, and militia and government forces in eastern Laiyang and western Haiyang were also occupied in much of late 1932 and early 1933 with rooting out Liu's rogue soldiers.⁴⁸ These developments gave cover to activists, who had sympathizers in local militias. CCP activists in Laiyang and western Haiyang were also helped by another favourable development. Han Fujun, following his conquest of Jiaodong, did not immediately replace government leaders in the Peninsula with his own supporters. He, instead, took a wait-and-see approach on their loyalty. Han's initial treatment of government officials in Jiaodong left the political connections the CCP in Laiyang had built intact.

⁴⁶ Lu Weijun et al., 387-388.

⁴⁷ Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 12-14.

⁴⁸ Wang Pixu and Liang Bingkun, 1636.

Largely unopposed, organizations in Laiyang and western Haiyang grew to become the largest in Jiaodong by mid 1933. They established, according to later recollections and local party histories, village branches in 29 villages in western Haiyang, expanded membership to all parts of Laiyang, and claimed 1,000 members by June of that year.⁴⁹ Activists in Laiyang and western Haiyang became more militant in 1933, launching a growing number of violent attacks on local militias and the wealthy in the two areas.⁵⁰

This success was short lived. By the spring 1934 the group had collapsed, its leader Zhang Jingyuan dead at the hands of a fellow member. Recollections of surviving leaders and party histories often attributed the collapse to fierce repression by Han Fujun and the actions of a few traitors within the group, but the few documents from the time suggests something far more complex. Members of the western Haiyang/Laiyang group were in many ways set on a path of self destruction by their relationships, behaviour and sudden growth of recruits. A report on their activities in 1934, written by Wang Zhifeng, highlighted a number of problems. The document notes that the group operated largely as an organization of young men detached from society. Though a small number of members were militiamen, they lacked the weapons or skills to successfully take on local forces or powerful individuals, and in large part robbed from the moderately wealthy, stealing weapons from them to build a guerrilla force and in some cases even holding people for ransom. Many members had a blurry understanding of class struggle, seeing it as robbing from or destroying the property of wealthy individuals; they at times kept what they stole for themselves. Despite their aim to overthrow the existing order, party members were heavily dependent on it. Attacks were carried out only in areas where they did not have supporters in the militia; they were afraid to bring trouble to sympathizers.⁵¹

These problems were compounded by personal conflicts between the group's leaders. As the Laiyang/western Haiyang party grew tension was brewing between Zhang Jingyuan and two other leaders, Zhan Zhuoyun (战倬云) and Xu Yuanyi (徐元义). Zhan,

⁴⁹ HDFB, 28; Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 274.

⁵⁰ HDFB, 33-35. Haiyang's local party history claims that CCP members in the western part of the county attacked ward militias, attempted to assassinate officials, and even killed some local elites, such as Sun Yuelan, the ousted principal of the Xiaze school.

⁵¹ Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 277-278.

a ward assistant in Laiyang, was one of the original party members recruited by Song Haiting. He was the most senior CCP figure from western Laiyang. Zhan felt he deserved more power in the rapidly growing local party, and was angered by Zhang's reliance on members from eastern Laiyang. Little is known about Xu, but he was said to be a teacher and one of the first members Zhang recruited in Laiyang.⁵² Xu, like Zhan, was also ambitious, and he ran afoul of both Zhang and Zhan by seducing a female student, who happened to be Zhan's niece. Hounded by Zhang, his allies and Zhan, Xu left Laiyang in the fall of 1932. He found work in the nearby county of Qixia, and over the next few months built up an organization of his own with more than 100 members in the southern part of the county and northern Laiyang. Xu and his followers rejoined Zhang's group in the spring of 1933. He found himself a pariah; Zhan had spread many malicious rumours about him during his absence.⁵³

A number of developments in 1932 and 1933 exacerbated these conflicts. In mid November 1932 the western Haiyang/Laiyang group lost contact with the provincial party. Zhang undertook a long trip to find the provincial committee, finally linking up with them in late December. He discovered that the committee had been devastated by the arrest of two key leaders, and had virtually lost track of all local organizations.⁵⁴ Zhang, seeing the situation, proposed a method of improving communication, integrating all party organizations in rural Jiaodong under the control of one body. This was approved by the committee, and Zhang, in early 1933, formed the Jiaodong Special Committee (胶东特委), with himself as its secretary. Zhang chose to locate the committee in Muping, close to the major port of Yantai and in a more central location in the Peninsula. He took over leadership of the remnants of the southern Muping/eastern Haiyang group, and spent much of the winter of 1933 travelling to find other party organizations in Jiaodong.⁵⁵

⁵² Li Zhonglin, "Guanyu Laiyang dangde," 23.

⁵³ Ibid., 272-273.

⁵⁴ "Zhonggong Shandong linwei fuzeren Ren Zuomin gei zhongyang de baogao" (Report by Ren Zuomin, Person Responsible for the Shandong Temporary Provincial Committee to the Party Centre), in *SGLWH*, Volume 6, 425-430.

⁵⁵ Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 272; RDB, 43-44 (see chap. 2, n. 30).

Zhang's long periods of absence opened further rifts in Laiyang. While he was away Zhang had handed over the management of the party in Laiyang/western Haiyang to several eastern Laiyang organizers. This further aroused Zhan, who was feeling left out. Zhan also ran afoul of Zhang during his absence by admitting Zhao Guodong into the CCP. Zhao, long kept in the dark about local CCP activities by Zhang, finally discovered the truth about Zhang's group after much prying in early 1933. He confronted Zhan, who was a friend, claiming to know everything and demanding to be let in. Zhan was pressured into agreeing, but this angered Zhang; on his return in the spring of 1933, he immediately expelled Zhao from the CCP.⁵⁶

Unstable contacts with the provincial party also deepened conflict between Zhang and Xu. Not long after his return to Laiyang Zhang found that he had lost contact again with the provincial party. After another long trip he learned that the Shandong provincial committee in Jinan had been completely destroyed by arrests, and that a temporary one had been set up in Qingdao by Li Junde (李俊德), the city's party secretary.⁵⁷ This shift in the provincial party's centre benefited Xu. His younger brother Xu Yuanpei (徐元沛), a student in the city, was a Communist underground worker, and had become the main relay person between the provincial committee and the lower levels. Xu Yuanpei sent messages from the provincial committee only to his brother, and Xu Yuanyi attempted to use this as leverage to improve his position in the Laiyang party.⁵⁸

All this upheaval began to impact the CCP in Laiyang and western Haiyang in a disastrous way in the summer of 1933. In July of that year Sun Jiesan and Sun Mingrui, who had sought to enforce the CCP's class policy by destroying and looting the property of the wealthy in their village, were informed on by locals. This triggered a number of

⁵⁶ Zou XX, "Guanyu Laiyang zuzhi gaikuang, paibie qingxing deng wenti gei zhongyang de baogao" (Report to the Party Centre Regarding the Organization of the Party in Laiyang, the Situation of its Factions and Other Questions), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 138-139; Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 272-273.

⁵⁷ An Zuozhang et al., *Shandong tongshi*, 487.

⁵⁸ Li Zhonglin, 25; Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 18.

raids by county and ward authorities in western Haiyang, leading to more arrests and forcing many of its leaders, such as Wang Zhifeng to flee to Laiyang.⁵⁹

At the same time, a cycle of leadership rivalries, disagreements and violent reactions, which had brought down the Laiyang CCP in 1928, was repeating itself in the county. Around the same time that the Haiyang members fled Zhang Jingyuan had created a Laiyang Central County Committee (莱阳中心县委) to manage party organizations in southern and central Jiaodong. Xu was excluded from leadership, and in response refused to hand over messages from the provincial committee. He later left Zhang's group altogether, forming a separate Laiyang county committee not under the control of the Jiaodong Special Committee. Zhan, during the spring and summer of 1933, convinced many members from western Laiyang to abandon Zhang. He accused Zhang of being an absentee leader whose long periods away from the county made him out of touch with its reality.⁶⁰

The crisis point came with the arrival of Li Zhongxiang (李仲祥), a Qingdao student sent by Li Junde to resolve the leadership crisis in the late summer. The mediation was bungled from the start. Li, having no prior contact with Zhang, came first to Xu, whom he had known before. He then met Zhan, and contacted Zhang last. Li's order of meeting the three leaders was seen as a snub by Zhang and his supporters, and he was not accepted as a legitimate higher party representative by them until three meetings later.⁶¹ He was instructed by Li Junde not to take sides, but to point out the faults of all the groups, help work out their differences, and gradually integrate the three sides into a unified organization. Li Zhongxiang attempted to do this, but was suddenly recalled to Qingdao by Li Junde. Prior to his departure, Li Zhongxiang made a quick decision, that the Laiyang/Haiyang party should be reunited under Zhang, with Xu as one of his deputies, angering the latter.⁶²

⁵⁹ "Guanyu Laiyang de paibie, zuzhi, jilu ji gongzuo jihua deng wenti de baogao" (Report Regarding the Factions, Organization, Discipline, Work Planning and Other Questions in Laiyang), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 145-146.

⁶⁰ Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 273-274.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 275.

⁶² Li Junde, "Zhonggong Qingdao linwei shuji Li Junde guanyu ganbu zhuangkuang, waixian gongzuo qingxing deng wenti gei zhongyang baogao" (CCP Qingdao Temporary Committee Secretary Li Junde's Report to the Centre Regarding the Situation of Cadres,

A development in Qingdao further stoked animosities in Laiyang/Haiyang. Li Zhongxiang had been called back because Li Junde had lost contact with the CCP party centre in Shanghai. Li Junde, desperate to re-establish links with the centre, hurriedly left in search of it, and placed Li Zhongxiang in charge in Qingdao. Li Zhongxiang was quickly embroiled in a conflict with Xu Yuanpei, Xu Yuanyi's younger brother. Xu Yuanpei had been ordered by Li Junde to temporarily take over his responsibilities until Li Zhongxiang arrived. Believing that Li Junde had put him in charge for the whole trip, Xu Yuanpei refused to relinquish his duties, and even tried to keep information from Li Zhongxiang, leading the latter to write to Li Junde for confirmation of his leadership. Li Junde's sent a reply directly to Li Zhongxiang, supporting him. This letter, however, was intercepted by the younger Xu and forwarded to his brother. Xu Yuanyi, already angered by Li Zhongxiang's siding with Zhang, was enraged by the message.⁶³ Believing that the higher leadership was in league with Zhang, he decided to take revenge.

Xu used the deteriorating situation in western Haiyang to plot Zhang's demise. Zhang had wanted to go to Haiyang to see if there were still party members left following the arrest of key party leaders. Fearful of being caught in the crackdown against Communists in the county, he went to Xu to borrow a gun. Zhang was lured into a remote place by Xu and killed.⁶⁴ Xu attempted to hide Zhang's death, but Zhang's associates became increasingly suspicious. In November Zhang's body was discovered, something that led his allies to quickly take revenge. Accounts of Xu's death varied, but they suggest that he was killed in a way similar to Zhang.⁶⁵

Outside County Work and Other Matters), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 125; Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao ", 275.

⁶³ Li Junde, "Zhonggong Qingdao linwei," 125.

⁶⁴ Zou XX, "Guanyu Laiyang zuzhi gaikuang," 140.

⁶⁵ Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 275; Yu Shoukang, "Yu Shoukang yi Laiyang zhongxin xianwei de jianli yu fazhan" (Yu Shoukang's Recollections on the Creation and Development of the Laiyang Central County Party Committee), in *Laixi dangshi*, Volume 2, 80. Details of Xu's death come from these two sources. The first, written during the 1930s claims that Xu was betrayed by a member of his group, who tricked him into an ambush with several of Zhang's supporters and later executed him. However, the second source noted that Zhang's supporters wanted to hold Xu until others from the group arrived, but were forced to beat him to death when Xu attempted to escape.

The consequences of Zhang's and Xu's deaths within a short time were disastrous. Members of the Laiyang party were severely demoralized. Xu, according to one document, had stoked further tensions prior to his death by attacking Li Zhongxiang in front of other party members, accusing him of being a GMD spy and in league with Zhan. This, along with the disillusionment after the deaths, raised suspicions towards the higher leadership amongst local party members, and deepened animosities between factions in the county.⁶⁶

The crisis within the Laiyang CCP coincided with an effort by Han Fujun to root out Communists in the county. Alerted to the activities of Zhang's group, Han made a methodical effort to hunt down Communists in the first half of 1934. Suspecting infiltration of local government and militias, he first replaced its Liu Zhennian appointed magistrate with a trusted aide, and transferred all ward and militia heads out of Laiyang, replacing them with those from nearby counties. This effectively removed any cover enjoyed by party activists, and Han then ordered the new heads to conduct a thorough investigation of Communist activity in the county.⁶⁷ Han's repression caught the local CCP at a time when it was already weakened by internal divisions. Rivalries between the different party factions further exposed CCP organizers to persecution, with captured members from different groups giving their rivals away to seek revenge.⁶⁸ Damage from factional rivalries had an impact that extended beyond Laiyang. Xu Yuanpei, learning of his brother's death, defected to Han Fujun's authorities in Qingdao, resulting in the destruction of the temporary provincial committee and the arrest of Li Zhongxiang and much of the provincial and municipal party leadership.⁶⁹

Party organizations in Laiyang effectively collapsed in the spring of 1934, with its leaders all under arrest or on the run. Zhan Zhuoyun, the only leader of the three factions to survive, made a daring escape, shooting two militiamen sent to arrest him. He never re-contacted the party.⁷⁰ Wang Zhifeng, most senior of the western Haiyang leaders, managed to flee and link up with the Jiaodong Special Committee. He carried out a

⁶⁶ Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao ", 275.

⁶⁷ Song Zhuting and Yu Shoukang, 19.

⁶⁸ Jiaodong Tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao ", 276-277.

⁶⁹ An Zuozhang et al., 487.

⁷⁰ Li Zhonglin, 34.

variety of work for the party in Jiaodong, but was arrested when he tried to re-establish party organizations in western Haiyang in 1936 and later executed.⁷¹ The actions of western Haiyang and Laiyang organizers ended in murderous personal conflicts and a grim fate for its leaders. However, they had inadvertently saved the Jiaodong party. Though Zhang's absence in 1933 had fostered local animosities, he had established a unified party organization in the Peninsula that survived and continued to work after the demise of the provincial committee. The attention brought to Laiyang also distracted Han's attention from western Haiyang, allowing the survival of a small number of its members. Activities in Haiyang and Jiaodong were shifting east, and were increasingly led by leaders from the future Rushan area.

3.15 Last Stand: Eastern Haiyang and Southern Muping: 1934-1935

On the night of November 28th, 1935, more than a hundred young men gathered for an attack on the market town of Xiacun in eastern Haiyang. They were similar to the rebels of 1928, who had stormed the same town that year and seized weapons from government forces in it. However, the rebels in 1935 were confronted by a well-armed ward militia, and one of their members had defected several hours later, warning the local ward head about the planned assault. The ward head attacked the rebels even before they struck, driving them off.⁷² Their plan foiled, the group wandered around eastern Haiyang over the next three days, robbing the local wealthy.⁷³ They massed again for a new assault on a ward office in Muping on December 2nd, but were ambushed by Han Fujun's troops and slaughtered.⁷⁴

This event marked the destruction of a CCP organization led by eastern Haiyang/southern Muping natives, which for two years had carried out revolutionary

⁷¹ HDFB, 340-341.

⁷² RDB, 50.

⁷³ Li Qi, "Jiaodong tewei shuji Li Qi tongzhi gei geji dang tongzhi de yifengxin" (Letter from Comrade Li Qi, Secretary of the Jiaodong Special Committee to Party Comrades at All Levels), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 437-438. The rebels were supposed to burn all rental and debt contracts in the villages they entered, and to distribute the grain of the wealthy to the poor, but a report in 1936 by survivors noted that they rarely did this. Some participants were also accused of yelling at and attacking poorer peasants.

⁷⁴ RDB, 51.

violence across the eastern part of Jiaodong. Despite the events of late 1932, CCP activities in the future Rushan area revived the next year. This was made possible through the efforts of several individuals who were connected to or part of the uprising of 1928, Yu Shoutang in Haiyang, Yu Jianzhai in Muping and Yu Yunting in Wendeng. The three, who all held important positions in the political or education establishment of eastern Jiaodong, were pillars of the southern Muping/eastern Haiyang party, providing job opportunities and cover for organizers. Undetected by local authorities, they gave covert support for CCP development.

However, these men had many responsibilities associated with their jobs, and often could not travel or organize activities. Leadership of the party in eastern Jiaodong was increasingly taken over by young men who were less rooted. Among these was Liu Jingsan (刘经三), a teacher in southern Muping. Liu's background was an exception among early party members. His father owned a prosperous business in the county town, and was the head of the township encompassing their village. Some documents from the 1930s referred to his family as "gentry".⁷⁵ However, Liu shared many similarities with other members. He had spent years away from his family for schooling and on business for his father in Manchuria. He was also a rebellious man and a victim of the turmoil in Jiaodong. As a wealthy man, Liu was harassed by Liu Zhennian's forces in 1930, and was bold enough to make a complaint directly to Muping's magistrate. This made him a wanted man, and he fled to Manchuria for a year.⁷⁶

Working as an administrator in a middle school in 1932, Liu was recruited into the CCP by Yu Jianzhai. He came into contact with Zhang Jingyuan through Song Zhuting later that year, and played a major role in establishing the Jiaodong Special Committee. Liu created a contact point for the committee in early 1933 by obtaining the use of an abandoned temple near the Muping/Haiyang border owned by the kinsman of a friend. He financed a poultry business in the temple, giving cover to the activities of the committee, and worked as a liaison between different local parties and the provincial

⁷⁵ RDB, 266; Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 288.

⁷⁶ "Ren yuan dengji biao" (Personnel Registration Form), in *Xuerande tudi* (Blood Soaked Earth), ed. Zhonggong Rushan xianwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhui (Neibu, 1987), 21; RDB, 266.

committee in Zhang Jingyuan's absence.⁷⁷ Liu, following Zhang's death also undertook a trip to re-establish contact with the larger party.⁷⁸ His efforts ensured that the Jiaodong Special Committee survived following the Laiyang/western Haiyang fiasco, and that it had a Rushan and eastern Jiaodong leadership.

CCP activities, up to the end of 1933, had been limited to the Muping side of Rushan. This changed in the spring of 1934 in part due to the efforts of a figure long absent from the area, Yu Xingfu. Yu had spent much of 1932 in Beiping through support from Zheng Tianju. He returned to Jiaodong late that year, and found employment under clansman Yu Yunting in Wendeng's teacher school. Yu Yunting gave Yu Xingfu work as an administrator in the school, and assigned him to manage the student party cell. Yu Xingfu did so until 1934, when a conflict between Yu Yunting and a student member collapsed the CCP organization at the school. Scolded by Yu, the student went to the local authorities; this resulted in Yu being arrested and various party members fleeing. Taking quick action, Yu Xingfu brought several teachers who were party members at the school back to eastern Haiyang, and with help from Yu Shoutang found them work in schools near his home village. He later returned and began to rebuild the party organizations in the eastern part of the county.⁷⁹

Yu Xingfu claimed that he made a living by starting a fruit orchard, but his account and the 1944 Haiyang county committee report suggest that Yu's previous government ties played a critical role in sustaining both himself and the eastern Haiyang party. Not too long after Yu returned, Zhang Jianan, Yu's former associate in the 1928-1929 pro-GMD unrest, who was serving as the head of Haiyang's GMD and its county government construction bureau, was murdered. Zhang, unlike Yu, was never sympathetic to the CCP, and the 1944 report claims that he was poisoned by a subordinate in league with Yu Xingfu and other Communists, who were in the county GMD. Yu's accomplice soon took over Zhang's position, and used it to secretly transfer

⁷⁷ "Xiaolongsi jiya gongsi: ji Jiaodong tewe de mimi lianluozhan" (Xiaolong Temple Chicken and Duck Company: Remembering the Jiaodong Special Committee's Secret Contact Station), in *Xuerande tudi*, 36-38.

⁷⁸ Liu Jingsan, "Liu Jingsan de baogaoshu" (Report by Liu Jingsan), in *Xuerande tudi*, 18.

⁷⁹ Yu Zhou, "Huiyi zai Wendeng xiangshi de rizi" (Remembering Days in the Wendeng Village Teacher School), *Wendeng wenshi ziliao* (Materials on History and Literature in Wendeng) 4 (1989): 78-84.

funds from the county government to local Communists.⁸⁰ Activists in eastern Haiyang also had several government sympathizers, including the militia head of Xiacun, and Yu notes that he had ties with the county police through a member of his lineage.⁸¹

Membership in Muping and eastern Haiyang reached over 700 by the late summer of 1934, but in early 1935 the group had been battered, its numbers greatly reduced; it was on the verge of collapse.⁸² The Rushan party was in many ways doomed from the start, pulled apart by many factors it could not control. The most immediate cause behind its destruction was the militant actions of party activists. Members in eastern Haiyang and Muping in 1934 had continued following the Comintern line passed down by higher levels, which called on members in North China to organize armed uprisings and create guerrilla forces. In mid 1934 they launched a number of attacks against local militias, elites, officials and the salt police in Muping, eastern Haiyang and Wendeng, and with the help of a few surviving members in western Haiyang, began to mount raids into the area. In this part of the county they had the greatest success, surprising and over-running a salt police station in August and seizing a considerable number of firearms. However, they lacked cohesion. Participants in the salt police raid, numbering a hundred, left soon after for a rocky range of hills in northern Haiyang, hoping to start a guerrilla force. They split up only two days afterwards, when most members deserted.⁸³ Aspiring revolutionaries from eastern Haiyang and Muping also faced fierce resistance from ward militias, who, after a few losses, were becoming increasingly active in hunting them down. One raid in the summer of 1934 was foiled after militiamen figured out where the CCP members were planning to gather and surprised them. Another raid ended disastrously when participants ran into a militia out hunting bandits; this sent them running in wild panic.⁸⁴ Increased persecution by late 1934 had destroyed all remaining

⁸⁰ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

⁸¹ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 349-350.

⁸² Jiaodong tewei, "Guanyu Jiaodong de baogao," 280-283.

⁸³ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

⁸⁴ Jiaodong tewei, "Jiaodong tewei tongxin erhao: guanyu gongzuo qingxing, jiesan youjidui jingguo deng" (Jiaodong Special Committee Letter Number Two: Regarding the Situation of Work, Disbanding of Guerrilla Forces etc), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 293-294.

CCP presence in western Haiyang, and was closing in on organizations in the eastern part of the county and Muping.⁸⁵

Documents from higher party levels in late 1934 and 1935 blamed the failure of guerrilla operations on poor ideological training of local party members and their disconnection from the wider society. These sources repeatedly accused local leaders of not building guerrilla war on the basis of class struggle, targeting militias and police while turning attacks on the wealthy into robbery by party members rather than involving the greater "masses" to settle their grievances and arousing them through the process to support the CCP.⁸⁶ The Haiyang party committee's 1944 document also placed blame on party members, who it said were mostly brutal, unreliable "liumang".⁸⁷ However, these sources reveal many factors working against the Rushan party. Organizations in southern Muping and eastern Haiyang, since early 1934, had been filled with members from outside the area. This was caused in large part by the collapse of the Laiyang and western Haiyang parties, which sent large numbers of party activists fleeing. Muping and eastern Haiyang, home to the Jiaodong Special Committee and close to the city and port of Yantai, was chosen by many members seeking means of survival, a way out of Jiaodong and support from the larger party. CCP organizations in the Rushan area were also running out of money, related to the influx of fugitive outsiders. Party leaders frequently complained of an inability to "feed comrades", and even requested in August 1934 financial support from the CCP centre.⁸⁸ Money difficulties were made worse by the collapse of the party cell in Wendeng's Village Teacher's School following the arrest of Yu Yunting; the CCP teachers and students had given a good part of their income and living stipends to finance party operations in eastern Jiaodong.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

⁸⁶ Liu Yizhao, "Guanyu Shandong gongzuo de baogao" (Report Regarding Work in Shandong), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 365; Shandong shengwei, "Gei Jiaodong tewei de zhishixin" (Directive Letter for the Jiaodong Special Committee), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 393-397.

⁸⁷ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

⁸⁸ Jiaodong tewei, "Jiaodong tewei tongxin erhao," 292-293; Liu Yizhao, "Guanyu Shandong," 366.

⁸⁹ Yu Zhou, "Huiyi zai Wendeng", 79-80.

Destruction of the party in the school also greatly reduced communications between party organizations in eastern Haiyang and southern Muping and their ability to provide ideological education to their members. Students from the Wendeng teacher's school, who were from around the Peninsula, were often used as couriers, passing down information to local party members.⁹⁰ The school's press was also used to reproduce party materials for study. The collapse of the school's CCP organization scattered its members.⁹¹ This, combined with the desperation of many outsider members, made ideological training, often emphasized by higher documents, difficult. The outsiders weakened the ability of the Jiaodong Special Committee to direct local action, and contributed to a vicious cycle. Large numbers of outsiders furthered the disconnection between local CCP organizations, already composed of many rebellious young men, and wider society. Money problems, along with the need to survive, also encouraged the brutal and opportunistic side of members, leading to bandit-like behaviour. Repression brought about by the actions of members likely made them feel more desperate, militant and willing to strike back at local forces, inviting greater persecution. From this mindset attacks on militias and police likely made more sense. These hated forces had large numbers of weapons, which could be used to carry out further violence. They also collected taxes or had the right to levy their own maintenance fees, making their offices even greater targets for CCP members desperate for money.

These difficulties unfolded amid rivalries between leaders in the Jiaodong Special Committee and their superiors. Members of the committee, after the disaster that resulted from Li Zhongxiang's mediation in Laiyang, were reluctant to contact party leaders in Qingdao, and sent Liu Jingsan on a trip to establish links with higher levels. Liu met up with the CCP Northern Bureau in Tianjin in early 1934, but was directed to the Shandong Provincial Youth League Work Committee (团山东省工委) in Qingdao, an organization formed after the collapse of the provincial committee in late 1933, which handled all CCP operations and liaison between party levels in the eastern part of the province. The Northern Bureau also dispatched Chang Zijian (常子健), a Shaanxi native, to serve as the

⁹⁰ Ibid., 80-81.

⁹¹ Chang Zijian, "Guanyu Jiaodong zhengzhi jingji he dang zuzhi zhuangkuang xiang zhongyang de baogao" (Report to the Party Centre Regarding the Political, Economic and Party Organization Situation in Jiaodong), in *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 216.

head of the Jiaodong Special Committee.⁹² Over the course of the year conflict developed between the Jiaodong members of the committee and Chang. Jiaodong members accused Chang of being inattentive to party matters, and by August requested that he be replaced with someone more competent. However, deeper issues were at work behind these tensions. Chang was an outsider to Jiaodong, and did not know any of the leaders in Haiyang and Muping before. Unlike other outsiders, such as Zhang Jingyuan, he was not invited, but was imposed as the senior CCP figure in Jiaodong by party leaders elsewhere. Animosities were also worsened by another problem, Zhang's poor grasp of the Jiaodong dialect, which he even admitted in his dispatches to higher levels.⁹³

A leadership struggle ensued in the fall of 1934, when Liu Jingsan and two other members of the committee, carrying important party documents, were arrested by a ward militia. What happened following their arrest was controversial. Later party histories recorded that Liu had made a heroic sacrifice, admitting that he was a senior party leader and that the other two committee members were merely travelling companions, something that got them released. The Youth League Work Committee, however, accused the three of being careless with documents. It also suspected that Liu had defected, and cast doubt on the story of the two released committee members. Chang fled to Qingdao, claiming that Liu had given away his location in Muping to Han Fujun's authorities.⁹⁴ This led the Youth League Work Committee to withdraw recognition of the Jiaodong Special Committee, and to place local parties in the Peninsula under its direct control.⁹⁵ The conflict was not resolved until early 1935, when the Youth League Work Committee backed down and affirmed Zhang Liangzhu (张连珠), a teacher from Wendeng county and one of the two leaders released, as the head of the committee.⁹⁶

Local organizers, caught in leadership confusion, escalated their attacks and robberies following Liu Jingsan's arrest, with disastrous consequences. A report from the

⁹² Liu Yizhao, 364-365.

⁹³ Jiaodong tewei, "Jiaodong tewei tongxin erhao," 292-293.

⁹⁴ Liu Yizhao, 365.

⁹⁵ Qingdao tuangongwei, "Qingdao tuangongwei gei dang zhongyang de xin: guanyu Jiaodong tewei bei puohuai deng wenti" (Letter from the Qingdao Youth League Work Committee to the Party Centre: Regarding the Question of the Damage of the Jiaodong Special Committee), *SGLWH*, Volume 7, 324-325.

⁹⁶ RDB, 47.

Youth League Work Committee in late 1934 noted that many members in Muping and eastern Jiaodong had died as a result, and that hundreds had fled to Manchuria.⁹⁷ Those who remained found their ranks thinned, their capacity for attacks severely weakened, and local authorities increasingly on to their activities. The Jiaodong Special Committee also lost contact with the higher party in April of 1935 when the Youth League Work Committee was destroyed by defection and arrest.⁹⁸

These developments precipitated the raid in November of that year. The Haiyang Party Committee's 1944 document claimed that the insurrection was caused by increasing enemy pressure and loss of members, which led organizations to take drastic action.⁹⁹ Plans for the revolt, as described by party histories, also highlighted desperation, and even included having participants fight their way out of Jiaodong.¹⁰⁰ The decision for the uprising was contentious. Recollections of surviving leaders, such as Yu Xingfu and some local party histories, noted that many eastern Haiyang members strongly resisted the plan.¹⁰¹ Yu claimed that he opposed the revolt out of a cautious assessment of the situation at the time, but sources, including his own writings, suggest a rift between the eastern Haiyang membership and the rest of the Jiaodong party. Eastern Haiyang members, because of their sympathizers in government, enjoyed greater cover, and were financially far less desperate than their counterparts in Muping.

Hot-headedness, combined with divisions between members, doomed the uprising. The failed raid on Xiacun was only one part of a larger revolt involving all remaining organizations in eastern Jiaodong. The rebels planned simultaneous attacks against two market towns, Shidao (石島) in Rongcheng (榮城) County, further east of Haiyang and Muping, where the local police department and salt bureau were located, and Xiacun, one of the most prosperous commercial communities in eastern Haiyang. The raids, which meant for eastern Jiaodong organizers to seize large numbers of weapons and wealth from elites to create a guerrilla force that would find a new sanctuary, grossly underestimated the cohesion of party members and the opposition they faced. The raid on

⁹⁷ Liu Yizhao, 366-367.

⁹⁸ RDB, 57.

⁹⁹ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

¹⁰⁰ RDB, 49; ZSSDY, 89.

¹⁰¹ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 349; HDFB, 42.

Shidao was poorly organized. Several party members who were assigned to take part in it were also arrested by local authorities a few days before the planned attack. The arrested members, frightened, gave away the whole plan of the raid to government leaders. Local forces were on the alert when the attack happened, and they also contacted Han Fujū's army for back-up. Activists heading towards Xiacun thought that they would be aided by the local militia head and several party members in the force. However, their plan was foiled when an eastern Haiyang member of the militia, possibly against the raid, defected and gave the secrets of the operation to local authorities shortly before the attack. The rebels had walked into their own doom.¹⁰²

3.16 Journeys

The uprising of 1928 in eastern Haiyang/southern Muping had given birth to a wave of revolutionary activism led by young men. Events of late 1935 would mark their end. Of the CCP members that took part in the raids, most were either killed or captured. Many in the second category, including Jiaodong Special Committee secretary Zhang Lianzhu, who led the attack on Shidao, were later executed.¹⁰³ For the few fortunate enough to escape, a long journey as fugitives began. This journey would lead some back to the CCP, others not. What happened to Yu Jianzhai, one of the pillars of CCP activities in the Rushan area is not known. He disappeared after the 1935 uprising, and never contacted the party. Leaders in eastern Haiyang, likely due to their opposition to the revolt, did not play a major role in it. Their decisions saved them. Yu Shoutang, who had provided cover for CCP members in eastern Haiyang, remained at his position in the local government. He fled after the revolt, fearing that his cover was blown. Yu Shoutang went to Manchuria, where he had earlier sojourned, and stayed there until 1939. He linked up with the CCP again when he returned to eastern Haiyang at the end of that year, and served as an official in various Jiaodong counties from the 1940s to 1960s, including as deputy magistrate of both Haiyang and Rushan.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Wang Liang, "Huiyi yiyisi baodong" (Remembering the One, One, Four Uprising), in *Jiaodong fengyunlu*, 80-82, 89-90.

¹⁰³ Wang Liang, "Huiyi yiyisi baodong," 87-89, 91.

¹⁰⁴ RDB, 293.

Yu Xingfu was more directly involved in the uprising, but was not part of the raid on Xiacun. He was assigned to an auxiliary group of party members who provided covert assistance to the attack on Xiacun, and lost contact with the party after it failed.¹⁰⁵ Yu travelled to various places in Shandong after this, searching for the party, and finally linked up with party leaders in Jinan in early 1936. He spent the next three years working for the party in western Shandong. Yu returned to Jiaodong in late 1939, and became an important party official in the eastern Peninsula, serving in various senior positions, such as mayor of Weihai following its seizure by the CCP in 1945. Yu went on to become party secretary of the Shanghai railway bureau after 1949, and ended his career as a senior official in the national railway ministry in Beijing.¹⁰⁶

Several other members from southern Muping and Haiyang who had been arrested or fled earlier, also had a similar fate. Song Zhuting, who fled eastern Haiyang in 1932, remained in contact with the party. He was involved in CCP activities in various parts of Jiaodong and Shandong from 1933 to 1949, and ended his career as a senior party official in Zhejiang province.¹⁰⁷ Yu Yunting, head of the Wendeng Teachers' School, was released in mid 1934 with the help of friends in Shandong's provincial education department. He continued work as a CCP underground worker after this, carrying out activities for the party while serving in various education positions in Shandong as well as other parts of China over the next two decades; he ended his career in the late 1970s as the deputy chairman of the Jinan People's Political Consultative Committee.¹⁰⁸

Those who remained in the CCP, like Song Haiting, who had paved the way for the formation of the Haiyang/Rushan party, became part of a mobile mid level CCP leadership in Shandong and later across China. Their survival was helped in large part by the detachment of these men from their communities, which made them willing to travel to look for the party or to take up work in many different places for it. However, they

¹⁰⁵ Yu Zhou, "Yuzhou zizhuan," 349.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 264.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 264-266.

¹⁰⁸ Zhonggong Jinan shiwei dangshi yanjiushi, *Jinan zhonggong dangshi renwu* (Figures in the CCP Party History of Jinan), Volume 2, (Jinan: Jinan shi xinwen chubanj, 1998), 308-309.

were only a few among the hundreds who joined the party in Haiyang and southern Muping, and integration between these men and the higher CCP was not always easy. Survivors of the CCP in Rushan and Haiyang often found that the party they met at the end of their journeys was a top-down organization that demanded total obedience from members over its agendas. It was often brutal towards dissenters and non-conformists, and had a habit of using their personal backgrounds and earlier activities with the CCP against them if they did not obey, accusing them of being traitors and purging them.

The case of Liu Jingsan, the party leader from southern Muping who was arrested by Han Fujun's government in late 1934, creating a conflict between the Shandong provincial party and local Jiaodong members, is an example. Liu, according to an autobiography that he wrote in 1937, was released from prison in 1935 after his family paid a large sum of money to bribe officials in Han's government. He decided to link up with the CCP after this and ended up in Yan'an, where official histories claimed that he drowned while swimming in a river.¹⁰⁹ However, Liu's account of himself was written as part of an investigation on him by party officials in Yan'an, aimed at scrutinizing his past record and determining if he was a loyal member, and his death seemed somewhat suspicious.¹¹⁰ He was denounced in some documents in the 1940s as a traitor, and was not made into a major figure in the early history of the Rushan CCP by party historians until the 1980s.¹¹¹ It is possible that Liu drowned himself because he did not like the party he saw, or that he was afraid that it would use controversial events in his past against him. Fear of having his past used against him might have also been what motivated Song Haiting, the founder of the Haiyang CCP, to spend thirty years trying to clear up his party record, petitioning higher party levels to declare him a member from 1927 to 1938 even though he had abandoned the CCP during that period.

Young men who made up the early CCP in Haiyang and Rushan had also failed to successfully spread the party locally. Being socially marginalized, combined with estrangement from family and community, drew many young men to the party. However, the immaturity, unstable commitment, and brute nature of early CCP members,

¹⁰⁹ RDB, 267.

¹¹⁰ Liu Jingsan, "Liu Jingsan," in *Xuerande tudi*, 23.

¹¹¹ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

something that was caused in large part by their backgrounds, also prevented them from building a viable party or reaching further into the society. These qualities, by the mid 1930s, were also running against the tide of developments in Jiaodong, which, though at times turbulent, was returning to political stability. The creation of a large grassroots party encompassing a greater part of society was blocked. This would change during the war with Japan.

Chapter 4: War and the Remaking of the Local Party

4.1 Rebirth of the Haiyang and Rushan Area Party

In the dying days of 1937 two men returned to the Haiyang/Rushan area. Both were veterans of the communist movement in the two counties. One was Song Zhuting, who helped to found the CCP in eastern Haiyang. The other, Liu Zhongyi (刘仲益), had taken part in Wang Zhifeng's radical unrest in western Haiyang in 1928/1929. He also led a number of raids on police and local elites in 1933-1934.¹ Arrested for their activities in 1934-1935, Song and Liu had been imprisoned just weeks earlier, but were released by Han Fujū's authorities as China's War of Resistance against Japan reached Shandong.²

Song and Liu hurried back to their native places at the directions of Li Qi (理琪), the new secretary of the Jiaodong Special Committee. Li, a native of Henan, had come to Jiaodong at the initiative of several survivors of the 1935 revolt. These party members, from Wendeng came upon a local who did business in Henan at the end of that year, and through him managed to contact the CCP in the province. They persuaded the Henan party to send Li, who also had contact with the CCP Northern Bureau. Li revived the Jiaodong Special Committee in the spring of 1936, but was captured by Han Fujū's forces several months later, and spent nearly a year in a prison in Jinan.³ Released as part of the United Front agreement in the fall of 1937, Li linked up with Li Yu (黎玉), head of the newly established Shandong provincial party committee. Li Yu was in many ways like Li Qi. From Hebei, he was sent by the northern bureau to rebuild party organizations after CCP activists in western Shandong, devastated by arrests by Han Fujū's government,

¹ Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian de geming douzheng shenghuo" (Fourteen Year Experience in Revolutionary Struggle), *Haiyang wenshi ziliao* 1 (1984): 1, 6-10.

² Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 10-11, 19; RDB, 265 (see chap. 2, n. 30).

³ Li Zhuanmin and Li Qingshan, *Jiaodong Fenghuo* (Tales of Jiaodong) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2005), 133-134, 138-139, 149-150.

contacted the Hebei provincial party for help.⁴ Li Qi, under instruction from Li Yu, searched Jinan's prisons for party organizers who could assist in the reconstruction of the CCP in Jiaodong.⁵

Among those Li found were Song and Liu, and he put them to work quickly, seeking to take advantage of the rapidly changing political situation in Shandong. In October of 1937 Japanese forces entered the province. Their advance put Han Fujun in a great dilemma. More concerned with maintaining his military strength and hold over the province rather than national resistance, Han put up a half hearted defence while pondering his next step. As Japanese pressure on Shandong increased, he made a fateful decision in December, fleeing the province with his forces. Han calculated this to be in his best interests, but he grossly misunderstood the growing patriotic mood in China caused by the war, and the response of Chiang Kai-shek towards his actions. His flight from Shandong turned him into a pariah in the eyes of the larger Chinese public, and led to swift reaction from Chiang. Chiang had Han arrested during a conference of national leaders on the war in January 1938, and executed him not long afterwards.⁶ Han's departure and sudden death decapitated a system that had become increasingly built around personal allegiance to him, causing it to immediately collapse. This was something that Li sought to exploit to the CCP's benefit.

4.2 Initial Activities in Haiyang and Rushan: the Backdrop

Song and Liu returned to an environment that was without government, militarized but orderly. Following the flight of Han political authority broke down in the Jiaodong Peninsula. Magistrates, who were largely appointed by Han Fujun and not natives of the areas they governed, fled across Jiaodong, leaving a power vacuum. However, the collapse of government, unlike in 1928, did not bring about a breakdown in basic social order. This was due in large part to Han Fujun's policies prior to the war. Han had eradicated most of Jiaodong's bandits and given local elites an important role in rural

⁴ Li Yu, *Li Yu huiyilu* (Autobiography of Li Yu) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1992), 84-86.

⁵ Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 19-20.

⁶ Diana Lary, "Treachery, Disgrace and Death: Han Fujun and China's Resistance to Japan," *War in History* 13, no. 1 (2006): 76-82.

governance through two systems. The first of these was "village federation" (联庄会) militias. Unlike the previous ward militia system set up by Liu Zhennian, which had state appointed heads and was either funded by county governments or given the right by local officials to collect taxes for their own maintenance, the village federation system called on groups of rural communities to form self-sustaining militias. Militias in the system were meant to be generated by locals, who funded them on their own informal initiative, and had only supervision from the state rather than direct appointment of their leaders.⁷ Village federation militias became the main form of rural security in Jiaodong by 1937, as Han Fujun scaled back ward militias and other forces.⁸

Han, secondly, had introduced Liang Shuming's rural reconstruction program to Jiaodong in 1936-1937. This system, an alternate form of governance below the county level, scrapped old forms of government and replaced them with "township schools", quasi-educational and bureaucratic institutions that provided Confucian-based moral instruction to the populace as well as administrative functions.⁹ Accounts by residents of Jiaodong who fled to Taiwan in 1949 credit both systems with bringing about order in the Peninsula before the war. However, they also suggest that the two systems significantly benefited wealthy, socially prominent men, including many who had been sidelined by the breakdown of order in the 1920s. Village federation militias and reconstruction schools were often funded by elites. Young men from wealthy and influential families also led Liang's reconstruction program, and in some cases used it as well as militias to co-opt and place under supervision those from more marginal backgrounds, who had previously been a source of disorder. Poor young men were hired as minor functionaries in township schools, and were sometimes even forced to join militias.¹⁰ Empowered by

⁷ Lu Weijun et al., 407 (see chap. 2, n. 25).

⁸ Ibid., 407-408.

⁹ SHXBW, 674 (see introduction, no. 18); Guy Alitto, *The Last Confucian: Liang Shuming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 246-253. The degree to which Liang's program was implemented across Jiaodong varied. The first of these schools in the Rushan/Haiyang area was established in February 1937. A more detailed description of Liang's program and its structures can be found in Guy Alitto's 1979 work, *The Last Confucian*.

¹⁰ Liu Guohua, "Kangzhanqian Laiyang xianzhang Liang Bingkun xiansheng zhengji" (Political Accomplishments of Mr. Liang Bingkun, Magistrate of Laiyang Prior to the Resistance War), *Shandong wenxian* 15, no. 1 (1989-1990): 106-107; Zhan Qinghui,

the two programs, native elites in Jiaodong took over government following the departure of Han's officials. Many assumed magistracy of counties and merged existing militias into larger local protectionist forces.¹¹

Jiaodong, up to mid 1938, had also been a peripheral front in the war in China. Japanese forces entered the Peninsula in December 1937, seizing the main cities of Qingdao, Yantai and Weihai, but did not move to occupy the countryside.¹² They were focused on chasing Chiang Kai-shek's national government in central China and sought to take over Jiaodong through less direct means. What followed in the first few months of 1938 was a number of informal negotiations and coalition-making efforts by elites to reconstitute county governments, and between them and larger political forces on the loyalty of specific areas. Seeking to win over the Peninsula's elites, the Japanese dispatched Zhang Zongyuan (张宗援) (Date Junnosuke 伊達順之助). Date, a Japanese agent going by a Chinese name, had once been military advisor to Zhang Zongchang, and claimed to be his adopted brother. He knew Jiaodong intimately and managed to persuade a number of local elites, as well as former government officials and military officers with

"Laiyang kangzhan chuqi qingshi yu baofa zhanyi jingguo jishi" (The Situation in Laiyang at the Start of the Resistance War and a Record of the Developments During its Initial Stages), *Shandong wenxian* 11, no. 1 (1985-1986): 106. This was particularly the case in Laiyang, which was designated the test county for rural reconstruction work in Jiaodong by Liang Shuming and Han Fujun. Members of the rural reconstruction program, led by Han's appointed magistrate Liang Bingkun launched a "round up hooligans" campaign in 1934, grabbing idle young men for militias and reconstruction school training.

¹¹ Li Xianliang, *Luqing kangzhan jishi* (Record of the Resistance War in Shandong-Qingdao) (Taipei: Jindai zhongguo chubanshe, 1994); Li Mengjiu, *Shandong xiangmin dui ri kangzhan ji fangong jishi* (Record of the Shandong Townspeople's Resistance War against Japan and Opposition to Communists) (Taibeishi: zongjing xiaohuagang shucheng, 1981). This process is described in detail at the regional and local levels by the autobiographies of two figures, Li Xianliang, head of the GMD in Jiaodong during the war, who integrated many of these militias into the Nationalist side, and Li Mengjiu, a militia commander in Pingdu, a county not too far from Haiyang who later went to Taiwan. None of these works deal specifically with Haiyang, but I use them as larger reference in understanding the situation in the Haiyang/Rushan area during the early phases of the War of Resistance.

¹² ZSSDY, 166 (see chap. 3, n. 3). This work, a local party history noted that there were no more than 1,100 Japanese soldiers in the whole of Jiaodong outside Qingdao prior to the fall of 1939.

ties to Zhang Zongchang to go over to the Japanese side.¹³ Jiaodong elites were also courted by GMD loyalists under the overall leadership of Shen Honglie (沈鴻烈). Shen, the commander of Zhang Xueliang's navy, had ruled Qingdao jointly with Han Fujun since 1932. He acquired a reputation for being a good administrator in the city, and became a hero in both China and Shandong in late 1937 for destroying Qingdao's many Japanese-owned factories as the Japanese army closed in on the city. Shen took over as GMD governor of Shandong following the departure of Han. He established a headquarters for the new provincial government in the south part of the province, and attempted to create a pro-GMD coalition out of remnant troops and local forces.¹⁴

Song and Liu, under guidance from Li Qi, attempted to insert the CCP into these negotiations and gain local control through them. Li, following directives from the Shandong provincial committee, had plotted a number of power seizures across eastern Jiaodong, in which CCP activists would take over counties and build armed forces.¹⁵ The plan, in practical terms, involved several parts. It called for winning over local elites and their forces, penetrating these with party activists who would slowly take over leadership, manipulating elite rivalries to eliminate competitors to CCP authority, and for members to launch revolts to seize power in specific areas on their own if necessary. Li departed for Jiaodong with Liu, Song, and a number of other released local activists in late 1937. He established a centre of operations for this venture in Wendeng, the county in the Peninsula that he had most familiarity with, and assigned Liu and Song the tasks of taking power in Haiyang and Muping.¹⁶

4.3 Initial Bid for Power: 1938

Liu and Song, upon their return, quickly sprang into action to implement Li's plan. They began by recruiting party activists who could serve as the basis of seizing local power, and soon met up with a number of pre-war CCP members who had either managed to hide from Han Fujun's persecution or were recently released from captivity. Among these was Sun Mingrui. In prison since 1933, Sun was released in late 1937. He came home,

¹³ Ibid., 157-158.

¹⁴ Li Xianliang, *Luqing kangzhan*, 5, 24-25.

¹⁵ ZSSDY, 109-110.

¹⁶ Ibid., 110.

and soon linked up with Liu Zhongyi.¹⁷ Liu and Song also found a sympathetic ear with Li Jianwu (李建吾), a prominent local elite in western Haiyang. Li was an odd ally. A champion of social stability in the county, he had long opposed radical politics, and even funded the Big Knife Society of Song Sikun, who had tried to destroy Yu Xingfu's GMD group in 1929.¹⁸ However, Li was a promoter of modern education who built and funded various schools in western Haiyang, which put him in touch with some party members in the county who were teachers, and his concern for social stability led him several times to support individual Communists.¹⁹ Li, for example, hid several local CCP members in his area in early 1936 as Han Fujun's forces combed through the countryside following the failed 1935 revolt, fearing that awareness of their presence might bring in unruly troops from Han's army and damage the lives of local residents.²⁰ He was also motivated by a strong sense of paternalism to protect all those in his lineage, which led him to intervene on county authorities and save several young clansmen who were party members prior to the war with Japan.²¹

Li warmed up to the CCP again in early 1938, not out of support for its cause, but of concern for maintaining local order. Seeking to prevent the county from descending to anarchy, he integrated several local militias into a "peace preservation" force at the start of the year, but ran into conflict with Ji Shouzhong (纪守中), a former official in Han Fujun's government who had organized a similar force. Li felt that Ji was a menace to local society, and began to solicit support to neutralize him. Liu Zhongyi knew Li through a clansman of Li's who was a CCP member, and approached him with the offer of getting rid of Ji. A secret dialogue between the two soon ensued.²²

¹⁷ Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian de geming douzheng shenghuo," 20; RDB, 86.

¹⁸ Cao, 84.

¹⁹ HDSBW, 782 (see chap. 2, n. 11).

²⁰ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai" (see chap. 3, n. 19).

²¹ Sun Yusheng, "Li Jianwu, Liu Songxia, Zhang Shulian xiansheng" (Mr. Li Jianwu, Liu Songxia and Zhang Shulian), *Haiyang wenshi ziliao* 8 (1992): 213.

²² Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 20.

4.4 Opportunity for Action

Several events in mid February 1938 presented what seemed like an opening for the CCP to take power. In southern Muping, Song Zhuting, with help from a sympathetic instructor from a local reconstruction school, raided the facility. He and several party members made off with over 30 firearms from the school armoury, giving the local CCP some firepower.²³ Around the same time Song heard another story that elites in Muping's county town had decided to give their allegiance to the Japanese. This angered Zhang Jianxun (张健勋), a local elite with a large militia, who plotted to take the county town. CCP members in Rushan quickly entered into negotiations with Zhang, offering support from their newly-armed group in this endeavour. They also alerted Li Qi in Wendeng, who took most members of his eastern Jiaodong group to Muping to support the attack.²⁴ Liu Zhongyi, around the same time, also reached an agreement with Li Jianwu, in which he and other western Haiyang members would take part in a joint raid with Li's men to disarm Ji Shouzhi's force. Liu and Li planned to form a new United Front government in Haiyang after this, with Li as county magistrate.²⁵

The plan to take power in both counties at first seemed to go well. In the early hours of February 12, 1938 Li Qi and Song Zhuting, backed by Zhang Jianxun's militia, stormed the Muping county town. They surprised and disarmed without bloodshed the militia of the city's elite, but the attack quickly went awry. CCP activists soon ran into a company of Japanese marines sent from Yantai to investigate the situation. A fierce, bloody gun battle ensued, in which many activists, including Li Qi, were killed.²⁶ In Haiyang Liu Zhongyi and Li Jianwu's agreement also suddenly collapsed when Li was enticed into an alternative agreement by Ding Futing (丁緯庭), a local elite and former military officer who had organized the largest militia in the county.²⁷

Left without a leader, party members in Muping decided to head west in the hopes of establishing contact with the provincial party. Most members, including Song Zhuting,

²³ RDB, 97.

²⁴ ZSSDY, 133-134.

²⁵ Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 20.

²⁶ ZSSDY, 135-138.

²⁷ Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 21.

departed. They left only a few activists behind.²⁸ In Haiyang, Liu Zhongyi, reeling from the breakdown his agreement with Li Jianwu, made a foolhardy decision to take power by force in mid-March. Hoping to emulate the raid on Muping, Liu, along with a number of western Haiyang members attempted to raid a militia loyal to Ding Futing. They were brutally put down, and several CCP leaders, including Sun Mingrui were killed or executed after capture.²⁹ Elites in Haiyang and Muping formed new county governments in March, excluding the CCP, and pledged their allegiance to Shen Honglie's pro-GMD coalition by the fall of 1938.

4.5 Collapse of the Endeavour

Remaining party members in Haiyang scattered, but were saved by a surprising twist of events. In late March Liu Zhongyi, a fugitive, suddenly showed up in Haiyang's county town, demanding negotiations with its reconstituted government. Liu claimed to be the leader of the local CCP, and insisted that the new elite coalition in the county release all Communist prisoners and abide by the provisions of the United Front agreement. Haiyang elites surprisingly agreed. They set free all captured party members, gave the CCP legal status to operate in the county, and even allowed it to establish an "Anti-Japanese National Salvation Association" to spread propaganda.³⁰

Why Haiyang elites did this, after just crushing the CCP's failed uprising, is an open question. Liu, in his later reflections, took credit for the successful negotiations, and claimed that the reputation built by the party following the Muping raid also made an impact on local elites.³¹ However, Haiyang's elite coalition was likely motivated by a number of pragmatic reasons. Its members were still uncertain of the true strength of the CCP in eastern Jiaodong after Li Qi's attack on Muping, and might have feared that a large Communist force was nearby. Some local elites might have sought to make their choices for making alliances more open by including the CCP, and Li Jianwu, who was noted by Liu to have played a major role in the negotiations, might have also wanted to use the party's members as leverage against his coalition partners, which included Ji

²⁸ ZSSDY, 144-146.

²⁹ Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 21-22.

³⁰ Ibid., 22.

³¹ Ibid., 22-23.

Shouzhi.³² This alliance, however, was short-lived. Elites in the county soon turned against the CCP as it became apparent that it was of little use to their interests. A number of propaganda rallies held by the Haiyang CCP in May were brutally broken up by various militias, with numerous activists killed or detained.³³ In July 1938 Liu Zhongyi himself was detained by the head of a reconstruction school for carrying out party activities, and was held for more than 40 days.³⁴ Remaining members of the Haiyang CCP fled or went into hiding after this, and the party's activities in the county ebbed.³⁵

4.6 Expansion: Early 1939

Events in Jiaodong, however, would quickly give the CCP in Haiyang and Rushan a new opportunity. In the fall of 1938 alliance building in Jiaodong had produced three factions: Date Junnosuke's collaborationist coalition; local elites and some remnant Han Fujian forces in the Peninsula loyal to the GMD; and a CCP area in northern Jiaodong, which was formed by a group of local activists in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai in early 1938 and joined by the survivors of Li Qi's group in the summer. Date's coalition, which was funded in weapons and cash by the Japanese army, initially held the advantage. It built a powerful collaborationist army, and in the fall of 1938 brought large scale warfare to Jiaodong by launching an attack on CCP and pro-GMD areas. Date seized most of northern and western Jiaodong by late 1938, and was poised to move on the southern Peninsula, including Haiyang/Rushan when Zhao Baoyuan (赵保原), a key lieutenant, turned on him. Zhao was a seasoned officer in Zhang Zongchang's army, and his betrayal severely weakened Date by taking away thousands of his best collaborationist soldiers. Over winter and spring 1939 Zhao formed a coalition with the CCP, Jiaodong elites and several pro-GMD military units. They managed to recapture much of the territory lost to Date, and in early June dealt him a crippling defeat near Laiyang's county town. Date, wounded during the battle, faded from Jiaodong, and his collaborationist coalition fell apart shortly after.³⁶

³² Ibid., 22.

³³ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai"; RDB, 91.

³⁴ HDFB, 75 (see chap. 3, n. 1).

³⁵ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

³⁶ ZSSDY, 144-146, 158-159, 175-176, 179.

Haiyang and Rushan elites sided with the Zhao Baoyuan/CCP/GMD coalition and permitted Communists to operate in support of their activities. Unlike the previous year CCP members did not contest power with local elites, but worked with their efforts against the Japanese. Some joined elite militias and pro-GMD forces, while others engaged in propaganda in their native areas to encourage enlistment by young men and donations to the war effort. CCP members, some of whom were former teachers with training in propaganda work or had served in militias, were well-suited to these tasks, and they tapped into the general mood of the county, which was very patriotic at the time. This created what the Haiyang party committee's 1944 report has called the first great expansion of membership in the war. In Xiaze, home of Sun Jiesan and Sun Mingrui, for example, active propaganda work by several party veterans recruited over 90 men into the CCP in the first few months of 1939.³⁷

4.7 Seizure of Power: 1940-1941

Party membership grew to hundreds by the end of 1939, but the spirit of unity that sustained this growth was short lived. Soon after defeating collaborationists Zhao Baoyuan, his allies and the CCP began to fight over the spoils. In late June 1939 Zhao expelled all Communists from his force, accusing them of trying to undermine it from within. Settling in the county seat of Laiyang, he also began a hunt for local CCP activists, resulting in the deaths of some 200 and their sympathizers.³⁸ Anti-communist sentiments began to reach Haiyang in the fall of 1939, as Zhao and some local elites in southern Jiaodong formed a new coalition to oppose the CCP under the banner of the GMD, but the local party was saved by an unexpected development.³⁹ In early February 1940 a large force of Japanese troops swept into the county. This event was caused by the defeat of Date Junnosuke the year earlier, which led the Japanese to abandon relying on collaborationists to tame Jiaodong in favour of a more direct military occupation. Tens of thousands of Japanese troops poured into Jiaodong's interior in the winter of 1939-1940, something that marked the start of a more brutal phase of the war in the Peninsula.

³⁷ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

³⁸ ZSSDY, 190-191.

³⁹ HDFB, 109.

The Japanese build-up had an immediate effect, severely disrupting the activities of Zhao Baoyuan and his allies in southern/eastern Jiaodong and easing pressure on local Communist party organizations. In Haiyang Japanese troops unleashed a torrent of violence which exceeded any in its already turbulent history. This violence, compared to earlier actions, was often random and inexplicably atrocious. In one case Japanese troops massacred 62 people in a village after hearing several gunshots near it, stabbing the heads of four men into bloody pulp with bayonets, chopping off the hands of a little girl before killing her, and even cutting open a woman in labour, ripping out her unborn child and smashing it on the ground.⁴⁰ These actions caused a panic in a county that had not yet experienced war, collapsing some militias, driving others out, and sending many socially-prominent figures fleeing.⁴¹

Hundreds of inhabitants were killed, maimed or raped, but the Japanese did not establish a new order. Despite the large military showing, they lacked the commitment or troops to fully occupy Jiaodong, and concentrated on securing major transportation routes and urban locations near them. The Japanese troops that entered Haiyang were on a mission to seize Fengcheng, a point in the larger system of motor roads in Jiaodong, which had its origins in the early 1920s and had been expanded by various militarist rulers for transporting troops.⁴² Fengcheng was merely a small, dead-end stop in this system, created only a few years earlier through Han Fuju's road-building program.⁴³ Japanese forces, sensing no significant resistance from nearby areas, withdrew most of their troops from Haiyang at the beginning of March 1940, leaving only 70 some soldiers and a few hundred collaborationist troops huddled in the county town. They decided to

⁴⁰ HDFB, 80-84; RDB, 139-140.

⁴¹ HDFB, 85.

⁴² USDSCC, Motor Highways in China (Shandong), June 26th, 1928, p. 108-112, Vol. 202; Guo Dasong and Zhang Fenglei, "Kangzhan qiande Yantai jiaotong yunshu" (Transportation and Communications in Yantai Prior to the Resistance War), *Shandong wenxian*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1986-1987): 15-16. I call these motor roads rather than highways because roads linking different urban centres were often constructed very differently, with some being paved asphalt highways while others were merely expanded dirt roads that were wider than traditional ones.

⁴³ USDSCC, Political Report, March 6th, 1935, p. 3; Vol. 260, January 7, 1935 - December 31st 1935.

abandon the town altogether at the end of 1940, shifting to several blockhouses in southwestern Haiyang to protect more important motor roads in nearby counties.⁴⁴

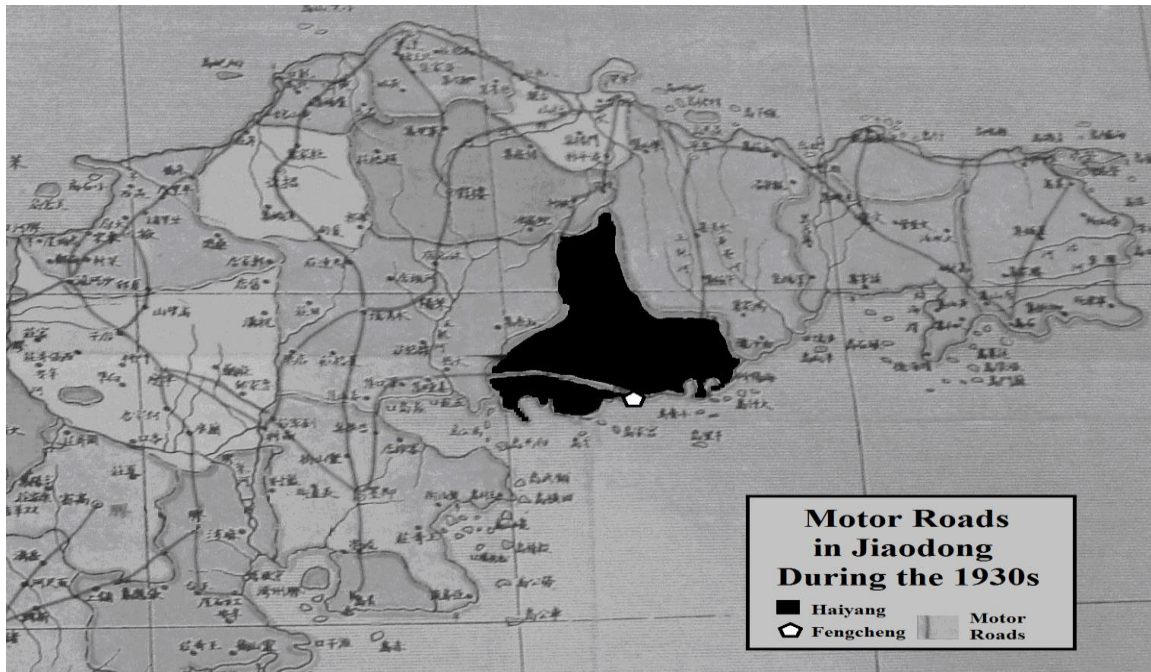


Figure 11 The Motor Road System in Jiaodong

Source: Modification of a map from: *Shandong wenxian* (Shandong Memorabilia) 1, no. 1 (1975).

This gave CCP activists in the Haiyang/Rushan area a reprieve from persecution, and some time to regroup. Zhao and some of his allies returned to Haiyang in late 1940, and wasted little time hunting Communists. They launched a number of raids on villages in January and February of 1941, killing and kidnapping anyone suspected of having ties with the CCP, but were soon hit with an even more ferocious attack by Communist forces from the north.⁴⁵ This turn of events was influenced by larger national developments. In 1939 Mao Zedong had made Shandong a major target for CCP expansion, sending most of the Eighth Route Army's 115th Division and elements of the 129th Division, along with several veteran military commanders to the province. One of these men, Xu Shiyou

⁴⁴ SHXBW, 669.

⁴⁵ HDFB, 110; RDB, 119.

(许世友), a regimental commander in the 129th Division, made his way into Jiaodong in late 1940. Xu, a brilliant tactician in the CCP, quickly rallied the party's fledgling forces in northern Jiaodong, and in March 1941 launched a sudden invasion of southern and eastern Peninsula. His troops surprised and defeated the much larger units of Zhao Baoyuan and his allies in Haiyang, and by July 1941 had fought off several attempts by Zhao and his allies to retake what they had lost.⁴⁶

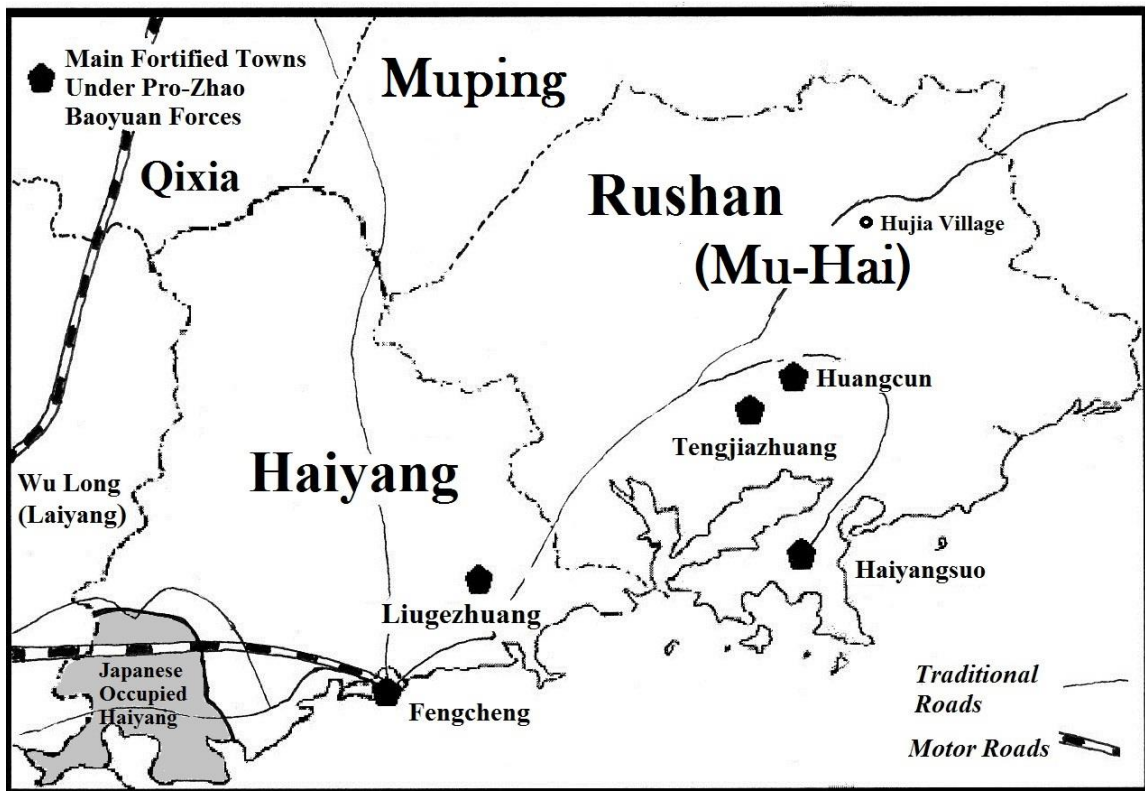


Figure 12 Haiyang and Rushan: 1941-1942

Source: Created based on descriptions from: Rushanshi dangshi shizhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Rushan difangshi* (CCP Local History of Rushan) (Xianggang: Tianma chubanshe, 2005); Haiyangshi dangshi fangzhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Haiyang difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Haiyang) (Haiyang: Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2007).

Zhao Baoyuan never recovered from this defeat. His coalition, previously dominant in Jiaodong, fell back from many places. However, they were far from finished,

⁴⁶ Xu Shiyu, *Xu Shiyu shangjiang huiyilu* (Recollections of General Xu Shiyu) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2005), 236-250.

and in Haiyang still controlled the county town. Zhao, backed by local strongman Ding Futing and several pro-GMD commanders, fortified the town and several market towns near the coast. These troops, still numbering in the thousands, managed to hold these areas until CCP forces from northern Jiaodong, assisted by local party organizations, dislodged them through a number of drawn-out sieges in the spring and summer of 1942. Japanese forces, now seeing the CCP as the main threat in Jiaodong, also carried out two major mopping-up operations in 1942, both of which swept into and caused great damage in Haiyang and Rushan. The Japanese abandoned large scale operations against the CCP in 1943-1944, but they still threatened Haiyang from their fortified positions in the southwest of the county, and launched periodic raids into western Haiyang throughout those years. However, CCP forces more or less controlled the larger area, and by May 1941 had established two county administrations, Rushan in the east and Haiyang in the west.⁴⁷

4.8 Effects of War: A New Party

The CCP in Haiyang/Rushan started the war with Japan in 1937 as small group of revolutionary survivors, with a shared background of mobility, loose connections to their families and communities, involvement in radical politics at a young age, and years of suffering as a result of it. Communist activities, as in the previous years, were also concentrated in the western parts of Haiyang and eastern Haiyang/southern Muping. The party, however, evolved into a very different entity by the early 1940s. The shift is highlighted by a survey of party membership by Haiyang's party organization department in June 1943. The first ever internal investigation of party membership in either county, it shows a number of startling changes in the composition of members. Membership, firstly, had grown to a number unimaginable in the prewar period. The survey notes that there were 3,982 members in the new boundaries of Haiyang alone. These members, secondly, were also dispersed across almost all corners of the county. Membership in Haiyang, thirdly, was composed of and led almost entirely by newcomers. The organization department survey notes only four members in the county who were recruited prior to

⁴⁷ HDFB, 85-88, 118-142; RDB, 118-120, 123-126, 140-143, 157.

1937. With the exception of party secretary Liu Mengxi (刘梦溪), a member with a minor role in party activities in western Haiyang prior to 1937, these revolutionary survivors did not hold senior positions in the county CCP. Of the remaining members, 3,350 joined the party from the spring/summer of 1941 on, following the CCP's seizure of power in the county. (see Appendix 2.)⁴⁸

Two other documents, the 1944 Haiyang party committee report on local CCP history and a report on party branches by the Rushan organization department in 1945, highlighted even greater contrasts between the pre-war and wartime parties. Unlike the pre-war party, which was largely composed of young men, the 1944 document complained of too many old members in some villages. In one community in southwestern Haiyang, the document notes that 17 out of the 22 members were in their 40s and 50s.⁴⁹ Rushan's organization department document makes a similar complaint, pointing out that in one village, 13 out of 27 members were between ages 36 to 60.⁵⁰ In a further reversal from pre-war trends, both documents cited a lack of teachers as members, especially at the village level. The 1944 Haiyang document, in fact, notes that teachers were often excluded from recruitment in many villages, particularly in 1941-1942.⁵¹

4.9 Dynamics Behind the Changing Membership

This shift was due to many factors. Most pre-1937 members in Haiyang and Rushan left following the death of Li Qi. From late 1938 to early 1941, they made defending and consolidating the party's hold over northern and western Jiaodong a priority. They used periods of stability for the Haiyang/Rushan party, such as the first half of 1939 and 1940, to pull out most remaining veterans from the area for this task. Among those who left

⁴⁸ Haiyangxian zuzhibu, "Haiyangxian zuzhi zhuangkuang tongji diaochaobiao" (Collective Survey Sheet of the Organizational Situation in Haiyang County), 30 June 1943, HMA, 1-1-14.

⁴⁹ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

⁵⁰ Zhonggong Rushan xianwei zuzhike (hereafter cited as ZRXZ), "Shang bannian zuzhi gongzuo zongjie" (Collective Summary of Organization Work in the First Half of the Year), 11 September 1945, Rushan Municipal Archives (hereafter cited as RMA), 001-01-0036-001.

⁵¹ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai"; ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

during this period was Liu Zhongyi, who was called north in the spring of 1939.⁵² The withdrawal of veteran organizers was so common that the Haiyang area went through a succession of seven party secretaries from late 1938 to the spring of 1941. (see Appendix 3.)⁵³ Being a party member in Rushan and Haiyang from 1938 to 1941, as in the pre-war years, was dangerous, and several veterans of the pre-1937 period met a grim fate. Desertion from the CCP, given the continual threat faced from local elites, was also not uncommon. Travel to Manchuria for work or to escape persecution was possible throughout the war, and documents note that this was frequently practiced by party members.

Large numbers of older men, combined with the lack of teachers in the party in many areas, were, to an extent, the result of natural reasons, and the basic impact of the war. Some veteran party leaders, by the late 1930s and early 1940s, had reached their early 40s, and might have recruited from their own age group. War, particularly from 1940 to 1942, had also led to the closing of many schools in Rushan and Haiyang. Party leaders during wartime also lacked educational institutions, such as the Laiyang or Wendeng Village Teacher Schools, to connect with and recruit from educators.

These changes, on a deeper level, do reflect the shifting nature and composition of the party during the war. Party members, up to 1941, were still made up largely of mobile young men detached from their families. Disruptions caused by the initial stages of the war, along with the CCP's anti-Japanese propaganda work in 1938 and 1939, in fact, fostered this. The Japanese invasion drove many such young men home, and made them susceptible to patriotic appeals put out by CCP propagandists. Zhang Weizi (张维兹), the man who became Haiyang's first CCP magistrate following the party's seizure of power, is an example. From western Haiyang, Zhang had spent years away from the county for schooling. Forced to return home from his studies at a Hebei middle school by the war in late 1937, Zhang first became a local teacher. He was involved in creating patriotic

⁵² Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 24.

⁵³ Zhonggong Shandongsheng Haiyang xianwei zuzhibu, Shandongsheng Haiyangxian shizhiguan and Shandongsheng Haiyangxian danganguan, *Zhongguo gongchandang Shandongsheng Haiyangxian zuzhishi ziliao, 1926 nian-1993 nian* (CCP Organization History Materials, Haiyang County, Shandong Province, 1926-1993) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1995), 21-23.

propaganda while in this position, and later joined Li Jianwu's militia, which was sympathetic to the CCP and secretly allowed several members to join its ranks. This put him in contact with CCP members who were teachers or members of the militia, and he was inducted into the party by late 1938.⁵⁴

Members like Zhang added to the pool of young men who later became mid-level leaders in Jiaodong and across China. They dominated the county CCP leadership in Haiyang and Rushan during the war, and like members recruited prior to 1937, frequently rose to positions in the Jiaodong and Shandong party. Some, such as Zhang, also left the Peninsula after 1949, and became senior officials in other provinces.⁵⁵ Recruitment prior to 1941 did not dramatically increase the total membership in the two counties, neither did it expand CCP presence beyond areas of the county that had been the cradle of the party prior to 1937. Young men recruited also made little impression on their communities. Often poorly attached to their native villages, they usually came and went. Some left to join CCP forces. Others fled their communities when faced with persecution. A number of party members also went to support party activities in other places. Surveys of village parties done in the later 40s often found that residents in specific communities had little recollection of their early members, or saw them only as a nuisance.

This changed following the CCP's military conquest. Seizure of the counties in 1941 gave the CCP a degree of governing authority, and its members began to use the guise of carrying out administrative functions to expand membership to new villages. The 1944 Haiyang party committee document notes that leading activists often went to villages claiming to be county government representatives. They initially did not disclose their party membership, but asked for local help in creating mass associations and militias to resist the Japanese, and used this to work with and convert those willing to take part.⁵⁶ Recruitment into the party was also fostered by another development, the increasing brutalization of local society caused by the worsening situation of the war. Following the conquest of Haiyang and Rushan party members in some villages began to attack and kill those loyal to Zhao Baoyuan's coalition. CCP forces, by early 1942, also began to cut

⁵⁴ HDFB, 351-352.

⁵⁵ Zhang, for example, became a senior official in the Fujian government after 1949. Ibid., 352.

⁵⁶ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

trade off from towns controlled by Zhao and his allies as a prelude to besieging them. Taking revenge, Zhao-affiliated forces mounted raids into villages seen as pro-Communist. They first killed or kidnapped suspected CCP members for ransom, and as the situation in the areas they controlled became worse, started to rob many communities in an increasingly indiscriminate way for supplies to withstand sieges.⁵⁷ Villagers in some parts of Haiyang and Rushan also faced Japanese soldiers, who sometimes brutalized their communities, and in other cases demanded grain, livestock and men for use in forced labour. (see Appendix 4.)⁵⁸ Outside intrusion fostered moments of unity in various villages, and brought many from various backgrounds to join CCP mass associations and later the party. They also transformed the CCP, previously a marginalized group, into a community-based organizations with greater participation by locals in many places.

4.10 A Case Study of the Impact of War on the CCP in One Village

Shimatuantou, a market town in western Haiyang, is in many ways an example of all these developments. The native place of early party leader Wang Zhifeng, it was one of the first villages in the area to have a CCP presence. Examining party history in this community in depth allows for an analysis of how the CCP expanded its membership over time, the types of people that joined it, and what factors made it successful in recruiting members.

Early party members in Shimatantou were mostly rebellious young men. They were students, teachers and migratory workers who were never fully considered insiders in the community, and they often did not stay in the village for long. Organizations formed by early members were frequently broken up when such men had to leave for study, work in Manchuria or to escape government authorities, and they made little impression on most villagers. A report on the village done by the county's organization

⁵⁷ HDFB, 121-123; RDB, 119-120. CCP local histories note that pro-Zhao forces killed hundreds of Communists and their sympathizers in raids, and in one case even wounded Zhang Ziwei, Haiyang's first CCP magistrate.

⁵⁸ HDFB, 140-141.

department in 1947, in fact, notes that locals often could not recall the full names of members prior to 1937.⁵⁹

This situation did not change much during the early years of the war with Japan. Party recruitment during the war period began in late 1937 with the arrival of Xin Ruiting (辛瑞亭), a member from a nearby village. Xin joined the party in 1933, and knew Wang Zhifeng and many members of his lineage. He stayed at a teahouse owned by one of Wang's kinsmen, and through conversations with inhabitants of Shimatantou Village who frequented the establishment recruited several men, who were either in their twenties at the time or accustomed to leaving the county for work. Some of these men joined a force in Zhao Baoyuan's coalition when it was allied with the CCP or later left for work in Manchuria, never to return. They enjoyed little success in expanding membership, and the village party branch was nearly destroyed by a raid by a Zhao-affiliated force in early 1941, which killed its secretary and sent other members fleeing.⁶⁰

Some members returned following the CCP conquest of Haiyang. They built mass associations, and attempted to recruit people into the party's military forces, but received little support from villagers. Members in Shimatuantou also faced challenges from some wealthy individuals still loyal to Zhao; they killed two of them in 1941 and early 1942. The party's position in the town, however, shifted dramatically in April 1942, as a pro-Zhao force raided it. The actions of this group altered local allegiances. Unlike previous incursions by troops loyal to Zhao, who had targeted only Communists, they pillaged the village indiscriminately, taking away large quantities of grain, over 40 head of livestock and burnt down many houses. Villagers, according to the Haiyang organization document, rallied around the CCP following this, and many joined the party.⁶¹

4.11 "Faces" of the New Membership

Who were the people who flocked into the party from 1941-1942? Gauging this is at times difficult. Unlike early CCP leaders, who have often been singled out for

⁵⁹ Haiyangxian zuzhibu, "Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu Shimatantoucun qingkuang" (Situation in Shimatantou Village, Haiyang County), December 1947, HMA, 1-1-14.

⁶⁰ Haiyangxian zuzhibu, "Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu."

⁶¹ Ibid.

biographies by later party authorities or have themselves written stories of their lives, new members were largely faceless. They appear mainly as statistics or are occasionally mentioned in documents, and are often described with class labels that do little to illustrate their actual backgrounds. The documents do suggest several things. New members, according to available village case studies, were mostly men. Haiyang's 1943 organizational department survey describes three quarters of them as literate, something that suggests that they were either from or were born into better-off families. The survey, however, notes that most members had "basic literacy" (初等文化).⁶² While what defines this category is not stated by the document, it suggests that they were not very wealthy, or highly educated, not among the higher elite. Many of the prominent elites in Haiyang and Rushan had fled the county or been killed by the CCP in 1940-1942, and given their experiences with the party over the previous decade it is unlikely that most would want to join it.

The large numbers of men in the party over 40 mentioned in documents can be interpreted in several ways. All villages described as having large numbers of "old" men as members were in areas without CCP presence prior to conquest. The Haiyang party's 1944 report notes that visiting party members, in these new places, often recruited existing local leaders. It is likely that many who joined in such cases were village elders or members of lower elites.⁶³ The absence of teachers, a poorly-paid position with little social power in villages that is often taken by young men, might also reflect another development, domination of party membership in various places by those with greater local power.

Another aspect of the new membership mentioned in documents is a concern with family responsibilities, often at the expense of duty to the party. This represents perhaps the greatest contrast with the pre-1941 party. Early CCP members were often people in troubled relationships with their families, and were quick to abandon them. This can be seen in the cases of Song Zhuting and Liu Zhongyi, the founders of the wartime party. Song, in his recollections, notes that his family, following the death of his father in 1927, was without strong parental authority, leaving his radical brother in charge. Song and his

⁶² Haiyangxian zuzhibu, "Haiyangxian zuzhi."

⁶³ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

brother bankrupted their family trying to get a radical education, and by 1935 had both left their county to become Communists, leaving their mother and Song Zhuting's sister in law in dire poverty. Song's brother later died in CCP service, something that drove their mother to commit suicide.⁶⁴ Liu Zhongyi's relationship with his family was even more problematic. Liu claimed that he was driven to radical politics due to a dispute with his family, who tried to force him to work in Manchuria to pay off a collective debt. He noted that he joined Wang Zhifeng's GMD group in 1929 due to Sun Yatsen's concept of "land to the tillers", something that he interpreted as calling for family partitions to allow individuals to escape unwanted responsibilities. Liu's family later succeeded in sending him to Manchuria, only to see him return after he got in trouble with the law. Liu joined the CCP not long after, and this, along with his rebelliousness, finally made his family agree to a partition. The partition and Liu's activities with the party drove his wife and two children into great hardship, forcing them to beg for food. Liu spent years away from his family as a prisoner. He returned to them in late 1937 only to leave a little over a year later later, not seeing his family for another five years.⁶⁵

Unlike these early CCP figures, members during the 1940s often expressed strong attachment to their families and their well-being. One village branch secretary, mentioned by the Rushan 1945 document, rejected a promotion to the county party on the grounds that it would prevent him from working on his land and paid too little to support his family. He was quoted as saying "When I first joined I was committed to working for the party, but in the last few years my family's situation has not been good. Each year things seem to be getting worse, and my wife and kids have almost starved to death. The party didn't give me any consideration for this, and now it wants to send me away? I will definitely not follow, and I will never abandon my own interests."⁶⁶

Such qualities among party members represent, in many ways, a transition for the local CCP. The party began as one of young men who were estranged from their communities, who used the CCP mainly as a tool of personal rebellion and opportunism.

⁶⁴ Song Zhuting, "Hanxin ruku," 181-184, 187-188 (see chap. 2, n. 44).

⁶⁵ Liu Zhongyi, "Yi shinian," 1, 4-5; Liu Changyuan and Liu Changze, "Huiyi fuqin Liu Zhongyi" (Remember Our Father Liu Zhongyi), in *Qilu yinglie* (Heroes and Martyrs of Shandong), ed. Jinan lieshi lingyuan (1986), 221-222.

⁶⁶ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

It was becoming, increasingly at the lower levels, an organization of communal insiders, people who joined to protect their families and interests in their villages. The party was also, in some cases, a domain for those with more established power in their communities.

4.12 An Entity Thrown Together by Circumstance

Scholars have long pointed to a critical role played by the Japanese invasion of China in shifting the fortunes of the CCP. Chalmers Johnson has argued that Japan's attack on China in 1937 swept away government in many parts of China, leaving a political vacuum that the CCP filled with its leadership of anti-Japanese resistance. Johnson contends that the collapse of government forced rural society to look for new leadership in fighting the Japanese. The political vacuum, combined with brutal Japanese attacks, Johnson asserts, also weakened traditional social ties, which had previously given rural society a fairly local-minded thinking, and made many of its inhabitants develop a sense of nationalism. The CCP, Johnson contends, took over China in 1949 because it effectively appealed to this nationalism, and was better at organizing anti-Japanese resistance than other groups.⁶⁷ Later scholars, such as Odoric Wou, though challenging Johnson's argument on rural nationalism, have also highlighted the importance of the war and the political vacuum it created in the CCP's rise to power. Wou contends that the political vacuum caused by Japan weakened old elites and military forces in society, who at first had more political legitimacy than the CCP. It also allowed CCP organizations to co-opt these groups into party controlled governments and military units and slowly eliminate their leaders.⁶⁸

The cases of Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong overall support these arguments, though they challenge them in certain ways as well. The political vacuum created by Japan did play an important role in expanding the party's base of support in Jiaodong, though it developed gradually and did not fully reach Haiyang, Rushan or most of the Peninsula until 1940. Japanese forces, prior to that time, did not establish a major presence in Jiaodong, and elites in most of the Peninsula were not weakened. They gathered together old government forces and resisted CCP efforts to co-opt or eliminate

⁶⁷ Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism*, 2-5 (see chap. 1, n. 1).

⁶⁸ Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 374-378 (see chap.1, n. 6).

them. However, the political vacuum created by Japanese invasion eventually spread across Jiaodong, sweeping away anti-CCP forces and allowing party members to establish themselves as the government in many places.

The larger vacuum in northern China formed by the war with Japan also allowed CCP forces from outside Jiaodong, such as the Eighth Route Army, to enter the Peninsula. These troops reinforced local CCP power and made the party seem like a more credible political force to Jiaodong residents. Japanese attacks during 1941 and 1942 worked with the establishment of CCP government and the arrival of outside forces to increase popular participation in the party's political activities. Atrocities committed by Japanese forces drove many communities to seek leadership to survive, and they turned to CCP organizations.

The war, however, did not create a widespread sense of nationalism. Nor did it foster strong commitment by Jiaodong inhabitants towards the CCP's cause. Japanese forces, unlike in other parts of Occupied China, did not maintain a large occupation force in the Peninsula, and their presence was felt mainly in large operations. These attacks did cause a great deal of damage to rural society, but they were not the main part of the CCP's fighting, and many battles were fought between the CCP and other Chinese forces like the remnants of Zhao Baoyuan's army rather than against a foreign enemy. Japanese attacks and predations by pro-GMD forces did push some communities to side with the CCP, and to seek its leadership in their efforts to protect themselves. Patriotic propaganda spread by the CCP had also attracted a small number of rural inhabitants, mostly young men, to the party's cause. However, rural communities did not completely abandon their old identities and embrace a new national one, and tensions created by old social ties often weakened the commitment of many villages to the CCP. Party organizations needed strategies to ensure the continued support of these communities to the CCP. The persistence of old social ties also created dysfunction in many local party organizations, whose members were composed of newly recruited members of society.

One village, Hujia (胡家村), in the northern part of Rushan county, is a good illustration of these tensions. The village, according to the Rushan organization department's 1945 report, had a new party branch that sprang up during the early 1940s, mainly due to predations by forces allied with Zhao Baoyuan and by the Japanese. Its

members, motivated by a common threat, had initially been enthusiastic supporters of the CCP. They provided great assistance in sieges against Zhao's strongholds in 1942, and were declared a "model village branch" by the county committee that year.⁶⁹

This cooperation, however, quickly broke down following the expulsion of Zhao-affiliated forces from the county. Some members, according to the document, quit the party, claiming that taking part in its activities interfered with their farm work, family responsibilities or that they had problems with other people. A struggle for power began in the village. The organization department report blamed the conflict on long-standing lineage and family disputes in the village, and traced the tension to three factions, which were composed mostly of men in their 30s and 40s. The first, termed the "Big Western Gate" (西大门) Jiang faction after the part of the village where they lived and by their surname, were members of several families who were traditionally the wealthiest in the community. They dominated the Jiang (姜) lineage, the largest in the village, made up a large portion of party members in it, and controlled village leadership through this. The Western Gate Jiangs, however, were also in economic decline, and were in a rivalry with two rising groups. One, the Gaos (高), were from a rival lineage; the Western Gate faction also faced a challenge in their own lineage from a group of up-and-comers led by a man named Jiang Dongsheng (姜东升).⁷⁰

The three factions, according to the document, fought over leadership positions in the village party, resulting in five village secretaries being ousted, and several other posts going through numerous turnovers of people. They spread malicious rumours about each other's members, attempted to use members of their factions who had risen to higher party levels to improve their local position, and in several cases even organized groups of villagers to go to the county party to denounce each other.⁷¹

The conflict unfolded in several ways. In mid 1943 Gao Ziming (高子明), head of the Gao faction, accused Jiang Zunyi (姜尊一), head of the Big Western Gate Jiang faction of corruption. Gao did this to oust Jiang, who was both party branch secretary and village head in Hujia at the time; he sent his supporters to both the local ward and the

⁶⁹ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

county parties to complain. Jiang, angered, spread rumours that Gao was a Japanese spy. He used the village's CCP militia, which was controlled by the Big Western Gate faction to arrest Gao on that charge, and beat up some of Gao's supporters. Jiang's actions, however, played into Gao's hands. It unsettled most people in the village, and caused the county party to remove him as secretary. The Big Western Gate faction suffered further loss when villagers, angry over Jiang Zunyi's actions, ousted him as village head in elections a few months later, and elected Gao instead.⁷²

The Big Western Gate faction, however, retained the position of party secretary in the village, simply replacing Jiang Zunyi with another member from their group. They fell into another trap in the fall of 1944 when the new secretary, along with the village peasant association head, another member of the Big Western Gate faction, were suddenly offered promotions to junior positions in the Jiaodong party. The document notes that this was a ruse by Jiang Dongsheng and his faction, who had members in and connections with higher party levels. This vacated both posts, which were both taken over by Jiang Dongsheng. Jiang seized the positions for a specific reason. Rushan, at the time, was undergoing a class struggle campaign, something that was organized by the peasant associations and carried out under the directions of village secretaries. Jiang sought to use class struggle to attack wealthy members of the Big Western Gate and Gao factions. This plan, however, fell apart after Gao learned of Jiang's scheme. He told members of his lineage, who escaped before Jiang's supporters could attack them. Jiang managed to attack members of the Big Western Gate faction, but this brought a backlash on him. Members of the faction in the party accused him of only attacking their group while shielding other wealthy men in the village allied with his own faction. They also used the village militia, which they controlled to try to arrest Jiang, something that the document notes forced the county party to step in and temporarily suspend the village branch and its operations.⁷³

Hujia was a successful village for party recruitment during the 1940s, and it also played an important role in helping the CCP's military operations. Kinship rivalries in the village, despite the support given by its inhabitants to the party, highlight the continued

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

existence of old social ties, and the problems faced by the party with its new-found rural support. Hujia, in addition, suggests that conflict in society could easily affect relationships between party members and erode cohesion amongst them and their commitments to the CCP's agendas. Its example, more importantly, indicate that CCP organizations in Haiyang and Rushan during early 1940s, were often relationships of convenience whose members were only brought together out of temporary needs, such as community defence against the Japanese and pro-GMD forces, and having various different agendas. The CCP was becoming a large and increasingly heterogeneous entity, and an umbrella group for various local interests and needs. Participation in the party and its agendas, as seen by the example of Hujia, was often purely voluntary, based on family and group interests. It was also frequently done for pragmatic reasons, and loyalty to the CCP by many members was often in doubt. The 1945 Rushan document raised questions on certain members in the Big Western Gate faction, noting that they had family members who had opposed the party before and been killed by its forces.⁷⁴

Villages such as Hujia represented only part of the picture for the party in the two counties. Activities of its members, despite their difficulties, suggests an overall acceptance of the party as government, and implies that more prominent individuals in the village had decided to assert their interests through taking part in it rather than opposing the CCP. This, however, was not the case everywhere. Documents, such as the 1944 Haiyang party committee and the 1945 Rushan organization department reports, still note many villages in the two counties where the party faced problems attracting members, or had never had a CCP presence. This was especially the case in the southern areas of Haiyang and Rushan, in or close to the towns previously occupied by pro-Zhao forces.⁷⁵

Both documents blamed these issues on recruitment methods prior to 1943, which they noted had focused on admitting to the party anyone willing to join rather than checking their reliability. They also blamed problems with members on a lack of political education by early party leaders.⁷⁶ This was an assessment based on the situation of the

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai"; ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

⁷⁶ Ibid.

mid and late 1940s, when the CCP in both Rushan/Haiyang and across Jiaodong was in a much stronger position militarily, and its growing strength was facilitating increasing contact between different party levels and the passing down of ideological instruction. The CCP in Haiyang and Rushan, for most of 1938-1941, was a marginal, semi-underground group that faced frequent political persecution. It was also in a war zone up to late 1942, and was in no position to pick its allies. Membership expansion in Haiyang and Rushan prior to 1943 was also influenced by many factors that were not foreseen or were beyond the control of local leaders or of the larger CCP in the Peninsula, such as the Japanese onslaught and the actions of pro-Zhao forces in specific villages. The Jiaodong party, up to the early 1940s, was also a weakly organized entity that was frequently on the move, and its policies on membership and ideological training were also in infant stages. Its focus, more importantly, was largely elsewhere; the Jiaodong party, rather than providing guidance and imposing ideological discipline, frequently pulled away the most reliable members from the two counties.

Party organizations in Haiyang and Rushan, as a result, were open to the whims of individuals, families and other groups. Contingencies of the war helped the CCP take power in the two counties, but they did not shape all areas of Rushan and Haiyang in the same way, or produce effects to foster lasting commitment to the party's cause. This, along with the marginal positions of the CCP in the counties prior to 1941, made it a weakly-integrated entity thrown together by circumstance. The position of the party, however, would change with a number of programs, which were developing with the region's higher party leadership prior to 1943 and were increasingly imposed on local party levels as the CCP's military situation improved in the Peninsula.

Chapter 5: Becoming an Organization: The Emergence of a Permanent Jiaodong Party with Ties to the CCP Centre.

In May 1938 a group of young men were wandering across Jiaodong. They were the members of Li Qi's CCP group in the eastern part of the Peninsula, who had left the area after the death of their leader in a battle against the Japanese three months earlier. The young men sought to establish contact with higher party levels, and to win over local forces in the counties they passed through. They were largely unsuccessful in this until they heard some unexpected news. Party organizers in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai, three counties in the north of Jiaodong, had achieved something that they had failed to do: use the chaos created by the flight of Han Fujun to take over local government.

A rendezvous between the followers of Li Qi and party members in Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai shortly afterwards began a bitter six year struggle for power in Jiaodong, from which a CCP base area covering most of the Peninsula would emerge. It would also be a first step in the transformation of the party, from a number of weakly-connected local organizations to a cohesive, top-down entity tied to agendas of the CCP centre. These developments marked a critical turning point in the history of the CCP in Jiaodong, but they were also in many ways controversial to the party. CCP authorities in Shandong and Jiaodong have placed heavy censorship over discussions of many events in the 1938 to 1944 period. Few personal accounts of the period exist compared with earlier stages of CCP history, and access to documents from the late 1930s and early 1940s has been heavily restricted.

The rise and transformation of the Jiaodong CCP was a human story, filled with the triumphs, conflicts and suffering of the individuals in the region's party. A desire to record their experiences, reflect on personal trauma, remember lost friends and to have the activities of some individuals and local groups recognized by the larger CCP led a few members to write recollections that defied official party silence. Among these are the personal reflections of Zhang Jialuo (张加洛), a party leader in Yexian (掖县), and the

autobiography of 1980s political dissident Wang Ruowang (王若望), a party intellectual who served as an aide to several senior CCP leaders in Shandong during the 1940s, and stayed in Jiaodong for a few months during a provincial inspection mission in 1943.

These accounts are influenced by strong personal emotions that are critical of many developments in the party during the 1938-1944 period. Some of these, such as Wang Ruowang's autobiography, were also written and published outside of China, making them free of party censorship. When viewed together with a small number of newly-available CCP documentary and archival sources and reflections on life in Jiaodong by inhabitants who fled to Taiwan, they suggest that the triumph and transformation of the CCP was the result of several external and internal factors. They were made possible by the Japanese invasion of Shandong, which led to the collapse of Han Fuju's government and created a political vacuum in Jiaodong that gave the party opportunities to seize power across the Peninsula. The political vacuum also broke the pre-war isolation of the Jiaodong party and allowed leaders linked with the CCP's centre to enter Jiaodong. These men brought ideology and centralized leadership to Jiaodong party members, and placed them under the strict rule of Mao Zedong and his followers.

Establishing centralized leadership was a slow and often brutal process for Jiaodong members. It was a clash between men affiliated with the party centre and the toughness of local leaders unaccustomed to top-down discipline, and often involved the former purging the latter. Organizations in Jiaodong began the war with Japan as groups of friends and locals. These ties were increasingly attacked by central leaders, who used violent intimidation to break down existing relationships between members and subject them to an atmosphere of terror. These methods eliminated the often volatile feuds and rivalries between party members prior to 1937, and made the CCP a powerful force with effective centralized control in Shandong. They were justified by party ideology, and taught members to act in line with ideological dictates from the CCP's central leadership. However, measures used by leaders connected with the party centre also traumatized many members, and made the 1938-1944 period a controversial time for both the larger CCP and the Jiaodong party.

5.1 Basis for the Emergence of CCP Power in Jiaodong: A Brief History of the Party in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai

Yexian, Huangxian (黄县) and Penglai (蓬莱), at the start of 1938, seemed unlikely places for the CCP to seize power. Compared to party organizations in Haiyang and Rushan, the party in the three counties had barely a presence prior to the start of the war with Japan. This was due to a number of reasons. Northern Jiaodong lacked a strong leftist influence in its GMD organizations, which radicalized a number of young men and made them supporters of the Communist party in the case of Muping and Haiyang.¹ Many of the CCP organizers in the area, prior to 1937, were also outsiders who were sent in by leaders in eastern Jiaodong such as Li Qi. These men lacked ties to local society, and ultimately failed to bring many native inhabitants into the CCP.²

CCP fortunes, however, were dramatically changed by two developments during the early stages of the war with Japan. One of these was poor local leadership. Unlike Rushan and Haiyang, Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai lacked strong leaders among their elites who could bring together various local forces and form a stable new government after the flight of Han Fujū's magistrates. Many elites from Yexian, Huangxian and

¹ Only Yexian had a few GMD radicals. However, leftist GMD members in the county were only one group in the local party, which included many conservatives as well. These men did not begin their activities until the early 1930s, when order was returning to Jiaodong and government authorities were heavily cracking down on radical politics. Actions of Yexian radicals, which included organizing anti-tax protests, incurred the wrath of Han Fujū in 1934. Han shut down the local GMD and drove off or killed most of its leaders.

Shandongsheng Laizhoushi shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Laizhou shizhi* (Laizhou Gazetteer) (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1996), 429-430.

² Party activities in Penglai and Huangxian, for example, were led by Li Housheng, a member from Zhaoyuan county in central Jiaodong. Li had joined the CCP while studying in Laiyang's Village Teacher School, and started to recruit people in the northern Peninsula when he found a teaching job in Huangxian during 1933. He was successful mainly in rallying a group of hired farm hands in Huangxian who were from his own county.

Zhonggong Longkou shiwei dangshi yanjiushi (hereafter cited as ZLKSDY), *Zhonggong Longkou difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Longkou) (2002), 19-24; Zhonggong Penglai shiwei dangshi yanjiushibian (hereafter cited as PSDY), *Penglai geming douzhengshi* (History of the Revolutionary Struggle in Penglai) (Penglai: Penglaishi xinhua yinshua youxian gongsi, 2002), 8-12.

Penglai were also discredited by their collaboration with the Japanese. Japanese forces entered the western side of Jiaodong in late 1937 by occupying Qingdao, and sought to exert control over the northern and western parts of the Peninsula. However, they lacked sufficient men to occupy any areas beyond the city, and decided to bring inhabitants in western and northern Jiaodong under their leadership with a show of force. The Japanese sent a large and heavily armed motor column into various counties in the area in February of 1938, demanding the allegiance of locals. Japanese forces did not stay or carry out atrocities, but their menacing presence forced many elites in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai to submit to their demands.³

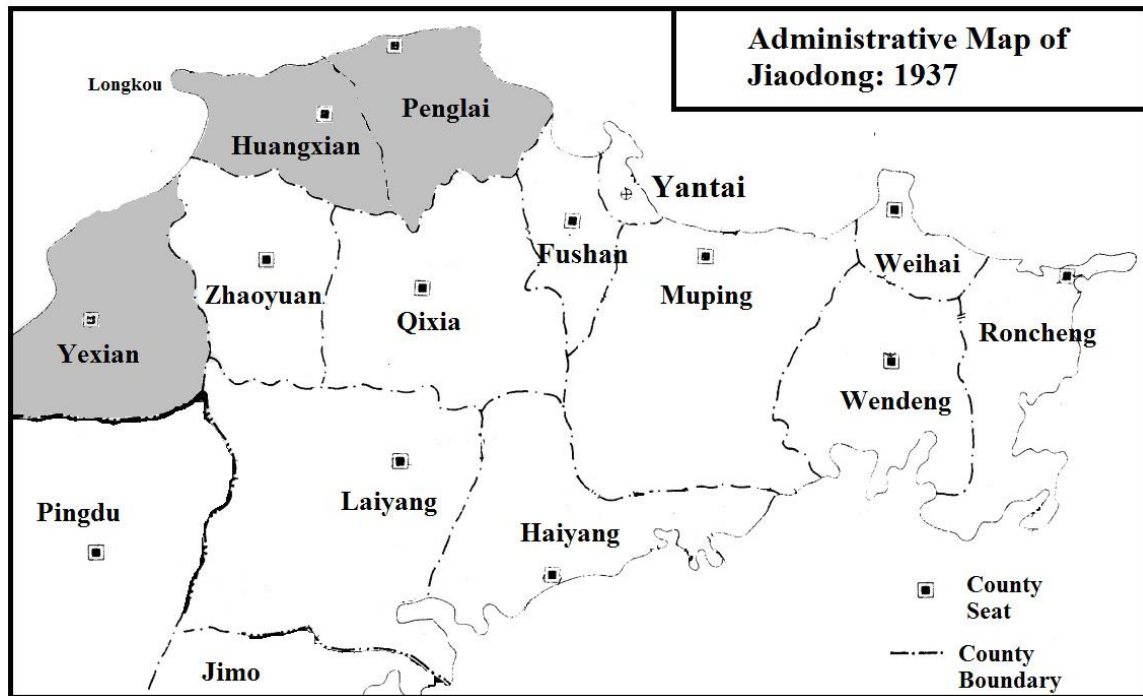


Figure 13 Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai in 1937

Source: Created based on a map from: Zhonggong Yantai shiwei zuzhibu et. al, *Zhongguo gongchandang Shandongsheng Yantaishi zuzhishi ziliao 1921-1987* (Sources on the Organizational History of the CCP Yantai Municipal Party, Shandong Province) (Yantai: Shandongsheng chubanshe Yantai fenshe, 1989).

³ Zhang Jialuo, "Zhang Jialuo wengao" (Writings of Zhang Jialuo), *Laizhou wenshi ziliao* (Materials on History and Literature in Laizhou) 16 (2004): 157-158; ZLKSDY, *Zhonggong Longkou*, 35.

Another was the sudden and unforeseen appearance of a large CCP force, led by Ma Baosan (马保三) in northern Jiaodong in April 1938. Ma, a veteran Communist organizer from central Shandong, had taken advantage of the political vacuum following Han Faju's arrest and death to recruit nearly 2,000 local peasants, bandits and militiamen in early 1938 in his area. Pushed out by pro-GMD security forces and possibly also in search of funds for his largely mercenary force, Ma headed into northern Jiaodong. He chose this area for several reasons. Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai were a strategic part of Jiaodong, and had been a major battlefield in militarist wars during the 1920s and 30s. They also had a large garrison of Han Faju's troops prior to the Shandong leader's flight, and were awash in weapons left behind by various forces. Longkou (龙口), a small port in Huangxian, also collected customs duties, and stored large amounts of cash in its revenue offices. Ma's men stayed in northern Jiaodong for less than three months before moving on to other places, but they helped to seize and solidify power in Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai.⁴

Both these developments were part of a growing political vacuum in Jiaodong and Shandong created by Japan's invasion of China. They opened the way for a seizure of power in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai by a small number of CCP activists. These were, for the large part, a different group from those of the pre-1937 period. They were natives of the counties. Most had joined the CCP during the mid 1930s, and had done so while studying in urban centres outside Shandong. These men were previously part of organizations outside the province. They were sent back to their native places around the outbreak of war after their organizations received an order from the party centre. The order anticipated disorder in the Chinese countryside in the chaos of war, and sought to exploit the situation. It called on all rural party members living in cities to return home and take advantage of the impending political collapse to increase CCP membership and build up rural base areas for the party.

Many of these activists had not been home for years, but they were able to take advantage of the situation in their counties in several ways. The start of war with Japan

⁴ Zhang Jialuo, "Zhang Jialuo wengao," 150; Zhang Zhijing, "Yexian minzhong kangzhanishi" (History of the Yexian People's War of Resistance), *Shandong wenxian* 17, no. 3 (1997): 61; Lin Jiade, "Ma Baosan" (Ma Baosan), *wenshi ziliao xuanji* (Selected Materials on History and Literature) 12 (1995): 71-78.

stirred up patriotic fervour amongst students and teachers in Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai. Anti-Japanese political activism reached rural Jiaodong in 1936 and 1937 due to the region's easy access by sea to numerous major cities in China. It led to many demonstrations by students and modern-educated people in the Peninsula's countryside in support of fighting Japan, and made them eager to join groups that promised to carry out national resistance. Some of these people were also connected to political elites in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai, and gave CCP members access to them. Returned party members were largely recruited into the CCP while taking part in anti-Japanese activities in the cities. They were experienced in spreading patriotic propaganda, and could appeal to the sentiments of many young, modern-educated people in their native counties. Some members had also joined a province-wide patriotic propaganda organization established by Han Fujun at the start of the war, or had been part of bureaucratic training programs offered by Han's government, giving them a degree of political legitimacy and leadership credentials. Returning CCP members were also helped to an extent by the party's stifled development prior to the war, which made the CCP a largely unknown entity in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai and local elites and political figures more willing to work with it.

5.2 Seizure of Power: Spring 1938

The CCP takeover of Northern Jiaodong began in Yexian. There a group of local elites attempted to assert order after the departure of Han Fujun's magistrate. Seeking to avoid bringing damage to the county, they pledged allegiance to the Japanese army when its motor convoy arrived in 1938. This collaborationist group, however, failed to win over the various security forces in the county, and asserted control only over the county town. CCP members in the county were also helped by Zhao Sentang (赵森堂), a local GMD member who played a major role in organizing patriotic activities in the county at the start of the war. Zhao in 1937 set up a patriotic propaganda organization that recruited a large number of students and intellectuals. He was willing to work with anyone to oppose Japan, and quickly formed an alliance with Communists.⁵

⁵ Zhang Jialuo, "Zhang Jialuo wengao," 154-157;

This played into the hands of Zhang Jialuo, a returned party member. Zhang entered the CCP while studying in a middle school in Beiping in 1936, and could claim both military and administrative experience. He had joined the Northeast Army for a few months in 1936 and 1937 as part of a CCP attempt to infiltrate it. Working under cover, he also took part in Han Fujū's bureaucratic training program in Jinan around the start of the war with Japan. Zhang contacted Zhao Sentang after he returned to Yexian in the late summer of 1937, and became an important member of Zhao's patriotic group. Zhang and Zhao presented themselves as a United Front organization, and through a mixture of propaganda work and appealing to lineage members managed to win a number of elites and local forces in Yexian to their side by early March 1938. They staged a daring raid on the county town not long after, disarming the collaborationist group and setting up a government dominated by themselves.⁶

The CCP seizure of Huangxian and Penglai happened more slowly. Party members there could not tap into the patriotic United Front spirit that Zhao's organization offered, and were less successful in winning over local forces initially. CCP activities began in late 1937 under a few members led by Yu Mei (于眉), a former Peking University student from Penglai. Yu, like Zhang Jialuo, had spent much of the 1930s studying away from his home county, and been active in party activities in Beiping prior to the war. Sent back to his home county in the fall of 1937, he and other members, some of whom were members of Han Fujū's patriotic organization built up a small party network in Huangxian and Penglai. They were less successful in recruiting members than Zhang Jialuo, but had several advantages. One of Yu's brothers was a former county government official with contacts with many local militia commanders. Yu's group had also recruited several teachers with ties to Wang Jingsong (王景宋), an important merchant in Huangxian and head of the county's education department, a person who would play an important role in the Huangxian's political scene later on.⁷

⁶ Zhang Jialuo, "Zhang Jialuo wengao," 158-163; Zhang Zhijing, "Yexian Minzhong," 60.

⁷ Yu Zhongshu, "Zhandou zai Aigushanxia" (Battle at the Foot of Aigu Hill) in *Jiaodong fengyunlu*, 216; Wei Maojie, "Huangxian kangzhan kanluanshi" (History of the Resistance and Suppressing Disorder Wars in Huangxian), in *Shandong wenxian* 1, no. 1 (1975): 95.

In Penglai, party members, supported by Yu Zhongshu, attempted to recruit local forces following the departure of Han Fujū's magistrate, but were overall unsuccessful until late March 1938, when a group of local elites and militia commanders, who had pledged allegiance to the Japanese several weeks earlier, proved unable to effectively govern the county or to rally other forces. These men had also invited a collaborationist unit from outside Penglai to solidify their power, something that did not sit well with locals. Yu Mei and other CCP activists in the county, taking advantage of the situation, managed to bring a number of militia forces over to their side. In a show of force in April they marched on the county town and pressured the collaborationists to surrender, seizing control of Penglai.⁸

The CCP takeover of Huangxian was the slowest. Party members in the county were very unsuccessful in building a base of supporters, but were helped by a steadily deteriorating situation in the county.⁹ Of the three counties, the political scene in Huangxian was the most chaotic. Security forces in the county, after the collapse of Han Fujū's government, degenerated into several competing armed groups, some of whom behaved little different than bandits. Disorder drove away many local elites, and fighting, along with poor leadership gradually eliminated the different factions until only one, led by former education official Wang Jingsong remained. Wang declared himself magistrate of Huangxian in April 1938, but he was not popular with many of the county's inhabitants, and his rule was backed by some of the most predatory local forces. Connected to Communists through Huangxian's network of teachers, he also made the mistake of inviting several of them into his new government. CCP members pretended to work for Wang, but secretly contacted Ma Baosan and brought his forces into Huangxian in early May. Wang was caught off guard by the appearance of Ma's army. Heavily outnumbered

⁸ PSDY, *Penglai geming*, 18-26.

⁹ Fan Xinran and Wang Weizhong, "Xingxing zhihuo: Kangzhan chuqi Huangxian kangri wuzhuang douzheng de fazhan" (Flickers of Fire: Development of Anti-Japanese Armed Resistance in Huangxian at the Start of the Resistance War), in *Jiaodong fengyunlu*, 235-236, 241. Huangxian members suffered several failures in recruiting supporters prior to taking power. A patriotic organization they set up nearly collapsed after many non-CCP members left due to personal problems with the organization's leaders in early 1938. Members in Huangxian won over some local militia forces following the departure of the magistrate, but had a hard time controlling them and nearly lost their lives when some militiamen attempted a mutiny.

by Ma's men, he was advised by Communists to welcome them and meet Ma. Ma arrested Wang immediately, and used the confusion created by the event to disarm all of Wang's forces in Huangxian. CCP members in the county set up a new government, and with Ma's men pressured the customs police in Longkou to surrender and give up their store of cash, something that helped to fund Ma.¹⁰

5.3 Consolidating Control: Spring and Summer 1938

The disarming of Wang Jingsong's men, along with the collapse of other armed groups in Huangxian, gave the CCP a firm hold over the county. However, party activists in Yexian and Penglai were reliant on alliances with various militia commanders. These men had only joined forces with the CCP because there were no strong alternative leaders to unite them. Their support, however, changed in May, with the appearance of a GMD-led coalition further south under the leadership of Zhang Jinming (张金铭). Unknown to the CCP members in northern Jiaodong, a GMD organizational presence loyal to the GMD's CC clique had been developing in Qingdao and several of its surrounding counties. Shandong's GMD had never been a cohesive body. Its provincial organization was a place of competition between different GMD factions, and was continuously harassed by Han Fujun during the 1930s. Han, hostile to any organized political force in Shandong, killed or jailed key leaders of the provincial GMD in the fall of 1935, and declared that the entire provincial organization had been disbanded later that year. The GMD in Shandong, after this, became a number of local, semi-underground organizations, some connected to factions of the central party, and others operating independently.¹¹ CC activists dominated Qingdao and several of its surrounding counties. They were able to flourish due to a covert effort in the mid 1930s, and were supported by Shen Honglie, the Northeast Army mayor of Qingdao, who ruled jointly with Han Fujun. Shen, unlike Han,

¹⁰ Wei Maojie, "Huangxian kangzhan," 95-97; Zhang Zhijing, 61; ZLKSDY, 51-52.

¹¹ *Minguo Shandong tongzhi bianji weiyuanhui, Minguo Shandong tongzhi* (Gazetteer of Shandong during the Republic) (Taipei: Shandong wenxian zazhi she, 2002), 589-592.

was not hostile to the GMD; some of his personal circle in the Qingdao government were also CC members.¹²

A major figure in the CC group, Zhang Jinming, became a middle school principal in Pingdu in the mid 1930s. Though not a native of the county, he used his political credentials to rally local elites and militias, and also undertook a perilous trip in early 1938 to seek out Shen Honglie, who had set up a pro-GMD provincial government in southern Shandong after the Japanese occupation of Qingdao. Zhang was appointed magistrate of Pingdu by Shen.¹³ He briefly headed the pro-GMD forces in the Peninsula, and demanded that county governments in Yexian, Penglai and Huangxian submit to his leadership. CCP activists in the counties refused, leading Zhang to launch a major attack on northern Jiaodong in May and June. A number of militia leaders in Yexian, seeing Zhang as a more legitimate leader than the CCP, immediately switched allegiances, but party activists in the counties were saved by Ma Baosan's men. Ma proved to be a more competent military commander than Zhang, and with CCP activists in northern Jiaodong drove back Zhang's assault.¹⁴

Zhang's futile invasion resulted not only in CCP victory, but also allowed Communist party members to tighten their control over Yexian and Penglai. The defeat of Zhang led to the destruction of several local militias who had turned against the CCP, reducing the number of armed groups in the two counties not firmly under the party's control. Fighting Zhang also gave Ma an excuse to bring his men into Yexian and purge remaining groups. This was done in July, with the sudden arrest and execution of GMD member Zhao Sentang, allegedly for conspiring with Zhang Jinming. Zhao was not a CC clique affiliate, and the charge was likely fabricated. His death also removed the last non-CCP leader in the Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai county governments. However, Zhao, like many other non-CCP local figures in the three counties who tried to vie for power, was also not popular with many of the local people. The recollection of a Yexian elite who later fled to Taiwan noted that he was an arrogant and obnoxious person with little

¹² Zhan Qinghui, "Laiyang kangzhan chuqi," 105 (see chap. 4, n. 10); Li Xianliang, "Qingdao yu banian kangzhan: er" (Qingdao and the Eight Year War of Resistance, Part 2), *Shandong wenxian* 5, no. 3 (1979): 69.

¹³ Li Mengjiu, *Shandong xiangmin*, 49-50. (see chap. 4, n. 11).

¹⁴ Zhang Zhijing, 61; ZSSDY, 147-148. (see chap. 3, n. 3).

administrative skill. Zhao had also picked a fight for power with Communists shortly before his death, which might have made CCP allegations against him seem plausible, and justified his execution.¹⁵

5.4 Unifying Party Leadership in Jiaodong: Gathering of Local Organizers and Connecting with the Party Centre

The elimination of Zhao Sentang completed the CCP takeover of Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai, in which political chaos following the collapse of Han Fujū's government and poor alternative leadership had allowed party activists to monopolize power in the three counties. The CCP's hold over Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai was tenuous, and it would lose these counties in early 1939. However, initial victories by party activists in the three counties had achieved several results. Control of the counties briefly made them a gathering point for party members across Jiaodong, and a place to coordinate their activities. This led the leadership of the Jiaodong Special Committee to set up in the area in May. Successful co-option of local forces also placed thousands of men, along with large numbers of weapons under the command of CCP organizers, and with the defeat of Zhang Jinming made the party a serious contender for power in Jiaodong. This attracted the attention of higher party levels, and led to the arrival of several Shaanxi men led by Wang Wen (王文) later in the summer.

The appearance of Wang dramatically altered the nature of CCP activities in the Peninsula. CCP organizations in Jiaodong, up to mid 1938, had been operating with only sporadic contact with levels above. They were now linked with decision-making in the CCP's highest reaches. Wang was part of a delegation sent directly by Mao Zedong to oversee party activities in Shandong. The group came through the initiative of provincial party leader Li Yu. Seeking support for CCP operations in the province, Li travelled to the party's headquarters in Yanan in early 1938, and met with Mao. Mao deemed Shandong to be critical to the CCP's operations in China, and dispatched over 50 veteran party leaders, including numerous senior figures in Shaanxi, to the province.¹⁶

¹⁵ Zhang Zhijing, 61-62.

¹⁶ Li Yu, *Li Yu huiyilu*, 149-150 (see chap. 4, n. 4).

Wang and his associates were the first of a growing number of personnel from the party centre, ranging from small groups of cadres to large Eight Route Army units, to enter Shandong from 1938 to 1940. The initial political vacuum created by the Japanese invasion had allowed passage by men from Yan'an to far off places in China during the first two years of the war. Organizations in the country's north and east were also setting up numerous base areas, something that facilitated safer movement for these travellers and increasingly linked Shandong and its various regions with the party's larger agendas. Members of Wang's group quickly inserted themselves into the leadership of organizations across the province, and he went to Jiaodong after hearing of success by local members in the Peninsula's north. Finding the regional party without central leadership, Wang appointed himself head of the Jiaodong special committee, and set about asserting control over organizations gathered in Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai.¹⁷

5.5 Strengthening Central Leadership: First Purge of Local Leaders

Previous cooperation by party members in different places on the Peninsula was often marred by local rivalries and feuds between leaders. Members in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai were a more heterogeneous group than any previous one in Jiaodong, and were quickly divided. These divisions were caused by a variety of factors. One of these was the different degrees of contact between the various groups prior to the seizure of the three counties. This was caused largely by Han Fujun's policies. Not wanting to compromise his power in Shandong, Han did not respect the United Front agreement for much of 1937. He did not release imprisoned Communists, and continued to persecute them until the war was reaching Shandong during the fall of that year.¹⁸

Members from Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai, on Yan'an orders, came back to Shandong and their native places in secret in the summer of 1937. They had different contacts with higher levels, and did not know of each other's existence. Those in eastern Jiaodong were released from prison in October and November, and returned mostly in December. All three groups lost their connections with higher levels in the chaos that followed Han Fujun's departure. Those in Huangxian and Penglai learned of the activities

¹⁷ ZSSDY, 146.

¹⁸ Lu Weijun et al., 543 (see chap. 2, n. 25).

of the eastern Jiaodong group around the turn of 1938, and had some contact with them in the spring. However, members in Yexian had only limited contact with those in Huangxian and Penglai, and did not meet leaders from eastern Jiaodong until August of 1938.¹⁹

Eastern Jiaodong members claimed to represent the regional party, and demanded submission by Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai members. They were, however, seen by some local members, particularly in Yexian as intruding strangers.²⁰ The sizes of the different groups also created tensions. Members in Yexian were more successful in recruiting members. They also built up a larger and better armed force than those in Penglai and Huangxian and eastern Jiaodong, and felt themselves to be the more dominant organization because of this. The backgrounds of the leaders in Jiaodong also played a role in conflict between different groups. Most leaders from eastern Jiaodong were either students of the Laiyang and Wendeng schools or connected to the circle of teachers and students in them. They had worked together in CCP activities prior to the war, and had almost all been jailed for this. These men were, on the whole, poorer and less educated than those in Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai. They were viewed as unsophisticated by some northern Jiaodong members, such as Zhang Jialuo, but felt themselves more dedicated party members than those in the Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai due to their incarceration prior to the war.²¹

Rivalries between CCP factions in Jiaodong prior to the war with Japan were especially bitter during attempts to unify them under one leadership, and often turned violent, notably against outsiders trying to assume leadership roles. However, Wang Wen was unlike any previous non-Jiaodong leader. A former subordinate of Liu Zhidan in northern Shaanxi, he was a survivor of the bloody purge carried out by Mao's

¹⁹ Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu" (Interview Records) *Laizhou wenshi ziliao* 16 (2004): 246-247.

²⁰ Lin Yishan, *Lin Yishan huiyilu* (Memoir of Lin Yishan) (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2004), 83-84. Zhang Jialuo, for example, refused to submit to the authority of the eastern members. This comes from the memoirs of an eastern Jiaodong leader.

²¹ Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu," 262.

subordinates on the area's party organizations in late 1935.²² Wang was possibly a member of CCP intelligence, and founded what later became Jiaodong's Social Affairs Department (社会部) not long after he arrived. Ruthless and cunning, he set about imposing cohesion in a Machiavellian manner, by playing different groups off against each other, removing their leadership, and ruling them through a small outsider minority.

Wang initially capitalized on two things, his status as a representative of the party centre, which gave him an aura of authority unlike any previous leaders, and his personal charm. Described by Zhang Jialuo in a later interview with a party historian as a cordial and pleasant person, he quickly won support from all the factions.²³ Wang blended the good will he acquired with a different leadership style. He acted at first as a person with plans rather than a hands-on leader, and was known to give general orders to subordinates, letting them work out details, and stepping in only when asked for help. This made him seem like a neutral leader, but Wang secretly favoured members from eastern Jiaodong, the smallest group. He also moved increasingly to manoeuvre their leaders into positions of power while exploiting the fears and conflicts between northern Jiaodong members.

Shortly after rallying all groups to his side, Wang played on the suspicions of the Penglai and Huangxian leaders. This group was dependent on co-opted security forces from Penglai to maintain its power, but was never fully certain of their loyalties. The reliability of Penglai forces became more in doubt after Zhang Jinming's attack on northern Jiaodong. Offering to help, Wang and eastern members organized a coup with local members against the commanders of these units in mid July of 1938, arresting and removing them from power. The act solidified the hold of Huangxian and Penglai leaders over their counties, but also placed several eastern Jiaodong party members in roles commanding local forces.²⁴

Wang next set a more elaborate trap for Zhang Jialuo's group. Calling for the establishment of a new CCP government, he convinced Zhang of the need to create separate civil and military administrations for territories under the party's control. This

²² Luo Zhufeng, "Dao Wang Wen tongzhi" (Mourning Comrade Wang Wen), in *Shandong xinwen daxi* (Compendium of Shandong News Clippings), eds. Cheng Guanglin, Zhu Defa and Wang Jingke (Jinan: Shandong wenyi chubanshe, 1999), 366.

²³ Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu," 248-249.

²⁴ Lin Yishan, *Lin Yishan huiyilu*, 83.

led Zhang to give up his political leadership in Yexian and move to the military. Wang next divided forces in the counties into two even-sized units, each with similar armaments. This measure, done in the name of military efficiency, further weakened Zhang's power, taking some men he commanded and placing them in a unit led by Huangxian, Penglai and eastern Jiaodong leaders. Wang also used the guise of administrative reform to shuffle the government and military leadership in the three counties, moving some of Zhang's allies from Yexian to Huangxian and Penglai and replacing them with members from those counties and eastern Jiaodong. In a step to further isolate Zhang, Wang shifted military units in October, bringing the one led by Zhang Jialuo to Huangxian and Penglai and the unit from those two counties to Yexian.²⁵

While doing this Wang exacerbated tensions between Zhang and leaders outside Yexian. Despite actively persuading Zhang to divide his military force, Wang suddenly took a backseat on the actual process of division, resulting in a bitter struggle for weapons between Zhang's group and members in Huangxian and Penglai. Wang next moved to convene a discussion on the make-up of the party committee for Jiaodong region, at the end of 1938. He was mysteriously absent from this meeting, which allowed the larger number of leaders in Huangxian, Penglai and eastern Jiaodong to dominate the committee and exclude those from Yexian, further fostering conflict with the latter.²⁶

Not long after this rumours began to circulate about the presence of Trotskyites in local CCP organizations. Such rumours had their origin with Kang Sheng (康生), the CCP intelligence head and his attempt to spread the Comintern line in Yan'an months earlier.²⁷ Their appearance in northern Jiaodong, which had been cut off from higher levels for a long time before Wang arrived from Yan'an suggests that he was almost certainly the one behind them. News of internal subversive elements played into the hands of party leaders from Huangxian, Penglai and eastern Jiaodong, who used it to launch a witch hunt against Yexian members in January, 1939. Zhang Jialuo, in his recollections, noted that eight of his subordinates in the Yexian government were

²⁵ Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu," 250-253.

²⁶ Ibid., 251, 257-258.

²⁷ Byron and Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon: Kang Sheng - The Evil Genius Behind Mao - and his Legacy of Terror in People's China* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 142-144

executed, and a number of others tortured, with the purpose of getting them to admit that they were Trotskyites.²⁸

The purge of Yexian leaders happened mainly in the county itself, where a large number of leaders from Huangxian, Penglai and eastern Jiaodong were based after Wang's shuffle and enjoyed military dominance. The elimination of major party figures in Yexian severed Zhang Jialuo's connections with his home county, and he was also increasingly isolated in his own unit. Zhang noted that officers from eastern Jiaodong under his command were trying to keep information from him, and he fell in to a trap by them less than two months later. In March Zhang's commissar, who was from eastern Jiaodong, began to circulate a notice that the Jiaodong party was asking for senior cadres to volunteer for training in Yan'an. The commissar asked Zhang and two of his key associates to submit their names as a show of support to the party, claiming that many other leaders had already done so. Zhang and his allies found out that they were selected to go to Yan'an, and were sent off.²⁹

Zhang Jialuo's personal reflections suggested that he and his subordinates were treated almost like prisoners. They were guarded by armed members from eastern Jiaodong, and were not entrusted with weapons or money, making escape difficult.³⁰ Four months afterwards Yu Mei, the most senior party figure in Penglai and Huangxian was also sent to Yan'an.³¹ Yu had taken part in the purge of Zhang's subordinates, and was on better terms with Wang Wen.³² Wang might have persuaded him that this was a promotion, and Yu was sent officially as a delegate for the CCP's 7th party congress.

²⁸ Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu," 258.

²⁹ Ibid., 256-257, 259. Zhang claimed to have met a Shaanxi subordinate of Wang Wen in Yan'an in 1943, who told him that training in Yan'an was a simply trick to remove him from Jiaodong.

³⁰ Ibid., 263. This whole story comes from Zhang Jialuo's efforts during the 1980s to rehabilitate members of his party group who were purged in early 1939. Zhang, who was the victim of a number of other political campaigns under Mao Zedong, openly protested the treatment of Yexian members. He was supported by party authorities in Yexian, who wanted greater recognition for the contributions of local Communists to party history in Shandong. Zhang achieved his aims at the end of the decade, having all purged leaders and their reputations rehabilitated.

³¹ ZSSDY, 173.

³² Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu," 254. Zhang Jialuo mentioned that Yu was behind torturing some of his subordinates.

However, Yu, like Zhang Jialuo, had also been moved away from his close associates by Wang's shuffle in 1938, and men he had previously commanded were now led by members from eastern Jiaodong. His exit removed the main party figure in Penglai and Huangxian, and may have been a plot by Wang and eastern leaders against local members in the counties.

5.6 Significance of Wang's Purge

Zhang Jialuo, Yu Mei and other leaders did not return to Jiaodong until the late 1940s, and their departure effectively eliminated the local leadership in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai. Wang Wen and leaders from eastern Jiaodong dominated power in the regional party. Party members from the eastern Peninsula filled positions in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai as well as commands in military units vacated by local members, and a number of other leaders from the eastern Peninsula, such as Haiyang's Liu Zhongyi, were later brought north for this purpose. They would form the core leadership in Jiaodong for the next two years.

Wang's purge marked the first step in the transformation of the Jiaodong party. It established the basis for a top-down organization. Organizations in Jiaodong were still only vaguely ideological at the time of Wang's purge. Despite the "anti-Trotskyite" justification for the removal of Zhang Jialuo's associates, only a few leaders had serious knowledge of the ideological line of the party. Zhang, in his recollection, noted that many of his supporters who were purged did not even know who Trotsky was.³³ The purge, like earlier disputes between party members, was fuelled mainly by local animosities. Now it was no longer simply personal conflict between groups of young men, but involved manipulation of different groups through organizational methods and a new leadership style. Wang's tactics broke down the various groups in Jiaodong and integrated them into a new top-down structure, and they largely succeeded. The absence of Zhang Jialuo caused some members from Yexian to either leave the CCP or defect to pro-GMD forces in other counties.³⁴ However this was only a minority. Members originally tied to Zhang Jialuo were now split up into different organizations and units, making large scale

³³ Ibid., 255.

³⁴ Ibid., 260.

defections difficult. Fear created by the Trotskyite purge might have also convinced them, as well as other party members in the three counties to stay with the CCP.

Wang's purge, combined with his staffing of major party positions with eastern Jiaodong leaders, also established a cohesive leadership. Eastern Jiaodong leaders were from several counties in the Peninsula, and were not without differences and animosities, but they were strangers in Huangxian, Yexian, and Penglai, and did not have strong ties with the large body of local members they led. These men were also not connected to local society, and this, along with their acts against members in Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai, forced them to act together to support higher party agendas imposed by Wang Wen. The presence of eastern party leaders also served to enforce discipline on local members. These men, due to their earlier violent revolutionary activity and imprisonment, were some of the most brutalized leaders in the regional party. They were willing to use harsh methods to keep local members in check, something that further reinforced party cohesion.

5.7 Retreat and Expansion: 1939-1941

The purges of Zhang Jialuo's men took place at a time when the northern Jiaodong base area was under attack. In the fall of 1938 Date Junnosuke's collaborationist army, which had been built up by the Japanese around Qingdao, pushed north. Attacks by collaborationists were at first weakened by the defection of Zhao Baoyuan, Date's main subordinate. They did not seriously challenge the CCP in the three counties, and even played into Wang Wen's manipulation. They kept Communist forces in the counties, including Zhang Jialuo's regiment, busy, and likely distracted him from the arrests and executions of his men in Yexian. However, by the second half of January 1939 the military situation was turning against the CCP. Date's forces seized the county seats of Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai by mid-February, and drove Communist forces into the hills to the south.³⁵

The CCP lost control over most of Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai, but was given an opportunity for expansion elsewhere. Date's army, while pushing north from Qingdao,

³⁵ ZSSDY, 157-159, 174

scattered Zhang Jinming's pro-GMD forces to the south, expanding the political vacuum in Jiaodong and spreading it to parts of neighbouring Pingdu, Zhaoyuan, Qixia and Laiyang counties, which had previously been controlled by Zhang's allies. The sudden advance of the collaborationists also forged a brief unity between the CCP and pro-GMD forces in other parts of Jiaodong. Communists allied with these groups, as well as the newly-defected collaborationist Zhao Baoyuan, to defeat Date between March and June. The alliance allowed the CCP to enter parts of counties abandoned by pro-GMD forces, and also to briefly take back parts of Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai.³⁶ Cooperation with pro-GMD forces also led them to permit Communist party members to operate openly in non-CCP controlled areas, and likely allowed Wang Wen to complete his take-over plan, using the improving military situation of the party in Jiaodong to whisk Zhang Jialuo and other leaders off to Yan'an in the spring of 1939.

This victory was brief. By the fall of 1939 CCP forces in Jiaodong began to face Japanese troops. Northern Jiaodong was used by the Japanese as a staging ground for mopping-up operations and the occupation of the Peninsula. Their forces quickly occupied Yexian, Huangxian and Penglai, pushing the CCP back from gains in the counties, and also advanced on areas that the party had taken over in Jiaodong's interior.³⁷ Communist forces also faced a revived pro-GMD coalition in the south, led by Zhao Baoyuan, which was turning against them. However, defeat, as in earlier that year, also brought the CCP new opportunities. The Japanese military build-up in Jiaodong focused on securing county towns and towns near major motor roads, which were all controlled by Zhao and his allies. This made them, rather than the CCP, the main target of Japanese attacks, and mopping-up operations against pro-Zhao forces in early 1940 created an even bigger vacuum across the Peninsula.

³⁶ Ibid., 174-179.

³⁷ Ibid., 180-181.

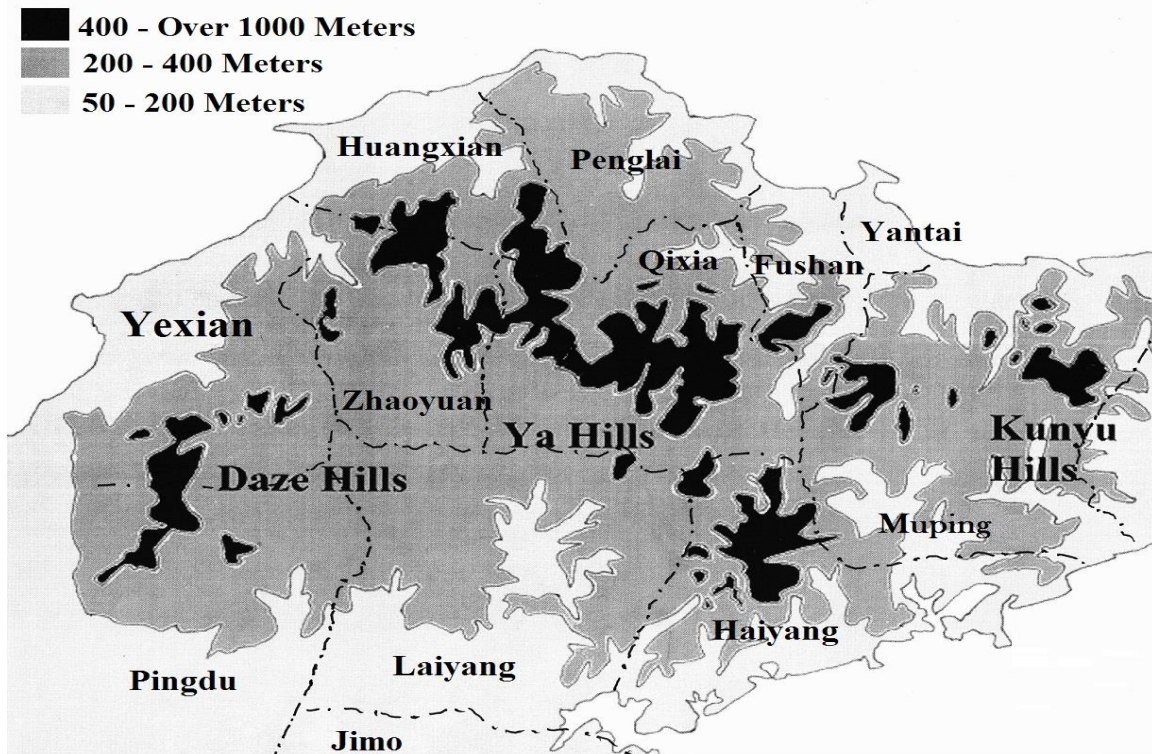


Figure 14 Topographical Map of the Jiaodong Interior in Meters Above Sea Level

Source: Created based on maps from: Zhonggong Yantai shiwei zuzhibu et. al, *Zhongguo gongchandang Shandongsheng Yantaishi zuzhishi ziliao 1921-1987* (Sources on the Organizational History of the CCP Yantai Municipal Party, Shandong Province) (Yantai: Shandongsheng chubanshe Yantai fenshe, 1989); Yantaishi jiaoyu kexue yanjiuyuan, *Yantai dili* (Geography of Yantai) (Beijing: Xinshijie chubanshe, 2006).

It was around this time that the CCP leadership in Jiaodong received an unexpected visitor, provincial party leader Li Yu. Li came as a military official. He had been ordered by Mao in 1938 to give up his position as Shandong party secretary to Shaanxi delegates, but was retained as a major figure in the provincial CCP, and became commissar of CCP forces in Shandong.³⁸ Li's appearance marked a change in CCP strategy in the province. Party organizations in western Shandong, as in Jiaodong, had been struggling for control of territory throughout 1939 against Japanese and pro-GMD forces. They were strengthened in their position by units of the Eight Route Army's 115th and 129th divisions by the end of the year, and were ordered by Mao Zedong to go on the offensive, seizing territory that was easily defensible as a first step to consolidating party

³⁸ Li Yu, 154.

control in Shandong. Li came as part of the provincial party's efforts to relay and coordinate this strategy to local organizations. He devised a plan of action with Jiaodong leaders to achieve military expansion in early 1940. Li noted that the regional CCP, after its flight from Huangxian, Yexian and Penglai, had moved into three chains of hills in Jiaodong's interior, Ya (牙), Daze (大泽) and Kunyu (昆嵛). He argued that these hills were of strategic value to the party, containing terrain that made it difficult for the Japanese to launch mopping-up operations, and could serve as springboards for future CCP military expansion into numerous counties in the Peninsula. Li ordered regional forces to make seizing the hills a priority, and promised that help in the form of experienced Eighth Route Army units was on the way to Jiaodong.³⁹

Li's promise of outside forces was premature. The situation in both Shandong and north China was worsening by early 1940, as the Japanese dramatically bolstered their garrison forces and aggressively asserted control over many areas, making travel difficult. Military support, in the form of Xu Shiyou and small unit of Eighth Route Army troops, did not enter Jiaodong until late 1940, but the situation in the Peninsula was providing many opportunities for military expansion. Communist forces used the vacuum generated by Japanese mopping-up operations to move in and consolidate their control over the Daze and Kunyu hills in the first half of 1940.⁴⁰ They were blocked, however, from taking control of the Ya chain, which covered Qixia and northern Haiyang by pro-Zhao forces, who had regrouped in the area by the fall of that year. The party took control of the area only after a major offensive by Xu in the spring and summer of 1941.

5.8 Establishment of the Jiaodong Base Area

The seizure of the three chains of hills created the basis for a secure CCP area of control in Jiaodong. Military challenges for the party were far from over, and 1942 would be the hardest year for it during the war with Japan. Japanese forces, seeing Communist gains in the previous year, now viewed the CCP as their main threat, and turned their attention towards eradicating it. The Japanese launched several operations on the Ya, Daze and Kunyu hills and the CCP also had to contend with the remnants of Zhao's forces. Tapping

³⁹ ZSSDY, 199.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 196-199.

on ties he had built up in the Japanese army prior to his defection, Zhao entered into semi-collaboration with it. He retained his GMD affiliation, but worked with the Japanese to fight Communists, and was left unmolested by their attacks.⁴¹

However, control of the crucial chains of hills allowed CCP forces to weather these assaults. The hills were rugged and porous, slowing down Japanese operations and letting main bodies of CCP troops slip away from them. Stretching across Jiaodong's interior, they also allowed Communists to launch hit-and-run operations on numerous counties in the peninsula, tying down Japanese troops and picking off Zhao Baoyuan's weakened forces. CCP troops managed to hold this situation until 1943, when defeats in the Pacific forced the Japanese to withdraw much of their force from the Peninsula to deal with the Americans. They used the vacuum created by the Japanese pull-out to go after Zhao Baoyuan in 1944, driving him out of the Peninsula.⁴² CCP forces gained military control over most of Jiaodong by early 1945.

A secure base of operations also gave the CCP room to develop. The collapse of Zhao Baoyuan's army, along with the weak Japanese presence in much of Jiaodong, made the party the only governing authority in much of the Peninsula. This led to a dramatic expansion in membership as people in many places began to interact with their new political leaders. The CCP on the Peninsula began the war with Japan as a few hundred released prisoners, returned students and their allies. Their numbers grew exponentially with Communist successes in 1938 and 1939, but the early 1940s saw the largest numerical expansion of party membership. Communist members rose from 16,000 at the start of 1940 to over 50,000 by 1945. Safe areas of control also allowed the party to do something more important, develop and refine a system for controlling members. This would bring about another brutal stage in the transformation of the Jiaodong party.

5.9 Mechanisms of Control: A Theoretical Analysis

Kenneth Jowitt, in his 1992 work *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*, has argued that Leninist parties, which the CCP is a variant of, are a curious mixture of arbitrary leadership backed by ideology, emphasis on a corporate party identity amongst

⁴¹ Ibid., 190-192, 245-255.

⁴² Ibid., 214-217, 255-257, 294-295.

members, and "impersonal" procedures. Jowitt defines "impersonal" procedures as formal practices in an organization that reject personal favouritism between its members, and argues that they can be found in organizations in western liberal societies as well as Leninist parties. However, he argues that impersonal procedures in Leninist parties differ greatly from those of western societies. Jowitt contends that procedures in the West are governed by clearly stated and impartial rules that apply to all members, and organizations that use them can be divided into religious and military types, which stress a strong emotional devotion to the organization and a corporate, institutional identity amongst their membership, and civilian secular types, which lack this component.⁴³

In contrast to these, Jowitt notes that Leninist parties are secular organizations that lack clear civilian and military distinctions. They are governed not by impartial rules, but secular ideologies that often function both as objective tools for viewing the world and religious beliefs that are followed without question. Jowitt asserts that ideology served to justify the unchecked power of leaders. These leaders also used the formal, impersonal procedures of the party to weaken existing personal ties of members, and to foster an emotional, self-sacrificing devotion to the organization amongst them that is similar to religious institutions or the military. Formal procedures, Jowitt asserts, condition members to view the party as their main source of loyalty. They also induce a new mode of interaction between them that is public and superficial in nature rather than personal, and creates a distrust by members towards confiding secrets with each other. Jowitt argues that the various elements of Leninist parties are kept together through manipulations of ideology. He contends that leaders in such organizations maintain power through creating an "official line", a policy guide and worldview for the party based on its ideology that is enforced through its procedures.⁴⁴

Jowitt does not go into detail about procedures used by Leninist parties to regulate members, but his theory is an effective framework for viewing CCP organizational development in Jiaodong. Fostering cohesion in the Peninsula's party was an attempt to break down local, personal and other ties between members through the imposition of

⁴³ Jowitt, *New World Disorder*, 1, 4 (see chap. 1, n. 21). Examples of military and religious organizations that Jowitt mentions as having a strong emphasis on corporate identity include Jesuits and the US marines.

⁴⁴ Jowitt, 10-21.

formal procedures. These procedures, which contained a mixture of educational and coercive elements, made members feel increasingly isolated, and forced them to submit to arbitrary higher authority within the CCP. Procedures used by the CCP were guided by the official party line of the party and its often hazy world-view and political categories for individuals. This world-view justified the suppression of any dissent to arbitrary authority that was caused by relationships between members. It also made them feel frightened about their personal pasts and involvement in any activities that could be seen as opposing the CCP and its agendas by the higher leadership. Formal procedures were never truly "impersonal". They were carried out mostly by party members from Jiaodong, who always had their own interests and ties. These procedures, because of the rough nature of the early Jiaodong CCP, also constantly targeted young men who had fiery tempers and unpredictable behaviour. Enforcing formal procedures, therefore, often involved a great deal of manipulation by higher leaders, and frequently exploited relationships and rivalries between members. However, such procedures, over the long run, made members express their conflicts and ambitions within the policies of the official line. They also made members fearful of being blamed for misinterpreting party policy.

These practices were not native to party members in Jiaodong. They were pushed through by men with close ties to Mao Zedong, the CCP's rising leader, or endorsed by him, and constituted the imposition of a new system of intra-party relations from Yan'an and of Mao's ideological line. Carrying out formal procedures in the party had a logistical element. Mao's line was a constantly developing world-view for the CCP and organizational strategies for running the party. Enforcing it required a secure communications link between the party centre and regional leaders in Jiaodong to pass on the nuances of agendas and strategy. Doing so in an expanding organization whose members were spread out in numerous places in Jiaodong required means for the regional party leadership to extend its ideological and disciplinary reach to grassroots membership, and specially designated personnel to facilitate this task. This developed into a growing organizational apparatus with several layers and numerous components.

5.10 Mechanisms of Control: Origins

Yan'an-affiliated leaders began efforts to enforce disciplinary procedures amongst party members in Jiaodong, but they were not the first ones to advocate strengthening intra-party cohesion through impersonal procedures. Earlier leaders, such as Li Qi, the ill-fated head of the CCP in Jiaodong from 1936 to 1938, had made similar calls prior to the war with Japan. Li, in a directive in 1936, argued that existing party membership in the Peninsula was heavily dominated by people who were pulled into the CCP by friends, family ties and those seeking personal gain, and advocated the creation of formal disciplinary procedure and ideological training mechanisms to counter these behaviours. He called on leaders at the regional level to engage in constant investigations of the party membership, their backgrounds, and for lower organizations to regularly submit information on their members for higher scrutiny. Li also advocated developing ways to punish and weed out members who were not strongly committed to the agendas of the party. He, in addition, called for increased ideological study by local organizations, and asked the Jiaodong regional party to create official publications, outlining the ideological line of the larger CCP and passing them down to members to facilitate this task.⁴⁵

Efforts by leaders such as Li led to the creation of "organizational" personnel in many of the party groups in Jiaodong, who were given the task of maintaining records on party members in their groups and assisting in personnel investigations by higher levels. Some party groups, through use of local printing presses and purchasing of basic printing equipment, also produced educational publications. These earlier measures were largely superficial in nature. Li and other leaders prior to 1938 were not high-level representatives of the CCP, but lower underground workers who had never been in sustained contact with the party centre. They had only a vague idea of the practices of the CCP centre based on limited directions they received from it, and did not have stable channels of communications to gain up-to-date guidance on the party line and more specific instructions on how to control members. Li and other leaders also lacked the charisma and cunning to weaken local groups and their leaders, who often behaved independently of higher authority. Constant persecution from governments opposed to

⁴⁵ Li Qi, "Jiaodong tewei," 430-431, 439-444 (see chap. 3, n. 73).

the CCP, in addition, frequently disrupted the activities of these men. Li, in fact, was arrested by Han Fujun's government within a few months of issuing his directive and spent a year in prison. He was killed fighting the Japanese three months after he returned to Jiaodong. Party publications, due to frequent arrests of their organizers, often collapsed not long after they began, and organizational leaders usually did little more than keep a list of people who were CCP members in their groups.

5.11 Mechanisms of Control: Initial Phase, 1938-1940

This situation began to change in mid 1938, when a steady stream of leaders from the party centre were entering Jiaodong, and the political vacuum in north China following Japan's invasion was facilitating easy contact between different CCP areas and Yan'an. Wang Wen began the first true efforts to foster cohesion. His shuffling and purge of leaders in northern Jiaodong broke down local ties in the largest and most powerful groups in the Peninsula, and placed their members into organizational groupings where they were mixed with outsiders and less independent of higher authority in the CCP. Wang's purge, which was done in the name of eliminating Trotskyites, also introduced the party line to Jiaodong members, and used it to justify the assertion of arbitrary higher authority. "Trotskyite" was an ambiguous term, which could mean enemy agent, deviator from the official party line, or having bad personal qualities. Fear of Trotskyites, according to studies published in China, was started by Kang Sheng, head of CCP intelligence in early 1938 as a part of an effort to push Stalin's political line on the CCP. Kang was a Soviet-educated CCP leader, and had just returned from the USSR after years of exile from China. He was alleged in studies from the PRC to be trying to assert the supremacy of Soviet-educated leaders over those who were not, and sought to use the Trotskyite fear to discredit Mao Zedong.⁴⁶

Kang, these studies claim, used the false testimonies from Soviet show trials during the late 1930s, which claimed that Trotsky was in league with Japan, to allege that all those supportive of him were Japanese spies. He first used the charge of Trotskyite

⁴⁶ Wang Kan, "Kangzhan shiqi de "sutuo": yige buneng bushuo de wenti" (Anti-Trotskyism in the Resistance War Period: A Question that cannot be Ignored), *Zhonggong Zhejiang shengwei dangxiao xuebao* 4 (2003): 91.

against Mao, who advocated reconciliation with the Chinese Trotsky movement led by Chen Duxiu. However, the term and its connotations became part of Mao's political line after he gained dominance over Soviet-educated leaders in late 1938, and morphed into conspiracy theories about Trotskyite Japanese spy networks within the CCP. It also took on numerous additional meanings that were beyond identifiable support for Leon Trotsky and his political views.⁴⁷

The term Trotskyite was spread by party figures from Yan'an to other CCP-controlled areas over the course of 1938. "Trotskyite", when it reached Shandong, became associated with a large number of behavioural traits, social backgrounds as well as personal histories of party members. A document from the Shandong provincial party in 1940, for example, defined the term as people in the party who were "headstrong", refused to listen to criticism from their party peers, had been punished for misbehaviour by their superiors or were unhappy after being punished. These groups, the document argues, were susceptible to recruitment from Trotskyites due to their backgrounds, and could all be considered potential spies in the party.⁴⁸ Being labelled "Trotskyite", because of its alleged connections with Japanese espionage, was an offense that was punishable by death. Hazy definitions of the term fit well into the purge of Zhang Jialuo's men in Jiaodong, who were disgruntled by Wang Wen's personnel shuffles and leadership appointments. By allowing people to be persecuted simply on the basis of personal background and sentiments, they would also become convenient justifications in future attacks against local networks of members and efforts to break down personal ties between them.

⁴⁷ Wang Kan, "Kangzhan shiqi de "sutuo", 91; Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenyang sheng qilaide: Yanan zhengfeng yundong de lailong qumai* (How the Red Sun Rose: An Examination of the Origins of the Yanan Rectification Movement) (Xianggang: Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 2011), 362. Scholars such as Gao Hua argue that Mao never advocated reconciliation with Chen Duxiu. He simply permitted Kang Sheng to spread the Moscow line on Trotskyites into the CCP and later appropriated it for his own use.

⁴⁸ Liu Juying, "Kaizhan chujian yundong: zhengqu kangzhan shengli" (Begin the Anti-Traitor Movement: Seek Victory in the Resistance War), in *Shandong geming lishi dangan ziliao xuanbian* (Selected Archival Materials on Revolutionary History in Shandong), Volume 5, ed. Shandongsheng danganguan and Shandongsheng shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1982), 279-280.

The 1939 purge of leaders in Yexian marked another shift in the practices of the Jiaodong CCP. It was fuelled by local and personal animosities, but was carried out through manipulation of formal procedures of arrest and interrogation. Wang, shortly before the elimination of Zhang's allies, had formed a "protection bureau". The bureau, later renamed Jiaodong's "Social Affairs" department, was intended to root out spies and traitors in the party, but became a tool of terror against Zhang Jiahua's group. Members of the bureau, composed of party activists from eastern Jiaodong and Penglai, launched a number of arrests of Zhang's subordinates in Yexian and his military unit as a part of the purge. These men were beaten, hanged by the hands, and were forced to admit that their friends and locals in the Yexian organization were Trotskyites, something that justified executions and further arrests.⁴⁹

The "protection" or "social affairs" service was only part of a larger organizational apparatus and formal procedural mechanisms for managing party members, which was being created by Wang Wen. Wang, not long after he arrived in Jiaodong, placed all organization personnel under the control of a regional organizational department that he directed. He also gathered all members with knowledge of printing into one regional party press, which produced educational publications for all lower organizations. The press created a variety of materials, starting with *Dazhongbao* (*Mass Gazette* 大众报), an inner-party newspaper, in the late summer of 1938. Wang also established a party school for training CCP leaders in Jiaodong in the basics of Marxism Leninism and the latest directives of the party line, which he at first headed.⁵⁰

The significance of these organizations was not what their name implied, or what tasks they were officially designated to do, such as hunt down spies within the regional CCP or educate members on party ideology. They were guided not by clear rules or consistent directions on what constituted treason or ideological education, but by the vague concepts of Mao's party line. Manipulations of the party line by leaders affiliated

⁴⁹ Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu," 254-255.

⁵⁰ Chen Jiang, "Dazhongbao jishi" (Annals of *dazhongbao*), in *Jiaodong fengyunlu*, 509-510; Zhonggong Yantai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhui (hereafter cited as ZYSDZZYW), *Zhonggong Jiaodongqu dangshi dashiji* (Great Record of Events on the Party History of the CCP Jiaodong District) (hereafter cited as *ZJDD*) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi ziliao chubanshe, 1990), 1938.

to Mao often turned these organizations into tools of repression and control, and they were used together to launch an increasingly fierce attack on the existing relationships amongst Jiaodong party members. However, their effects on the larger membership prior to late 1940 were limited. Many of the components of the Jiaodong party apparatus were still at an early stage of development. The "party school", for example, began as a small and dilapidated building in Huangxian, and gave training to very few members. Loss of northern Jiaodong in February of 1939 and the constant movement of the Jiaodong regional leadership over the next two years also frequently disrupted efforts to enlarge and strengthen disciplinary organizations. The party school and press, for example, were nearly wiped out when most of their staff were caught or killed in a Japanese raid in late 1939.⁵¹

Senior leaders in Jiaodong also had a hard time maintaining contact with members outside their area of operation in northern and central Jiaodong. The eastern Peninsula was an example. Members who were left behind when most of their comrades decided to head west had only intermittent communications with the regional party due to their unstable relations with pro-GMD forces that occupied the area. Attempts by the Jiaodong regional leadership to send cadres to lead them in 1938 and 1939 often ended in disaster, with these men either being caught by pro-GMD groups or forced to flee. The disruption caused by the Japanese operations in early 1940 also led the regional leadership to lose touch with most organizations in the area during the entire first half of the year.⁵²

Without sustained interaction with the regional party or strong mechanisms to control them, many local party organizations continued to exist as groupings of individuals bound together by personal and local ties. Even in some areas where strong personal relationships between members had been weakened by Wang Wen's purge new ones emerged. The death of Yu Lang, the magistrate of Yexian in 1940 was an example. From eastern Jiaodong, Yu came to Yexian with party members from the area in 1938,

⁵¹ ZSSDY, 172-173; Chen Jiang, "Dazhongbao jishi," 514-515.

⁵² ZSSDY, 194-197; Donghai diwei zuzhibu, "Yijiu silingnian bageyue lai dangde zuzhi gongzuo zongjie baogao" (Summary Report on Eight Months of Organization Work in 1940), 1940, Shandong Provincial Archives (hereafter cited as SPA), G024-01-0200-001.

and was appointed magistrate of the county by Wang Wen's shuffle of party leaders.⁵³ Yu's appointment was meant to break up local and personal ties amongst members in Yexian, and he might have had a role in the purge of Zhang Jialuo's men in 1939. However, he was a very charismatic person, and built up many local connections in Yexian over time.

Yexian was lost to the CCP for much of 1939 and 1940, and switched hands several times between collaborationists, pro-GMD forces and the Japanese. Yu Lang was out of touch with the higher party for much of this time. He was a resourceful leader and managed to preserve the party organization due to his local ties. He expanded membership during these hard times, and even humiliated pro-GMD commander Zhao Baoyuan when he briefly occupied the county in mid-1939, by persuading many prominent people in Yexian to reject or criticize Zhao's rule.⁵⁴ Yu's relationships and isolation, however, got him in to trouble in the summer and fall of 1940, when the regional CCP secured firm control over the Daze Hills, which covered parts of Yexian, and could interact with him regularly. Yu was a fiery-tempered man, and had strong sense of pride in his activities prior to mid 1940. This led him to constantly reject criticism by superiors, and he was also devoted to friends who had allowed him to survive in Yexian.

Yu's downfall came in September of 1940, when he refused to arrest several subordinate party members for corruption. This might have been a plot by the regional leadership to reassert control over the party organization in the county by eliminating some of its key figures under false charges. Faced with a lack of cooperation from Yu, they decided to make an example of him. Yu Lang was arrested shortly afterwards. He was supposed to be questioned by regional party leaders, but in a show of defiance, Yu escaped from captivity through ties in the local government. Yu went on the run for a few weeks, but showed up in his native county in October, where he demanded a chance to demonstrate his loyalty to the CCP. He was executed shortly afterwards for his actions.⁵⁵

⁵³ Yu Kun, "Wode dage Yu Lang" (Yu Lang, My Elder Brother), *Weihai wenshi ziliao* (Materials on History and Literature in Weihai) 9 (1995): 91.

⁵⁴ Yu Kun, "Wode dage," 91.

⁵⁵ Xiao Yu, *Ah Taifushan: Yu Lang de beige* (Ah Tianfu Mountain.....: Yu Lang's Sad Song) (Xianggang: Zhongguo yingshi wenyi chubanshe, 2002), 284-286.

The death of Yu Lang created a commotion amongst members both in Yexian and Wendeng, his native place, and was an embarrassment for the regional CCP leadership.⁵⁶ Yu's escape from custody in many ways demonstrated the weak grasp that the regional leaders had on many local areas, and strong personal ties between members, which often exceeded loyalty to orders from higher, arbitrary authority within the CCP. It also highlighted the rebelliousness and unpredictability of many party members, something that had been a major hindrance to cohesion prior to 1937, and continued to exist.

5.12 Mechanisms of Control: Expansion, 1940-1942

Comprehensive efforts to impose formal procedures on members could not begin until the CCP had created a stable area of operations. This started in the fall of 1940, when the party secured most of the main hill chains in Jiaodong, and was being reinforced by Eighth Route Army regulars. Attempts to foster intra-party discipline was also aided by the arrival of Eighth Route Army leaders to Shandong and Jiaodong. These men were tasked by Mao with military expansion and rallying all organizations in Shandong towards this task, and gradually used the authority associated with it to take over key positions in the party across the province. Eighth Route Army figures dominated the Shandong CCP leadership by 1943, and Luo Ronghuan (罗荣桓), commander of the Eighth Route Army's 115th division, the largest Communist force in the province, became its party secretary.⁵⁷

In Jiaodong, the arrival of the Eighth Route Army in 1940 brought a large group of outsider leaders to the Peninsula; they had few ties with the native members, but needed their obedience and unity to accomplish the party's military objectives. Military needs, along with the ascendancy of Eighth Route Army commanders to senior positions in the regional party, led to an aggressive effort to expand control mechanisms over party members, and to bring them in line through attacking their existing relationships and ties.

Eighth Route Army commanders quickly pushed aside Wang Wen. Wang was likely losing favour in Yan'an due to his non-military background, and lost his position as head of the regional party in October of 1940. His significance in the Jiaodong CCP

⁵⁶ Xiao, *Ah Taifushan*, 358.

⁵⁷ Gao, *Hong taiyang*, 466.

faded in the next three years, and Wang also became gravely ill, dying in 1943.⁵⁸ This paved way for the rise of Lin Hao (林浩), a military leader as the head of the party in Jiaodong. Lin was a native of eastern Jiaodong, but had no ties with the CCP movement in the area. From a wealthy family, he left the Peninsula for schooling in the early 1930s, and had been outside until 1940. Lin joined the CCP in a middle school in Jinan in 1933, and was a major party leader in western Shandong. He entered the Eighth Route Army in 1939, and went to Jiaodong in the fall of 1940 to help local forces prepare for an offensive against Zhao Baoyuan.⁵⁹

Lin was ordered by Eighth Route Army leaders in the Shandong provincial party to support the activities of Xu Shiyou, commander of CCP forces in the province's east, and to create a more cohesive party organization in Jiaodong to support Xu's military needs. This responsibility gave him political clout in the Shandong and Jiaodong military establishment, which was made up of many Mao loyalists, including Xu Shiyou, and led him to take over Wang Wen's position.⁶⁰ Working with other Eighth Route Army leaders, he strengthened control over party members in Jiaodong in a methodical but calculated manner. The CCP, up to early 1943, was engaged in heavy fighting against pro-GMD forces. They also faced a powerful Japanese threat, and could not afford to create panic in members through a sudden and heavy-handed enforcement of discipline. Cases, such as Yu Lang's death, had also demonstrated the unforeseen consequences that sudden disciplinary action might provoke from the tough men who formed leadership in many lower organizations. Eighth Route Army commanders moved slowly at first, laying the

⁵⁸ Zhang Qishan et al., "Wang Wen tongzhi zhandou de yisheng" (Comrade Wang Wen's Life Long Fight), in *Guangzhao qianqiu: Shandong geming lieshi shiyixuan* (Illuminated for a Thousand Years: Selected Great Deeds of Shandong's Revolutionary Martyrs), Volume 7, ed. Shandongsheng minzhengting (Jinanshi: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1987), 72-73.

⁵⁹ HDFB, 354-355 (see chap. 3, n. 1).

⁶⁰ Wu Bilian, *Xu Shiyou heta yijia* (Xu Shiyou and His Family) (Shenyang: Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 1998), 51, 158-168; Xu, *Xu Shiyou shangjiang*, 22 (see chap. 4, n. 46); Zhang Yaduo, Ma Yong and Yan Shenjun, *Yidai mingjiang Xu Shiyou* (Great General of a Generation: Xu Shiyou) (Beijing: Jiefangjun wenyi chubanshe, 2005), 9; HDFB, 355. Xu, according to official histories and his own memoirs, was closely tied to Mao since the late 1930s. Mao personally intervened twice to save Xu from two internal party purges, including during the early Cultural Revolution. Xu even received the name Shiyou from Mao.

foundations for a strong disciplinary apparatus to control members. They did so by expanding the organizations and procedures established by Wang Wen. Lin, in a directive to Jiaodong party leaders not long after he became regional party head, called for increased inspection of lower levels. A part of this strengthening of supervision was the establishment of formal "investigative" committees, starting from the highest level of the regional party to carryout investigations on all CCP members across Jiaodong. Lin also argued that party organizations must be simplified to better facilitate inspection of members, and called for reducing the number of levels in it. He, in addition, ordered greater ideological instruction for members, and the creation of lower-level educational organizations.⁶¹

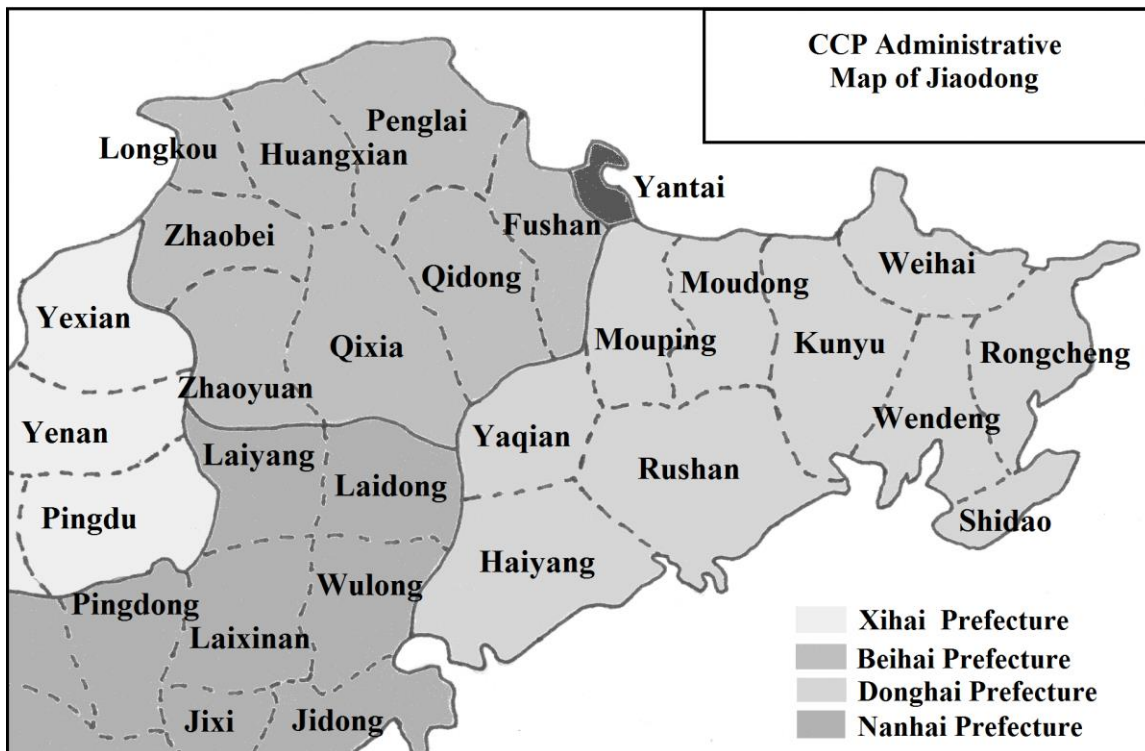


Figure 15 New Administrative Boundaries in Jiaodong Under the CCP

Source: Created based on a map from: Zhonggong Shandong shengwei dangshi yanjiushi, *Zhonggong Jiaodong difangshi* (CCP Local History in Jiaodong) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2005)

⁶¹ Lin Hao, "Jiaodong dangde jianshe wenti baogao tigang" (Draft Report on Party Construction in Jiaodong), in *Jiaodong Fenghuo* (Beacon in Jiaodong), ed. Zhonggong Yantai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhui (1990), 30-34.

Behind this was a manipulation of the various elements of party organization and procedures to break up ties between members and carry out purges. Investigative committees were composed of a mixture of organizational bureau and social affairs department personnel, and Lin stressed the need for close cooperation between the two organizations. They were to encourage party members at different levels to inform on each other, and to arrest suspected Trotskyites through the investigation process. Inspections were accompanied by reforms to the party structure in Jiaodong. The regional CCP leadership, in the years prior to 1940, had experimented with a multi-layered party organization for directing members across Jiaodong, which had as many as eight levels. Lin created a simplified system with five levels, regional, prefectural, county, ward and village. This structure substituted some of the layers by redrawing the administrative boundaries of Jiaodong. It increased the number of counties in the Peninsula, but also created larger higher level party organizations with more people to manage them. Larger organizations served the efforts to increase cohesion in multiple ways. They concentrated higher party personnel, and made it easier to investigate, indoctrinate and purge them.⁶²

Investigations started at the higher levels of the party in late 1940. They at first concentrated on securing organizations that could be used to enforce discipline. Lin, in his directive, had called for investigations to begin in the party's security organization.⁶³ This organizational structure was still rudimentary at the time, and Lin, under the pretext of improving security work, replaced its head and several senior positions with Eighth Route Army commanders. These leaders soon began arresting lower figures under the guise of investigations, accusing them of being Trotskyites. They next detained leaders in the party press, organization department and party school. Purges in these organizations gave Eighth Route Army leaders control of organization and procedures that could be used to attack the larger membership, and they began to extend investigations and arrests to all party levels in 1941.⁶⁴

⁶² Lin Hao, "Jiaodong dangde," 30-36.

⁶³ Lin Hao, 30.

⁶⁴ Wang Ruowang, *Wang Ruowang zizhuan* (Autobiography of Wang Ruowang) (Hong Kong: Mingbao chubanshe, 1991) <http://www.wangruowang.org/57.htm>.

Many intra-party documents on the investigations and arrests that followed are still restricted, but one critical source is available, the autobiography of later dissident Wang Ruowang. Wang was a long time party intellectual, and was sent from Yan'an to help administer party affairs in Shandong in 1942. As an aide to the province's Social Affairs Department head, he went to Jiaodong in early 1943 and investigated the purges carried out by regional Eighth Route Army leaders and their victims. His work suggests that many of those who were targeted by investigation teams at lower levels were leaders of local organizations that were never well integrated in to the regional party. Amongst those purged were several leaders in a party network in northern Pingdu (平度), a county in central western Jiaodong. This group was started in 1937 by Luo Zhufeng (罗竹风), a former Peking University student who returned to his home county after the outbreak of war between China and Japan. Luo built a small military force in Pingdu in late 1937 and 1938. He was described by Wang Ruowang as an outspoken man, and had a background that made him suspect to those in higher authority. Luo came into contact with larger CCP groups first through Zhang Jialuo's Yexian organization, and played a role in helping Zhang take over power in the county. Luo was described by Zhang in his recollections as a friend and ally, and his group, like the one headed by Zhang Jialuo, at first refused to accept the authority of the eastern Jiaodong dominated regional party committee.⁶⁵ The group operated in the Daze Hills, a strategic area.

The Jiaodong regional leadership at first relied on Luo, appointing him magistrate of Pingdu and his allies to important positions in the CCP county government, but turned against them in late 1941. Luo and a number of senior party figures in Pingdu were arrested. They were tortured, kept in squalid conditions and some were executed.⁶⁶ Positions vacated by Luo and his allies were filled by party members from nearby counties. The purge of Luo's group reduced the native leadership in northern Pingdu so much that a later CCP report noted that three quarters of the members of the county level party and government in 1944 were non-locals.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Zhang Jialuo, "Zhang Jialuo wengao," 152.

⁶⁶ Wang Ruowang, *Wang Ruowang zizhuan*.

⁶⁷ Pingbei xianwei zuzhike, "Yinianlai zuzhi gongzuo zongjie" (Summary of One Year's Organizational Work), February 1945, SPA, G024-01-0208-003.

Investigations initially went slowly, and were not carried out in many parts of Jiaodong due to unstable military situations, but the effects of investigations began to be felt by members over time. By 1942 they had reached all CCP occupied areas of the Peninsula, and were done once every three months.⁶⁸ Investigative teams at first did not detain many, but their activities often provided justifications for further arrests, which led to the detainment of many party leaders over time. Investigators encouraged members to inform on each other, exploiting conflicts between them, and used a mixture of intimidation, physical abuse and trickery on some to get them to denounce others, including friends as Trotskyites. Wang Ruowang's autobiography notes that interrogators sometimes fooled detainees into thinking that their friends had informed on them, or told them that they would be released if they denounced others or confessed to being Trotskyites. Security men also used forms of torture, such as driving nails under a person's finger nails and mock executions, to breakdown detained members and get them to give false confessions. People who were detained were often traumatized, and anyone who was arrested for a long time faced an even harsher fate.

The Jiaodong security service during 1941 and 1942 often moved to avoid Japanese mopping up operations, and established no permanent prisons. Those arrested for being Trotskyites were often crammed together in filthy makeshift detention areas, such as open air animal pens or grain stores. They were also put on grim marches, often in bad weather as security services shifted to different locations. Wang Ruowang noted that being imprisoned for a long time was as good as a death sentence; how many died during captivity is not known.⁶⁹

Investigators tried to question all members across Jiaodong, but targeted leaders the most. A document from Jiaodong's regional organization department in early 1943 noted that all leaders from the ward level up in the Peninsula were investigated at least

⁶⁸ Jiaodongqu Donghai diwei zuzhibu, "Jiugeyue lai zuzhi gongzuo zongjie (1941.10-1942.6)" (Summary of Nine Months of Organization Work: October 1941 to June 1942), 1942, SPA, G024-01-0200-002.

⁶⁹ Wang Ruowang, *Wang Ruowang zizhuan*.

three times.⁷⁰ Party leaders were continually scrutinized by investigators over their personal history and activities in the party, and 500 of them, mostly from the county, regional or prefectural levels, were also arrested from late 1940 to the end of 1942.⁷¹ Though many of these leaders were released, one group, composed of members of higher security and party press organizations and local leaders such as Luo Zhufeng, were detained indefinitely. Investigations and arrests had a long term effect. They gradually intimidated members of organizations that had been fairly independent of the regional party leadership prior to 1940, and removed their leaders. Leadership in some of these organizations were replaced with outsiders, while others were cowed. Eastern Jiaodong party members who dominated the regional leaderships were also placed under heavy pressure. The anti-Trotskyite purges reached a peak in the fall and winter of 1942, when 16 detained party leaders were executed for being Trotskyites.⁷²

Lin Hao likely ordered the executions to further intimidate party members and enforce greater obedience to the authority of Eighth Route Army leaders. His actions, however, were halted by the party centre in early 1943. Central leaders stopped the anti-Trotskyite purges not out of concern for their excesses. Documents suggest that the central party leadership in Yan'an was aware of what its representatives were doing in Jiaodong for years, but did not intervene. A directive from the party centre to the Shandong provincial leadership in the spring of 1939, for example, praised the purge of Zhang Jialuo and his key subordinates by Wang Wen, and claimed that it was an important step in unifying control in the Jiaodong party.⁷³ Central leaders simply wanted the Jiaodong regional leadership to follow the command of a new provincial party committee formed in western Shandong. The CCP in Shandong, up to late 1942, had lacked a centralized leadership. Power in the provincial party was shared between several

⁷⁰ "Kangzhan wunian Jiaodong dangde zuzhi jianshe" (Organizational Construction in Jiaodong during the Last Five Years of the Resistance War), 1943, SPA, G024-01-0256-001.

⁷¹ Ding Longjia and Zhang Yeshang, "Shandong kangri genjudi de "sutuo" wenti" (Anti-Trotskyite Question in the Shandong Anti-Japanese Base Area), *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* (CCP Party History Research) 1 (1995): 75.

⁷² Wang Ruowang.

⁷³ Zhongyang shujichu, "Guanyu Jiaodong gongzuo zhishi" (Directive on Work in Jiaodong), in *Jiaodong Fenghuo*, 12.

Eighth Route Army leaders, who each commanded their own forces. Mao, at the end of 1942 decided to make leadership in Shandong more streamlined. He gave central decision-making to one person, Luo Ronghuan, commander of the 115th division of the Eighth Route Army. Luo was a long time Mao loyalist and one of his closest confidants in the CCP's military establishment during the 1940s.⁷⁴ He was entrusted by Mao to be the dominant party figure in the province, and took over responsibility for the entire Shandong CCP in early 1943.⁷⁵

The appointment of Luo Ronghuan as the province's most senior party figure brought a brief halt to the purges. Luo was not completely against purging dissenters in the party. However, he was concerned with preserving the military effectiveness of CCP organizations in Shandong due to the constant state of war in the province since 1937, and did not want purges to cause excesses that could ultimately demoralize CCP members and hurt intra-party cohesion.⁷⁶ Luo felt that Lin Hao, Xu Shiyong and other leaders were firmly in charge over party members in Jiaodong in early 1943, and ordered them to cease all investigations, executions and arrests. He also sent a provincial work team that included Wang Ruowang to correct the extremes of the anti-Trotskyite movement in the spring of 1943. The work team released all those who had been detained under the charge of being Trotskyites. However, the leaders who were detained for a long time, such as Luo Zhufeng, were never fully rehabilitated.⁷⁷ They were kept out of their previous positions and native places for the next several years, making them unable to influence members there.

Investigations of party members were suspended, but they were not over. Efforts of Eighth Route Army leaders over time had built an increasingly large organizational and security apparatus. These organizations, through constant investigations of members, had also produced a large body of records on them. Records on party members formed the basis for a system of personnel files; information on members would be used against

⁷⁴ Wang Li, *Xianchang lishi: wenhua dageming jishi* (On the Location History: A Record of the Cultural Revolution) (Xianggang: Niuqin daxue chubanshe, 1993), 93-95.

⁷⁵ Gao, *Hongtaiyang*, 462-466.

⁷⁶ Wang Li, *Xianchang lishi*, 122-123.

⁷⁷ ZSSDY, 287. Victims of the purge were not completely rehabilitated until the 1980s.

them in later political campaigns. The next one, party rectification, arrived not long afterwards.

5.13 Mechanisms of Control: Further Expansion Through Ideological Study, 1944

Rectification was a process in which CCP members engaged in the study of Mao Zedong's works and discussed how to apply concepts in them to issues faced by the party and to their interactions with each other. The practice started in Yan'an in late 1941, and scholars such as Gao Hua, David Apter and Tony Saich have argued that it was an effort by Mao to instill his ideological line amongst the CCP's larger membership through a mixture of group pressure and intimidation. Rectification in Yan'an, according to these scholars, had two components, one of which was study and discussion in small groups. Apter and Saich assert that rectification worked by placing party members into groups that gave them little privacy and could easily be directed by Mao's associates. Small groups forced their members to accept Mao's ideological worldview by presenting it as a moral ideal, and pressured them to confess any personal behaviours and thoughts that ran counter to it and to accuse others of harbouring similar thoughts.⁷⁸

Rectification was not simply a new mechanism of control in the CCP. It marked a shift in CCP strategies of imposing discipline among party members and asserting the authority of the Mao-dominated party centre, from Soviet style methods to more indigenous ones developed in China. Previous practices, such as the anti-Trotskyite purges, had used methods similar to ones in Stalin's Great Purge during the 1930s. They used tough coercion, in the form of arrests, torture, executions and false confessions to either eliminate or intimidate party members who were considered hostile towards the leadership of Mao Zedong and the authority of his representatives. Rectification, in contrast, was invented by Mao and his inner circle. It, on the surface, seemed like a softer form of asserting discipline over members than anti-Trotskyite purges, using group criticism and pressure rather than torture and execution to establish Mao's authority. However, terror and intimidation was always a part of the program. The threat of

⁷⁸ David Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 279-293.

punishment was applied to those who did not make self-confessions, and a constant climate of fear was created using the CCP's security service to force party members to cooperate and conform to rectification.

Studies such as Gao Hua's argue that fear was created by manipulating criticism of the higher CCP leadership and using it to justify purging and intimidating those who diverged from Mao's party line. Gao argues that Mao consolidated his line at first by denouncing existing party ideology as too dogmatic and arguing that his interpretation of Marxism-Leninism was more pragmatic. He encouraged party members to point out flaws in the party, and directed this criticism towards his rivals, such as party leaders who had been educated in the Soviet Union. When certain party intellectuals, such as Wang Shiwei, misinterpreted Mao's directives and deviated from his real intention for the campaign by criticizing inequality and authoritarianism in the party system, Mao turned rectification into a purge. The movement became a campaign to scrutinize what people said during rectification. Anyone who was even remotely seen as not agreeing with Mao's party line was accused of being an enemy spy and was interrogated by the CCP's security service. Many of those who were detained during this extreme phase of the campaign, including Wang Shiwei, were executed or died in captivity.⁷⁹

Rectification in Jiaodong mirrored many trends in Yan'an. It was, in the context of party development in the Peninsula, also an expansion of the arbitrary power of party leaders affiliated with Mao. Previous purges in the Peninsula were more conspiratorial in nature, and often involved manipulation of Jiaodong members by outside leaders who had limited power at first. Yan'an-affiliated leaders, by the time of the rectification, were firmly in charge of lower party organizations in the Peninsula, and were openly cracking down on dissenters to their rule. Rectification, unlike earlier purges, was not carried out in response to the behaviour of party members in Jiaodong. It was completely driven from Yan'an and the Shandong provincial party, and made the party in Jiaodong more closely integrated with the agendas of the CCP centre. The larger process of rectification, as in Yan'an, served as a lesson to those who diverged from Mao's ideological agendas, or dared to resist the authority of leaders who were appointed by the CCP centre to lead party members in Jiaodong.

⁷⁹ Gao, 257-282.

Implementation of rectification also marked the maturation of the formal coercive and educational mechanisms developed by Yan'an-affiliated leaders to control the Jiaodong's party membership. One of these was ideological education. Apter and Saich, in their work, argued that rectification in Yan'an took advantage of the large number of schools and educational facilities ran by the party centre and turned their classes in to small study groups.⁸⁰ In Jiaodong, expanding ideological education for party members at all levels and making it routine was a priority for Lin Hao as soon as he arrived.⁸¹ The regional CCP gradually increased the size of its party school, making it able to accommodate hundreds of students at one time, and also developed a number of lower institutions. It established, by 1943, a system of ideological education in which all party leaders from the ward up would undergo training for periods ranging from weeks to months each year at the party school, and for leaders at the village level to receive education in lower-level schools. Rectification began in these institutions. The regional leadership also organized rectification training sessions for party members from the county up to bring the process to more CCP personnel in the Peninsula by 1944.⁸²

Successful rectification also required party members to be able to study up-to-date ideological documents from Mao and the party centre, and for their leaders to quickly pick up shifts in the policy. This was a difficult task during the early 1940s due to Jiaodong and Shandong's distance from Yan'an. The Japanese were also increasing their presence across north China during this period and were aggressively attacking and trying isolate all CCP held areas in it, making the movement of internal party materials difficult. Party organizations in Jiaodong, since the arrival of the first wave of leaders from Yan'an in 1938, had been receiving radio equipment from the party centre.⁸³ Radios allowed regional leaders to receive directives, but they could not effectively transmit large texts, such as study documents. Ideological materials had to be delivered largely on foot from Yan'an to Shandong. They were relayed by couriers between different CCP-controlled areas in north China, and were delivered to Jiaodong by a province-wide intra-party postal system. This system began in Shandong during the late 1930s, and included

⁸⁰ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse*, 225-242.

⁸¹ Lin Hao, 34-35.

⁸² "Kangzhan wunian Jiaodong."

⁸³ ZYSDZZYW, *ZJDD*, 64. The first of these radio sets came with Wang Wen in 1938.

several dozen courier stations across the province by 1943. These stations operated both openly in CCP controlled areas and covertly in Japanese-occupied locations, and had armed guards to protect special materials.⁸⁴ They reached into all parts of Shandong and became increasingly effective in delivering documents by 1944, allowing materials from the provincial party to be sent to regional organizations within four to five days.⁸⁵ Speedy transmission of documents allowed the CCP leadership in the province to rely on newspapers produced by the provincial party and various regional organizations to transmit directives and policy shifts that year. These were delivered by couriers. Documents from the provincial leadership around the time began to call on lower leaders to rely on these sources for instruction rather than actual directives. Rectification was heavily dependent on these mechanisms; they were used in tandem with security organizations and organizational departments to intimidate party members.

The process of rectification started much later in Jiaodong than in Yan'an. It was not carried out in a systematic manner until early 1944. The party education system and the courier network were not well developed prior to then. Shandong, before 1944, had a large Japanese presence, which hampered movement of documents between the province and Yan'an. The Eighth Route Army leadership in Jiaodong and Shandong at first carried out rectification in a moderate way, avoiding many of the harsh tactics that were used in Yan'an by central party leaders. They did so for several reasons. Provincial and regional leaders, when they first entered the province and the Peninsula, were outsiders. They were initially eager to use the central party line, such as on Trotskyites, to seize power from unruly local party figures and crush dissent, but were firmly in charge by 1944. Party leaders did not see a need for further intimidation to gain compliance from lower members, or to create an atmosphere of fear behind rectification. Nor was there significant resistance to rectification voiced by lower leaders. Many party members, after previous purges, were aware of the dangers of challenging Yan'an-endorsed leaders and

⁸⁴ Wang Yi, "Huiyi Shandong zhanyou de jijianshi" (Remembering Several Things about the Wartime Postal System in Shandong), in *Huadong zhanshi jiaotong tongxin shiliao huibian: Shandongjuan* (Compilation of Historical Materials on Transportation and Communication: Shandong Volume), ed. Shandongsheng youdian guanliju (Beijing: Renmin youdian chubanshe, 1997), 395-409.

⁸⁵ Chen Yi, "Dangbao de fanxing gonzuo" (Work on Transmitting Party Newspapers), in *Huadong zhanshi*, 129.

their agendas. They also realized that the party line could easily be used to justify repression against them, and were afraid to be seen as violating it.

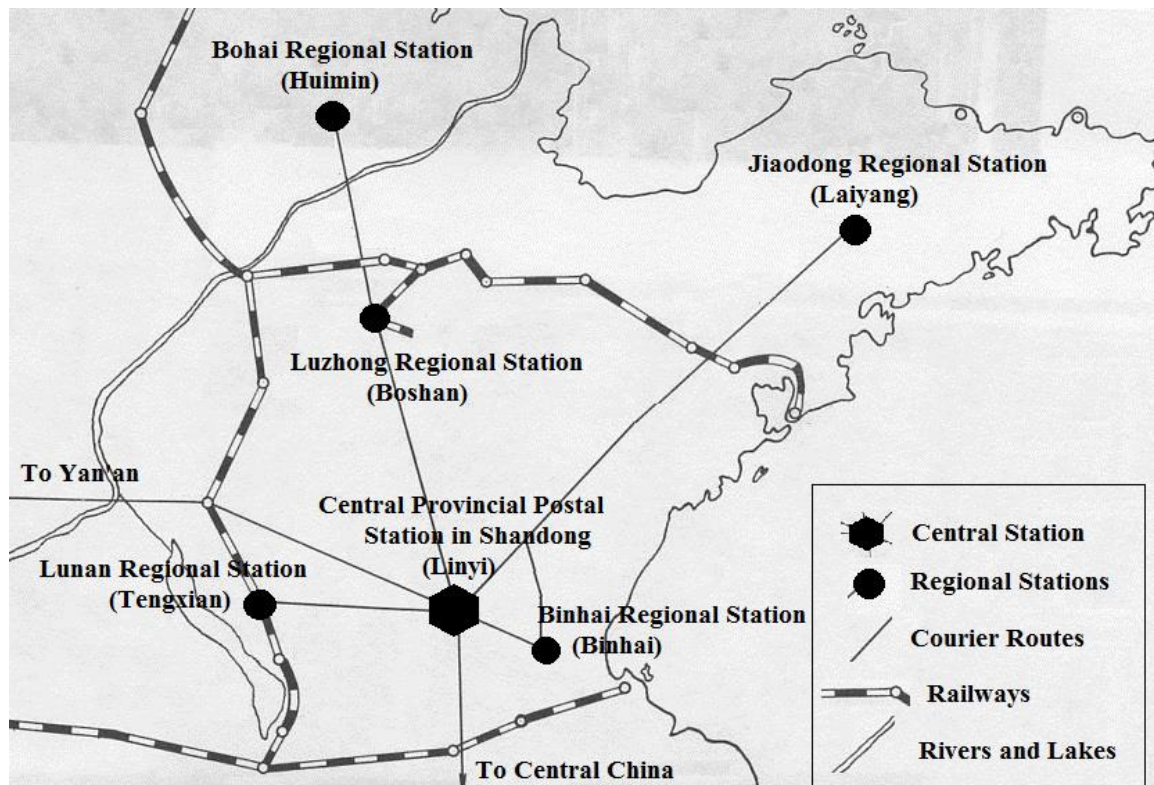


Figure 16 Shandong's Courier System at the Height of its Operation in 1946

Source: Created based on a map from: Shandongsheng youdian guanliju ed., *Huadong zhanshi jiaotong tongxin shiliao huibian: Shandongjuan* (Compilation of Historical Materials on Transportation and Communication: Shandong Volume) (Beijing: Renmin youdian chubanshe, 1997).

This moderate stance by provincial and regional party leaders, however, quickly changed during the fall after the actions of Wang Ruowang. Wang had been a critic of party policy during the initial phases of the Yan'an rectification. An intellectual, he was a friend of Wang Shiwei and some of the other major victims of the Yan'an campaign. While he was in Yan'an Wang Ruowang also helped to organize a wall poster that was used by intellectuals to criticize the larger party system. Criticisms in the wall poster Wang organized were later used by Mao as an excuse to turn rectification into a campaign of intimidation. Wang Ruowang evaded persecution from Mao because he was

sent to Shandong before the most brutal phase of the Yan'an rectification. Not fully understanding what rectification was about, he decided to criticize his superiors again.⁸⁶

Wang was not a careless critic who was unaware of the limits of dissent. He tailored his criticisms to what he thought was the spirit of rectification, Mao's criticisms against ideological dogma in the party and calls for pragmatism. Wang Ruowang used Mao's early comments during the Yan'an rectification, as well as careful praise of Mao himself, to criticize a number of practices amongst senior party leaders in Shandong, such as the low input they gave to subordinates in decision making process as well as their handling of the anti-Trotskyite purge. Being from Yan'an he was able to use the rhetoric of rectification better than Shandong leaders, and his criticism at first caused a panic amongst many of them. Provincial leaders, realizing that Wang Ruowang was from Yan'an, suspected that they were out of favour with Mao, and that criticisms from Wang were the first step of a conspiracy to persecute them. Frightened, they accepted Wang Ruowang's criticism for several days while trying to contact Yan'an and find out if the party centre had turned against them. Submission by provincial leaders towards Wang Ruowang's comments also led some lower figures in the provincial party structure to criticize them, but this situation changed after the party centre responded to provincial leaders, saying that it still supported them. The party centre also pointed to Wang Ruowang's connections with Wang Shiwei and other victims of the Yan'an rectification, and suggested provincial leaders should take action to root out dissenters like him.⁸⁷

Provincial leaders were angered by Wang Ruowang. They were also alarmed at their subordinates criticizing them, and quickly initiated harsh tactics to crackdown on dissent. Rectification was turned into a hunt for alleged traitors and spies, and used many organizational, coercive and educational mechanisms to intimidate lower members. Wang Ruowang was denounced by party newspapers for his criticism, and he was labelled Shandong's Wang Shiwei. Newspaper articles demanded that all CCP organizations use rectification to root out traitors like Wang Ruowang; they were spread by the party's postal service to all parts of the province. Rectification began in party

⁸⁶ Wang Ruowang.

⁸⁷ Wang Ruowang; Huang Yao, *Zhongguo yuanshuai Luo Ronghuan* (China's Marshall Luo Ronghuan) (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1998), 446.

schools and training classes, reaching to other CCP organizations over time, heavily monitored by investigative committees that were formed years earlier.⁸⁸

Criticisms of party policy in Shandong, unlike in Yan'an, were almost non-existent before Wang Ruowang. The harsh phase of rectification, for the larger part, tried to force people to confess to treason or denounce others through aggressive methods. In one organization at the provincial level, members of a small group were hounded for days by superiors to produce traitors. They were not allowed to do anything else, and finally found a traitor when a member, tired of constantly being forced to confess, made hostile comments about the CCP. Those who were accused of being traitors were interrogated by investigative committees. Charges against them were sometimes compared with personnel records produced by earlier membership investigations to determine their guilt. Rectification reached Jiaodong in November of 1944, and instantly caused a frightening effect. In one case, many students from the region's party school ran to CCP secretary Lin Hao's residence, weeping at his doorstep. They claimed that their lives were in danger from investigative committees, and begged him for mercy.⁸⁹

This terror was made worse by the arrival in the Peninsula of a group of men from Yan'an who quickly took up positions in the educational and security organizations. Some of these, according to official party histories, were outsiders who were hardened by their experiences in the CCP's wartime capital and felt little closeness with members in the Peninsula. Others were associates of early Jiaodong party leaders, including Zhang Jialuo and Yumei who had been either tricked to go to Yan'an or were sent there in 1938 and 1939. Life there, according to Jiaodong members who went to the CCP's capital, such as Zhang Jialuo, was a harsh and constantly frightening experience. The policies promoted by Mao during the late 1930s and early 1940s had brutalized them. Zhang, for example, claimed that he was accused of being a Trotskyite not long after he arrived. He was investigated and faced the danger of losing his life.⁹⁰ Returning members had suffered the trauma of being persecuted. They saw Wang Ruowang, a person from Yan'an, turned into the image of the traitor, and were fearful of being targeted because

⁸⁸ Wang Ruowang.

⁸⁹ Huang, *Zhongguo yuanshuai*, 450-451.

⁹⁰ Zhang Jialuo, "Fangtanlu," 271-276.

they had spent time there. Such men, possibly in an effort to prove their loyalty to the party, were said by party histories to be especially ruthless during the campaign.⁹¹

The most brutal stage of rectification in Jiaodong did not last long. A little over a month after it reached the Peninsula it was ended by the provincial party. Official party histories published in China and recollections of individuals involved in rectification, such as Wang Ruowang, attributed this to Luo Ronghuan, party secretary of Shandong. Luo was cautious about the effects of rectification, and stopped the more brutal policies behind it quickly when he felt that they were becoming harmful to morale amongst party members.⁹² Victims of rectification were all quickly rehabilitated. The only exception was Wang Ruowang. Wang escaped serious punishment, but he became a pariah in the provincial party after rectification, and spent the next two years as an obscure rural teacher.⁹³

However, rectification, along with earlier purges, had achieved its effect. Party organizations in the Peninsula, in 1938, consisted of a number of feuding groups that were often autonomous from higher authority. They had become, by 1944, fear-filled and at the whim of Yan'an-affiliated leaders. Years of manipulation, purges and exile had broken down many of their existing ties and often turned them against each other. A large organizational apparatus and a set of formal intra-party procedures had also been established. The mechanisms of this organization linked Jiaodong with the provincial party and with Yan'an. They asserted pressure on party members to accept agendas dictated by the CCP centre through many ways, ranging from group discussions, ideological education and personnel investigations, and could be easily used to intimidate them.

The larger effect of these mechanisms was to strip party members of any feelings of autonomy or privacy, giving them little choice but to become committed followers of the CCP. Members, by the time of the rectification, were under increasing pressure to comply with agendas set by the party centre through methods such as group discussion,

⁹¹ Gao Hua, 470. A party member from Yan'an, for example, was said to have caused the incident where many students from Jiaodong's party school came to Lin Hao to plead for their lives.

⁹² Wang Ruowang; Huang, 451.

⁹³ Wang Ruowang; Huang, 451.

and were threatened with harsh punishment if they did not. They were also forced into superficial relationships with each other, often coerced or manipulated into accusing friends of harbouring thoughts against the party. Members were also afraid to share secrets with each other, or to go near those who were labelled by their superiors as anti-CCP. Wang Ruowang's accounts of his experiences during the Shandong rectification highlights this new mentality amongst party members. He notes that he became ostracized after he criticized provincial leaders; few people wanted to be seen in public with him. A few friends did speak to him in secret, but they often acted as his enemies during group discussions, echoing the party centre's judgment of him and showing little hesitation in criticizing him.⁹⁴

The effects of purges, rectification and organization building from 1938 to 1944 cannot be emphasized too much. Party building policies for much of the period focused on high and mid-level leaders and members in the Peninsula, mainly from the ward level up. They were only reaching into the village, the lowest level of the party at this time, which was also where most members operated. However, a cohesive, top-down party structure, which was willing to follow the commands of the CCP centre was established in Jiaodong. This structure, by 1944, was increasingly outward-looking and consolidating the power of the party in basic society.

⁹⁴ Wang Ruowang.

Chapter 6: Consolidating Local Power, Grassroots Party Control and Domination of Rural Society

Survival from Japanese military operations, combined with the creation of a more disciplined party structure at the higher levels and new mechanisms to control members, allowed regional CCP leaders in Jiaodong to move beyond military and internal matters from late 1942 on. They began to consolidate control over the populace in the areas under CCP control, and to make party members undisputed leaders amongst them. This marked a new stage in the transformation of the Jiaodong CCP. The party, up to 1942, was an organization that was constantly on the run from persecution or enemy attacks, and had little ability to influence basic society. It became, after this time, a party-state, whose members dominated the government and politics of rural Jiaodong and controlled through many means the economic activities and social lives of its inhabitants.

Kenneth Jowitt has argued that Leninist parties asserted control over societies by attacking the way they were organized, destroying existing modes of economic production and social identities. Jowitt contends that in most Leninist societies this involved the replacement of one form of group identity with another. He asserts that societies where Leninist parties took power were usually based on family, community and extended family ties. Community and family groups served as the main unit of social interaction and economic production. Successful Leninist control, Jowitt contends meant eliminating or weakening identification with these groups, and taking over their social and economic functions with organizations led by party members and directed by the larger national party. Jowitt's model applies to Jiaodong in many ways. The transformation of the CCP in the Peninsula into a party state during the mid-1940s was a battle against existing kinship and community identities in local areas, and led to a complete restructuring of social ties and means of economic support in grassroots society. CCP leaders did this through a variety of methods, ranging from administrative reform, economic policies and "class struggle". These measures destroyed old ties by turning

people against community and kinship elites and ultimately each other, and made them increasingly reliant on a new party-created village administrative apparatus, where their social and economic activities could be regulated and led by party members.¹

Breaking down existing social relationships was not easy. Attempts by party leaders to do this benefitted from the fraying of some of these ties by the war with Japan, but tensions created by the war and natural conflict between kinship groups in many rural communities also hampered the CCP's efforts to restructure society and made social responses to them unpredictable. Family and kinship ties affected all individuals in grassroots society, including lower party members. Higher leaders often had to break down these relationships amongst its grassroots personnel first before moving on to the rest of society. Party state building, due to these factors, was an experimental process, which went through many twists and turns. It also had to be constantly adjusted to achieve desired results. The CCP's attempts to change society, in addition, were also heavily influenced by the political interests and ideological agendas of central party leaders during the mid-1940s, which made the whole process a complicated one.

This brings us back to Rushan and Haiyang. The two counties were once the cradle of the CCP in Jiaodong, and party state building in them from 1942 to 1945 is in many ways illustrative of the changing relationship between CCP organizations in Jiaodong and grassroots society. Archival sources from the counties also contain many individual case studies on the consolidation of party control in single villages, and they shed further light on the problems faced by CCP policy and leaders in this process.

6.1 Grassroots Party Expansion in Rushan and Haiyang: Patterns and Background Prior to Late 1942

CCP development in Rushan and Haiyang was a product of the larger party strategy for survival and expansion in Jiaodong during the early 1940s. It was also heavily influenced by the military situation in the Peninsula during the period. The two counties were administrative units that were created out of the CCP's efforts to seize strategic hilly territory in Jiaodong. The northern part of the former county of Haiyang and southwestern Muping was composed of a number of hills that were either part of or

¹ Jowitt, 27-29 (chap. 1, n. 21).

adjacent to the Ya Chain. It was a rugged and heavily wooded area, and was considered good terrain for CCP forces to hide in and evade Japanese attacks. Northern Haiyang and southwestern Muping also bordered the flatter parts of southern and eastern Jiaodong, and were excellent staging points for launching attacks on major transportation and population centres in these places. Their seizure was a major priority for the CCP in 1941. Communist forces entered the area in March of that year, and drove out Zhao Baoyuan's troops by July. Haiyang and southern Muping's geographical and strategic importance led Lin Hao, the Eighth Route Army commander who led the regional party, to make a personal inspection of the area in early 1941. Lin, following his call for reorganizing administrative boundaries, divided Haiyang and southern Muping into two new counties, Haiyang and Rushan.²

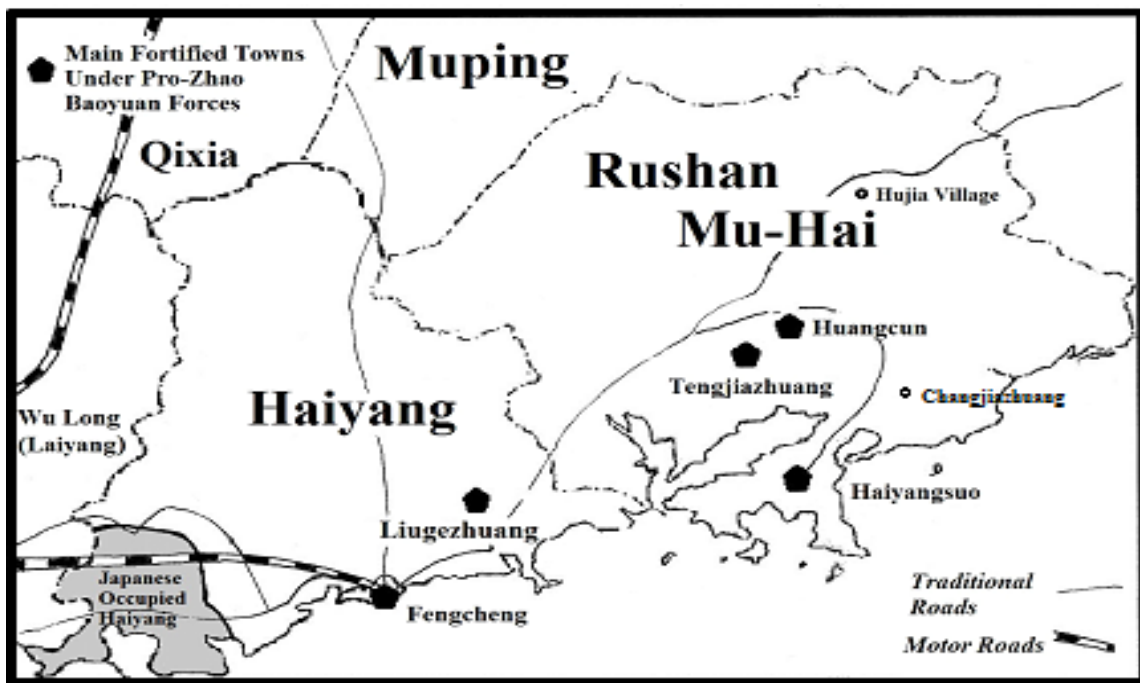


Figure 17 Haiyang and Rushan, 1941-1942

Source: Created based on descriptions from: Rushanshi dangshi shizhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Rushan difangshi* (CCP Local History of Rushan) (Xianggang: Tianma chubanshe, 2005); Haiyangshi dangshi fangzhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Haiyang difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Haiyang) (Haiyang: Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2007).

² HDFB, 87 (see chap. 3, n. 1); RDB, 88-89 (see chap. 2, n. 30).

Geography, military strategy and the presence of hostile forces played a major role in shaping and limiting party expansion in Haiyang and Rushan. The hilly areas of the two counties became the headquarters of the Jiaodong regional CCP during the 1940s. Many meetings and decisions on party building were made there. Wang Wen, the Shaanxi leader who was Lin Hao's predecessor, also fell ill and died there.³ However, the CCP's control of Haiyang and Rushan beyond the rugged areas, prior to 1944, was limited. Zhao Baoyuan and some of his allies still occupied a number of towns in the southern and central areas of Haiyang and Rushan, and were engaged in tit-for-tat skirmishes with CCP forces before the latter threw them out in the summer and fall of 1942. Parts of western Haiyang and northern Rushan also faced a long-term Japanese presence. Japanese forces, by 1943, were no longer launching major operations into CCP territory into the two counties. However, they maintained garrisons along transportation routes near the two counties, and occupied an important market town and some of its surrounding areas in southwestern Haiyang.⁴

CCP forces managed to briefly oust the Japanese from their positions in Haiyang in 1942, but were for the large part unable to seriously challenge Japanese garrisons in the two counties or surrounding areas. They were also unwilling to incur a major Japanese reprisal by launching a significant attack on territories occupied by the Japanese army. A pattern of skirmishes between the two forces, CCP sabotage operations, and Japanese retaliatory raids in the aftermath of Communist attacks ensued for the next two years.⁵ The CCP did not gain an upper hand until the summer of 1944, when the Japanese, facing a growing manpower shortage in Shandong due to operations against the GMD in south China and military needs of the Pacific War, reduced the number of garrisons in Jiaodong. They withdrew their forces from Haiyang and lessened military presence in the

³ Lu Tao, "Jiaodong xingshu zhuren Wang Wen tongzhi geming huodong pianduan" (A Section on the Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Wang Wen, Head of the Jiaodong Administrative Office), *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* (Selected Materials on History and Literature) 19 (1986): 16-18.

⁴ HDFB, 19-20.

⁵ SHXBW, 707 (see chap. 1, n. 18); HDFB, 152-182.

surrounding counties, something that allowed CCP forces to move in, destroying some left over collaborationist forces and securing all of Haiyang and Rushan.⁶

Organizational department documents suggest that the expansion of grassroots members in Haiyang and Rushan was influenced by a number of factors, ranging from the presence of members prior to 1937 to experiences of individual communities during the fighting between CCP, pro-Zhao Baoyuan and Japanese forces. However, the military situation was the determining cause behind where the party was able to expand the most during the early 1940s and where members were concentrated. Areas that were more remote in the two counties tended to have more members, while those that were in flatter areas and closer to strong points of Zhao forces and the Japanese had fewer.⁷ General perceptions of which side held the advantage and was in charge also influenced grassroots expansion. Japanese and pro-Zhao forces in more remote areas of Haiyang and Rushan were more of a menace than actual rulers. They did not directly occupy territory, and appeared largely in violent raids. People near strong points, however, had a longer history of living under the thumb of pro-Zhao and Japanese troops, and were less willing to support the CCP. They were, according to some documents, also easily frightened by rumours of Japanese or Zhao Baoyuan troops returning after their conquest by Communist forces.⁸

6.2 Challenges in Building Local CCP Power: 1940-Early 1943

Early recruitment of party members evolved around the creation of a new administrative system in Haiyang and Rushan. Haiyang and Muping, prior to CCP conquest, had six wards per county, each with a dozen townships. Each township had several villages, and the two counties had several hundred villages each. CCP leaders in the newly created Haiyang and Rushan counties, following Lin Hao's administrative reforms, removed the township as an administrative unit in early 1942, and replaced old boundaries with a new

⁶ HDFB, 207-208.

⁷ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai" (see chap. 3, n. 19).

⁸ Muhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisannian xia bannian minzheng gongzuo baogao" (People's Administration Report for the Second Half of 1943), 30 December 1943, RMA, 001-03-0003-007.

system of smaller wards and "administrative" villages.⁹ Administrative villages were larger than existing natural villages. They were created in any area that had over a hundred households within a kilometer, and sometimes merged two or three natural villages into one new unit.¹⁰ Each new ward had between twenty to thirty administrative villages; Haiyang and Rushan by 1945 had thirteen to fourteen wards each. The new administrative structure contained two components: government and mass associations. Mass associations were considered outside of government, but coordinated with it on a variety of tasks. They had a structure that was parallel with administrative villages, wards and counties and were divided into several types, including peasant, youth, farm labourers and women's associations. Each association had its own leaders, but they were under the overall leadership of a mass association head for each village and ward.¹¹

This system was formed with a purpose of allowing party members to take over local society through helping rural communities protect themselves and survive against Japanese and pro-GMD forces. Administrative villages created militias composed of local volunteers, and sent the best members of these forces to form ward and county militias. These, along with members of mass organizations, warned communities of hostile threats and assisted in the evacuation of villages in the event of attacks by the Japanese and pro-GMD forces. Militias and mass association members also took part in harassment and sabotage operations against the Japanese carried out by CCP forces, and helped to bring supplies for Communist troops besieging towns occupied by Zhao Baoyuan's allies. During lulls in the fighting the different components of the CCP administrative system also helped communities recover from war damage. They collected relief grain in lieu of taxes and distributed it to the needy, organized projects to improve irrigation and encouraged the cultivation of more land and grain to increase the food supply.¹²

Senior party leaders from the two counties, acting as agents of the new CCP government, supervised the creation of administrative villages, their governments and

⁹ HDFB, 88-90; RDB, 157-158.

¹⁰ Muhai xingshu, "Cunzheng xuanju zhanxing tiaolie" (Provisional Regulations on Village Government and Elections), 1943, RMA, 001-03-0003-003.

¹¹ RDB, 107-110; HDFB, 92-98.

¹² RDB, 98-100; HDFB, 104-106.

mass associations. Doing this allowed them to interact with many individual communities, and to carry out something party leaders had never previously been able to do: recruit people beyond their personal friendship, community and lineage networks as party members. They gradually brought many who took part in village governments, mass associations, and local defence into the CCP.¹³

Functions performed by the new administrative system, combined with the devastation caused by the Japanese and pro-GMD forces, made the CCP a credible governing authority in some village communities and encouraged many of their inhabitants to join the party. Activities such as irrigation and grain relief and encouragement of production of foodstuffs also attracted some people affected by poor weather conditions in the early 1940s. The climate in Jiaodong had mostly been good during the 1930s, but it was unpredictable from 1940 to 1942. The Peninsula went through drought, flooding caused by heavy rain, hail and other unstable weather phenomena on top of fighting; these all added further relevance to having CCP organization in many places.¹⁴

Recruitment through community defence and war recovery dramatically increased the party's presence in the Rushan and Haiyang countryside, and allowed the CCP to mobilize the populace of many villages to aid its military struggle against the Japanese and pro-Zhao Baoyuan forces. However, it did not bring most rural communities under the real control of the CCP, or create a reliable grassroots membership who would faithfully carry out the party's agendas. Existing social ties, such as lineages and community ties created great obstacles to commitment to the party. Such structures had their own leadership and interactions with outer society. Village administrations and party organizations were often plagued by rivalries of such local powers. Conflicts between members of different lineages often surfaced. They tended to see themselves as representatives of their own groups first and in conflict with each other. Tensions in village party organizations were to an extent made worse by the new CCP structure of government. Creation of administrative villages sometimes merged communities, putting

¹³ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

¹⁴ SHXBW, 93-98; Shandongsheng Rushanshi difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (hereafter cited as SRDSBW), *Rushan shizhi* (Rushan Gazetteer) Jinanshi: Qilu shushe, 1998), 109-111.

hostile groups together. Elimination of townships also made the village a more important unit of governance. It enlarged the size of administrative personnel in villages, and created a new arena of power competition for politically ambitious people. Some of these people exploited lineage tensions for their own gain, and rallied those from their own kinship groups to help them in rivalries with their enemies.

Changes in local leadership brought about by the chaotic three-way battle between the CCP, pro-GMD forces, Japanese troops and their collaborators in the Peninsula also added to the dysfunction within village party organizations. Becoming a leadership figure during this period was often very dangerous. Those who did so were forced to take sides by the different warring factions during the conflict, and were kidnapped or killed if they sided with the wrong group. Local leaders were also made to carry out tasks that went against the interests of their communities, such as collecting heavy taxes ordered by Japanese forces and those allied with Zhao Baoyuan, and by all sides ordered to report on and hunt down locals who sided with their enemies. The danger of being a local leader drove most people away from taking it; those who led their communities often did so for personal power and gain. They were prone to abuse government and mass association positions, and to feud with each other for these positions and power within their communities.

Power rivalries in villages seriously hampered CCP leaders in their attempts to successfully establish a strong party presence in every part of Rushan and Haiyang through appealing to community defence and war recovery. Participation in government and mass associations was weak in villages that were not severely threatened by Japanese and pro-Zhao troops, or had long been occupied by them. The CCP conquest of these places often ended fighting in their vicinity, and made it unnecessary to organize new village governments and mass associations for community defence. Attempts to build them, therefore, were often met with derision by locals and seen as unwanted responsibilities. Many war relief functions carried out by village governments and mass associations were previously performed by elites in these communities; they viewed the new organizations as encroaching on their social power. Elites in many such villages often worked to undermine the new administrative apparatus, and to discredit the CCP members trying to lead them and recruit locals as members. They, in some cases, even

took over the new administration, excluding CCP members. Internal party documents from the Rushan and Haiyang from the mid-1940s frequently speak of “empty villages”, which did not have a single CCP member.¹⁵

Rivalries within village party organizations and the obstruction by elites had an impact that extended beyond individual communities. They often created discord between village party members and leaders from the ward or county levels. County and ward level leaders were often people with little knowledge of or ties with most of the villages in their administrative jurisdictions. They frequently relied on specific local party members or even members of the elite in some villages for guidance when they carried out their activities, something that often led to charges by village party members that ward and county leaders were showing favouritism towards particular local factions or powerful individuals in their communities. Such charges grew worse over time as county and ward parties promoted more and more village members to expand their personnel or replace those that had been transferred to other places; this led some party factions to complain of favouritism in promotion or injury by members from rival groups who had risen to higher levels. Ward leaders, in some cases, also feared giving internal party information to village members due to their feuding or factional ties, and sometimes chose to bypass village parties and administrative organizations altogether, giving direct instructions to the inhabitants of some communities when they visited these places.

Two villages, Hujia and Changjiazhuang in Rushan, are good examples of these problems. Hujia, the village with a troubled party membership mentioned at the end of Chapter Four, highlights many of the problems plaguing grassroots party members mentioned above. The 1945 Rushan Organization Department report blamed the conflict in the village on a number of factors. One of these was long standing lineage disputes, chiefly between the once-powerful "Big Western Gate" Jiang faction, the Gaos, a minor lineage and a lesser branch of the Jiang lineage led by Jiang Dongsheng.¹⁶ The ambitions of the leading party members in the village and the demotion of some following the elimination of the township was also a factor. The chief figures in the rivalries between

¹⁵ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai"; Rushanxian zhengfu, "Yijiu siwunian shiyue zhi siliunian sanyue chajian gongzuo zongjie baogao" (Report on Reduction Work from October 1945 to March 1946), March 1946, SPA, G031-01-0304-007.

¹⁶ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian" (see chap. 4, n. 50).

party members, such as Jiang Zunyi, Gao Ziming and Jiang Dongsheng, had all served at the township level before it was abolished. They were sent home to take up positions in their native village when townships were eliminated, and soon began to feud with each other for government and mass association positions. Some of these men, such as Jiang Dongsheng, also used the ties they had built while serving in their old positions to transfer rivals away from the village.

Changjiazhuang (常家庄) a village in southern Rushan, reflects many of the problems faced by the Communists in the areas of the two counties that were conquered late by the CCP or had never seen much fighting. The community did not fall under CCP control until late 1942, and had no Communist presence prior to that. New governments and mass associations were set up in the village at the end of the year, and efforts were also made by CCP leaders in the county to attract local members. Their efforts, however, floundered in 1943 under resistance from members of the Wangs, several prominent and inter-related families in the village. The Wangs had long been a dominant lineage in Changjiazhuang. They were the most prosperous and educated in the community and managed Changjiazhuang's village school. One of its members, Wang Zhongshan (王中山), had also been a township head prior to the CCP conquest.¹⁷

Members of the Wang group publically pledged their allegiance to the CCP after the village's fall to the party. However, the Wangs saw the CCP as a threat to their power and worked fiercely to undermine the party's village administrative bodies and the authority of its members. Members of the Wang families complied only with party policies they agreed with. They played on the weak presence of CCP prior to 1942, telling locals that the party was a new government whose future was uncertain, urging them not to cooperate with its agendas. They also frequently accused local party members of mismanaging administrative matters or not properly representing community interests, and at times organized community projects that were supposed to be carried out by mass

¹⁷ Rushanxian Gangli fenquwei, "Changjiazhuangcun diaocha huibao ji fucha qianhou ge jieji tudi biandong diaochabiao" (Investigative Report on Changjiazhuang Village and Changes in Land Holdings of Each Class in it Before and After the Land Reform Inspection), 14 August 1947, RMA, 001-05-0010-001; Zhonggong Rushan xianwei zuzhike (ZRXXZ), "Changjiazhuang eba douzheng zongjie" (Summary and Analysis of the Anti-Local Bully Struggle in Changjiazhuang), 4 January 1946, RMA, 001-01-0037-010.

associations and the village government on their own to highlight the feebleness of such bodies. Sabotage by the Wangs discouraged locals from warming up to the CCP, and badly hampered party recruitment in the village.¹⁸

The Wangs, because of their previous experience in governing the area around Changjiazhuang, built close ties with party leaders at the ward and county levels. Members of the group such as Wang Zhongshan often used these connections to scare party members in the village, who later told a county investigation team that they were fearful of carrying out any policies that might anger or go against the interests of the Wangs due to their connections with higher party leaders.¹⁹

6.3 Consolidating CCP Power

CCP leaders in Jiaodong dealt with these issues through a number of strategies, all of which were based on the concept of class and on the determination to impose it on party members and on the wider society. Class was a part of the CCP worldview from its inception, and was a pillar of Mao Zedong's party line. CCP ideology under Mao divided society into several groups, based on their means of income and relationship to tenancy, loans and rural wage labour. At the top were landlords and rich peasants, who derived most of their income from leasing land to others, usury or hiring farm labour. Below them were middle peasants, who earned their income mostly from farming their own land, poor peasants, tenants who received their income mainly from leasing land from others, and the rural landless who hired out their labour. Mao's party line saw China in terms of exploitation of the lower classes by the upper classes, and emphasized fostering conflict between them to serve the party's ends. The CCP stressed itself as the representative of poor peasants and landless labourers, and sought to win their support by organizing them to settle grievances against landlords, rich peasants and middle peasants in issues relating to rent, labour wages and debt.²⁰

¹⁸ ZRXZ, "Changjiazhuang eba"; Rushanxian Tengjiazhuangqu, "Changjiazhuangcun zhibu gongzuo qingkuang," (Situation on the Party Branch Work in Changjiazhuang Village) August 1947, RMA, 001-05-0002-003.

¹⁹ ZRXZ, "Changjiazhuang eba."

²⁰ Mao Zedong, "How to Differentiate the Classes in Rural China," in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Volume 3 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), 137-139.

Creating class conflict in Rushan and Haiyang was mainly a process of manufacturing social identity, using it to divide society and break down existing social ties for the benefit of party organizations. It had little to do with the economic reality in Haiyang and Rushan. Class was an alien concept in Jiaodong, whose society was organized along family, lineage and village ties. It did not take into consideration means of income beyond rent, debt or labour relations for the poor, such as migratory work in Manchuria. Nor did it account for household cycles or family divisions. Family households in the Peninsula often went through cyclical patterns of growth and decline in wealth over two or three generations, caused by population growth, the number of members they had to do hard physical labour and the spending habits of their members. They also had a habit of dividing into smaller households when they had too many male members, splitting their land and other holdings equally between them. These factors often greatly altered an individual or family's means of earning and income, and people could be born into one class and enter another at a different stage of their lives.

Family and kinship ties, household division and alternative income generated by family strategies for survival, in fact, influenced the economy of Rushan and Haiyang more than rent, debt and labour relations. This was particularly the case during the 1940s. Small family farms, drawing their income from their own land and from a variety of means other than tenancy, going into debt and hiring out as farm labour, dominated the landscape of the two counties. This was caused by factors that extended beyond their boundaries. Philip Huang, in his 1985 study on economic and social change in rural North China, has argued that a mixture of population growth and commercialization brought about by foreign contacts helped to create an economy based on small family farms in most of Shandong and much of northern China during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.²¹ Jiaodong was not part of Huang's study, but the trend was reflected there. The population had grown dramatically since the late 19th century, doubling the number of people in many of its counties, including Rushan and Haiyang from the 1890s to the

²¹ Philip Huang, *The Peasant Economy and Social Change in North China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 120-137, 185-187.

1940s.²² This trend was to an extent fostered by the opening up of the Peninsula to foreign trade, mainly via port cities such as Qingdao and Yantai. The linking of Jiaodong to the global market, which began during the 1890s, produced a demand for export products such as lace, sausage casings and hairnets and peanut oil. Many of these were produced in small family-owned shops or through putting-out agreements between foreign firms and rural households; they could be made by women, children and the elderly.²³ They provided alternative sources of income for small family farms. New income, along with migration to Manchuria, allowed households to support more family members and avoid losing their land or going into debt.

Population growth, combined with the survival of small family farms, fostered a continual fragmentation of land ownership through household division. This pattern was accelerated further by war and political turmoil in Jiaodong during the early 20th century. Disorder affected the wealthy the most. Those with great wealth or large tracts of land were often the first to be extorted for money by warring factions or bandits. The wealthy had the means to relocate themselves and their fortunes, and often chose large cities, which had greater security. Cities were better protected during fighting. They also had business opportunities in international trade. Many wealthy families either sold their lands or divided them up to be cared for by family members before leaving. Rich families, like poor ones, also went through household division, and the combined weight of these factors had a dramatic effect in collapsing large landed estates in Jiaodong during the Republican period.

Haiyang and Rushan reflected this larger trend. There are various examples. Some areas in the southern parts of the two counties had been sparsely populated military garrison land during the Ming and early Qing. The creation of Haiyang County in 1735

²² SRDSBW, *Rushan shizhi*, 113; HDSBW, 8 (see chap. 2, n. 11). Haiyang's population, according to a modern gazetteer, rose from 234,104 in 1881 to 435,007 in the reduced territory of Haiyang alone in 1950. Population in Rushan, which included parts of eastern Haiyang was 397,240 in 1949.

²³ USDSCC, Brief Historical Outline of the Lace, Hog Casing and Hairnet Industries in Chefoo, Translated from the Chinese Text of Mr. S. Tsi of Bank of China, Furnished to the Consulate by Mr. Ahmed, 1935; Vol. 264. Reports of the US consulate in Yantai from the 1920s and 30s claim that Haiyang and Rushan were major producers of these products.

allowed these lands to be privatized, and they often fell into the control of a few individuals, creating large estates. Rural protesters in Haiyang in 1910, for example, vented their anger on several families near the coast, who owned between 2,000 to 4,000 *mu* of land each. These households were attacked because their lands produced a large share of the county's grain and accounted for a major portion of the taxes that local inhabitants paid to the state. They were accused by protesters of hoarding grain during famine and shifting tax burdens to the rest of society.²⁴ Such households disappeared after 1911. Party documents from the two counties during the mid and late 1940s mention no household owning more than 500 *mu* of land. These sources, in fact, suggest that the wealthy in most cases owned only between 100 to 200 *mu* of land, and that in the north of Rushan and Haiyang, where the land was more rugged, it was often difficult to find people who owned over 60 *mu*.

Tenancy, indebtedness and farm wage labour, due to the de-concentration of land ownership and dominance of small family farms, were not widespread in Rushan and Haiyang. The amount of land being rented in villages, according to case studies of villages by the CCP governments of the two counties during the 1940s, rarely exceeded 25 percent of the total amount of land being cultivated, and in some cases rented land constituted as little as 6 to 9 percent of total village land.²⁵ Though large numbers of people were labelled by CCP surveys as "poor peasants", very few families were actually landless or heavily dependent on tenancy. The poor were often people who earned their income from a mixture of farming their own land, renting small parcels of other people's lands and alternative means rather than tenants who survived mainly by leasing land from others. In one village in central Haiyang, for example, 116 "poor peasant" households, owning around 9 *mu* of land each, rented on average 1.6 *mu* of land per family. Such

²⁴ Haiyang xianzhi bangongshi, "Nao xiangsheqi," 407-411 (see chap. 2, n. 21).

²⁵ Jiaodongqu dangwei diaocha yanjiushi (hereafter cited as JDDY), "Diaoyan cailiao diyiqi: Haiyang Guochengqu Zhanchangbocun diaocha" (First Edition of Investigative Materials: Investigation of Zhanchangbo Village in the Guocheng Ward of Haiyang), October 1944, SPA, G024-01-0010-001; Haiyangxian zhengfu, "Yijiu sishinian xiabannian jianzu gongzuo chubu zongjie, er, Zheyang jidianqu chajian gongzuo zongjie" (Summary of Early Rent Reduction Work in Haiyang, Second Part, Second Half of 1944: Summary of Rent Investigation Work in the Zheyang Central Point Area), 1944, SPA, G031-01-0221-007.

small amounts of land being leased per family was likely not enough for them to survive purely on earnings from rented land, and they likely had other means of income.²⁶

Family and kinship relations became more important in economic matters during the war with Japan. The political disorder in rural Jiaodong during the first few years of the war, combined with efforts by the Japanese to squeeze western firms out of its port cities, led to constant disruptions in rural trade and money flows from 1938 to the early 1940s, hurting family production of goods for the global market and creating cash shortages in some areas, collapsing their credit markets.²⁷ Families adapted by sending more of their members to Manchuria. Tenancy in Rushan and Haiyang, in fact, was often a product of migration during hard times. Families often rented land they could not farm when family members were away working elsewhere. Kinship and lineage ties also stepped in on credit issues, offering much valued loans at no interest. An investigation of a village in northern Haiyang in 1944 found that more than three quarters of loans in the community were non-interest bearing, and were given to people with the same surname for the purpose of paying for weddings and funerals, to help in war recovery or other pressing needs.²⁸

Class struggle, under these conditions, often had little to do with issues relating to rent, debt or labour wages, and class labels were vaguely applied. It became, instead, a manipulation of social tensions created by the war with Japan and, to an extent, by CCP policies, as lower level party members and leaders tried to destroy those who were socially prominent and powerful in village communities. Many of these men had been obstacles to the ability of party organizations to control society and were often also dominant figures in their lineage and family networks. Conflict based on local grievances often spread beyond those who were wealthy and powerful, and it collectively weakened

²⁶ Haiyangxian zhengfu, “Yijiu sisinian xiabannian jianzu gongzuo.”

²⁷ USDSCC, Political Report, January 12, 1940 - December 6, 1940; Vol. 312, January 12, 1940 - December 6, 1940. Western demand for lace, hairnets and sausage casings from Jiaodong had been slumping during the 1930s, but it remained sufficiently high for a busy trade in these products during the decade. This trade, however, was severely hampered in 1940 by a Japanese effort to squeeze out western firms. The Japanese did so through placing restrictions on the ability of these companies to exchange currency in Jiaodong, purchase goods from the Peninsula and send mail to their home countries.

²⁸ JDDY, “Diaoyan cailiao di yiqi.”

family ties and other forms of social support in villages, which were already heavily strained by war. Manipulations of social tensions were carried out by higher party leaders in Rushan and Haiyang and were supervised closely by the Jiaodong party. Their effect was to make village inhabitants more reliant on the administrative apparatus of the CCP, its party members and directions from their higher ups in their economic activities and daily lives.

6.4 Manufacturing of Class Identity: Party Organizations

Efforts to restructure relationships in rural communities began with party organizations. Party leaders moved to strengthen discipline amongst village party members by altering their social composition and selectively removing non-conformist individuals and ring leaders of group rivalries. Kicking out troublemakers from village party organizations and creating a new party membership in them was first advocated by Lin Hao in late 1940.²⁹ Efforts to do this began in parts of Jiaodong, including Haiyang and Rushan in 1941 and 1942, but were not carried out on a large scale across party controlled territories until 1943. Party leaders in the Peninsula, prior to that year, were more concerned with imposing discipline on higher level leaders. Military matters also distracted them from issues relating to lower party members.

Party policy on membership selection saw it in terms of class. It called for expelling members who were landlords and rich peasants, reducing the number of middle peasants, a group that was considered to be somewhat wealthy, slightly exploitive and only partially loyal to the CCP and recruiting more poor peasants and labourers. This policy, in practice, tried to increase the number of young people in the party. The 1944 Haiyang County Committee document and the 1945 Rushan Organizational Department report both mention that party policy preferred young people over “old men”.³⁰ Newly recruited young people were unlike those who made up the party membership in Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong prior to 1937 and during the early stages of the war with Japan. They were members of their communities, and were less educated. Party recruitment was ambivalent towards teachers, people who made up most of the early party membership.

²⁹ Lin Hao, "Jiaodong dangde," 30 (see chap. 5, n. 61).

³⁰ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai"; ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

Rural educators did play an important role in CCP administration. They were used to expand the party's village administrative apparatus by setting up mass associations for children and young men and by encouraging students to join; party recruitment from 1943 on targeted them as well.³¹ However, teachers were rarely allowed into positions of power in village or higher party organizations. They were often discriminated against by members who were less educated, who sometimes refused them entry into the CCP; documents from the mid-1940s on mention many cases where teachers complained that they were not fully trusted by the party.³²

The new practices were part of an effort to create a new type of party member at the village level, one who was less connected to old social ties. They also reflected the imposition of party ideology in selecting members. New party recruitment occurred alongside rectification, which began in Rushan and Haiyang around early 1944. Preference for young people in party recruitment was likely an effort to fill membership in villages with those who were more receptive to rectification and its tactics, such as group criticism. Young and poorly-educated people had less life experience and were lower status figures in rural society, expected to obey authority. They were less likely to resist orders from party leaders and more willing to follow authority without question. Teachers, in contrast, were viewed with suspicion for both practical and ideological reasons. Schools in Rushan and Haiyang were usually funded by elites, who also served as their principals and administrators. Teachers often had close ties with these men, and were linked to the old power structure of villages. They had never been an obedient or reliable group of party members. Teachers, by the 1940s were lumped by party ideology into the "intellectuals" and "petty bourgeois" group, people who were by nature resistant towards party discipline and were not part of the lower classes.

The lower class identity of the party, despite the complexities of membership selection, was emphasized in education for members. This, along with selecting people who were younger and more obedient to top-down leadership and its disciplinary measures, helped to create a new identity amongst them. While trying to make party

³¹ Haiyang xianwei. "Liunian lai."

³² Rushan xianwei, "Tudi gaige gongzuo zongjie" (Summary of Land Reform Work), 20 December 1946, SPA, 24-1-53-5-2. Complaints by teachers, for example, were common during the land reform movement of 1946.

members more obedient to party organization CCP leaders in charge of rectification and membership selection gradually removed those who might divide members or remind them of their lineage and families connections. Getting rid of party members was much harder than recruiting new ones. Both the 1944 Haiyang and 1945 Rushan documents emphasized caution, flexibility and learning from experience in dealing with unruly party members.³³ Case studies in the reports suggest that party leaders in charge of membership selection used a mixture of punishment and trickery against members who resisted efforts to impose intraparty discipline.

This takes us back to Hujia Village. Conflicts between party members in the community led party leaders from the ward and county to take charge of rectification in the village. They approached problems in the village by first identifying ringleaders behind the rivalries in the local party and their motivations for feuding with each other.³⁴ Party leaders from the ward and county levels, after speaking with all the party members in the village, determined that most of them shared a common interest, a desire for power in the CCP administration. They played on this in efforts to discipline the Hujia party organization, and singled four individuals, Gao Ziming, head of the Gao lineage faction, Jiang Dongsheng, leader of the lesser Jiang group and Jing Zunyi and Jiang Mingzhou, the main leaders of the western gate Jiang faction as the main culprits of the rivalries between party members. Party investigators first expelled Gao Ziming from the CCP and barred him from holding any positions in the village administration. Gao's faction was the smallest in the Hujia party, and his removal did not cause a great commotion amongst party members. Party leaders from the ward and county used Gao as an example, warning other members that they would be expelled like him if they misbehaved or feuded with each other. They next held a group discussion, in which all members were called on to follow guidance from higher levels and admit any personal acts that violated party discipline. The expulsion of Gao Ziming scared many members, and they confessed their wrongs and vowed to follow party discipline. Jiang Zunyi and Jiang Mingzhou, however, were unmoved. They were reluctant to admit that they had done anything wrong, and tried to shift the blame for rivalries within the village party on to Jiang Dongsheng and to

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

get other members to join in accusations against him. Party investigators were reluctant to punish the two because of their influence on other members with the Jiang surname, but quickly discovered a way to remove them. They found that Jiang Zunyi and Jiang Mingzhou were both former township party leaders who were sent back to Hujia after that level was abolished; they wanted to rise higher in the CCP. County and ward leaders, taking this into consideration, suddenly “promoted” the two Jiangs. They were sent to a higher party level outside of Rushan, and permanently left the village.³⁵

The departure of these two made other village party members more obedient and less quarrelsome. Removal of Jiang Zunyi, Jiang Mingzhou and Gao Ziming eliminated figures who saw lineage ties as more important than obedience to the party, and often manipulated them in their rivalries with other people in the Hujia CCP organization. Jiang Zunyi, Jiang Mingzhou and Gao Ziming were also all in their late 30s or 40s, and their departure allowed younger party members to become leaders in Hujia’s party organization.³⁶

The effort to create a new party membership was a slow and constantly evolving process. Poor young men often had family responsibilities, and did not always want to join the CCP. Nor were attempts to remove troublemakers always successful. The 1945 Rushan Organization Department document, in fact, claimed that efforts of ward and county leaders to do this actually weakened party cohesion in a few villages.³⁷ Party policy attempted to address these problems by recruiting people who were beneficiaries of its policies.³⁸ CCP leaders also made continual attempts to resolve troubles in village organizations. Their efforts, along with rectification, gradually fostered greater commitment and reduced lineage ties that might cause problems between members.

The ability of the larger party in Jiaodong to foster cohesion in village organizations was heavily dependent on ward and county leaders constantly monitoring members at this level, and on these leaders acting as a disciplined group in carrying out their responsibilities. A great deal of effort was spent by regional party leaders in imposing supervision and top-down discipline on ward and county party members. This,

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Haiyang xianwei, “Liunian lai.”

compared to efforts to discipline village party members, was much easier. Ward and county party members were fewer in number, and were closer to higher CCP power in Jiaodong. They could be better monitored, and were also less attached to local, family and kinship circles. County and ward government and party offices, where these members worked, were usually not in their native communities. Ward and county party members often had to move out of their home villages to work in their jobs, and they were less connected to family and lineage ties. Some, like Jiang Zunyi and Jiang Mingzhou, the two misbehaving members from Hujia, might even have been deliberately sent to higher levels to break up lineage ties in their home villages, and ward and county members could be moved to a position outside of their county if they were deemed to be troublemakers.

Ward and county party leaders were also very different from village ones in terms of income. Village members received no wages, and were only given financial aid if they held a position in their village government and could not support themselves or their families while doing this. County and ward members, in contrast, were often referred to as people who have “left production” (脱离生产) to work for the party.³⁹ They worked full time for the CCP and received wages from the party organization. This closer supervision, being farther apart from their native place ties and having no income other than that given by CCP organization, made party members at the ward and county levels more willing to submit to the CCP authority.

6.5 Imposing Class on Society: Class struggle

Class struggle was a more radical effort to assert class identity on society. It involved organizing people from lower classes to attack people from higher ones, and using the process to break down old social ties in villages. Implementing class struggle was a complex process of trial and error in fostering and manipulating social tensions. It was shaped by constantly changing calculations by senior party leaders in Jiaodong on whether social conflict was beneficial to the regional CCP's interests, differences

³⁹ Haiyang xianwei, “Yijiu siwunian shangbannian duidi douzheng qunzhong dangwu jingji gongzuo zongjie” (Summary of Struggles Against the Enemy and Mass, Party Matters and Economic Work in the First Half of 1945), 1945, HMA, 1-1.

between class policies and the social and economic reality of the Peninsula and different stances on class struggle by the party centre.

The process of class struggle in Jiaodong can be divided into two phases, a more moderate period from 1942 to 1944 and an aggressive attempt to foster class divisions from 1944 to 1945. Policies on class conflict started in the Peninsula in 1942. They were advocated by some party leaders prior to this time, but were never carried out, for a number of reasons. Early party members were often people who were not closely attached to their communities, and felt little connection with social issues in them. Overall policy by the CCP prior to that year was also ambiguous on class conflict. Turning segments of society against each other also violated the 1936 United Front agreement between the CCP and GMD, in which the CCP agreed to abandon socially divisive policies and unite with Chinese of all backgrounds in national resistance against Japan. The agreement had always been one of convenience between the two parties in the face of Japanese aggression on China and public demand for unity in the country to confront a foreign threat, and it was never fully respected by either side. However, the United Front served as a major pillar of legitimacy for the CCP during the war, and Mao and other senior leaders were reluctant to be seen as openly breaking it. The CCP centre under Mao issued calls for fostering class conflict several times from 1937 to 1941, only to withdraw them shortly afterwards.⁴⁰

This situation changed in 1942, when the party in Jiaodong was under the control of leaders closely connected with the CCP centre. The United Front was also disintegrating, and by 1941 it had existed in name only. The CCP in early 1942 felt less adherent to the agreement, and the senior party leadership under Mao had worked out a theoretical argument supporting class struggle within the United Front. Directives from the party centre that year stressed that improving the lives of the poor was a major part of strengthening China for national resistance, and that class conflict was necessary if it relieved the economic burdens of the rural majority and only weakened the wealthy

⁴⁰ Sherman Lai Xiaogang, *A Springboard to Victory: Shandong Province and Chinese Communist Military and Financial Strength, 1937-1945* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 208-209.

rather than destroying them.⁴¹ Documents calling for class struggle reached Jiaodong during the second half of 1942, and some efforts were made to enforce them. County and ward leaders in the Peninsula, starting in areas that were secure from pro-GMD forces and Japanese attacks, began to carry out land surveys. These were officially done for the purpose of improving tax collection, but they also assigned class labels to households and were a prelude to fostering social conflict between them.

Initial efforts to generate class struggle were often cautious in nature and easily aborted. Attacks on members of higher classes orchestrated by party members began in some parts of Jiaodong, including Rushan and Haiyang, in late 1942 and 1943, but they were quickly abandoned by the region's party leadership. These leaders were later accused of violating party policy and "falling asleep" on fighting exploitation, but they did so for a number of reasons.⁴² Directives from the party centre saw class struggle within the context of a rent and interest reduction campaign, which called for a 25 percent reduction on all rents on farm land, adjustment of rates to not exceed 37.5 percent of total annual yield and setting a 15 percent interest limit on all loans.⁴³ They called on CCP organizations at the county level and below to implement this policy, and to encourage tenants and the indebted to carry out "mass struggles," often violent confrontations against members of higher classes that refuse to abide by it.

Mass struggles were designed to humiliate and reduce the social standing of rural elites by subjecting them to public violence and abuse. They also allowed the poor to vent their anger towards elites over exploitive practices, and force them into economic arrangements that benefitted those who took part in the struggle. Lower party leaders and mass association heads organized and supervised these events. Larger party theory on class struggle assumed that it would bolster public support for the CCP and its administrative apparatus and encourage village inhabitants to join mass associations.

⁴¹ Zhonggong zhongyang, "Guanyu ruhe shixing tudi zhengce jueding de zhishi" (Directive Regarding How to Carry Out the Decision on Land Policy), in *Shandong de jianzu jianxi* (Land and Rent Reduction in Shandong) (hereafter cited as *SJJ*), ed. Shandongsheng danganju (Beijing: Zhongyang dangshi chubanshe, 1994), 38.

⁴² Zhonggong huadong zhongyangju, "Shandong tugaiqian qunzhong yundong de gaikuang" (The Mass Movement Situation in Shandong before Land Reform), in *SJJ*, 476.

⁴³ Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 230.

However, directions given by the party centre on who to target in mass struggles hardly suited the environment of Jiaodong. In many villages in the Peninsula few people rented land or were tenants, and elites who opposed the CCP were not necessarily big rentiers of land. Tensions over rental relations were also minimized by a number of factors. Tenants and rentiers were often relatives or members of the same lineage, and the former were reluctant to challenge the latter over this.⁴⁴ Most rental agreements in Jiaodong were also temporary in nature, and rentiers could easily take back land if they had disagreements with tenants. This was influenced by the tradition of migratory labour in the Peninsula. Families who rented out land had often done so because members who could farm them were working elsewhere. They cancelled rental agreements when they felt that migratory work was unprofitable, pulling family members back. The right to suddenly retake land was seen as a respected local custom due to the large number of families who were part of back and forth labour migration, and fear of losing rented land further discouraged tenants from challenging rentiers.⁴⁵

Determining what constituted exploitation over rent was also a difficult matter. Tenancy in Jiaodong was often not just about renting land, but involved leasing a more productive piece of land. The complex geography in Jiaodong had produced more than a dozen different qualities of soil, each with a different degree of agricultural productivity. Good land was in short supply in many areas due to rugged terrain and high population densities, and renting high quality soil at a high rent might not have seemed exploitive.

⁴⁴ Rushanxian zhengfu, “Yijiu sisinian shiyi yue zhi siwunian siyue chajian baogao” (Report on Reduction Work from November 1944 to April 1945), 1945, SPA, G031-01-0241-003; Rushanxian zhengfu, “Yijiu siwunian shiyue zhi siliunian sanyue.” Tenants mentioned by documents from Rushan and Haiyang in many cases shared the same surname as the people they were renting land from, and sometimes called them uncle.

⁴⁵ Muhai xingshu, “Yijiu sisinian yiyue zhi sanyue chajian gongzuo zongjie” (Summary of Rent Reduction Investigation from January to March 1944), March 1944, RMA, G031-01-221; Rushanxian zhengfu, “Yijiu sisinian shiyi yue zhi siwunian siyue.” CCP policy in Jiaodong, in fact, allowed rentiers to take back their land if they had family members who were returning from business ventures outside the Peninsula or migratory labour.

Rent on land also varied greatly depending on the type of crop being produced and the market price for it, and land with high rent was often used to grow lucrative cash crops.⁴⁶

Compared with rent exploitive usury barely existed in Jiaodong. Loaning money for profit had been diminishing in the Peninsula because of cash shortages at the start of the war with Japan. It almost collapsed in 1942 and 1943 due to a new development, growing inflation. The outbreak of the larger war in the Pacific greatly depreciated *fabi*, China's national currency. It could no longer be supported by the British pound, the currency that backed it, and its value was further weakened by the Japanese in an effort to economically destabilize areas outside their control. CCP documents during the 1940s did mention some tension between people over loans, but they were usually about exploitive lending practices before the war with Japan or during its early phases.⁴⁷

Fostering class struggle also had other problems. In many Jiaodong villages all types of households, rich or poor, rented land, and most of the rentiers were households with lower class labels. In one village in northwestern Rushan, for example, poor peasants rented out more land than those labelled landlords and rich peasants. In another case in the southern part of the county poor and middle peasants rented out three times as much land as higher classes.⁴⁸ Encouraging conflict over rent had the danger of creating confrontations that would go out of control and result in many poor families being attacked and hurt. Local party members were also members of society, and were often related to struggle victims. Members in such instances were reluctant to organize attacks against their relatives or lineage members. Class struggle, if poorly supervised by higher levels, could also degenerate into attempts by certain village party members to settle scores against their personal enemies or people from rival lineages. Party leaders in Jiaodong also had another concern. The economy of the Peninsula in late 1942 and 1943 was badly damaged by years of war and trade disruptions and needed recovery. Fostering

⁴⁶ Muhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisinian yiyue zhi sanyue." Rent for peanuts, a lucrative cash crop, for example, were often very high, amounting to 70 or 80 percent of total annual crop.

⁴⁷ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan, "Jiangai xunbao" (Report in Response to Rent Reduction Reforms: September 2nd to September 30th), 10 October 1944, SPA, 31-1-221-4.

⁴⁸ Rushanxian zhengfu, "Yijiu sisinian shiyi yue zhi siwunian siyue"; ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

class struggle would only damage this recovery and further the poverty of many Jiaodong inhabitants.

These issues led the Jiaodong leadership to avoid fostering violent conflict in villages and to put in place policies that revived the regional and local economies, restored lending between households and evened out inequalities in land and wealth in a more discreet way, from 1942 to early 1944. The leaders first dealt with inflation, spreading a CCP currency within areas of the party's control and setting up commerce departments and customs offices in market towns and ports to curtail the use of *fabi*. They also encouraged small-boat trading with Manchuria, Japanese-occupied areas along China's coast and with Korea. This policy led to a rapid growth of regular trade in Jiaodong in 1943, which had almost collapsed before then. It also created outside demand for some farm-and family-produced goods, such as peanut oil.⁴⁹ Jiaodong's CCP leaders, while increasing trade and demand for local goods, also promoted and experimented with new farming techniques, such as ploughing the land during winter. These efforts fostered quick economic growth in many places in the Peninsula by late 1943. A report on the local economy by Rushan's CCP government around that time noted that the trade, which had fallen to a trickle in 1942 due to inflation and loss of commerce with western business firms, was back to one half of its pre-war levels, and that the production and harvests of grain, foodstuffs and cash crops had doubled across the county.⁵⁰

While reviving the economy in general CCP policy in Jiaodong also attempted to improve the situation of poorer households through non-violent means. Party leaders encouraged the poor to avoid tenancy by opening up and farming new lands. Newly cultivated land was given a three year tax exemption, and in areas where land was scarce CCP policy sought to transfer more productive lands to poor households with a new tax system.⁵¹ This policy, which began in 1943 taxed households based on the estimated

⁴⁹ HDFB, 186-187.

⁵⁰ Muhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisannian xiabannian jingjian gongzuo de zongjie" (Summary of Economic Construction Work in the Second Half of 1943), 30 December 1943, RMA, 001-03-0003-009.

⁵¹ Tang Zhiqing, *Jindai Shandong nongcun shehui jingji yanjiu* (Research on Rural Society and Economy in Modern Shandong) (Beijingshi: Renmin chubanshe, 2003), 595.

annual harvest from their lands.⁵² Those with high annual yields received a higher rate of taxation; the new taxation strategy led some households with large amounts of good land to sell them to poorer ones. CCP leaders across Jiaodong also revived lending, and sought to redirect it towards helping the poor. County governments across the Peninsula set up credit bureaus, offering low interest loans to households with less income and land. They also encouraged these households to set up credit cooperatives, which pooled wealth from families involved and gave them to others at low interest. CCP economic policy, in addition, encouraged cooperative farming amongst poor households, getting them to share tools and farm animals and to divide earnings, and gave loans to those who collectively started workshops, handicrafts production and businesses.⁵³

Cooperatives and other CCP economic policies prior to 1944 had a political as well as an economic purpose. They allowed the party to increase its influence and presence over society in a less overt way. The impact of these policies in dealing with problems faced by the poor varied. The success and failure of cooperatives, for example, was dependent on the people taking part in them, on their ability to work together and support each other during times of need and divide earnings in a way that was agreeable to everyone involved. Cooperatives also worked best when their participants had similar land holdings and wealth. Those with people who were wealthy and had a great deal of land often led to complaints from poorer participants, who claimed that the division of earnings based on the land holdings and tools of each household taking part essentially made them farm labourers to wealthy households.⁵⁴ However, cooperatives were supervised by mass association leaders, and they were constantly investigated by ward and county governments. They were often started by party members, and were sometimes used by CCP leaders from higher levels to recruit people into the party.⁵⁵ Other CCP economic policies, such as giving loans through the government, also made the poor dependent on the party's administrative apparatus.

⁵² SRDSBW, 646.

⁵³ Muhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisannian xiabannian jingjian."

⁵⁴ "Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu Wanggezhuang de lingdao fangshi lingdao zuofeng yu shengchan gongzuo de fazhan" (Development of Leadership Methods, Leadership Work Style and Production Work in Wanggezhuang Village, Xiaoji Ward, Haiyang), 1945, HMA, 1-1-3.

⁵⁵ Haiyang xianwei, "Liunian lai."

Party leaders in Jiaodong, up to early 1944, did not openly or aggressively challenge elites. This stance was due to practical concerns. The Jiaodong leadership was interested mainly in economic recovery and restoring trade in the Peninsula. Many elites, including several the Wangs from Changjiazhuang, were merchants who had business connections in Manchuria, Jiaodong's cities and to other parts of China's coast.⁵⁶ They were initially used by party organizations to rebuild trade between Jiaodong and other regions, by convincing people from these areas to buy goods from CCP-controlled parts of the Peninsula. Though elites in some villages had tried to obstruct party organizations, in many others they had long withdrawn from involvement in community affairs. War with Japan and intimidation by the different sides in the conflict prior to 1943 often forced such men to retreat from their old responsibilities. In Hujia Village, for example, none of the men who were prominent figures before the war with Japan played an active leadership in the community, and the feuding members were all men of lower social status who stepped in to fill their absence.⁵⁷ Party policy during 1943 and early 1944 courted elites and tried to use them towards the CCP's agendas. Local elites, such as Wang Zhongshan, a prominent member of the Wangs of Changjiazhuang, were invited to join consultative assemblies, organizations at the county level that gave prominent non-CCP figures a role in advising CCP leaders, and to merchant associations that tried to re-establish trade.⁵⁸

6.6 Shift Towards a More Radical Stage of Class Struggle

Moderate economic policies and efforts to alter the composition of village party membership were still ongoing when the regional CCP leadership received orders for a new push for class struggle from the party centre. By the fall of 1943 an end to the war with Japan seemed to be in sight. Japanese forces, though still powerful in China, were faltering under American military power in the Pacific, and Japan's larger empire in Asia was crumbling. The CCP centre saw Japan's defeat as inevitable, and began to plan for a mass mobilization of manpower and resources from China's countryside to seize national

⁵⁶ Rushanxian Gangli fenquwei, "Changjiazhuangcun diaocha huibao."

⁵⁷ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

⁵⁸ ZRXZ, "Changjiazhuang eba"; Muhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisannian xiabannian jingjian."

power from the GMD afterwards. Central party leaders saw bringing most of rural society into mass organizations, where they could be controlled and directed by CCP members, as an essential first step in this effort. They were considerably less burdened by the United Front by this time, and were more eager to establish a contrast between CCP and the GMD. Class struggle was an important component of this effort. It was seen as something that could be used to bring people into mass organizations in a short time, and as a way of defining the party's identity. In October 1943 the CCP's Politburo issued a directive to all lower party organizations, calling them to "thoroughly carry out" rent reduction and use it to stir up and lead the people of the countryside in carrying out mass struggles. The document declared that only through mass struggle could the Chinese people be motivated to actively support the CCP, and called on party organizations to use it to create and expand mass organizations through this process.⁵⁹

Orders to carry out class struggle through rent reduction caused a great deal of confusion for party leaders in Jiaodong, who spent most of late 1943 and the first half of 1944 trying to figure out what rate rents in the Peninsula should be reduced to and who was violating policy on rent reduction rather than carrying out class struggle. Policy on rent reduction had called for a 25 percent reduction on land rents, and adjustment of all rents to no more than 37.5 percent of total annual yield. This rule was in many ways impractical for Jiaodong, where rental rates were set according to the quality of land being rented, types of crops grown on the land, market prices for the crops and availability of land in the area where the rental agreement was made. In some places in the rugged north of Rushan and Haiyang, for example, rent reached 70 to 80 percent of annual yield, but in other places, such as in the south of the two counties it was below 37.5 percent.⁶⁰ Rent reduction according to the 25 percent rate, with a 37.5 percent of yield rent ceiling often either did not do much to benefit tenants or caused great discontent amongst rentiers, and frequently led party organizations in different places in

⁵⁹ Zhonggong zhongyang zhengzhiju, "Guanyu jianzu shengchan yongzheng aimin ji xuanchuan shida zhengce zhishi" (Directive Regarding Rent Reduction, Production, Supporting the Government, Loving the People and Spreading Propaganda on the Ten Great Policies), in *SJJ*, 42-45.

⁶⁰ Muhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisannian xia bannian minzheng gongzuo baogao" (People's Administration Report for the Second Half of 1943), 30 December 1943, RMA, 001-03-0003-007; Muhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisinian yiyue zhi sanyue."

Jiaodong to set their own reduction rates through engaging in discussions between tenants and those they rented land from. Rentiers, seeing problems in the policy, also began to take back their land from tenants. They often claimed to be doing so because family members were returning from Manchuria, and the respected local custom regarding this practice forced party organizations to allow some to take back their land.

This led CCP leaders in Jiaodong to engage in increasing investigations of rental rates and arrangements, and to focus on setting rates that were agreeable to both tenants and rentiers rather than fostering conflict between them. Party leaders in the Peninsula also made rentiers and tenants create written contracts, which could be recorded by party investigators and used to determine if rentiers were violating policy on rent reduction.⁶¹ Major attempts to push rural inhabitants to carry out class struggle did not begin until the late summer of 1944, when Mao personally wrote a letter to the party heads of all CCP-controlled base areas, demanding that they give monthly reports on the progress of rent and interest reduction and class struggle. Party leaders in Jiaodong were also receiving heavy pressure from the provincial CCP.⁶² The provincial party, up to mid-1944, had supported moderate and flexible approaches towards party power building at the lower levels. They were placed in an uncomfortable situation by Mao's letter. Feeling pressured, provincial leaders sent out a special directive in August, demanding that all counties send reports on their progress in carrying out class struggle every two weeks to their superiors, and that all county reports should be passed directly to the province for scrutiny. Provincial documents also set an ambitious goal, declaring that 60 percent of all adult

⁶¹ “Qudangwei guanyu jiancha jianzu gongzuo de jingyan jieshao yu zhishi” (Directive and Introduction to Experiences Relating to Investigation of Rent Reduction Work by the District Party Committee), February 1944, RMA, 001-03-0004-002.

⁶² Mao Zedong, “Mao Zedong guanyu qing gedi diaocha he dafu shixiang wenti de dianbao” (Mao Zedong's Telegraph Asking All Areas to Please Investigate and Answer Ten Questions), in *Jiandang yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian: yijiu eryi – yijiu siji*, (Compilation of Important Documents Since the Founding of the Party: 1921 – 1949), Volume 21, eds. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi and zhongyang dang'an guan eds (Beijingshi: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 435-436.

populations in each village across the province must be brought into mass associations in the next four months through class struggle.⁶³

Initial efforts to carry out class struggle under these conditions were highly chaotic. County and ward village party organizations, pushed hard to struggle against elites and encourage people to join mass organizations, were given little time to select targets or decide how to attack them. Mass struggles were carried out in large numbers, often with little planning. They, at first, found little support. Tenants, for fear of losing rented land, were often the last to take part in attacks. Class struggle also started during August and September in most Jiaodong counties, the time of harvest, and many villagers chose to stay in their fields rather than join in attacks. Many of those who took part in the first mass struggles were social outcasts. A report from Rushan's county government in mid-September 1944, for example, blamed organizations in some wards and villages for using "opium addicts," "bad elements" and those who had been convicted and incarcerated for crimes to attack elites. The only social group that joined in large numbers were farm labourers.⁶⁴ They were a miniscule group in most counties of the Peninsula.⁶⁵ Many were willing to take part because they worked in different villages than the one they lived in. Their presence during mass struggles often caused a backlash by the inhabitants of villages, who viewed struggle sessions as attacks by outsiders on their own native places. In one case labourers not only attacked their employer, but robbed an old man in the employer's village who had made fun of them, creating anger in the community. A party member who served as village head in another community, after seeing a group of labourers mass struggle their employer in his village, ordered the militia to break up the event, resulting in several labourers being hurt.⁶⁶

Attempts by party leaders at various levels in Jiaodong to deal with the lack of participation in class struggle also created problems of their own. Some early mass struggles involved party members and ward leaders personally attacking members of the

⁶³ Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, "Qibajiushi yue qunzhong gongzuo buchong zhishi" (Directive Regarding Mass Work in July, August, September, and October 1944), in *SJJ*, 185-186, 191-192.

⁶⁴ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan.

⁶⁵ SRDSBW, 353. The 1998 county gazetteer of Rushan claimed that there were less than 8,000 labourers during the 1940s, out of a population of between 370,000 to 400,000.

⁶⁶ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan.

elite or forcing their will on villagers. A report by the Peninsula's regional leadership in early 1945 noted that initial struggle sessions often involved higher party leaders bringing armed ward militias to villages, using them to attack elites and physically threaten inhabitants if they did not take part in mass struggles. Party leaders in many counties and wards, trying to correct this, encouraged people to come by telling them that they could take and eat food from the houses of struggle victims. This led to a great deal of economic damage across the Peninsula, and even to brawls over food. In Rushan alone 540 pigs were slaughtered and large quantities of grain were eaten.⁶⁷ In one case in the county the participants in a mass struggle ate a struggle victim's food stores and livestock clean, and began to brawl with each other after they were drunk with his liquor.⁶⁸

CCP leaders were ultimately able to take charge of class struggle and channel it towards its intended purposes by using several tactics. One of these was to exploit tensions between local elites and the rest of their village created by the war with Japan and CCP rule. Successful mass struggles often attacked alleged misdeeds during the 1940 to 1942 period. Charges of corruption, helping in the mistreatment of local inhabitants by the Japanese and pro-GMD forces, and taking advantage of the chaotic situation during those years to abuse villagers were commonly used by CCP members to incite hatred towards village elites. One local elite in western Haiyang, for example, was attacked because he helped recruit labourers for the Japanese army in Manchuria during 1940. He managed to convince 250 young men from his community and nearby villages to go. Locals in village alleged that the men who went were treated as slaves by the Japanese, and those who were too sick to work were buried alive by Japanese troops. A prominent local figure in southern Rushan was accused of passing tax burdens on to the rest of his village when pressed by pro-GMD forces to collect them, and a local elite in a central Haiyang was alleged to have pocketed money paid by a unit allied with Zhao Baoyuan for hiring many in his village for labour services for himself. One village elite in western Rushan was even said to have pretended to be kidnapped by forces allied with Zhao,

⁶⁷ Jiaodongqu dangwei diaoyanshi (hereafter cited as JDD), "Jiaodong jianzu jianxi yundong zongjie" (Summary of the Rent and Interest Reduction Movement in Jiaodong), 1945, SPA, 24-1-10-4.

⁶⁸ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan.

tricking members of his lineage to pay for his release and pocketing the money for himself.⁶⁹

Many village elites were also accused of usurping property from relatives and lineage members who were forced to go to work in Manchuria by the economic situation of the early 1940s. CCP documents also claimed that elites often tricked newly cultivated land from poor people in 1943, bought things with worthless money, and even farmed on land that was used collectively by the community for animal grazing or firewood.⁷⁰ Whether these charges were true in all cases is not known. However, the 1940 to 1942 period was a difficult time in Jiaodong, which frayed the relationship between the elite and local inhabitants in many villages. Elites constantly faced the threat of kidnapping, beating or death from various warring forces for not meeting their demands, and were often forced to choose between their own wellbeing and that of their communities. Some might have tricked villagers into doing forced labour for pro-GMD troops to avoid being punished by these forces. Many local elites were also experiencing financial ruin caused by the economic disruptions of the war with Japan, and might have sought to maintain their wealth by preying on lower members of their communities. Coping with the hardships of war, natural disasters, economic collapse, and predations of contending political factions during the early 1940s might have also led village society to blame its leaders, who were normally responsible for their wellbeing but were increasingly unable and unwilling to do so because of their own sufferings, and to imagine wrongdoings by the elite to explain their plight. Rumours of sufferings of family members in Manchuria might have been especially horrifying to many, since they depended on these people for income during the hard times of the 1940s but were not in regular contact with them. This might have led the inhabitants of many villages to view local elites who often served as recruiters and guarantors for migrant workers, with even more suspicion and hate.

⁶⁹ Haiyangxian, “Changshuiqu chajian gongzuo zongjie” (Summary of Investigation of Rent Reduction Work in Changshui Ward), 12 December 1944, G024-01-0527-002; Rushanxian zhengfu, “Yijiu sisinian shiyi yue zhi siwunian siyue”; ZRXZ, “Shang bannian.”

⁷⁰ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan; ZRXZ, “Shang bannian”; Haiyangxian zhengfu, “Yijiu sisinian xiabannian jianzu gongzuo.”

Tax and economic policies promoted by the CCP during 1943 and early 1944 had made some of these tensions worse. Local elites bore the highest tax burdens under the new taxation system, and might have sought to cope with this by taking over newly cultivated land, which was tax-exempt, and farming common land, which they often managed as community leaders or lineage elders and was not taxed. Occupation by various political forces from 1940 to 1942 had also made Haiyang and Rushan awash with numerous types of money, from CCP and GMD currencies to those printed by the Japanese collaborationist governments in Shandong. Many of these were banned in the Communist effort to control inflation in 1943 and 1944. CCP monetary policies disadvantaged the wealthy, who often had large amounts of cash. Some elites might have purchased goods and land without realizing that the money they used had become worthless. Others, more opportunistic, might have sought to get rid of banned currencies by taking advantage of villagers who did not know their value.

Conflicts over these issues, rather than rent, wages or debt drove and gave momentum to class struggle in many villages. A report on rent and interest reduction by a ward in Haiyang in the fall of 1944 noted that attacks on elites over corruption, abuses towards their fellow villagers and collecting taxes for the enemy could easily attract large numbers of people and enthusiastic participation.⁷¹ CCP leaders often linked alleged abuses by local elites with rent reduction, portraying the taking back of land by some to avoid lowering rent as another form of mistreating their kinsmen and communities.

This strategy worked well in most villages, but it was not successful in all communities in Rushan and Haiyang. Rivalries between party members and lineage conflicts prevented successful implementation of class struggle in some places. Some elites in other villages had managed to maintain good reputations with their communities despite the chaotic events of 1940-1942. They also had close ties with ward and county party leaders in charge of organizing mass struggles, and managed to initially avoid being attacked. Party leaders, under pressure to carry out mass struggles in 1944, picked the easiest villages in which to do so, leaving others for another time.

Ward and party leaders gradually gained experience in carrying out class struggle. Education on class, along with the party's shifting stance towards rural elites also led

⁷¹ Haiyangxian.

many of these CCP members, who saw the party as a career and a chance for social advancement, to become less sympathetic towards them over time. Party leaders, when faced with difficult situations, tried a variety of strategies. One of these was to build up or manipulate existing rivalries in villages. They were willing to exploit lineage conflicts in communities if such tensions could be used to weaken elites and turn most members of a village against them.⁷² Class struggle gradually spread across Rushan and Haiyang, targeting elites in all corners of the two counties.

Hujia and Changjiazhuang were examples. In both villages class struggles did not happen until 1945. In Hujia, Jiang Dongsheng, who had taken over as party secretary, tried to manipulate ward leaders and use class conflict as an excuse to attack members of the Big Western Gate and Gao lineage factions in the fall of 1944. Jiang's scheme ignited a lineage conflict within the village. Gao Ziming, sensing what Jiang was trying to do, warned all the wealthy members of his lineage, who escaped before Jiang's supporters could attack them. Party members from the Big Western Gate also tried to use the militia, which they controlled to arrest Jiang Dongsheng, something that led county and ward party leaders to step in and briefly suspend the activities of the village party.⁷³ In Changjiazhuang, the Wangs were respected by society and feared by village party members, and managed to avoid being attacked for nearly a year after the start of radical class struggle in 1944.

However, mass struggles were carried out on Hujia's elite following the removal of ring leaders behind the rivalries between the village's CCP members. In Changjiazhuang, ward leaders ultimately got the Wangs in late 1945. Unable to find clear grievances between them and other villagers, they built up tensions between the Wangs and the Changs, the community's largest lineage. Ward leaders did so because Changjiazhuang, unlike many other villages in Rushan, was more economically stratified, and the Wangs as a whole were very wealthy compared to members of other lineages. They capitalized on an incident in 1941, when Wang Zhongshan, the most prominent figure of the Wang lineage, who was township head at the time, helped pro-GMD forces

⁷² ZRXZ, "Shang bannian." The 1945 Rushan organization report suggested that party leaders should turn lineage tensions in villages into class conflict if they could not eliminate them.

⁷³ Ibid.

arrest suspected CCP members in the village. Locals at first did not object to the incident, and Wang Zhongshan, when he was first confronted with it, claimed that he was merely doing his job as a government official and did not know which side was going to win.⁷⁴

Party leaders, however, manipulated the fact that all those arrested in the event were members of the Chang lineage, and that some of them were badly beaten by pro-GMD forces or made to pay large ransoms to be freed. They blamed Wang Zhongshan and other Wangs, who dominated the leadership of the village, for the sufferings of these individuals. Party leaders also connected Wang Zhongshan's actions to a number of other issues, such as his and the other Wangs refusal to reduce rent for Changs who were their tenants and the low wages given by a Wang to a woman who was wet nurse to his child a long time ago. They managed to turn the Changs against the Wangs, and organized the Changs to carry out a number of mass struggles against Wangs, starting with Wang Zhongshan.⁷⁵

6.7 Restructuring Village Society

Class struggle shook the foundations of society in many ways. Attacks against elites often turned into acts of cruelty, something that was deliberately promoted by higher CCP levels. Documents from the provincial and regional leadership saw mass struggle mainly in terms of generating enthusiasm for such actions. They often forbade party members and leaders from “throwing cold water” on this enthusiasm by setting limits to mass struggle, something that frequently led to mass cruelty at the village level. Total figures of excesses in Rushan and Haiyang are not known, but party documents recorded 62 cases of beatings resulting in serious injury in Rushan in November of 1944 alone. In many cases in both counties during that month struggle victims were stripped and left to freeze in the cold of winter, made to drink a mixture of urine and feces dubbed “confession soup”, while the elderly amongst them were made to stand on a shaky table that was kicked and pushed until they fell off.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ ZRXZ, “Changjiazhuang eba douzheng zongjie.”

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ JDD, “Jiaodong jianzu.”

Members of the elite in many villages were humiliated and injured. Being a target of mass struggle gave ward and county leaders an excuse to remove them from being a part of mass associations or holding office in village governments. Mass struggle also brought financial ruin to many village elites. Attacks against abuses by village elites were organized with the intent of allowing villagers to “settle old accounts” (算旧账) with them, demanding financial compensation for past wrongs. Targeted elites were often forced to pay huge sums of money and goods to the people struggling them, and frequently sold their land to do so and became broke. All this helped to strengthen the power of party members and the CCP’s administrative apparatus. Weakening of elites through mass struggle allowed party members in many villages to take over government and mass associations, and removed the main obstacles to their ability to lead their communities. It also made the inhabitants of administrative villages much more dependent on CCP mass associations in their economic activities. Elites often organized charity and disaster relief in their villages and lineages, and their absence from these tasks following class struggle led many rural inhabitants to seek aid from the CCP government and credit cooperatives organized by mass associations. Membership in mass organizations was mandatory to receive aid, and this increased participation in the CCP administrative apparatus.

Mass struggles also weakened kinship ties between the inhabitants of many rural communities. Kinship relations, and the tendency for people of the same surname to band together did not completely disappear, and some new organizations, such as cooperatives, were often made up of people of the same surname. However, mass struggles often involved organizing people to attack their relatives or lineage members. In one case in Rushan, a nephew played a major role in a mass struggle against his uncle, accusing the latter of usurping his inheritance. In another a man attacked his lineage elder for failing to provide him with grain relief during the 1940-1942 period.⁷⁷

Though wealthy local elites were the intended targets of class struggle, the practice of organizing attacks on people over past grievances often led to poor people being attacked by their kinsmen as well. Some party documents, in fact, encouraged such attacks if they could stir up enthusiasm in rural inhabitants to carry out more mass

⁷⁷ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan.

struggles and to take on wealthier people afterwards. Mass struggles weakened old ties between people, and the treatment of class struggle victims by party members and the CCP administrative apparatus often divided people along class lines. Victims of mass struggles were often fined during attacks, but party organizations and mass associations collected fines. They distributed wealth to the society and determined how much people should be fined. The amount people were fined was based on class, with lower classes given more lenient treatment.⁷⁸ Mass associations also tended to divide their members into classes, and party members leading them often dealt with each class as a separate group in association activities. Society was increasingly made to accept class lines and identities imposed by the CCP.

Local elites and other people labelled as higher class, though expelled from mass associations, were also dealt with as a group. They were often put together into “bad eggs” (坏蛋) groups, who were treated in a discriminatory way by party and government leaders.⁷⁹ Party organizations also made efforts to limit their interactions with the rest of society. Village party leaders forbid any contact between their members and elites except on official matters. One organization in Rushan, in fact, even organized a mini struggle against two members who had been invited to dinner by a local elite. The two were confronted by other party members and a number of CCP sympathizers after leaving the dinner, who threatened to attack them and shouted “You’re selling out our interests!”⁸⁰ Village elites often tried to improve their images and change their social status by selling their lands to the poor and even donating lands to the village for charities; there were also those who sent their sons to the CCP army. Such deeds, however, were often described in the reports as the class enemies’ stubborn resistance, and used to justify more class struggle against elites.⁸¹

⁷⁸ JDD, “Jiaodong jianzu”; ZRXZ, “Shang bannian.” Documents suggest that party leaders in Jiaodong, Rushan and Haiyang made a major effort to scrutinize how village organizations fined people, and to make sure that they treated each class differently in determining fines.

⁷⁹ Zhonggong Rushan xianwei (hereafter cited as ZRX), “Xin xingshi xia canjun canzhan gongzuo renwu de buzhi” (Guideline Under the New Situation for Tasks and Work on Military Recruitment and War Participation), August 1945, RMA, 001-01-0005-001.

⁸⁰ JDD, “Jiaodong jianzu.”

⁸¹ ZRXZ, “Shang bannian.”

Weakening of elites, along with the dominance of mass associations in society, gave party members a leading role in the affairs of villages. These people were members of their communities, but their connection to old social ties and their tendency to act independently from the party's agendas were weakened by ideological education and the transferring away of non-conformists from village organizations. Village members were also subject to constant supervision and direction from higher levels; the collective effect of the imposition of class was to make society more dependent on top down control from the regional party.

The restructuring of society was not done for its own sake. Mass associations and village governments, since their inception, had functions relating to war, and new organizations such as cooperatives would also be used for war making. Inhabitants of Rushan and Haiyang did not realize it, but 1945 was the year in which the war with Japan would come to an end. The CCP's administrative apparatus and the power of party members would be used in the next conflict, China's 1945-1949 civil war.

Chapter 7: Mobilization and Purges: CCP Organizations in Rushan and Haiyang and the Party's War for National Power, 1945-1948

End of the war with Japan came suddenly and as a surprise to Haiyang and Rushan residents. The conflict, from the perspective of the two counties, seemed to heating up and entering its most brutal stage in 1945. Japanese forces were pulling back from across China that year, unable to sustain the occupation of the country after years of heavy losses to the Americans in the Pacific. This brought relief to some parts of China, but not Jiaodong. The Japanese withdrew according to a larger strategic plan, locating to China's eastern coast to counter the possibility of an American invasion of these areas, and to provide corridors of escape for Japanese forces in China if the military situation in the country deteriorated. Jiaodong was a major part of this redeployment, and CCP organizations in the Peninsula quickly faced what they had never faced before, a large Japanese occupation force. The Japanese, unlike in the early 1940s, did not mount large-scale attacks to destroy Communist military units. Their objective was more defensive in nature, securing all important areas along motor roads with a large military presence and driving the CCP back towards the hills. Haiyang was a major target of this new strategy. In May 1945 thousands of Japanese troops entered the county from its west. They came to stay, and established garrisons in half of Haiyang.¹

The Japanese operation caught CCP organizations in Haiyang off guard and devastated 61 villages. Japanese forces set up strong points in some communities, pillaged them mercilessly for supplies and human labour, and slaughtered the residents of others to create a buffer zone between their garrisons and villages held by the CCP. Hundreds of Haiyang inhabitants were killed, maimed or taken away by the Japanese,

¹ Haiyang xianwei, "Yijiu siwunian shangbannian" (see chap. 6, n. 39).

and CCP organizations were put under tight pressure.² Rushan was also bracing for a Japanese assault, but in Mid-August of 1945 news of what seemed like an unbelievable story reached the two counties. Giant American bombs had incinerated two Japanese cities far away, and that the war with Japan was over.

This news, however, gave the residents of Haiyang and Rushan little to rejoice over. Japanese forces pulled back after the surrender, leaving a trail of devastation, with hundreds of houses and livestock destroyed and countless property lost just as Haiyang was entering the fall harvest.³ Inhabitants of the county and Rushan also had many refugees, including many from nearby counties to care for, and any euphoria for the end of the war was cut short by the almost immediate entrance of Jiaodong into an even larger internal conflict for control of China. The CCP centre, even as the conflict with Japan was going on, had been planning a war with the GMD for national power following Japanese surrender. Jiaodong was a major part of its larger strategy. Mao, since the early 1940s, had made seizing of Manchuria, one of China's major industrial regions at the time an immediate goal for the CCP following Japanese defeat.⁴ Separated from Manchuria by a narrow stretch of water and having a long tradition of work migration to the region, Jiaodong was a critical staging ground for this effort. It became, in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese surrender, a major transportation route for bringing CCP troops from all parts of Shandong into Manchuria. The Peninsula, with a large population, was also subject to high demands for military recruitment and labour from provincial and central party levels from the fall of 1945 to 1948.

² Haiyang xianwei, "Yijiu siwunian shangbannian"; Haiyangxian jiuji weiyuanhui (hereafter cited as HJW), "Yijiu siwunian chun diren zai Haiyang penzishanqu de zuixing diaocha ji wozhengfu de jiuji gongzuo" (Investigation into the Crimes of the Enemy in Haiyang's Penzi Hills Area During the Spring of 1945 and Relief Work Carried Out by Our Government), 1945, SPA, 31-257-10.

³ HJW, "Yijiu siwunian chun."

⁴ Mao Zedong, "Shandong genjudi shiwei zhanlue zhuanyi de shuniu" (Shandong Base Area is the Pivot Point of Our Shift in Strategy), in *Mao Zedong junshi wenji* (Collection of Mao Zedong's Military Writings), Volume 2, ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi (Beijingshi: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1993), 681-682. Mao, for example, had stressed in a July 1942 document that taking control of Manchuria was a critical step in dealing with the GMD after the war with Japan, and called for using Shandong as a stepping stone for CCP forces to reach the region.

Demands of the civil war placed many burdens on both the CCP base area in Jiaodong and party organizations in them. Mobilizing for the new war was total in nature, demanding active participation and sacrifice by all segments of society. It often went against the social, political and economic reality of the Peninsula, and led many in Jiaodong to question if they should support the party. War mobilization also placed strains on the ability of CCP organizations to remain cohesive amidst many forces threatening to divide their members and weaken their commitment to the party's cause. Pressures of war, in addition, led the party centre to unleash more radical class struggle to consolidate its control over rural society. These developments shaped the last and most radical phase of party history in Jiaodong prior to 1949.

7.1 Initial Stage of War Mobilization: 1945

Preparations for a coming civil war against the GMD began in Jiaodong years before Japanese defeat. Jiaodong Communists had a long connection with Manchuria. The region was a place of refuge for many Jiaodong party members fleeing persecution from their native places prior to 1937, and the Peninsula's CCP committee, at the urging of the party centre, sent a number of Jiaodongese party members who were familiar with Manchuria to southern Liaoning from 1942 on. These men formed information gathering networks and served as guides for CCP forces entering the region after Japan's defeat.⁵ CCP forces in Jiaodong, by mid-1945, were also creating the basis for a mass deployment of troops from Shandong into Manchuria. Following directions from provincial and central party leaders, they largely avoided confrontation with Japanese forces that were advancing into CCP areas in the spring of that year, saving strength for a future conflict with the GMD. Forces in Jiaodong, instead, targeted pro-GMD troops in areas close to central Shandong. These areas were of little strategic value to the Japanese. However, they allowed CCP forces from the rest of Shandong to link up with those in Jiaodong, and

⁵ Liu Gongcheng and Wang Yanjing, *Ershi shiji Dalian gongren yundongshi* (History of the Dalian Worker's Movement in the 20th Century) (Shenyangshi: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2001), 427-433.

became a corridor for the party to move troops into the Peninsula and Manchuria after they were conquered.⁶

CCP leaders from Jiaodong undertook these actions as part of a slow buildup of forces to seize Manchuria. They, along with the party leadership in Yan'an had believed that an end to the war between China and Japan would come soon, but did not anticipate Japan's sudden collapse in August 1945. Neither did they predict that Japanese forces in Manchuria would be swept away in a vast offensive that month by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union formally recognized the GMD as the legitimate government of China, but it saw the CCP as a proxy in its larger efforts to establish political dominance in Asia and allowed the party's forces to enter Manchuria unopposed. What followed in the next few months was a rush by the CCP to move its troops into Manchuria through Jiaodong. From September to December 1945 over 70,000 men from Jiaodong, western Shandong and central China crossed over to Manchuria via the Peninsula.⁷ Central party leaders, while sending large numbers of Jiaodong troops north, also called on remaining forces to block the GMD from entering the Peninsula. These units were told to do so by expanding the CCP's control over Jiaodong's countryside and seizing its main seaport cities of Qingdao, Yantai and Weihai.⁸

⁶ Lai, *A Springboard to Victory*, 231-232 (see chap. 6, n. 40).

⁷ Li Bingling, "Tingjin dongbei: yi kangzhan shenglihou Shandong budui duhai beishang de qingkuang" (Advancing to the Northeast: Recalling the Movement of Shandong Forces North across the Sea after Victory against Japan), in *Zhifu dangshi ziliao xuanbian* (Selected Materials on Party History in Zhifu), Volume 3, ed. Zhonggong Yantaishi Zhifu quwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhu (1989), 142.

⁸ Xu Shiyou, 284 (see chap. 4, n. 46).

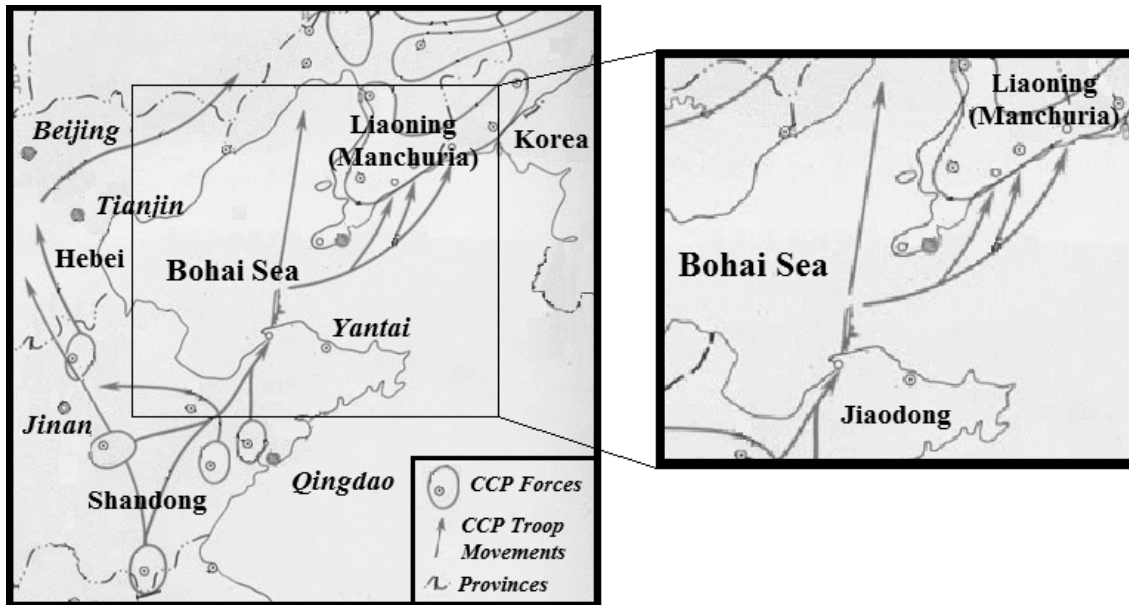


Figure 18 Routes Used By CCP Forces in Shandong to Enter Manchuria, 1945

Source: Modification of a map from: <http://bbs1.people.com.cn>

These developments dragged the residents of Rushan and Haiyang into something they had never experienced before, a total mobilization of society for nation-wide war. CCP forces entered Manchuria through Jiaodong by travelling to its northern counties, such as Penglai, where they then headed north on small boats requisitioned by party organizations from locals. Transporting large numbers of men through the Peninsula's rugged interior was a difficult task. Jiaodong did not have railways, and its road system was heavily damaged during the war with Japan. CCP forces in Shandong also lacked modern transportation to supply their men. A smooth transfer of troops to Manchuria from Jiaodong could only be achieved through a vast organization of human labour to support their needs. Units in Jiaodong, in addition, needed to quickly replenish their numbers following the movement of large bodies of men to Manchuria. Responsibility for these tasks was given by provincial and regional party leaders to lower organizations and the administrative bodies they commanded. In late August the Jiaodong regional party issued directives to all county and sub-county governments and mass associations, calling on them to mobilize their inhabitants to repair roads, feed, clothe and provide

medical care to soldiers, and to replace forces leaving Jiaodong by recruiting 30,000 men into the army by the end of October.⁹

7.2 Machinery of Mobilization

In Rushan and Haiyang, these calls pushed into high gear a larger system of social control and mobilization. This system was the product of class struggle and the creation of a new CCP membership. Attacks on elites over past grievances had allowed CCP organizations to seize control of mass associations and restructure society. They had also consolidated the party's hold over society by creating new groups of supporters. Some of these were people the CCP designated as "activists" (积极分子). Activists were mainly beneficiaries of class struggle, and were selected by ward level party leaders or nominated by village CCP members. They were seen as party members in training and received education in CCP ideology similar to members. Activists were allowed to serve in senior positions in mass associations, and they were placed under the control of party organizations at the village level.¹⁰

Another group was women. Why women joined the party or supported its activities is an interesting subject. The CCP, in its propaganda, emphasized equality between men and women, and stressed a need to uplift women from the constraints of traditional society in order to strengthen China. However, the activities of its members and organizations, particularly at the lower levels, were often abusive towards them. The early CCP in Jiaodong was a group of rebellious young men who were prone to abandon their wives and mothers to pursue their revolutionary activities. This tradition continued with party members from the ward level and up during the mid and late 1940s. These men, according to documents, often saw moving away from their home villages to as an opportunity to leave their wives behind. They were frequently accused by their superiors of engaging in improper sexual relations with women in their new work places, and were constantly trying to divorce their spouses and marry new ones.¹¹

⁹ ZYSDZZYW, *ZJDD*, 245.

¹⁰ Haiyangxian geijiuhui, "Shang bannian gongzuo zongjie baogao" (Summary Report on Work in the First Half of the Year), 1945, Haiyang Municipal Archives, 1-1-3.

¹¹ Haiyang xianwei, "Yijiu siwunian shangbannian."

A few major CCP figures in Jiaodong, such as the murdered 1930s leader Zhang Jingyuan and Luo Zhufeng, a major victim of the Anti-Trotskyite purge of the early 1940s, were married to modern educated women and enjoyed companionate relationships with them. However, the activities of these men often placed their wives in hardships and danger. Zhang's wife, for example, travelled with him during his activities. She gave birth to a son during their time in rural Jiaodong, but was left helpless and alone to take care of their baby in strange place when Zhang died. Zhang's child later died because his wife could not properly care for it.¹² Luo's wife, who was also CCP member, was arrested with her husband after he was accused of being a Trotskyite. She was pregnant at the time, and give birth during a forced march of prisoners a few months later.¹³

Party organizations at the village level were also known to mistreat women. CCP policy in Jiaodong, in theory, encouraged women to join the CCP and its mass associations. However, documents never gave them much attention or made recruiting women a priority. Party organizations, in an effort to create enthusiasm for mass struggles, at times also encouraged attacks on "broken shoes" (破鞋), women who were accused of being adulteresses and unchaste widows.¹⁴

Despite this a number of women came out to support the CCP, and they did so mainly after the start of class struggle in 1944. Women took part in party activities for a number of reasons. As cooks for their families they were often concerned with food. Mass struggles, which permitted participants to take food from the wealthy might have appealed to their interests.¹⁵ Women also had closer interactions with village elites than men, and often served as nannies, wet nurses and domestic servants for their families. Some might have been mistreated and sought revenge against their former employers by

¹² Li Runwu, "Huiyi Zhangfu Zhang Jingyuan" (Remembering Husband Zhang Jingyuan), in *Laixi dangshi ziliao*, 54-57 (see chap. 3, n. 9).

¹³ Wang Ruowang (see chap. 5, n. 64).

¹⁴ Rushanxian zhengfu, "Yijiu siwunian shiyue zhi siliunian sanyue" (see chap. 6, n. 15). A document on class struggle in Rushan in early 1946, for example, noted four cases where women were attacked for being "broken shoes" during a campaign in the fall of 1945 and early 1946.

¹⁵ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan, "Jiangai xunbao." This document noted that women were very active in mass struggles if they could take food from the victim's houses, and that some came to such events mainly to collect food and cook (see chap. 6, n. 47).

supporting the CCP.¹⁶ Many of the CCP's activities also involved getting people to speak out about their past sufferings. These events might have been seen as a chance by women, who were often widowed by war and forced to endure economic hardships and take care of children and the elderly during times of turmoil to vent the bad emotions they had accumulated. Some women might have also wanted to escape the constraints imposed on them by their families by joining the CCP and taking part in its activities.

Participation by women in the CCP was never great in contrast to men.¹⁷ Society in Shandong had a very conservative and patriarchal attitude towards them. It saw women only as wives and mothers who stayed at home, and those who joined the CCP and played an active role in community affairs were frequently accused by their communities of being sexually promiscuous and breaking with social custom.¹⁸ However, a considerable number of women from all age groups did come out to support the CCP, and they became party members, activists and mass association members.

Activists and women serving as CCP members expanded the party's presence in society. They also increased the ability of party organizations to influence different segments of rural communities to comply with the CCP's demands, and gave the party's activities an emotional appeal. Women, for example, were often tearful and wailing when they took part in actions such as mass struggles, something that made the people the party was trying to attack seem guilty and added a personal element and intensity to the messages that the CCP was trying to promote. They also nagged their sons and husbands to follow the party's agendas, or got other women to do the same. Party organizations

¹⁶ ZRXZ, "Changjiazhuang eba douzheng zongjie" (see chap. 6, n. 17). One such case was the mass struggle against the Wangs in Changjiazhuang, Rushan. A woman was very vocal about being poorly paid and badly treated as a wet nurse by the Wangs.

¹⁷ ZRXZ, "Zuzhi zhuangkuang diaocha tongjibiao" (Statistical Chart on the Organizational Situation), May 1946, RMA, 001-01-0037-013; Rushan xianwei zuzhibu, "Zuzhi zhuangkuang diaocha tongjibiao" (Statistical Chart on Investigation of the Organizational Situation), 1 July 1947, RMA. An indicator of the role that women played in CCP activities is the number of women who joined the CCP during the late 1940s. Women made up 1,181 out of 6,513 party members in Rushan, roughly 18 percent of the total number of members in the county in 1946. The number of women in Rushan's CCP went up slightly in the summer of 1947, the height of party recruitment during the pre-1949 period. Despite this they made up only 2,296 out of 11,774 members, roughly 25% if the total membership in the county.

¹⁸ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian" (see chap. 4, n. 50).

also exerted influence on society through teachers who were recruited into the CCP. These members were used to motivate children and young people to take part in the party's activities, and to produce propaganda for the CCP. The larger party in Rushan and Haiyang, over the course of 1945, began to organize these groups to direct and control society through a mixture of ideological education, propaganda and social pressure. This effort began with Haiyang and Rushan's schools. Many of these had been closed down due to war from 1940 to 1942, and the weakening of elites through class struggle had removed the funding of schools by the wealthy and lineages. CCP governments took over managing and supporting schools, and reopened many that were shut down.¹⁹

The takeover of education had a political purpose, and CCP leaders began to transform schools with help from teachers who were party members. School education was often merged with party ideology, and ideologically trained students were used to organize and exert pressure on both children and adults to follow the agendas of the CCP. A document on education from Haiyang in early 1946 noted that the schooling must be integrated with practical matters in villages, and that it should focus on educating adults outside of the classroom as well as students. Party members used students to organize youth associations, and to encourage children and young people who were not enrolled in schools to join these organizations. Students also carried out a number of propaganda activities targeting adults, such as demonstrations to encourage people to join mass organizations and their activities.²⁰

Key amongst these activities was "literacy classes". Classes on literacy were organized by CCP controlled mass associations. They were designed for adults who could not read or write, and were promoted by mass associations as a way for individuals

¹⁹ HDFB, 198 (see chap. 3, n. 1); RDB, 173-174 (see chap. 2, n. 30). ZRXZ, "Changjiazhuang eba douzheng zongjie." CCP governments in Rushan and Haiyang tried to take over and fund schools as early as 1941, but they faced resistance in some villages from elites over this and were not able to fully control schools until after class struggle. In Changjiazhuang, one of the villages described in chapter 6, the Wangs, the dominant elite group controlled the school and tried to stop government officials from taking it away from them in 1943. They also tried to create social discontent by claiming that the government was intruding on the property of the village.

²⁰ "Haiyang Changshuiqu Xianantou xingzhengcun dongxue zongjie" (Summary of Winter Study in Xianantou Administrative Village, Changshui War, Haiyang), 27 March 1946, SPA, G031-01-1926-006

to uplift themselves from poverty. However, characters and texts taught were often related to politics and were frequently used to discuss party ideology. Literacy classes were heavily supervised by village party members and ward party leaders, and those who taught them were often selected on the basis of commitment to CCP ideology rather than education level or literacy skill. Instructors often taught people specific ideological characters and terms, such as class struggle and asked them to relate personal experiences to these concepts.²¹

Political agitation by children and literacy classes were combined with several other forms of propaganda. Mass organizations put up wall posters on a daily basis to spread agendas promoted by the CCP, or wrote the contents of these posters on blackboards placed in the center of villages. They also organized opera troupes and musical groups to perform politically themed songs and plays. These mechanisms collectively spread several messages.²² They reinforced class divisions. Schools and children's associations usually accepted only children from lower class households, and those with the label of "poor peasant" were preferred as teachers of literacy classes. Literacy classes often asked participants to speak out about past abuses at the hands of individuals from higher classes, and taught them to be vigilant towards the actions of such people. Opera troupes also made plays depicting abuses towards the poor that were allegedly committed by village elites. A central message behind both propaganda and education was the unity of people from poorer classes, chiefly poor peasants and farm labourers in standing up against oppression from the wealthy. Another was that the CCP was the representative of the poor and the importance of banding together behind the party's leadership and supporting its activities. Literacy classes, in fact, were often turned into calls for action on programs decreed by higher CCP levels.²³

²¹ "Haiyang Changshuiqu Xianantou"; Zhonggong Haiyang xianwei (hereafter cited as ZHX), "Haiyangxian yijiu siwunian minzheng gongzuo zongjie" (Summary of People's Administration Work in Haiyang County, 1945), 1945, HMA, 1-1-3.

²² "Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu Wanggezhuang." (see chap. 6, n. 54).

²³ "Haiyang Changshuiqu Xianantou"; "Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu Wanggezhuang"; Haiyang xian gejiuhui, "Shang bannian gongzuo zongjie baogao," (Summary Report on Work in the First Half of the Year), 1945, HMA, 1-1-3.

7.3 Mobilizing for War

Supporting the CCP, by 1945, increasingly meant taking part in its military activities. Rural society in Jiaodong, since the early 1940s, had been organized to support a localized guerilla war by party members and mass associations. It was organized by the mid-1940s to prepare for a long term conventional war following the conflict with Japan. Literacy classes and propaganda called on people to join the Eighth Route Army, the CCP's regular forces, and to support the army by helping military families. Party members, activists and children also made a major effort to persuade and pressure people to form cooperatives and join mass associations. These organizations were given many responsibilities to support the military. Cooperatives were often assigned a military family that had lost labour power because a male member had joined the army, and worked the family's land alongside their own economic activities. They were also called on to increase agricultural production and make up for crop shortages that might be caused by the departure of large numbers of men from their farms to join the army. Mass organizations sometimes also made families with many able bodied males look after military households.²⁴

The entire propaganda and education system organized by schools and mass associations was used to encourage and pressure society to cooperate on these matters. Children exerted pressure on people to take part in literacy classes. Those who could not take part during the times that literacy classes were held were given "little teachers", students who taught them the content of these classes at a time of their choosing. Schools also set an example for society by forming cooperatives and supporting military families. They often turned their surrounding lands into collective farms worked by students, and sent their children and youth to work for military families.²⁵ Activists, directed by party members and ward leaders, frequently harangued individuals and families who did not take an active part in literacy classes, cooperatives or supporting military activities, asking them to be more supportive of these programs. Party members and activists also used wall posters to blacklist people who did not actively support the military. A villager

²⁴ Haiyangxian geijiuhui, "Shang bannian gongzuo zongjie baogao."

²⁵ "Haiyang Changshuiqu Xianantou xingzhengcun dongxue zongjie."

in western Haiyang, for example, found his neighbors reading a poster criticizing him in 1945 after he constantly skipped out on farming the land of a military family. He immediately made changes to conform out of embarrassment.²⁶

Members of society who actively took part in literacy classes and supporting the military, in contrast, were often honored as “models”. They were declared examples for others to follow by literacy classes, received special mentions on wall posters, and were sometimes sent to ceremonies in the ward or county levels, where they received praise by higher party leaders. Men who joined the Eighth Route Army were sent off in elaborate ceremonies organized by mass associations that resembled weddings and festivals in traditional Chinese society, riding sedan chairs and mules and accompanied by loud music. Their families received special treatments during holidays, such as feasts prepared by mass associations and visits by ward and county officials. They were also described as “honorable and glorious” in mass association activities.²⁷

These efforts went into overdrive after the end of the war with Japan, and turned into frenzied campaigns to pressure rural inhabitants to support the CCP’s civil war. In Rushan and Haiyang mass organizations carried out several county wide recruitment drives and efforts to support the military from late August to October, which often involved the entire populations of many areas. A party directive from Rushan in August 1945 characterized war mobilization as a “political offensive”, demonstrating the strength of all CCP organizations the county and their ability to organize society.²⁸ Residents of the county and Haiyang were hit with a barrage of propaganda activities and public events by party members, which were held in quick succession. Village associations organized rallies to celebrate the end of the war with Japan. They attributed Japanese collapse to the efforts of the Jiaodong people under the CCP and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, but told them that Chiang Kai-shek’s army was an even greater danger that was coming for them. These rallies were accompanied by talks on the direness of the new military

²⁶ Haiyangxian geijiuhui, “Shang bannian gongzuo zongjie baogao”; “Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu Wanggezhuang.”

²⁷ Haiyangxian geijiuhui, “Shang bannian gongzuo zongjie baogao”; Haiyangxian geijiuhui, “Chajian yu yongjun zongzuo zongjie” (Summary of Investigation of Rent Reduction and Work to Support the Army), 2 April 1945, HMA, 1-1-3; “Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu Wanggezhuang.”

²⁸ ZRX, “Xin xingshi xia” (see chap. 6, n. 79).

situation in literacy classes. Wall posters, children's demonstrations and plays spread a similar message, calling on rural inhabitants to immediately support the army. Propaganda, victory rallies and literacy classes reminded people of the stability in Jiaodong under CCP rule from 1943 on, and the benefits many received from the party's economic policies. They also played on larger developments in China, such as the fact that the Japanese had surrendered to Chiang Kai-shek rather than the CCP, the party that most Jiaodong inhabitants had fought the Japanese under during the 1940s, and used this to declare Chiang and the GMD traitors who must be stopped.²⁹

Such activities often paved way for larger and even more elaborate events to pressure society to join the war effort, such as recruitment drive rallies. Inhabitants from several villages and sometimes entire wards were brought one rally by mass associations and the party members leading them. They were given emotional speeches by higher party leaders, urging them to join the army. Party members and activists fostered an atmosphere of enthusiasm for the civil war by chanting political slogans. They declared their support for the CCP and enlisted one after another at rightly timed moments, and prodded other males in the rally to follow their lead. Playing on local ties, some members also encouraged competition between men from different villages to enlist, asking those from their own to join the army and make the community look proud. Party members and their allies, while applying encouragement and pressure on men to serve in CCP forces, also harassed people who might dissuade them. One group that was singled out by documents was dubbed "people who dragged legs", wives and mothers of recruits who refused to let them go to the army. Such women were subjected to frequent pressure tactics by party members and activists.³⁰

One case in Rushan serves as an example. A woman in the western part of the county fiercely resisted her husband joining the army in the fall of 1945, complaining that she was unable to take care of their child alone, and that his mother would abuse her. She

²⁹ Zhonggong Rushan xianwei xuanchuanke (hereafter cited as ZRXX), "Zhanzheng dongyuan jiaoyu yu xuanchuan gongzuo zongjie" (Summary of War Mobilization Education and Propaganda Work), 1945, RMA, 001-01-0058-009; Rushanxian canjunhui, "Canjun zongjie" (Summary for Military Recruitment), September 1945, RMA, 001-01-0058-009.

³⁰ Rushanxian canjunhui.

was first approached by the village mass association head, a party member, who asked if she would like to bring any personal concerns to the women's association head. The woman refused, and later told her husband that he can bring their child with him if he want to go to the army. This prompted a visit by the women's association head of her village, who told her that she had no right to make such a claim because the child belongs to both her and her husband. The woman again refused to back down, and was approached by several women's association members who tried to convince her to let her husband leave. She was finally pressured to allow him to go.³¹

Party members and their mass association allies, while launching recruitment drives, also put other segments of society to work supporting the army. Peasant and labourer's associations organized older men to work repairing roads. Cooperatives were often turned into stretcher teams for carrying wounded and sick soldiers and groups that transported supplies to the army. Women's associations made their members make clothes and other necessities for the growing number of soldiers in Jiaodong, and to convince their husbands and sons to join the army. Schools and children's associations also sent boys to serve as messengers for the supply network catering to soldiers moving to Manchuria.³² Even refugees from the last months of the war with Japan were organized to support CCP troops. They were assigned to mass associations in different villages, and were given tasks. Rushan and Haiyang were not on the routes used by CCP forces to travel to northern Jiaodong and Manchuria, but they were considered major supply areas, and set up field hospitals for soldiers hurt in the fighting to clear out Japanese troops from the Peninsula.³³

7.4 Limitations of the System: Complexities Created by Social Reality

This mixture of propaganda, social pressure and benefits for those who complied with the CCP's agendas was initially effective in mobilizing large numbers of people. Huge groups were quickly put to work on various duties assigned by higher party levels, and

³¹ Ibid.

³² ZRXX, "Zhanzheng dongyuan."

³³ Rushanxian canjunhui; Haiyang xianwei, "Xingzheng gongzuo muqian de jixiang zhongyao renwu" (Several Important Tasks Facing Us in Administrative Work), 9 December 1945, HMA, 1-1-3.

often completed them in quick succession. In one case in Rushan over 10,000 people were mobilized to repair roads, and finished the task in one day.³⁴ A document from the Haiyang county mass association in the fall of 1945 also boasted that inhabitants of the county had completed over 60 tasks ordered by higher party levels in several days during September.³⁵ Both counties also claimed to have met their recruitment quotas, but the larger system they used to achieve this feat was not without limits. Neither was it sustainable over the long term. By late 1945 problems began to emerge in war mobilization. They were caused by several factors. One of these was that propaganda spread by the CCP on the civil war didn't always fit with reality. Party organizations, through their political agitation, had sought to convince rural inhabitants that the CCP was the representative of their interests. The party, according to their propaganda, had led the Jiaodong people to victory against Japan and brought stability to the region. War mobilization stressed a need for society in the Peninsula to side with the CCP in its new conflict against the GMD, and emphasized the urgency of the task.

The understanding of most people about the war, despite this, was at best fuzzy. The sudden end of the war with Japan had left many in Jiaodong confused about the future of the country. They were unsure why the party was initiating a new conflict right after a destructive one had just ended. Party documents from the start of the civil war often accused people of having “dazed heads” about the situation in China.³⁶ Neither could Jiaodong society fully understand why its interests were best served by sending people to Manchuria. The initial months of the war was also a period that even CCP propagandists had a hard time explaining. The CCP and GMD were often engaged in fighting and peace negotiations at the same time, and several nationwide ceasefires were declared. This left many people in Rushan and Haiyang even more confused about the war and if they should support the CCP's effort to fight it.³⁷

³⁴ Rushanxian canjunhui.

³⁵ Haiyangxian gejiuhui, “Xin xingshi yilai zhi gongzuo zongjie baogao” (Summary Report of Work since the New Situation), 2 November 1945, HMA, 1-1-3.

³⁶ Rushanxian canjunhui.

³⁷ ZRX, “Rushanxian beizhan gongzuo zongjie” (Summary of War Preparation Work in Rushan County), 14 October 1945, RMA, 001-01-0005-005.

Jiaodong, up to late 1945, was also a relatively open society. Some inhabitants of the Peninsula frequently moved around to other regions and Jiaodong's major cities for work or business. They had access to sources of information outside the CCP and often spread it to others. Despite the claims spread by party supporters that the war with Japan had been won by CCP guerillas and the Soviet Union, for example, many in Rushan and Haiyang knew that it was America, the GMD's ally, which defeated Japan. News about the war from non-CCP sources often came to people in the form of rumours, which were embellished. Events in China, such as the end of the war with Japan and developments in the civil war in 1945 and early 1946 were also unfolding in a fast and unpredictable way. This, along with the circulation of rumours, made many in Jiaodong constantly jittery and hesitant about helping the CCP.

Disconnect between propaganda and reality was at first minimized by the fact that the civil war did not reach Jiaodong. It became serious in November 1945 when GMD forces landed in the Peninsula. They were able to do so because of the city of Qingdao. The city, along with others in the Peninsula, such as Yantai and Weihai, were the target of a major CCP operation against the Japanese since late August. Party propaganda linked war mobilization with the offensive, declaring that the best way to prevent the civil war from reaching Jiaodong was to support the capturing these three cities.³⁸ The attack, at first, seemed to be succeeding. Japanese forces, no longer willing to fight on after their country had surrendered, abandoned Weihai, Yantai and most other areas of Jiaodong that they controlled. However, they stood firm against the CCP in Qingdao, handing it over to the GMD in November in a blow to the Communists.³⁹ GMD forces that entered Jiaodong were equipped with weapons that were superior to those used by the Japanese. Many inhabitants of the Peninsula knew that they, unlike Japan, were coming to occupy their homeland in strength and permanently eradicate all Communists. With the GMD came an even more frightening force in the eyes of many in CCP areas, the Americans. American forces transported the GMD to Qingdao by sea, and they established a presence in the city for the next three years. Rumours began to

³⁸ ZRX, "Xin xingshi xia."

³⁹ Xu, 285-288.

circulate that the Americans came to fight for the GMD, and that they might use their most powerful weapon, the atom bomb on the CCP, creating panic in some places.⁴⁰

Though CCP propaganda stressed that the party was the only representative of the interests of society, many Jiaodong inhabitants saw other organizations as their protectors. One of these was secret societies. These groups were offshoots of Buddhism, and blended elements of Buddhist worship with practices from folk religion in rural China. They spread a belief that the world was in chaos, and that the only hope for escape from calamity was to subscribe to their teachings.⁴¹ Secret societies had long existed in the Haiyang and Rushan area. However, these groups did not experience a dramatic expansion in their membership until the chaotic events of the war with Japan, which might have given credence to their doctrine. Secret societies were not naturally hostile to the CCP, but they were often a major presence in many village communities.⁴² Many of these societies performed charity for their members, making them less dependent on the CCP. They also spread a message of spiritual detachment from the world, making them as challenge to the party's effort to control society and mobilize it for war.

7.5 Limitations of the System: Tensions Between Party Members and Society

Conflicts, by late 1945, were also emerging between party members and society. Some organizations created for war mobilization, such as cooperatives, were running against economic reality. Putting people into cooperatives was beneficial in some cases. Military recruitment during this time took away many young, able bodied men from Rushan and Haiyang, and weakened the ability of families to collect their fall harvest. Farming cooperatives, which pooled together manpower from many families, allowed crops to be harvested at a faster speed and prevented them from rotting before they were collected. However, many were created through heavy pressuring of villagers by party members and activists. They were also formed without considering if the people in them could

⁴⁰ ZHX, "Haiyangxian yijiu siwunian minzheng."

⁴¹ Hung Changtai, "The Anti-Unity Sect Campaign and Mass Mobilization in the Early People's Republic of China," *The China Quarterly* 202 (2010): 402.

⁴² "Haiyangxian Xiaojiqu Wanggezhuang." In one village in western Haiyang, for example, an investigation in late 1945 found that 51 out of 246 households had members who belonged to secret societies.

work well together, or if they could come up with a division of cooperative earnings that satisfied everyone. Some people in cooperatives had also resented having to take care of military families, and many commercial cooperatives were badly managed. The winter of 1945 and 1946 saw many cooperatives collapse. In some wards in Haiyang nearly two thirds of all cooperatives fell apart because of conflicts between the people in them and poor management of their finances.⁴³

These developments often led to public resentment towards village party members. Members, in their eagerness to create cooperatives, had sometimes put money seized from elites through class struggle into these ventures rather than give them to the people demanding it. These actions were aimed at getting people to join cooperatives, but they often led to money being lost through mismanagement and the failure of cooperatives. Party organizations, during the winter of 1945, were also facing internal problems. War mobilization had a negative effect on the party ranks. Village party members were expected to take a lead in military recruitment and be the first to enlist in an effort to encourage others. In one ward in Rushan in late August 1945, for example, 73 out of 178 people who joined after a recruitment rally were party members.⁴⁴ Party members went for a number reasons. Some were heavily pressured by their leaders and colleagues. Others, according to some documents, had also heard that they might be assigned government positions in the cities of Yantai and Qindao after these were taken.⁴⁵ However, some were also fervent supporters of the CCP, and the practice of having members join the army took away many of the more committed and seasoned village party personnel from the two counties.

Members who left were replaced by newer and less experienced ones. Many new members were activists who were only recently given party membership to replace those who had left to join the army. They had often joined for opportunistic reasons, such as gaining wealth from class struggle, and were less committed to the party. Panic over the GMD presence in Jiaodong affected them as well as society. In November and December 1945 many members, fearful of a GMD takeover, stopped working and demanded to quit

⁴³ Haiyangxian gejiuhui, “Xin xingshi yilai.”

⁴⁴ Rushanxian canjunhui.

⁴⁵ Haiyangxian gejiuhui. “Xin xingshi yilai.”

the CCP.⁴⁶ Many cases of corruption and abuse of power by these new members were also reported. A document by Haiyang's county mass association in late 1945, for example, claimed that 37 percent of village mass association leaders investigated during an inspection in the early winter of that year were found guilty of either corrupting wealth seized from elites or stealing from public funds.⁴⁷

War mobilization had affected county and ward party leaders as well. Takeover of territory in Manchuria and formerly Japanese occupied areas of Jiaodong had led to a large transfer of mid-level party personnel away from older party controlled areas, such as Rushan and Haiyang. Several thousand ward and county party leaders from CCP held areas in Jiaodong were sent to Manchuria over the fall of 1945, and many others also moved to Yantai, Weihai and newly conquered places in Jiaodong itself. Those left behind were often inexperienced junior party members or recently promoted village party leaders.⁴⁸ The constant transfer of mid-level party personnel also made many ward and county level party leaders and members feel that they were no longer going to be working in their home counties for long. Some either stopped doing their jobs or worked less diligently on tasks assigned by superiors. Promotions within ward and county organizations, caused by the departure of many mid-level personnel, also created discontent between many party members and with their superiors. Some members who were not promoted complained that they did not receive proper rewards for their service with the party. A number of mid-level party members and leaders, believing that they would be promoted to higher positions in newly conquered areas, also grumbled or did not do their work when they found out that they were not going to be transferred.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ ZHX, "Haiyangxian yijiu siwunian minzheng."

⁴⁷ Haiyangxian gejiuhui. "Xin xingshi yilai."

⁴⁸ ZSSDY, 338. Party histories claim that over 3,000 Jiaodong party leaders from the ward level and up left for Manchuria during the fall of 1945. It likely that even more were moved to newly conquered parts of the Peninsula.

⁴⁹ Haiyangxian gejiuhui. "Xin xingshi yilai."

7.6 Challenge by the Party's Enemies

Panic over the political situation in Jiaodong amongst CCP members, along with social discontent toward some of the party's policies, led some village elites to challenge the CCP. Elites had many reasons to hate the Communists and want to sabotage their operations. For some resistance against the party might have also been defensive in nature. Members of the elite in some villages might have felt that the arrival of GMD forces would lead the CCP to launch more class struggles against them, and wanted to protect themselves by spreading doubts in society about following of the Communists. The departure of many seasoned party members due to military recruitment had also weakened the ability of CCP organizations to control society, and some elites might have sought to fill in the leadership void. Elites in some villages used the GMD and American presence to scare CCP members and their supporters and instill panic amongst fellow villagers. One of them was alleged by a document from Haiyang to have told a group of militiamen, "You just watch. The GMD has landed in Qingdao. Go train to fight, I want see you act as model militiamen when they come for you." Another in the county wrote a letter to a village party leader, claiming that there was no protection against an American atom bomb and asked the leader if his head was made of iron.⁵⁰

Elites also used case of corruption by party members and their mismanagement of cooperatives to turn villages against them. One local elite in Haiyang, for example, used allegations of corruption by party members in his village to stir up public anger, and motivated a large number of people to go to the ward government office and demand that some local members be fired from government and mass association positions. Another also ousted several party members from key village positions by pointing to their corruption, and became assistant village head.⁵¹

7.7 New Consolidation of Local Power

These developments led to a new attempt by the CCP leadership in Jiaodong, Rushan and Haiyang to strengthen the party's control over village society. This effort had several

⁵⁰ ZHX, "Haiyangxian yijiu siwunian minzheng."

⁵¹ Haiyangxian gejiuhui. "Xin xingshi yilai."

components. One of these was to launch a new round of class struggle. Mass struggles began in Haiyang and Rushan in November 1945, and they were linked with a new campaign, the vilification of the GMD through “speak bitterness” (诉苦), or “accusation” (控诉) discussions.⁵² “Speak bitterness” was part of a national campaign by the CCP to target Japanese collaborators in the aftermath of the war with Japan. The policy, according to documents from the Shandong party leadership and the party center, was designed to help party members seize power in areas that were newly conquered from the Japanese, by turning people against collaborationist government officials and elites that were previously dominant political figures in them. Party members during speak bitterness campaigns asked people to talk in groups about past abuses by the Japanese and Chinese who worked for them. They used this to build up popular anger towards collaborators, and encouraged people to mass struggle them.

Speak bitterness, in Jiaodong, was applied to areas that never had a sustained Japanese occupation, like Rushan and Haiyang as well as newly conquered places.⁵³ It was, in areas without a long period of Japanese rule, used mainly to stir up anti-GMD sentiment, and to reshape frustrations in society to serve the CCP’s needs.⁵⁴ Village party members and activists, according to a document on speak bitterness from Rushan in early 1946, did surveys in their communities prior to the campaign, asking people to report if they had been widowed, lost family members, or suffered great financial losses during the war with Japan. Those who reported were often asked to give an account of how

⁵² Rushanxian zhengfu; Haiyang xianwei, “Jindong mingchun de zhongxin gongzuo zongjie” (Summary of Central Work in this Winter and Next Spring), 1945, HMA, 1-1-3. Documents from Rushan and Haiyang used these two terms interchangeably.

⁵³ “Nuli fadong jiefangqu qunzhong” (Mobilizing People of the Liberated Areas with Effort), in *Jiefang zhanzheng shiqi Shandong de tudi gaige* (hereafter cited as *JZSSTG*), ed. Zhonggong Shandong shengwei dangshi yanjiushi (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1993), 66; Zhonggong Huadong zhongyangju (ZHZ), “Guanyu muqian Shandong qunzhong gongzuo de jixiang jue ding” (Several Decisions on the Current Mass Movement in Shandong), in *SJJ*, 443 (chap. 6, n. 41).

⁵⁴ Haiyangxian xunliandui, “Yijiu siwunian shiyi, eryuefen Xingcunqu Xingcun gongzuo zongjie baogao” (Report on Work in Xingcun Village, Xingcun Ward During November and December of 1945), 26 December 1945, HMA, 1-1-3. There were some minor exceptions to this. A few places in western Haiyang were occupied by the Japanese from 1940 to the fall of 1944. They were taken over by the Japanese again during the spring of 1945, and had a large number of collaborationist officials. In these places “speak bitterness” targeted mainly collaborationists.

much they lost in material terms and how many of their family members had died during that time. Party members and activists also asked people to identify the source of their sufferings, and to state if it was pro-GMD forces, their supporters or the Japanese, and selected some of them speak out about their experiences to others. Those who had suffered the most during the period were made to share their stories in large events attended by people from several villages, while others spoke in village discussions. These events were meant to encourage others in attendance to speak, and to spill out the emotional traumas they experienced before CCP rule.⁵⁵

CCP members organizing speak bitterness discussions stepped in after people spoke, reminding them that pro-GMD forces were responsible for their sufferings. When participants of the discussions spoke about Japanese atrocities party members linked their grief to the failure of pro-GMD forces to put up a fight when the Japanese attacked Haiyang in 1940. They also pointed out that some commanders allied with the GMD in Jiaodong during the war with Japan, such as Zhao Baoyuan had collaborationist pasts. Even when speakers could not identify the source of their sufferings party members attributed their misery to the GMD, claiming that it was the result of poor government administration by pro-GMD forces before the CCP defeated them. Party members ultimately connected the stories of speak bitterness participants with war against Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang was denounced as the root of all social ills experienced by Jiaodong society. Party members and activists often linked stories of atrocities by pro-GMD forces and the Japanese in Jiaodong to tales of corruption and abuse by GMD troops elsewhere in China and their overall ineptitude in fighting Japan. They urged people to enlist in CCP forces or support the Communist party's war effort to seek revenge.⁵⁶

Speak bitterness was a component of class struggle and an effort to intimidate the CCP's enemies. It often directed anger against anti-CCP elites, and party members frequently tried to find connections between them and pro-GMD forces. Speak bitterness discussions were sometimes a prelude to mass struggles, with inhabitants being directed to attack certain members of the elite in their villages afterwards. In some larger events

⁵⁵ Rushanxian jiuji weiyuanhui (RJW), "Kongsu yundong zongjie" (Summary of Accusation work), 10 February 1946, SPA, 31-349-1.

⁵⁶ RJW, "Kongsu yundong."

elites with strong ties to pro-GMD forces and former officers in units allied with Zhao Baoyuan were grabbed by party members and activists beforehand. They were sent to discussions to be denounced by the speakers, and a few were even executed on the spot to satisfy public anger.⁵⁷

Class struggle was accompanied by an increasing assertion of coercive power over society by party organizations. This effort involved militias. Seizing control of village militia forces and placing them under the leadership of CCP members had been an important objective of the 1944 class struggle campaign in Rushan and Haiyang. Local elites who served as militia leaders were often the victims of mass struggles, and class struggle was also used to remove militiamen who were hostile to the party. One case in Rushan mentioned by class struggle document in the fall of 1944 even involved a group of party members and their sympathizers ambushing a village militia that had refused to let CCP members into their force, disarming and disbanding them.⁵⁸ Most village militias in Rushan and Haiyang were under the control of local CCP leaders by the start of the civil war, and they were increasingly used to demonstrate the party's power over society. Militiamen first set up checkpoints on roads, village entrances and harbours. They questioned travellers about where they were going, made them seek permission from their village party leaders on trips, and began to restrict movement during certain times, such as at night.

The coercive role of militias became more widely felt by late 1945, when they played an important part in the new round of class struggle. Mass struggles were the preferred method for party organizations to deal with troublemaking elites. However, in villages where elites have sowed a great deal of panic and communities where CCP members were disliked by society this was often difficult. In such cases elites were suddenly arrested by village militias. Some were given prison sentences, removing them from their communities for a long time. Others were detained in higher governments until the situation in their villages had settled down and local inhabitants had been turned against elites and the GMD through speak bitterness sessions.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Muhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan.

⁵⁹ Haiyangxian gejiuhui. "Xin xingshi yilai."

Using the militia to remove elites was another form of intimidation against people who challenged CCP rule. It was also a way of cracking down on secret society activities. Such groups often operated at night, and they were detected by militia patrols. Intimidation by militias was complemented by increasing surveillance of village inhabitants by party members. Village party members and activists, after class struggle, often organized “anti-spy” committees, whose members were put in charge of keeping an ear out on anti-CCP rumours and to identify who was making them. Such committees were usually led by public safety officers (公安员). Public safety was a system of law enforcement and counter-espionage in CCP controlled areas. The system, in Shandong, emerged during the early 1940s, when the party acquired considerable territory and needed to keep order in society as well as hunt down spies in its own ranks.⁶⁰ Public safety, at the village level, included a person in the community government whose task was to arrest criminals, be on the lookout for enemy spies and educate the local populace on how to detect them. Public safety officers were established in most villages in Rushan and Haiyang by late 1944, and they coordinated with higher level public safety personnel to collect data on rumours and determine who was spreading them.⁶¹ Public safety officers and anti-spy committees imposed another layer of intimidation towards people who were hostile towards the CCP. They often labelled these individuals “spies”. Alleged spies were constantly harassed by anti-spy committee members, and they could be easily mass struggled or imprisoned at higher governments based on the words of these people.⁶²

While increasing coercion towards the party’s enemies and trying to win over the rest of society with campaigns like speak bitterness CCP leaders in the two counties also made efforts to indoctrinate and foster greater commitment amongst party members. Carrying out class struggle was a component of this effort. It brought the mostly

⁶⁰ ZYSDZZYW, 139. The public safety apparatus was set up in Shandong in 1941, and its Jiaodong branch was established a year later. This system, by 1943, had absorbed the social affairs department, which hunted down spies within the CCP itself.

⁶¹ Rushanxian gonganju, “Guanyu sisinian xiabannian siwunian shangbannian dite guote huodong zongjie baogao” (Summary Report Regarding the Activities of Enemy and Guomindang Spies in the Second Half of 1944 and First Half of 1945), 19 July 1945, RMA, 001-03-0043-009.

⁶² ZHX, “Haiyangxian yijiu siwunian.”

inexperienced ward and county party leadership and personnel into the countryside, away from distractions related to personnel transfers, and forced them to engage in investigations of local conditions as a prelude to organizing mass struggles. Investigations improved the knowledge these members had on the areas that they worked in. They also helped to expose problems in villages to higher levels. Class struggle, in addition, further linked village party members with the CCP by engaging them to carry out an important aspect of the party's policy and ideology.

While getting members to carry out class struggle party leaders also pressured them to confess misbehaviour through rectification. Behind such measures was the concept of the "mass line." The mass line was a pillar of Mao Zedong's interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. It was also a principle used by the party to control party members and used as a guideline on how they should behave. The concept stressed that CCP members were the vanguards of social revolution and representatives of the rural masses. Party members, according to the mass line, must see themselves as servants of the masses, follow their wishes, and must be selfless in performing this task. The mass line, however, had a paradox. Communists on one hand were supposed to be the servants of the rural masses rather than their masters. On the other hand, the masses were regarded by Mao to be backwards and ignorant people who had to be educated and directed towards doing what is in their interests by their party member servants. The mass line, in practice, involved party members following Mao's interpretation of what the interests of the masses were and directing the rural masses to follow agendas dictated by him. They were criticized by Mao for being selfish and not representing the masses if they did not do this, and were forced to study Mao's ideological line and purge themselves of thoughts and behaviours that deviated from it.

Following the mass line meant doing different things at different levels of the party. Scholars, such as David Apter and Tony Saich have argued that at the highest levels of the party mass line was a call for urban intellectuals, who made up most of the membership to abandon the western liberal thinking they had acquired in the cities and devote themselves to following Mao's ideology.⁶³ At the county and ward levels, according to documents from Haiyang and Rushan, it was used by party leaders to

⁶³ Apter and Saich, 257-259 (chap. 5, n. 78).

pressure their subordinates to carry out frequent investigations of the social and economic conditions of local areas so they can better adapt Mao's policies to rural society and lead the masses to follow them.⁶⁴ In villages, ward and county level leaders used concept of serving the masses to pressure party members to come clean about their corruption and abuse of power. Party leaders, in keeping with the mass line, also staged carefully organized public events to show the commitment of party members to serving the masses. County and war level leaders, after uncovering corruption in a village, first convened an ideological discussion for its members. Party members were reminded of the mass line, and were called on to confess any actions that violated it, such as corruption, and to accuse others of doing the same. Those uncovered as corrupt were forced to criticize themselves in front of their peers. They were also pressured to make a public apology to their communities, listen to criticism from its residents and pledge to better represent them. Such events were presided over by higher level leaders, and they were also directed by activists. Activists often stepped in as villagers spoke, asking society to forgive the corrupt members and to give them a second chance to serve the masses.⁶⁵

Following the mass line and making public apologies to society for misbehaviour, according to a document from Rushan in 1945, allowed party members to become more closely in touch with their communities and face accountability for their actions. It also increased public trust towards members and restored their image.⁶⁶ Public apologies also served other purposes as well. They gave society a chance to vent their grievances, reducing the emotional impact that abuses by party members might have over people. Apologies, perhaps more importantly, directed public anger towards individual party members and away from the party state and the CCP's policies.

CCP leaders in Haiyang and Rushan, while making very public efforts to deal with corruption and abuse of power, discreetly made changes to the policy on cooperatives. Putting more people into these groups was still promoted, but pressure on rural inhabitants to form them was reduced. County party leaders carried out investigations on how to manage cooperatives, and promoted successful examples for

⁶⁴ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

⁶⁵ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian"; Haiyang xianwei, "FanJiang baotian gongzuo zongjie" (Summary of Work on Opposing Chiang and Protecting Land), 1946, HMA, 1-1-3.

⁶⁶ ZRXZ, "Shang bannian."

rural inhabitants to follow. They also encouraged less ambitious forms of collective farming, where rural inhabitants only worked together in certain seasons rather than cooperatives that forced people to put all their land and resources together and share a collective earning.⁶⁷

7.8 Effects of the New Push for Power

Measures such as using militias to detain people, class struggle, speak bitterness discussions and anti-spy committees did not completely wipe out rumours or public panic. The civil war, for much of its duration, was an unpredictable conflict, and its outcome was never certain to anyone. Even when the CCP was winning the threat of American intervention on the side of the GMD created doubts on whether the party would emerge triumphant in the war. Rumours and panic continued periodically throughout the civil war because of these reasons. Restrictions on travel by militias, along with class struggle also provoked an initial backlash from secret societies. Such groups were increasingly restricted in their activities, and class struggle sometimes also targeted their members, causing them to turn violent. In October 1945 members of the Eastern Universal Mercy Buddhist Society (普济佛教东会), one of the groups in Haiyang, became rebellious after a militiaman spotted them while they were conducting a ritual. They killed the militiaman, and launched an armed uprising involving hundreds of people after the CCP government in the county began to look for his killers.⁶⁸ In Rushan, an attempt to carry out class struggle in late 1945 also stirred up a hornet's nest when some of the intended victims were members of the Unity Sect (一贯道), another secret society. The sect's members in the village included many people, including militiamen, and they detained party members and closed off the community to outsiders. Rushan's county government had to send in higher level forces twice to break up the protest in the village.⁶⁹

However, mechanisms such as the militia and anti-spy committees further expanded the control of party organizations over society. These measures, along with

⁶⁷ Haiyang xianwei, "Wuyuefen jige gongzuo qingkuang huibao" (Report on the Situation of Several Types of Work in May), 1946, HMA, 1-1-3.

⁶⁸ ZHX. "Haiyangxian yijiu siwunian."

⁶⁹ Rushanxian zhengfu.

class struggle also heavily cracked down on people who tried to prolong or exacerbate war anxiety in society with rumours and turn it against the CCP. Violent activities of secret societies also justified further crackdowns on them. People who tried to make trouble for the CCP also faced constant harassment by anti-spy committees and the threat of being arrested by militias and imprisoned at ward or county government offices. Arbitrary detentions became common by the spring of 1946. In many places in Haiyang and Rushan anyone even accused of being a spy was arrested and sent to higher government levels. In others it became almost mandatory to detain victims of class struggle in ward governments for a period of time after they were mass struggled. In one ward in Haiyang alone 37 people were arrested by and sent to the ward government in April and May of 1946.⁷⁰ In another village in the county around the same period, 80 suspected spies were arrested. Those placed under arrest, according to a party document during the period, were sometimes held for up to two months.⁷¹

These developments produced a powerful effect by the summer of 1946. Local elites, the most vocal opponents of party organizations, were forever silenced by the new effort to consolidate CCP power over grassroots society. Many, like in 1944 and early 1945, were again brutally attacked, and a few were even deliberately killed during class struggle. Secret societies, though still existing, were driven to operate deeper underground. The spreading rumours continued, but they were no longer traceable by documents to individuals, and were often made discreetly rather than in the open.

The effects of the CCP's policies to strengthen party power over local society were not always negative. Many people benefitted from goods taken from the wealthy during class struggle. Party leaders, in their investigations of society, had also moderated policy on cooperatives, and corruption by party members was also addressed in a very open way in many places. The opportunity to speak about past sufferings to others and receive sympathy for these experiences, in addition, also offered therapeutic relief for many people who took part in speak bitterness discussions. One woman in Rushan, according to a document, felt such a sense of emotional release after she was interviewed

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Haiyang xianwei, "Chujian gongzuo he chajian qingkuang" (Situation on Anti-Spy Work and Investigation of Rent), 1946, HMA, 1-1-3.

by party members about her sufferings during the war with Japan that she later come to them again, claiming that she had more sad tales to tell.⁷² A feeling of comfort and sympathy might have led many participants of speak bitterness sessions believe the claims made by CCP members organizing them, even if these were not completely true. Rushan and Haiyang under party rule was also a fairly stable period compared to the chaos of the previous years. It was also a time of overall economic recovery. Many people in villages that were devastated by Japanese rule might have also felt saved by the high degree of control that CCP organizations exerted over society. Assigning people from such areas to mass associations and cooperatives in villages that were not destroyed by war allowed them to survive. CCP organizations, through social pressure, had also encouraged many villages to donate grain to help families in stricken areas.⁷³

There were likely people who were unhappy with the CCP's policies, or did not completely agree with the political messages spread by party members. However, they were subject to increasing pressure from various mechanisms controlled by local party organizations to comply. The extreme ways that CCP organizations sometimes cracked down against those who opposed their authority might have further discouraged people from speaking their mind or going against the agendas of the CCP. A mixture of emotion, constant subjection to political agitation and fear was increasingly solidifying the party's control over rural communities.

These activities served as a prelude to the next stage of war mobilization. Class struggle in 1944, despite causing a great deal of physical harm and humiliation to victims, had not killed any. Attacks in 1945 and 1946, by linking class struggle with the manipulation of personal emotions, was encouraging much more violent actions. A few struggle victims were also intentionally killed. Policies used by CCP organizations to discipline their members, such as forcing them to make public confessions and be criticized by their communities also set a precedent. Descriptions of such instances in documents suggest that they were made to foster reconciliation between party members and their communities rather than punitive purposes. However, these actions made public

⁷² RJW.

⁷³ “Haiyangxian youkang gongzuo zongjie” (Summary of Work on Relieving Military Families in Haiyang), 1946, SPA, 31-1-308-1.

humiliation of members and confrontation towards them by society seem less out of the ordinary. The increasing violence in class struggle, combined with public methods to discipline party members would play an important role in a new campaign by the party, land reform.

7.9 Land Reform

The situation in Rushan, Haiyang and Jiadong had calmed significantly by the spring and early summer of 1946. Mobilization to support the movement of forces to Manchuria had ended, and the threat of a GMD invasion of the Peninsula had disappeared. In the immediate aftermath of the war with Japan, Jiadong was not a major focus of GMD efforts to seize territory in northern China. A few minor attempts by GMD forces to enter CCP areas of the Peninsula from Qingdao in late 1945 and early 1946 were quickly repulsed. A nationwide ceasefire had also been declared as part of an American effort to mediate a resolution between the CCP and the GMD.

This lull in the fighting, however, was brief as the ceasefire collapsed in late June. Although negotiations between the CCP and GMD would still continue for several months, they were largely superficial in nature and the two sides were now locked in a life and death struggle for control of China. Shandong, long considered a gateway between north and central parts of the country, was a major target of GMD attack. Shortly after the collapse of the ceasefire, the GMD launched a major offensive on Jiadong from the west of Shandong and Qingdao.⁷⁴ It marked the beginning of over two years of bloody fighting for the control of Shandong, and rendered the province the site of several of the largest and most decisive engagements of the civil war. Pressure from GMD armies brought about an even greater effort by party organizations to mobilize society for war. It also saw a new phase of class struggle, land reform.

Land reform began with the May 4th directive from the party center. In an effort to increase support for the CCP's war effort, this directive called for the seizure of land and property that belonged to the higher classes and for its distribution to the poor.⁷⁵ Officially, this policy marked a shift from less direct forms of class struggle seen during

⁷⁴ ZSSDY, 358-359 (see chap. 3, n. 3).

⁷⁵ Liu Shaoqi, "Guanyu tudi wenti zhishi," in *JZSSTG*, 73.

the war with Japan, such as rent reduction, which weakened the wealthy through reducing their income earned from tenancy, usury and hiring farm labour, to more radical measures that destroyed them as a group by taking away their land holdings. Land reform, in reality, was an expansion of the practice of property seizure from the wealthy that had been going on in Jiaodong since 1944. Rented land, as noted in the previous chapter, accounted for a small percentage of holdings in many parts of the Peninsula and Haiyang and Rushan. Even in areas where land was concentrated, many large land holding rentiers had already fled prior to the conquest by the CCP. Rent reduction in Rushan and Haiyang, for the large part, amounted to attacking elites, many of whom were not big rentiers of land, over past abuses towards society and forcing them to pay huge fines to those who they had allegedly wronged. This practice led many elites to sell off land and property. From 1944 on, party organizations in many areas of the two counties also gave land from large rentiers who had fled to their tenants.⁷⁶

This pattern was not unique to Rushan, Haiyang or Jiaodong. Some scholars, such as Suzanne Pepper, have argued that the distinction between land reform and earlier forms of class struggle across CCP-controlled areas of China from 1937 to 1949 was merely a matter of degree.⁷⁷ Although Pepper's assertion is correct, it obscures the distinctive dynamics of the land reform movement and the impact it had on CCP members and leaders. Land reform in Jiaodong and Shandong is in many ways reflective of these dynamics. In the province, the movement was marked by sharp policy turns, and was shaped by two developments. The first of these was the stance that central leaders in the party had towards land reform, and the second was a new struggle for power in Shandong's CCP. This conflict was the result of a shakeup of the provincial leadership during the civil war. Movement of CCP forces from Shandong into Manchuria in the fall of 1945 led to the departure of some of the Eighth Route Army commanders who had held senior positions in the provincial party establishment. Among these was Luo Ronghuan, Shandong's party secretary. As part of Mao's efforts at holding the province, these men and the forces they commanded were replaced by New Fourth Army units which were moved in from central China. With them came Rao Shushi (饶漱石),

⁷⁶ Haiyangxian, "Changshuiqu chajian" (see chap. 6, n. 69).

⁷⁷ Pepper, *Civil War in China*, 248-249 (see chap. 6, n. 43).

political commissar of the New Fourth Army. Rao was a rising star in the CCP. He was the senior party figure in central China from 1942 to 1945, and was appointed head of the newly created CCP Eastern bureau, the organization in charge of Shandong and the whole of eastern China by Mao during the civil war.⁷⁸

Rao was joined by Kang Sheng, who arrived in Shandong in November 1947. Unlike Rao, Kang was a fallen figure in the CCP during the late 1940s. Mao's top henchman during the anti-Trotskyite campaign and Yan'an rectification, Kang had acquired an odious reputation in the party for his ruthlessness. Although he played a major role in helping Mao consolidate his power in the CCP, he was disowned by the chairman in 1945 as a part of Mao's efforts to disassociate himself from the purges that led to his rise. Mao removed Kang from all senior positions in the party that year, but tasked him with overseeing the implementation of land reform in late 1946. As part of this mission, Kang travelled across CCP-controlled areas in north China, ultimately ending up in Shandong in late 1947.⁷⁹

Kang and Rao did not have much in common, but they had similar agendas. The two men were both political opportunists who were willing to use Mao's radical programs to increase their standing in the party and power over areas to which they had been assigned. Rao, prior to arriving to Shandong, had tried to carry out a purge of Chen Yi, commander of the New Fourth Army and his main rival for power in central China. Rao used Chen's reluctance to carry out a radical phase of rectification in 1943 to accuse Chen of breaking with Mao and his party line. He also employed a mixture of manipulation and pressure to force other party leaders in central China to denounce Chen. Rao's move led Mao to suspect Chen of challenging him. Chen ultimately convinced Mao of his loyalty and was rehabilitated, but he was removed from central China for two years, a move that increased Rao's stature in the regional party.⁸⁰ Following Mao's disassociation from Kang in 1945, Kang was left without any formal position of power.

⁷⁸ Liu Guoxin, He Yaomin and Liu Xiao eds., *Zhonghua renmin gongheguoshi changbian, renwujuan* (Long History of the People's Republic of China, Edition on Persons) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2010), 249.

⁷⁹ Byron and Pack, 183-184, 188-189, 190-196 (see chap. 5, n. 27).

⁸⁰ Xiang, *Mao's Generals*, 114-117 (see chap. 1, n. 15).

As such, he sought to re-enter the senior party leadership by finding himself a key position in Shandong.

In doing this, Rao and Kang found themselves a common enemy - the existing party leadership in the province. Key amongst these leaders was Li Yu, who became Rao's deputy and head of the CCP's Shandong provincial government. Li did not have Rao's stature or a long history of being in the CCP's central leadership as did Kang, but he had been a key party figure in Shandong since the mid-1930s. Many of Li's subordinates during his early days in Shandong, such as Lin Hao, had also dominated major positions in Shandong's provincial party and in various organizations in its regions.⁸¹ Positions held by Li's supporters gave him a great deal of political clout in Shandong, and made him a target of Kang and Rao. Rao and Kang used the problems generated by land reform and the CCP centre's changing stances on the policy to strengthen their power in Shandong. Their plan involved an ongoing effort to discredit Li, Li, Lin Hao and other senior provincial leaders, with the intent of branding them as going against central policy and removing them from power. This was accomplished through creating excesses in land reform, and affected party members down to the lowest levels, including in Rushan and Haiyang.

7.10 Moderate Phase of Land Reform: 1946

Initially, land reform involved a controlled campaign through which to exert social pressure on wealthy individuals and families give up their land, with the threat of violent class struggle if they did not comply. There were a number of reasons behind this approach. The CCP centre's directions on land reform hardly fit with the reality of Haiyang, Rushan or much of Shandong and Jiaodong. Land reform, according to the May 4th directive, was a program designed to rally society to the CCP's cause by organizing it to attack and seize property from large land owners. The directive called on party organizations to focus on those labelled landlords, and to target those with the most land.⁸² In Rushan and Haiyang, this policy left almost no one for party organizations to attack. In most areas of the two counties, land had never been concentrated, and even in

⁸¹ Li Yu, 247-248. (see chap. 4, n. 4).

⁸² Liu Shaoqi, "Guanyu tudi wenti," 73-75.

areas where it had been, large landlords had either been forced to sell most of their land by previous class struggle campaigns or had fled during the early years of the war with Japan. Class was also a poor indicator of actual land holdings. In some villages people labelled rich peasants often had more land than did landlords. Distinctions between classes were also vague in some areas, and carrying out violent land reform threatened to harm some individuals who had become wealthy through earlier CCP class struggle and economic programs.⁸³

These conditions led all levels of party organizations in Shandong to improvise. According to a directive on land reform from September of 1946, the Shandong provincial leaders called on lower party levels to use land reform to further weaken tenancy. They stressed that taking land from smaller landlords and rich peasants was acceptable, but argued that party organizations should only take rented land, and should do so through peaceful methods such persuasion and arbitration rather than through organizing mass struggles. Seizure of property was permitted, but the document ordered that lower party organizations allow those who were targeted by land reform to retain enough of their old land and wealth to remain as the equivalent of a middle peasant in their areas of residence.⁸⁴

Party organizations in Rushan and Haiyang approached the issue of land reform and “persuasion” advocated by the provincial party leadership through carefully orchestrated events held by mass associations. In one ward in southwestern Haiyang, for example, land reform started with a “mass struggle” against a long absent land owning family. The family had fled completely before the CCP took over Haiyang, and tenants had effectively owned their land under Communist rule.⁸⁵ Party leaders in Haiyang and the local ward decided to make this landlord family the focus of an effort through which to coax those with more land than others to give up their holdings. They did so by launching a campaign to expose the family’s alleged misdeeds, using village level party

⁸³ Rushan xianwei, “Tudi gaige gongzuo zongjie” (see chap. 6, n. 32). Classes were so indistinguishable in some areas of Rushan, for example, that party organizations conducting the policy frequently changed people’s labels.

⁸⁴ ZHZ, “Guanyu chedi shixing tudi gaige de zhishi,” in *JZSSTG*, 205-210.

⁸⁵ Haiyang xianwei, “Tudi gaige xingdong qingkuang baogao” (Report on the Situation and Actions of Land Reform), 1946, HMA, 1-1-3.

members and activists to put up wall posters detailing their bad behaviour. Activists and party members assisted illiterate locals in reading and understanding these posters, and also sought to find people who could recount oppression by the landlord family. They brought the inhabitants of all villages in the ward to a mass rally in the landowner's home village several days later. Here, after activists and party members chanted slogans against landlords, eleven people spoke out regarding the family's abuses. The speakers had been specially selected. They were deemed to have the most to say about the bad deeds of the land owning family, and were also heavily coached by party leaders to say specific things. Some of them gave teary eyed accounts about horrible mistreatment by the landlord. The stories they told could well have been exaggerated. One person, for example, claimed that he had been arrested by the government after having been framed by the targeted landlord and that he had been caned 300 times after the incident - something that he would have likely died from had it been a true story. Activists encouraged participants to chant anti-landlord slogans over and over, stoking further mass anger. They proclaimed that things had changed under the CCP, and asked other landlords and rentiers to seek forgiveness by coming forward and voluntarily giving up their land.⁸⁶

In earlier campaigns, "speak bitterness" rallies often functioned as preludes to violent mass struggles. Those with fair amounts of land during the early stages of land reform were frequently approached beforehand by party members and activists, and were encouraged to give up their holdings during the rallies. Such actions frightened targeted individuals, and sometimes even people who were previously mass struggled but had not been asked by party members to give up land. Many stepped up during rallies and turned in their land. CCP policy attempted to channel this process to the party's interests in several ways. Dividing the land that had been acquired through land reform was conducted by party members and activists, and this practice gave CCP organizations a degree of flexibility in directing land reform towards achieving the most desired effect for the party while trying to minimize the possibility of creating widespread social discontent. Party organizations decided how much land should be taken away from those who had offered to give up their holdings, and often did so according to local conditions and the availability of land. They could also decide to exclude certain people from land

⁸⁶ Haiyang xianwei, "Tudi gaige xingdong qingkuang."

reform. Division of land was usually held in conjunction with military recruitment and tax collection. Poor families with members in CCP forces were usually given land first, and all those who received land were asked to pledge to either join the army or support the party by paying taxes.⁸⁷

7.11 Shift Towards A Radical Stage of Land Reform

This approach initiated the process of land reform, but there were numerous problems associated with it. In many villages, particularly in the north of Rushan and Haiyang where land ownership was fragmented, those being targeted by land reform often did not have much land. This frequently led CCP organizations to go further than the directions which had been provided by the provincial party. In some cases, land that was farmed rather than rented was taken away from targeted households, and on other occasions, party organizations took land and property away from middle peasants, a group that had been excluded from land reform by provincial directives. Land reform benefitted some, but it also hurt others. Taking rented land away from wealthier households sometimes also hurt tenants, who lost land that they rented and were left worse off.⁸⁸

The methods employed by CCP organizations to take away and distribute land also created discontent towards them and some of their members. Using the threat of violent confrontations to force people to give up land was intended to prevent land reform from getting out of hand in the complex environment of Rushan and Haiyang. However, the use of “speak bitterness” methods generated hatred towards the wealthy. Anger built up during this process, and the fact that some poor people, such as tenants, in the two counties were hurt by the campaign led to demands that more land and property be taken from wealthier families and be distributed to the poor. Among the poor, some also questioned why party organizations were not carrying out a more aggressive class struggle campaign, and suggested that party organization members were showing favoritism towards some wealthy people. Furthermore, having land reform committees

⁸⁷ Rushan xianwei, “Tudi gaige gongzuo.”

⁸⁸ Rushan xianwei, “Tudi gaige gongzuo”, Haiyang xianwei, “Tudi gaige xingdong.”

distribute land also led to villages accusing their local party leaders of corrupting seized land and hoarding wealth for themselves.⁸⁹

These developments sowed the seeds for a more radical campaign which was ignited by a shift in the party centre's stance on land reform in 1947 and the actions of Rao Shushi. During that year, the CCP came under heavy pressure from the GMD. In March 1947, its forces lost the party's capital Yan'an to a GMD offensive, and were hard pressed by GMD forces almost everywhere else.⁹⁰ Feeling the pressure, the CCP's central leadership decided to expand the scope of land reform and its violent mass struggles, using them to equalize land holdings in areas under the party's control. This combination of rural discontent created by the early phase of land reform in Shandong and the party centre's changing view on policy played into the hands of Rao Shushi. Rao had come to Shandong in late 1945, but had been away from the province for most of 1946 on other assignments given to him by Mao.⁹¹ He was in close contact with Mao and other central leaders, and was able to gauge their shifting stance on land reform. Rao used his ability to read the party centre to carryout policies it had ordered before they were officially announced in 1947. As well, he also consistently embarrassed Li Yu and his subordinates, painting them as opposing the larger policy on land reform as well as Mao's party line.

Rao began the effort to increase his power in Shandong by issuing a directive in late February 1947, accusing lower party leaders in the province of favouring "compassionate" means of taking land from higher classes rather than involving the rural society in class struggle, and of corrupting land and property that had been seized. He characterized this as a "rich peasant line" (富农路线) that violated the mass line and the larger spirit of land reform, and called on party organizations to discipline their members

⁸⁹ ZRX, "Lanjia Zhuang tudi wenti de diaocha" (Report on the Land Question in Lanjia Zhuang), 3 March 1947, RMA, 001-01-0017-003. In one village in Rushan, for example, several party leaders were accused of taking the best land and goods seized during land reform as their own. One even arbitrarily ordered some local inhabitants to take these goods to his home. This, along with the limited amounts of land gained through initial land reform led to discontent amongst many poor people in the village.

⁹⁰ Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 151-159.

⁹¹ Li Yu, 244.

over it.⁹² Rao's directive was followed by another a few weeks later from Liu Shaoqi, Mao's closest aide at the time, and the person in charge of land reform. Liu's document was addressed to all party controlled areas. It literally repeated Rao's position, accusing many party organizations across China of following the rich peasant line and breaking with land reform policy. Liu recommended even harsher measures for punishing party members who were accused of following the "rich peasant line", which included subjecting them to mass struggle.⁹³ At first, cracking down on the rich peasant line in Shandong involved investigating cases of favoritism and corruption by party members, but it opened the door for the public attack of members for violating party policy. In early July of 1947 Rao issued a new directive, declaring that the entire Shandong party had been following the rich peasant line and ignoring the needs of the poor. He called on party organizations in the province to correct this through equalizing land and property between the rich and the poor, and to do this through class struggle. Rao issued a stern warning for party leaders who did not do this, calling on their organizations to expel them from their positions and to mass struggle party leaders at lower levels.⁹⁴

The stance on class struggle was supported by the party center, and officially endorsed in a number of documents over the next two months.⁹⁵ In his memoirs, Li Yu characterized Rao's claim as a great disgrace to himself and the Shandong provincial leadership, and he, along with lower leaders, began to fiercely implement Rao's plan in an effort to exonerate themselves.⁹⁶ Hundreds of mass struggles were held in Rushan and Haiyang during the summer of 1947. Case studies available from the counties suggest that most of those who were mass struggled were people classified as rich and middle peasants. Some in fact, were not even wealthy. These people were mass struggled for a

⁹² ZHZ, "Guanyu muqian guangce tudi gaige tudi fucha bing tuchu chungeng shengchan de zhishi" (Directive Regarding How to Implement Land Reform and Land Investigation Right Now and to Strengthen Spring Production), in *JZSSTG*, 226-230.

⁹³ Liu Shaoqi, "Dui tudi gaige de zhishi" (Directive on Land Reform), in *JZSSTG*, 84-85.

⁹⁴ ZHZ, "Guanyu Shandong tugai fucha xin zhishi" (New Directive Regarding Land Reform and Investigation), in *JZSSTG*, 239-245. Rao did not refer to any Shandong party leaders by name, but he severely criticized the directive in September of 1946 by Liu Yu and other provincial leaders.

⁹⁵ Liu Shaoqi, "Zai quanguo tudi huiyishang de zongjie" (Summary Made During the National Land Conference), in *JZSSTG*, 92-94.

⁹⁶ Li Yu, 249.

number of reasons. Some were people who were moderately wealthy within their communities, and had small amounts of wealth that could be distributed to the poor. Others were targeted as a result of grudges others in their community had for them. Some people were also attacked because wealthier family members and in-laws had given them property to hide. A few were even arbitrarily selected by party leaders and members who were under great pressure to find property to distribute.⁹⁷ Rao's directions had made many party members fearful of being mass struggled themselves if they did not carry out violent class struggle. In one case, a village party leader in Haiyang was tied up and mass struggled for questioning the land reform policy. A ward leader in Rushan was also mass struggled when he protested the attack of a personal relative.⁹⁸

Excesses in the campaign were many. A document in late July 1947 from Haiyang notes that 187 people had died in a few weeks alone due to class struggle. According to the report, some victims were killed because of the grudges that some attackers had towards them. Others had been tortured to death as part of an effort by the people who were struggling them to find out where they were hiding wealth. A number of others committed suicide as a result of their fear of being mass struggled.⁹⁹ This pattern was not unique to Haiyang and Rushan. Wang Ruowang, who was rehabilitated in the party in 1946 and served in a minor position in its provincial party structure, claimed that 10,000 people were killed across Shandong over the course of one month alone during the summer of 1947.¹⁰⁰ Although party leaders across the county had rushed to follow Rao's directions, they also fell into a trap that he had created. Despite calling on party organizations to carry out class struggle and equalize property, Rao had emphasized protecting middle peasants and showing leniency to small landlords and rich peasants. Rao's demand did not fit reality in most parts of Shandong, but he again used the excesses of the radical land reform campaign he created to blame Li Yu and his

⁹⁷ "Fucha gongzuo chubu jianyao zongjie" (Basic Summary of Investigation Work), 23 July 1947, HMA, 1-1-3; "Ji diaocha gongzuo zongjie baogao" (Work Report on Continuing Investigations), 24 January 1949, HMA, 1-1-3.

⁹⁸ "Fucha gongzuo chubu"; ZRX, "Gequ kuangda quganbu huiyi gongzuo buzhi qingkuang jianbao" (Brief Report on the Situation Regarding Planning for the Expanded Ward Cadre Meeting in Each Ward), 10 July 1947, RMA, 001-01-0013-009.

⁹⁹ "Fucha gongzuo chubu"; "Ji diaocha gongzuo."

¹⁰⁰ Wang Ruowang.

subordinates.¹⁰¹ Echoing the CCP's ideology on class, he argued that these excesses could not be caused by natural animosities in society since they involved people who were not economically too variant from each other. Rao suggested that the excesses from land reform were the result of a poor handling of the policy by party leaders at different levels in Shandong, and he proposed a solution. In an August 1947 directive, he called for party leaders and members at higher levels to be investigated for their conduct, and for governments and mass associations at the village level to be replaced by new associations made up of poor peasants who would be supervised by ward leaders.¹⁰²

Rao's directive was co-signed by Li Yu, who might have felt that by going along with Rao, he could spare himself from investigation. The larger plan Rao outlined was accepted a few weeks later by the party centre and made into official policy across China, giving it greater authority.¹⁰³ In Rushan and Haiyang it led to the dismantling of the administrative apparatus in many villages and the creation of poor peasant associations which would take over their responsibilities. Despite Rao's criticism of lower party organizations, available documents from the counties suggest that many poor peasant associations were actually led by party members. Many, in fact, consisted of the same perpetrators of the excesses of land reform. They were either people who were recruited into the CCP during the campaign or lower party members who had taken an active role in it. As such, these members merely replaced those who had been leaders of mass associations and village governments, and they were placed under the control of ward level party leaders.¹⁰⁴

The extreme phase of land struggle and poor peasant associations did not last long. While he criticized the excesses of the campaign, Rao began to issue orders calling for a

¹⁰¹ ZHZ, "Guanyu dui gezhong butong douzheng duixiang yingyong butong zhengce de zhishi" (Directive Regarding Using Different Policies on Different Struggle Targets), in *JZSSTG*, 250-251.

¹⁰² ZHZ, "Guanyu tugai wenti Rao Shushi Li Yu gei Guo Zihua de fudian" (Reply Message to Guo Zihua on the Problem of Land Reform by Rao Shushi and Li Yu), in *JZSSTG*, 252-253.

¹⁰³ Liu Shaoqi, "Zai quanguo tudi," 91-97.

¹⁰⁴ "Qigouxia cun chengli nonghui shisantan jiantan gongzuo zongjie" (Brief Summary of Thirteen Days of Work on Forming a Peasant Association in Qigouxia Village), 25 October 1947, HMA, 1-1-10.

halt to the violence that it unleashed.¹⁰⁵ Violent land reform continued into early 1948, but it had stopped in many places in Rushan, Haiyang and Shandong before that. In 1948, poor peasant associations were also gradually phased out and replaced with recreated mass associations and village governments. This return to calm, however, masked a larger purge in the province. Throughout the campaign, Rao had stressed his proper adherence to party policy and accused Li Yu and other senior leaders in Shandong of mismanaging land reform and going against the official party line. As of November 1947, he was joined by Kang Sheng, who also began to criticize Li and his subordinates, accusing them of everything from being an impediment to land reform to being too young to properly manage Shandong. Li, Lin Hao and a number of other senior party leaders had been removed from their positions by late 1948. They went on to serve a number of other positions in the CCP, but were moved out of the province in 1949, and were not properly rehabilitated from the charges Rao levelled against them until the 1980s. At the lower levels, a number of county, ward and village party leaders, including in Rushan and Haiyang were removed from their positions in 1948 and early 1949 as part of an investigation of the excesses of the land reform movement. Those who took their place, at the provincial and regional CCP levels were allied with Rao. They included party figures from central China who went over to Shandong with him and Kang Sheng, who took Li Yu's place as Rao's deputy. Party members who headed poor peasant associations often rose to senior positions in village, war and county party and government positions, with members who had previously held their positions becoming their subordinates.¹⁰⁶

Rao's plan was Machiavellian, but to a degree it helped prop up the CCP war effort in Jiaodong and Shandong. For much of 1947, the province had been a fierce battleground between the CCP and GMD. GMD forces briefly managed to seize most of the province that year, and even pushed into parts of Jiaodong during the fall.¹⁰⁷ Despite this, CCP controlled areas in the Peninsula, including Rushan and Haiyang were without the type of war panic that had characterized earlier periods of the civil war. Military

¹⁰⁵ ZHZ, "Guanyu zhanling tugai ji jinzhi luansha de zhishi" (Directive Regarding Temporarily Halting Land Reform and Stopping Uncontrolled Killings), in *JZSSTG*, 255.

¹⁰⁶ Li Yu, 248-249, 253. Li notes that Kang Sheng called the practice of assigning old party leaders to lower positions "flipping the tower upside down."

¹⁰⁷ ZSSDY, 386-398.

recruitment, in fact, reached an all-time high in the two counties that year.¹⁰⁸ This may have resulted from the violent class struggle, which made people fear their neighbors more than the larger situation of the war. From the fall of 1947 on, responsibility for carrying out military recruitment and war mobilization was also led by poor peasant association leaders. These men were often those who had terrorized their communities during land reform. Their menacing presence, as well as fears in society that they might launch a new round of class struggle, might have scared people into complying with the party's demands.

¹⁰⁸ HDFB, 280; RDB, 225. 1947 was a high tide of recruitment in both counties. In Haiyang 3,450 people joined up in the last five months of the year alone, the highest number throughout the whole war. The situation in Rushan was similar as well.

Conclusion

My study builds on an approach raised by historian Joseph Esherick in the 1990s to understand how the CCP came to power in China; it has yet to be applied by other scholars to studying the subject. Esherick argued that scholars in the field have long been focused on uncovering either internal or external reasons for the CCP's rise to power, attributing it either to factors outside of the party, such as the Japanese invasion, widespread poverty and social injustice in rural China, and stressing the role of these factors in pushing society to the CCP, or to internal factors, such as the ability of CCP organizations to control society and push it to carry out the party's agendas. He contended that the division between internal and external factors was often vague, because the CCP was not an entity that was insulated from the outside world, but a collection of individuals who were part of rural society and were shaped by developments happening to it in the early 20th century. Esherick asserted that the emphasis on internal factors behind the CCP's success overstated the unity within the party and obscured the differences between its members and their interactions. He argued that scholars studying how the CCP came to power should examine the issue from the perspective of party members, their backgrounds and the process that made them committed members of the CCP.¹

Using sources never previously available to historians, my thesis examines these questions through a case study of two counties in Jiaodong. My work expands on Esherick's framework by looking at the relationship between the central leadership of the CCP and the localities where the party developed. The findings of my dissertation in many ways corroborate Esherick's argument. The development of the CCP in Rushan, Haiyang and Jiaodong was a complex process, involving human beings. It was the story of a large and diverse group of individuals driven to the party by the turbulent events affecting Jiaodong and China from the 1920s to the 1940s, by the friendships and local ties uniting and dividing them, and by the efforts of leaders affiliated with the CCP centre

¹ Esherick, "Deconstructing the Construction of the Party State," 1053, 1079. (see chap.1, n. 9).

to turn them into a disciplined entity able to seize power in China. Relationships and conflicts between party members and strategies used by higher party leaders to foster cohesion between them shaped the party's efforts to control and mobilize society for its agendas. Examining these interactions generates many new understandings of the evolution of the CCP, its internal dynamics and the implications to China's later history.

One of the new findings is the role played by poor, moderately educated young men in spreading the party in the Chinese countryside during the 1920s and 30s. Scholars have traditionally argued that early rural CCP organizations were started either by urban intellectuals or progressive and modern-educated rural elites. Ch'en Yong-fa, in his study of the CCP in central China during the war with Japan, for example, has highlighted the role of urban intellectuals in initiating party organizations and recruiting members. Others have stressed the role of progressive rural elites in starting early CCP organizations. Odoric Wou, in his study on Henan, argued that initial CCP members in the province's countryside were elite men who had gone to school in the cities.² Steven Averill, in his writings on early CCP organizations in rural Jiangxi during the late 1920s, has also argued that progressive elites played an important role in creating a CCP presence in the province. Elites, he contends, did so by building modern schools that spread radical ideas. They were the first to be influenced by communism and join the party, and forged alliances with secret societies and bandits to create an area of military control under the CCP, which gradually became the Jiangxi Soviet.³ The role of poor, partially-educated young men in spreading the CCP has only recently been touched on by scholars such as Cong Xiaoping in her study of rural teachers, but her article focuses more on the relationship between the expansion of modern teaching in China and the spread of the CCP during the 1930s than on the young men.

The early history of the CCP in Haiyang and Rushan challenges these conclusions. Early party leaders in Jiaodong were neither well educated nor financially well-off. While a few had a degree of urban education and helped to initially spread revolutionary ideas to the countryside, most leaders were not well educated and could only vaguely be

² Wou, 116 (see chap.1, n. 6).

³ Steven Averill, "The Transition from Urban to Rural in the Chinese Revolution," *The China Journal* 48 (July 2002): 88, 120.

considered intellectuals. Some, such as Yu Xingfu, did not have a modern education. Those who were less educated were often more committed to the party than those with more education. Though the CCP as a whole can be considered an urban intellectual entity that was driven to the countryside by persecution by the GMD, its Jiaodong branch was exclusively rural. It ran no activities nor was it part of any CCP-affiliated actions in Qingdao and Yantai; its members were mainly from several areas in Rushan and Haiyang. Contrary to Cong, many of these young men were not radicalized by going into the profession of teaching. They were, instead, products of a larger breakdown of social norms, of the collapse of the old relationship between state and society and of family decline in Jiaodong during the Republican period. These developments resulted in a group of young men who were detached from their families, rebellious and contemptuous of authority in general. Periods of disorder in Jiaodong, which made rebellious and violent activities seem acceptable and rewarding public behavior, made many of these young men political radicals and ultimately turned them into early CCP members.

These features of early Jiaodong CCP activists might have been influenced by specific regional factors. The Peninsula was an area that was experiencing tremendous social change during the early 20th century; a combination of population growth, division of land due to it and political disorder was constantly weakening rural elites financially, driving them away from positions of public leadership and blurring their distinction from the rest of society. Some of the early CCP members were from fallen elite backgrounds; the diminishing wealth and social status of their families might have made some young men dissatisfied with the status quo and turned them in to social rebels. The rebellious nature of young men was also likely fostered by work migration, which made them less attached to their families and other forms of social authority. A tradition of travel for work and study by large numbers of poor young men in Jiaodong might have also made them more in touch with cities and the radical political ideas that were taking hold there. However, many of these developments, such as work migration, population growth and social disorder were happening in other parts of Shandong and of north China. More research should examine whether poor, moderately educated young men created early CCP organizations in other places as well.

The first two chapters of my work challenge the widely accepted belief amongst China historians that the GMD and CCP, following a period during the 1920s in which the CCP joined and became part of the GMD, split into two distinct entities in 1927. Scholars have often noted that the split began with Chiang Kai-shek's purge of Communists in that year, when the GMD started to eliminate CCP members and sympathizers, along with other political radicals from its ranks. They have long believed that during the 1930s the CCP became the party of violent political revolution and social change while the GMD became an organization based on non-violent development of the country.⁴ The origins of the CCP in Haiyang and southern Muping from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, however, suggest the opposite. The local GMD organization in the two counties continued to have many political radicals. These men were sympathetic to the CCP and they provided cover for Communist activists and their political activities. Even the GMD in Laiyang, whose members were more conservative, had some sympathizers who supported Communist leaders such as Zhang Jingyuan. This might have been a special case; Shandong was a province where the leaders of the GMD had great difficulty asserting control for most of the Republican period. Scholars should keep an eye out for similar cases in other parts of China where GMD control was weak.

The CCP and GMD in Laiyang, Haiyang and southern Muping also had many commonalities. They were both made up of young men. Many GMD and CCP members were also connected through lineage and family ties, similar professions, such as teaching, and groups that linked young men, such as martial arts schools. Ties between young men and lineage connections were important tools of recruitment for early CCP members and strongly united some of them. However, these connections, along with the youth and rebellious nature of many party members, also generated a great deal of volatility and conflict in the organizations they created. Recruitment through lineage ties and local connections between young men often created insider/outsider tensions in party

⁴ Lloyd Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 6-8; Bradley Geisert, *Radicalism and its Demise: The Chinese Nationalist Party, Factionalism and Local Elites in Jiangsu Province, 1924-1931* (Ann Arbor: Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2004), 186-203. This view goes back to the works of Lloyd Eastman, and was continued in the last few years by scholars like Bradley Geisert.

organizations, with party members from different places in Jiaodong often forming subgroups and resenting each other. Many early members, because of their backgrounds and local sentiments, were also resistant to the authority of party leaders who were sent from higher levels. This resistance can be seen in the murders of Li Boyan in 1928, Zhang Jingyuan in 1933 and the poor relationship that Chang Zijian, the Shaanxi party leaders who was sent by the CCP's northern bureau, had with eastern Jiaodong party members in 1934. Insider/outsider tensions and the contempt many party members had towards authority often led to deadly and self-destructive rivalries in 1920s and 1930s CCP organizations and caused them to collapse.

The war with Japan dramatically changed the nature of the CCP in the Haiyang and Rushan area and in Jiaodong. It created a political vacuum in Jiaodong and north China and drove many people from all backgrounds into the CCP. The war also allowed the party's central leadership, led by Mao Zedong, to send large numbers of representatives to Jiaodong and begin the process of imposing Leninist discipline on local party members. My research suggests that cohesion was fostered in an often brutal and manipulative way. Leaders affiliated with the party centre exploited rivalries between different groups of party members in Jiaodong to purge their leaders, and break down ties between members that made them resistant towards top-down authority, such as local and lineage connections. They also created a Soviet-style intelligence service that terrorized higher level party members through anti-Trotskyite purges and during the extreme phase of Shandong's rectification.

These strategies were to an extent necessary given the situation faced by leaders sent from Yan'an. Party organizations in Jiaodong were largely autonomous of the CCP's central leadership prior to the late 1930s, and were a heterogeneous mix of people who were drawn to the party by the war with Japan. Party leaders affiliated with Yan'an initially had little authority over party members, and had to assert discipline quickly to allow the CCP organizations to take advantage of the political vacuum in Jiaodong created by the war. However, coercive and manipulative methods to foster cohesion in party organizations were mainly brought to Jiaodong by party leaders from Yan'an, and they were the imposition of a new set of practices from the CCP's centre. Relationships between the party centre and CCP organizations in different parts of China during the war

with Japan have never been properly studied by scholars writing in English. Works in Chinese by scholars such as Gao Hua suggest that Jiaodong's case was not unique. Gao notes that anti-Trotskyite purges and brutal phases of rectification were carried out in virtually all CCP-controlled areas from the late 1930s to the mid-1940s. Targets of these purges mentioned by Gao were often leaders of local CCP organizations and party groups that were largely autonomous of higher authority prior to 1937, similar to victims of purges in Jiaodong. Anti-Trotskyite purges and harsh rectification methods were initiated by party leaders sent by the party centre, and they in many cases resulted in more victims and deaths than in Jiaodong.⁵ More research is needed to uncover the intentions behind these purges and their effects, but overall they suggest that what happened in Jiaodong was part of a larger effort by the Mao-dominated Yan'an leadership to assert authority over party organization across China, with the same methods applied universally.

Purges were only part of a comprehensive process to remold members; they were followed by further measures. One of these was ideological education. Ideology was instilled partly through methods developed in the Yan'an rectification campaign, such as group pressure and self-confession and partly through restructuring society. It included two components, education on class consciousness and the mass line. Class consciousness was more about manufacturing identity rather than a reflection of social reality in Jiaodong; it was something that was imposed on both the party membership and society by leaders affiliated with Yan'an and the political and economic policies they introduced. Party policies exploited tensions in society created by the war with Japan to turn rural inhabitants against each other, weakening their old social ties and destroying existing elites. They replaced these ties and individuals with an administrative structure that divided people along artificially created class lines and treated them differently based on their class designations. The new party administration favored people from lower classes, selecting them as CCP members. It also manipulated people's memories of their past sufferings, using methods such as "speaking bitterness" to direct their anger and grievances for past injustices towards those labeled as belonging to higher classes. The CCP administrative apparatus also encouraged members of the lower classes to constantly attack those with higher class labels.

⁵ Gao Hua, 367-368, 448-462 (see chap. 5, n. 47).

Class labels, along with the manufacturing of hatred towards people with high class labels fostered loyalty amongst party members in a number of ways. Those classified as part of the lower economic classes felt trusted and favored by the CCP; they became more dedicated to the party. Those from the higher classes were discriminated against, but were told that they would be accepted if they were humble, self-critical and obedient towards top-down authority in the party.

The mass line was a more ambiguous concept. It stipulated that party members must become selfless servants of the rural majority in society and representatives of their interests. The concept was contradictory. Though it stated that party members must serve the interests of rural society, it also assumed that its inhabitants did not know what was in their best interests. Serving the “masses” in reality meant following policies dictated by Mao and the party centre. The mass line was instilled in members through group discussion and self-criticism. Members were called on to evaluate their own behavior according to the concept, and to accuse others of violating it. The mass line’s linking of party membership with selfless public service made members feel that they had a moral purpose by being with the CCP. The equation of serving the interests of the rural majority with following the party’s agendas under the concept also allowed CCP organizations to suppress the individuality of members. Rectification often accused members who did not carry out the party’s policies of being selfish and against the interests of society, and made them feel guilty for such behavior. The mass line, when needed, could also be used to justify punishing and purging non-conformist party members; it was sometimes used by party leaders to scare their subordinates.

Coercion, weakening of kinship, personal and other ties between party members, along with ideological education made party members increasingly obedient to top-down leadership. The effects of these measures cannot be overestimated. What the CCP attempted to do was make a sudden transformation of individuals, and this often went against the real situation and the interests of party members. Members still showed a degree of autonomy, and were sometimes influenced by their personal agendas more than by those of the CCP’s. Autonomy amongst party members was expressed in different ways. The expansion of CCP membership in Jiaodong led to the creation of a large party structure with many levels. This structure shaped the interests of party members.

At the top of the CCP structure in Jiaodong were party leaders sent down from Yan'an and members with close ties with them, such as Jiaodong party secretary Lin Hao. These people were often long-time revolutionaries who had risen to a fairly high level within the CCP. They were mostly non-natives of Shandong and Jiaodong, or were Jiaodong inhabitants who had been separated from their region for many years. Figures from Yan'an and their allies made up the provincial party leadership in Shandong and the regional party leadership in Jiaodong. They sometimes formed political circles of their own; they were people who were fully committed to the party, with little interest of their own other than following its agendas. These members were also closely tied to the party centre and Mao Zedong, and were often friends or trusted confidants of Mao himself. Despite this leaders sent from Yan'an and their affiliates often had differences with the party centre. They sometimes acted according to their own judgments on policy implementation, or passively resisted agendas pushed by Yan'an when they felt that these were incompatible with local reality or did not improve their control over local party members.

Below them were mid-level party members and leaders, who were mainly from county and ward organizations. These people were career party members who worked full time for the CCP. Members at these levels often had to move away from their home villages to take up positions in higher CCP government and party levels; they were willing to give up ties with their families and communities to do so. This group was made up mostly of Jiaodong inhabitants. While it included some long-time party members, many party members were fairly new recruits. These people were closely monitored by provincial and Jiaodong regional level leaders. They were devoted to the party also because they had no source of income other than from it and because they saw the party as a tool of social advancement. Ward, county and other mid-level party members were heavily concerned with advancement within the party and improving their lives through this process. This desire sometimes interfered with their commitment to the CCP and to carrying out the party's agendas. County and ward level members often became discouraged and did not perform their tasks if they felt they were not rising quickly enough in the party structure or receiving the promotions they wanted.

At the lowest level were members in administrative villages. They were members of their communities, who had to work and take care of their families while carrying out unpaid tasks for the CCP. Party members at this level were often caught between the responsibilities to their families and the party, and they were at first not always reliable in carrying out tasks for the CCP. These were people who were the least committed to the CCP as an organization, and they sometimes engaged in corruption and abused their power to further their personal and family interests.

The Jiaodong party structure and its membership development produced a specific pattern of interaction between different CCP levels. How they worked together to carry out policy and how party members were treated from the mid-1940s on was also a changing process. Policy implementation often alternated between moderate and radical turns, which tended to happen suddenly. Regional and provincial leaders were flexible and pragmatic in their approaches to policies such as class struggle and rectification, and were concerned with their applicability to local conditions. However, they also showed a great deal of obedience to the party centre when it actively pushed for the implementation of radical agendas.

Mid-level party members, when carrying out radical policies like class struggle, sometimes showed hesitation. However, they were overall cooperative. Such people were for the large part separated from their home communities and local areas. They were also career party members, and were willing to carry out radical policies to prove their loyalty to the CCP. The role of village level party members in carrying out policies imposed from above was never predictable. Village party members were mostly heavily influenced by developments outside of the party. They were the most self-interested people in the CCP's party structure in Jiaodong. These members sometimes were very enthusiastic participants in class struggle and military mobilization because the two policies gave them material benefits seized from mass struggle victims and also increased their control over society. However, they also feared a GMD return, and were prone to panic and abandon their responsibilities when the larger political situation in Jiaodong and China did not favor the CCP.

The party centre, when pushing radical policies, did show a degree of willingness to listen to the opinions of regional and provincial leaders in Jiaodong and Shandong at

certain times, such as during the rectification. However, Mao tended to favor radical policies over moderation. He also preferred leaders who were close to him personally and can be considered loyalists; he often placed such people in top positions in the Shandong and Jiaodong party structure. Mao did this in 1942 by making Luo Ronghuan head of the provincial CCP and putting all lower organizations under his authority. In 1947 Mao did this to an even larger degree, allowing Rao Shushi and Kang Sheng to dominate the provincial party and to replace most regional leaders with their allies.

My findings have several implications for understanding the history of the CCP from 1937 to 1949, as well as the party's development during the Maoist period. One of these is that the larger Maoist strategy for managing relationships between the CCP centre and localities in China was one of governing through outsiders who were close to Mao and considered by him to be loyal rather than through locals. Scholars, such as Keith Forster, have noted that Mao tended to place outsiders who were close to him in higher position of power in provinces that were newly conquered by the CCP in 1949, and that he ultimately purged many local leaders in these places during the 1950s. This pattern, seen from the perspective of Jiaodong and Shandong, was a continuation of the larger trend in which the party centre asserted control over different parts of China from 1937 on.⁶

Another finding is that central leaders had long had a suspicious attitude towards lower party members and organizations and saw them as expendable. They were willing to scapegoat these members for the failings of the larger system and the incompatibilities between the policies of the party and local reality, and to use society to punish and discipline them. The party's efforts to discipline party members, from the mid-1940s, had constantly involved society. This began with forcing party members who had engaged in corruption and abuse of power to publically apologize to their communities and be openly criticized for their actions and went on to the dismantling of village party organizations and replacing them with poor peasant associations. Whether this treatment of lower party members was reflective of the CCP's larger policy towards lower party members needs to be better studied. If this is part of a broader trend it suggests that the

⁶ Forster, 221-223 (see chap.1, n. 12).

basis for later party developments, such as using society to attack party members in the Cultural Revolution, had their roots before 1949.

Overall, my dissertation suggests that the CCP's rise to power was darker and more troubled than previously thought. Many of the party's agendas did not fit social reality in Jiaodong. Local social ties and the incompatibility between CCP policies and actual economic conditions in the Peninsula also made many party members feud with each other or disobey orders from above. These factors might have led central leaders to favour loyalist outsiders over local party figures, and to increasingly push for more radical class struggle, which was more about artificially fostering animosities between people than anything relating to actual economic matters to break up social ties in society and between party members. Representatives of the party centre also built an increasingly coercive security apparatus, first within the party and in society by the late 1940s. Lessons drawn from this period might have convinced the CCP's central leadership under Mao to build a powerful police state in all parts of China after 1949, and to see class struggle as its main tool for maintaining social control.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. A List of Disruptions to the Shandong Provincial Party, 1928-1933

1. **November 1928:** Wang Fuyuan, head of the Shandong provincial party's organization department betrayed the party over personal disputes with other members. Wang gave a list of senior provincial party members to local authorities in Jinan, resulting in the arrest of many. He later worked with the pro-Feng Yuxiang provincial government as well as the Shandong GMD to expose and capture Communists throughout Shandong, completely disrupting activities by the provincial party until he was assassinated by CCP operatives in August of 1929.
2. **October 1929:** Dang Weirong, CCP propaganda head and the party secretary of Qingdao defected after being apprehended by city authorities. Dang gave away the names and locations of senior members of the Shandong provincial committee, destroying it.
3. **February 1930:** Lu Yizhi, party secretary for Shandong and his assistant Lei Jinsheng were arrested, causing major disruptions to the work of the provincial committee.
4. **November 1930:** Radical activities orchestrated by the Shandong provincial committee in Qingdao exposed the names of its key members, causing many to flee and leaving Shandong without a central party leadership for several months.
5. **April 1931:** Yin Zhusan, a senior party leader in Qingdao was captured by city authorities. Yin defected, resulting in the capture of most of the provincial committee based on the information he provided.
6. **August 1931:** Teng Yingzhai, Shandong's party secretary and organization head was arrested in Qingdao. Teng later died in captivity. He had been a crucial figure in the day to day activities of the provincial party, and his capture briefly paralyzed its operations.
7. **October 1932:** The new party secretary for Shandong, Wu Ping and organization head Tang Meiting were arrested in Qingdao, disrupting the activities of the provincial party and its communication with lower levels.
8. **February 1933:** Chen Hengdan, secretary of the CCP youth league in Shandong was arrested while on a trip to Shanghai. Chen defected afterwards, resulting in the arrest of the party secretary and organization head of Shandong.

9. **July 1933:** Song Mingshi, the new organization head for Shandong defected, leading to the destruction of the party committee in the province.
10. **November 1933:** Betrayal by Xu Yuanpei, a contact person for the Shandong provincial committee led to the arrest of most of its members. The Shandong provincial leadership was destroyed, and a new organization managing the party in the entire province was not revived 1936.

Source: An Zuozhang et al., *Shandong tongshi: Xiandaijuan* (Collective History of Shandong: Modern History Volume) (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1994), 482-487.

Appendix 2. Education Levels of Party Members in Haiyang in June 1943 and The Years That they Entered the Party

Year That Members Entered the Party:

Level	Ward/Village	County	Other Level	Total
Joined the CCP In:				
1933	2	1		3
1934	1			1
1937	25			25
1938	87	9		96
1939	225	10	2	237
1940	243	25	2	270
1941	1223	42	4	1269
1942	1445	38	9	1492
1943	575	1	13	589
Total Membership	3826	126	30	3982

Note: Other Level refers mainly to members in a teacher training school set up by the CCP in Haiyang.

Education Levels

Level	Ward/Village	County	Other Level	Total
Illiterate	1030	15	0	1045
Beginner Education	2779	104	4	2887
Moderate Education	17	7	26	50
Total Membership	3826	126	30	3982

Source: Haiyangxian zuzhibu, "Haiyangxian zuzhi zhuangkuang tongji diaochabiao" (Collective Survey Sheet of the Organizational Situation in Haiyang County), 30 June 1943, HMA 1-1-14.

Appendix 3. List of CCP Party Secretaries in the Haiyang/Rushan area, 1937-1941

Liu Zhongyi (刘仲益): November 1937 - December 1938

Xu Zhongfu (徐中夫): December 1938 - June 1939

Yu Oujiang (于瓯江): June 1939 - January 1940

Su Jincheng (孙进程): January 1940 - October 1940

Hu Xiangfu (胡祥符): October 1940 - January 1941

Zhang Weizi (张维兹): January 1941 - April 1941

Liu Mengxi (刘梦溪): April 1941 - April 1944

Source: Zhonggong Shandongsheng Haiyang xianwei zuzhibu, Shandongsheng Haiyangxian shizhiguan and Shandongsheng Haiyangxian danganguan, *Zhongguo gongchandang Shandongsheng Haiyangxian zuzhishi ziliao, 1926 nian-1993 nian* (CCP Organization History Materials, Haiyang County, Shandong Province, 1926-1993) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1995), 21-23.

Appendix 4. Some of the Worst Japanese Atrocities in Haiyang/Rushan 1940-1945

Zhanchangbo Massacre (February 11th, 1940): Japanese troops killed 62 and badly wounded 6 in Zhanchangbo village in northern Haiyang after they heard gunfire near it.

Zhougezhuang Massacre (February 11th, 1940): A company of Japanese soldiers killed 30 in the village of Zhougezhuang in southern Haiyang and its surrounding areas. They also raped 18 women, took away four men and wounded a number of others.

Xiahetou Massacre (February 12th, 1940): Japanese troops foraging for supplies killed 38, raped 14, took away 33 and seriously wounded 9 people in southern Haiyang.

Gushihe Massacre (February 13th, 1940): Japanese soldiers found 100 rural inhabitants trying to flee from them near Gushihe village in southern Rushan. They killed 16 of them.

Two Atrocities Against Dashijia Village (April 4th and December 15th 1942): Japanese troops killed four, took away 75 men as force labourers, raped several dozen women and burnt down over 30 houses in two separate occasions in one village north-eastern Rushan in 1942.

Qianhe Massacre (November 1942): Japanese soldiers killed 33 and burnt down 8 houses in Qianhe village in northern Haiyang.

Mashishan Massacre (November 23rd, 1942): A Japanese mopping up operation in Mashishan in north-western Rushan resulted in the murder in cold blood of 500 civilians in one day.

(June 29th, 1945): A Japanese force murdered 21 inhabitants, seriously wounded 9 and took away 7 men in Shimatantou village in western Haiyang.

(Mid July 1945): Japanese troops killed at least 194 people in four villages in western Haiyang.

Source: Haiyangshi dangshi fangzhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Haiyang difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Haiyang) (Haiyang: Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2007), 80-84, 221-222; Rushanshi dangshizhi bangongshi, *Zhonggong Rushan difangshi* (Local History of the CCP in Rushan) (Xianggang: Tianma tushu chubanshe, 2005), 139-142.

Appendix 5. Biographies of Key CCP Leaders

Major Party Figures from 1928-1937:

Laiyang/Western Haiyang



Li Boyan 李伯颜 (1905-1928):

Native place: Western Laiyang

Background: Orphaned at age 6. Raised by his poor maternal grandfather.

Education and time away from home: Li left his grandfather's village at age 15 to go to an advanced primary school outside of Laiyang. Li studied five years at the school, and two more at a university in Shanghai.

History in the CCP: Li joined the party while studying in Shanghai during the mid-1920s. He was sent back to Laiyang in late 1927 by both the CCP centre and the party's Shandong committee, and was tasked with organizing an uprising in the county. Li took over leadership of the Eastern Laiyang party started by Song Haiting and formed a group of his own in western Laiyang in early 1928. He planned to carry out an attack on Laiyang's county town in May of that year, but got into a dispute with Eastern Laiyang members, who disagreed with his plan. Li was later killed by them.



Liu Zhongyi 刘仲益 (1895-1970):

Native place: Western Haiyang

Background: Family owned a peanut oil shop, which went bankrupt in 1928 due to the chaotic situation in Jiaodong.

Education and time away from home: Liu was literate,. He spent years as a labourer in Manchuria after his family shop went broke.

History in the CCP: Liu joined Wang Zhifeng's the radical GMD during unrest in western Haiyang in 1928-1929 because he was disgruntled with his family. He was later forced by his family to go to Manchuria for work, something that made him even more rebellious. Liu came back from Manchuria in 1932, and through a lineage member became a CCP activist. He became the head of the Western Haiyang party in the first half 1934, and organized several attacks against government forces in his area. Liu was arrested and spent several years in prison. Released in late 1937, Liu returned to Western Haiyang and created a new party organization. He was transferred to the Jiaodong regional party in 1939 and served in a number of important positions in both it and the Shandong provincial CCP from the 1940s to the late 1960s.



Song Haiting 宋海艇 (1892-1984)

Native place: Eastern Laiyang

Background: From a poor family.

Education: Studied at several primary and secondary institutions from 1918 on. Entered the Jinan Special Field Agricultural School in 1922 with financial help from a wealthy friend.

History in the CCP: Song joined the CCP while studying at a specialized agricultural middle school in Jinan in 1925. He returned to Laiyang at the direction of the Shandong provincial party late that year, and with several GMD members attempted to build peasant associations. Laiyang's GMD members were more conservative than those in Haiyang and Muping, and they rejected Song after hearing of the CCP/GMD split in mid-1927. Song's actions also made him a wanted man with local authorities, and he fled the county. He worked across Shandong for the next 11 years, and did not contact the party until 1938. Though Song's early commitment to the CCP was unstable, he is often touted by party histories as the founder of the party in Laiyang and Haiyang.



Sun Mingrui 孙明瑞 (1890-1938):

Native place: Western Haiyang

Background: Fallen gentry. His father failed to achieve a degree during the late Qing, and his family was described by later biographies as "middle peasant".

Education: Studied at an advanced primary school in northern Haiyang.

History in the CCP: Sun joined the CCP in 1928 after being introduced to the party by a relative from Laiyang. Though he had little contact with the party from 1928 to 1933, Sun started a rebellion in its name in 1928-1929, and took over as the manager of his village school after ousting its principal, a member of the local elite. Sun later became a township head, and linked up with a more organized party presence through Zhang Jingyuan in 1932. He continued carrying out radical political activities until he was arrested in 1933. Sun was not released until the end of 1937. He returned home to continue service for the CCP, but was killed in the spring of 1938 when a raid that he and other members undertook to loot weapons from a local militia ended in disaster.



Wang Zhifeng 王之凤 (1911-1936):

Native place: Western Haiyang

Background: Poor, looked after oxen as a child.

Education and time away from home: Wang was sponsored to study at an advanced primary school in Jinan at the age of 13 by a local gentry member, and returned to his native Haiyang at age 17. He also had some education in the Laiyang Village Teacher School during the early 1930s.

History in the CCP: A radical GMD member in the late 1920s, Wang joined the CCP in 1932 after coming in contact with Zhang Jingyuan. He became one of the most senior CCP party members in western Haiyang from 1932 to mid 1933, but was forced to flee the county due to government persecution. Wang remained active in the party during his exile, taking part in activities across eastern Jiaodong, but was captured and executed by Haiyang county authorities after he returned to the county to rebuild CCP organizations in 1936.

Xu Yuanyi 徐元义 (?-1933):

Native place: Easter/Central Laiyang

Background: Described by the recollection of a party member from Laiyang to be from a "poor" family.

Education and time away from home: Spent several months looking for a job across Jiaodong in 1932-1933.

History in the CCP: A teacher in eastern Laiyang, Xu was introduced to the CCP by Zhang Jingyuan in 1932. He had a troubled relationship with Zhang and Zhan Zhuoyin, the other senior CCP leader in Laiyang. Xu left Zhang's group for several months in late 1932 and early 1933 because he seduced Zhan's niece. He formed a separate organization in neighbouring Qixia County and northern Laiyang, and later challenged Zhang Jingyuan for power over the Laiyang party. Xu's dispute with Zhang became deadly after a botched mediation by the CCP provincial party in the summer of 1933. Unhappy with the results, he murdered Zhang, and was killed in revenge by Zhang's supporters a few months later.



Zhang Jingyuan 张静源 (1901-1933):

Native place: Boxing, northern Shandong.

Background: A poor family.

Education and time away from home: Zhang went to a teacher training middle school in Jinan. He was away from his home county since the age of 16.

History in the CCP: Zhang became a CCP member while teaching in Qingdao in 1928. He became the principal of a primary school near the city during the early 1930s and met Song Jixian, an eastern Laiyang native and member of Song Haiting's lineage. Zhang became wanted by local authorities while carrying out CCP activities in 1932, and fled to eastern Laiyang with help from Song. He rebuilt the Laiyang/Western Haiyang party that year, and in early 1933 established the Jiaodong Special Committee, an organization coordinating all CCP activities in the Peninsula. Zhang, however, became embroiled in a conflict with two other senior party members, Zhan Zhuoyun and Xu Yuanyi later that year. He was murdered by Xu over the dispute.

Eastern Haiyang/Rushan



Liu Jingsan 刘经三 (1906-1937):

Native place: Southern Muping.

Background: Described by a document as "petty bourgeois" and "gentry".

Education and time away from home: Liu graduated from a middle school in Jinan. He also spent years doing business in Manchuria and Beiping.

History in the CCP: Liu was a victim of Liu Zhennian's government and its predations towards society. He dared to complain about abuses by Liu's magistrate in Muping, and was forced to flee from Jiaodong for a year. Liu Jingsan became hostile towards militarist governments in Jiaodong after his experience, and he joined the CCP in 1932. He helped Zhang Jingyuan set up a regional party organization for Jiaodong in 1933, placing its headquarters in his native Muping. Liu re-established contact between CCP organizations in Jiaodong and higher levels of the party after Zhang was killed. He was arrested by Han Fujun's government in the fall of 1934, and spent two years in jail. Released in 1936, Liu contacted the party again and went to its headquarters in Yan'an. He drowned there while swimming in 1937.



Song Zhuting 宋竹庭 (1911-1997):

Native place: Eastern Haiyang

Background: Described as from a "peasant" family. Money Song spent on education bankrupted his family.

Education and time away from home: Studied in two middle schools, one in Shanghai and another in Baoding prior to late 1931.

History in the CCP: Song was the younger brother of Song Hechu, an associate of Yu Xingfu and Yu Shoutang who took part in the GMD unrest in eastern Haiyang during 1928-1929. He was politically radicalized by Song Hechu, and became a member of the CCP after meeting Yu Yunting. Song Zhuting started the early CCP in the Rushan area by recruiting from local teachers and GMD members. He was forced to flee the area in late 1932 after an effort to spread CCP propaganda in Haiyang's county town exposed his identity to local authorities, but continued working for the CCP. Song was arrested by Han Fujun's provincial government in 1935 and spent two years in prison. He was released at the start of the war with Japan, and became a major figure in the Jiaodong CCP from 1937-1949. Song rose to become a senior provincial party official in Zhejiang during the 1950s.

Yu Shoutang 于寿堂 (1896-1972):

Native place: Eastern Haiyang

Background: Described by a biography as from a "peasant" family.

Education and time away from home: Several years of modern primary schooling. Yu also spent years working as a store clerk in Manchuria.

History in the CCP: Yu Shoutang never officially joined the CCP, but he was a major figure in its early activities. A member of Yu Xingfu's lineage, he was also a GMD radical during the 1920s, and took part in the revolt and unrest caused by local GMD members in 1928-1929. Yu Shoutang was introduced to the CCP by Song Zhuting and Yu Yunting in 1932, and used his position in the local GMD to shelter Communists. He fled from the Rushan/Haiyang area after the failed CCP revolt in 1935, and was out of contact with the party until he returned in 1939. Yu

served in government positions in several Jiaodong counties for the CCP from 1939 on, and finish his career in 1965 as the deputy country head of Rushan.



Yu Xingfu 于醒夫 (Later changed his name to Yu Zhou) (1904-1979):

Native place: Eastern Haiyang

Background: Family went bankrupt at age 14.

Education and time away from home: Yu had six years of traditional schooling. He also spent several years as a labourer in Manchuria.

History in the CCP: Yu was a GMD radical during the late 1920s, and organized a revolt in eastern Haiyang that tried to overthrow the county government in 1928. He later sided with Liu Zhennian's forces, and became the head of a ward militia in 1929. Yu was recruited into the CCP by Zheng Tianjiu, a party underground worker who came to Haiyang in 1931. He worked as an underground party operative in the Wendeng teacher training school from 1933 to the spring of 1934, and established a CCP party presence in eastern Haiyang from 1934 to 1935. Forced to flee the county after a failed CCP revolt in late 1935, Yu carried out activities for the CCP in Chiping county in western Shandong from 1936 to 1939. He returned to Jiaodong in 1939, and served in various positions in the regional party, including the mayor of Weihai from 1945 to 1949. Yu rose in the party hierarchy after 1949, ending his career as a senior official in the national railway ministry in Beijing.



Yu Yunting 于云亭 (1905-2003):

Native place: Eastern Haiyang

Background: From a moderately wealthy peasant family.

Education and time away from home: Yu went to a middle school in Muping and graduated from a university in Beijing in 1931. He served in various positions across Shandong for the provincial GMD from 1928-1929. Yu also worked as a teacher in Heilongjiang before joining the CCP.

History in the CCP: Yu Yunting was a relative of Yu Shoutang, and introduced his kinsmen to both the GMD and the CCP. He joined the GMD in the late 1920s, but became a CCP underground worker in the early 1930s. Yu found work as the principal of the Shandong Village Teacher's School Number Seven in Wendeng in 1931. He used the school to recruit from students, but was arrested by Han Fujū's government after a student betrayed him in 1934. Released a few months later, he continued his activities for the CCP, using academic and administrative positions in several educational institutions in Shandong as cover. He left the province after the start of war with Japan, and became an underground worker in Sichuan during the 1940s. Yu returned to Shandong after 1949, and ended his career in the CCP as the deputy chairman of the Jinan People's Political Consultative Committee during the late 1970s.

Minor Figures in the Rushan and Haiyang CCP

Western Haiyang and eastern Laiyang

Li Junde (李俊德): CCP Party secretary of Qingdao, Li Junde became provincial leader in 1933 after all other senior leadership figures in Shandong had been arrested by Han Fujū's government. He sent Li Zhongxiang to Laiyang to mediate the dispute between Xu Yuanyi, Zhan Zhuoyun and Zhang Jingyuan.

Li Zhongxiang (李仲祥): A minor party figure in Qingdao, Li Zhongxiang was sent by Li Junde to mediate the dispute between Xu Yuanyi, Zhan Zhuoyun and Zhang Jingyuan in 1933. His poor handling of the dispute, along with a personal conflict with Xu Yuanpei, Xu Yuanyi's younger brother in Qingdao afterwards led Xu Yuanyi to kill Zhang Jingyuan. Li Junde was betrayed by Xu Yuanpei when Xu defected to Han Fujū's government. He, along with the most of provincial party leadership was arrested.

Song Haiqiu (宋海秋): A member of Song Haiting's lineage, Song Haiqiu was introduced to the CCP by his kinsmen. He was one of the earliest party members in eastern Laiyang, and led the party group in the area after Song Haiting fled. Song Haiqiu linked up with Li Boyan's CCP group in western Laiyang in late 1927, but he had a disagreement with Li over whether to attack Laiyang's county seat in 1928, and was accused of killing Li by western Laiyang party members. Song Haiqiu fled the county afterwards, and withdrew from CCP activities.

Song Jixian (宋继先): Song Jixian was related to Song Haiting and Song Haiqiu. He was a minor figure in the eastern Laiyang CCP organized by those two, and helped to build a new organization in the area during the early 1930s after he met Zhang Jingyuan in Qingdao. Song brought Zhang to eastern Laiyang and was a major figure in the party organization that Zhang created in the area from 1932 to 1933.

Song Yuncheng (宋云程): Song Yuncheng was also a member of Song Haiting's lineage, and joined the CCP through him. He was a senior figure in the eastern Laiyang party from 1927 to 1928, and worked with Song Haiqiu in organizing its propaganda and violent activities. Song Yuncheng lost contact with the CCP after Song Haiqiu fled Laiyang. He regained contact with the party in the early 1930s, but was no longer a major figure in the eastern Laiyang Communist movement.

Sun Jiesan (孙杰三): A teacher from Haiyang, Sun Jiesan knew Song Haiting through the network of educators in the western Haiyang and eastern Laiyang. He was recruited into the CCP by Sun, and was one of the first party members in Haiyang. Sun Jiesan was a major player in organizing radical activities in western Haiyang from 1928 to 1933, but he was arrested by Han Fujun's government afterwards and left the party when he was released.

Xu Yuanpei (徐元沛): Brother of Xu Yuanyi, Xu Yuanpei was a minor figure in the Shandong provincial party in Qingdao during the early 1930s, and relayed letters between the provincial organization and party members in Laiyang and Haiyang. Xu sided with his brother in Xu Yuanyi's dispute with Zhang Jingyuan. He defected to Han Fujun's government after hearing of his brother's death at the hands of Zhang's supporters, and gave information that led to the arrest of the entire provincial leadership.

Yu Dianjun (于典君): Recruited into the CCP by Song Haiqiu, Yu Dianjun was also one of the earliest party members in eastern Laiyang. He helped to spread the CCP in Haiyang by recruiting Sun Mingrui, a maternal relative.

Zhan Zhuoyun (战倬云): Zhan was an early party member in Laiyang. He was first recruited into the CCP by Song Haiting, and rejoined the party after meeting Zhang Jingyuan. Zhan got into a rivalry with both Zhang Jingyuan and Xu Yuanpei in 1933, and was kicked out of the party by Zhang. He formed a separate party organization with supporters in the Laiyang CCP, dividing the party, and fled the county after Han Fujun launched a crackdown against Communists in 1934.

Zhao Guodong (赵国栋): Zhao was a controversial figure in the early Laiyang CCP. A teacher from western Laiyang, Zhao joined the CCP after meeting Song Haiting in 1926. He was also a GMD member, and left the CCP after the Laiyang GMD decided to cut their association with the CCP. Zhao tried to rejoin the CCP after meeting Zhang Jingyuan in 1932, but he was distrusted by Zhang due to his previous history. Zhang tried to hide his CCP identity from Zhao, and keep him

out of touch with CCP activities in Laiyang, but Zhao eventually found out about them. He persuaded Zhan Zhuoyun, a friend, to make him a CCP member. This created conflict between Zhan and Zhang Jingyuan, and led to the feud between the two party leaders.

Eastern Haiyang and Southern Muping

Chang Zijian (常子健): A party member from Shaanxi, Chang was sent to lead party members in eastern Haiyang and Jiaodong. He was not well liked by local party members, and fled from the Peninsula in late 1934.

Song Hechu (宋合初): Older brother of Song Zhuting, he participated in the 1928 GMD uprising in eastern Haiyang and Southern Muping with Yu Xingfu. He became a party member with his brother, and died on an undercover mission in Haiyang in 1940.

Yu Jianzhai (于俭斋): Yu was also participant in the 1928 GMD uprising in eastern Haiyang and Southern Muping, and became a well-known educator in Muping during the 1930s. He helped to spread the CCP into Muping during the early 1930s, and found teaching jobs in the county for many party members.

Zhang Liangzhu (张连珠): A native of Wendeng, to the east of Haiyang and Muping, Zhang worked as a teacher in southern Muping and joined the CCP in the early 1930s. He took over leadership of the party in eastern Jiaodong after Chang Zijian fled, but was arrested and later executed by Han Fujun's government after he led a failed rebellion in 1935.

Zheng Tianjiu (郑天九): A senior party leader in Shandong during the early 1930s, Zheng worked undercover in eastern Haiyang as a trainer for one of the county's ward militias from 1930 to early 1931. He recruited Yu Xingfu into the CCP and later brought him to Beijing to receive ideological education.

Biographies of Key Early CCP Leaders in Jiaodong and Shandong: 1938-1945



Li Qi 理琪 (1908-1938):

A CCP leader in Henan, Li Qi came to Jiaodong at the request of several party members in the Peninsula. These men were left without a leader following the disastrous CCP uprising against Han Fujin in eastern Jiaodong in 1935, and they stumbled on to the Henan party through a friend who did business in the province. Li re-established a regional CCP organization in Jiaodong, with himself as head in 1936, but was arrested by Han Fujin's government several months later. Released after the start of the war with Japan, Li played a major role in rebuilding grassroots organizations in several eastern Jiaodong counties in the first few months of the conflict. He persuaded a number of party members from the area who were released from Han Fujin's prisons to work in their home counties under his leadership. He died in a battle with Japanese troops in early 1938.



Li Yu 黎玉 (1906-1986):

A native of Hebei, Li Yu was sent by the CCP's northern bureau to take charge of party operations in western Shandong in 1936. He was a major military commander in the province and led its CCP provincial government during the 1940s. He was removed from his position in 1948 in a purge orchestrated by Rao Shushi and Kang Sheng.



Lin Hao 林浩 (1916-1996):

Born in eastern Jiaodong, Lin left the Peninsula at a fairly young age to study in Jinan. He joined the CCP there, and became a senior party leader in western Jiaodong. He was sent back to the Peninsula in 1940, and served as the party secretary of Jiaodong and its leading party figure through most of the decade. Lin Also lost his position in 1948 due to Kang Sheng and Rao Shushi's purge.



Luo Ronghuan 罗荣桓 (1902-1963):

A native of Hunan, Luo Ronghuan served with Mao Zedong in the Autumn Harvest Uprising, one of Mao's earliest military ventures. He was a long-time friend and trusted military aide of Mao and commanded the 115th division of the Eighth Route Army during the late 1930s. Luo was sent by Mao to Shandong in 1939 and became party secretary of the province and its dominant military figure in 1943. He was credited by many for halting the anti-Trotskyite purge in Jiaodong in 1943 and the most brutal phase of rectification a year later.



Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风 (1911-1996):

A native of Pingdu in central Jiaodong, Luo Zhufeng joined the CCP while studying at Peking University during the 1930s. He came home to Pingdu after the start of the war with Japan, and formed a small guerilla unit in the county. Sometimes defiant towards higher authority, he was a prominent victim of the anti-Trotskyite purge against local party leaders organized by Lin Hao during the early 1940s. Luo was imprisoned for over a year and badly tortured. He was released after Luo Ronghuan halted the purge in 1943, and became an important party intellectual in Shandong and later eastern China afterwards. Luo was not fully rehabilitated until the 1980s, and was not allowed to return to his home county for most of the 1940s.



Wang Ruowang 王若望 (1918-2001):

A native of Jiangsu, Wang joined the CCP in the early 1930s, and was a prominent party intellectual. Despite this he was a frequent critic of practices and policies within the party. Wang was also friends with many persecuted critics of the party, such as Wang Shiwei, the intellectual who was jailed by Mao Zedong during the Yan'an rectification and later executed. Wang Ruowang first criticized party policy in Yan'an during 1941 and early 1942, when he mistakenly believed that Mao's call for criticism of ideological dogma during the rectification was an opportunity to expose any types of failings in the party system. He escaped persecution because he was transferred to Shandong not long after he made his criticism, but got into trouble again in the fall of 1944, when rectification reached the province. Wang used the rectification campaign in Shandong to voice dissent against the practices of senior party leaders in the province, something that made him a pariah in the provincial CCP. He was removed from a minor position in the

Shandong party leadership and spent the next two years as a teacher in an obscure rural school as punishment, and his criticism of senior provincial party leaders led them to unleash a short but brutal campaign against dissent against lower members. Wang remained a critic despite this, suffering persecution several times in the next four decades; he was ultimately expelled from the CCP for criticism of Deng Xiaoping and his reluctance to carry out political reforms during the 1980s.



Wang Wen 王文 (1911-1943)

A CCP leader from northern Shaanxi, Wang Wen was sent by Mao Zedong to Shandong in 1938. He took over leadership of party organizations in Jiaodong not long after he arrived, and served as the Peninsula's party secretary from 1938 to 1940. Wang initiated the first purge against local party leaders by representatives of the CCP centre, killing or exiling to Yan'an a number of important party figures from the Peninsula in 1939. Wang's actions brought cohesion to the regional party, which prior to that year had been a group of independent groups that constantly feuded with each other. He fell out of favour with the party centre in 1940 and was removed from his position as regional party secretary in the fall of that year. He died of illness in 1943.



Xu Shiyu 许世友 (1905-1985)

A native of Hubei, Xu was another one of Mao's trusted military aides. He was sent by Mao to lead CCP forces in Jiaodong in 1940, and crippled pro-GMD forces in the Peninsula in a number of battles the next year. These victories allowed the CCP to control the most strategic territory in Jiaodong, and allowed the party and its forces to survive a number of Japanese attacks during 1941 and 1942.



Yu Mei 于眉 (1914-1980)

A native of Penglai, Yu Mei joined the CCP while studying in Beijing during the 1930s. He returned to his home county after the start of the war with Japan, and took advantage of the political vacuum created by the war to seize control of both Penglai and Huangxian, a neighbouring county, in the first few months of 1938. Yu's actions gave the CCP its first area of control in Jiaodong. He also created a military force for the party in Penglai. He became an ally of Wang Wen and participated in the purge of northern Jiaodong leaders in early 1939. Yu was sent by Wang to Yan'an in 1939. This might have been a trick by Wang to remove Yu from Jiaodong, and Yu did not return until the late 1940s.



Zhang Jialuo 张加洛 (1919-2003)

A young CCP member from Yexian, Zhang and few party members used the political vacuum in Jiaodong created by the start of the war with Japan to seize his native county. He created the largest CCP force in Jiaodong in 1938 by co-opting remnant security forces of Han Fujun. Zhang had conflicts with other leaders in Jiaodong, and became the target of an elaborately-planned purge by Wang Wen in early 1939. Wang used trickery to kill some of Zhang's allies in Yexian, and forced him and several of his close associates to go into exile in Yan'an. Zhang did not return to Jiaodong until the late 1940s.

Biographies of Key CCP Leaders in Shandong: 1945-1949



Kang Sheng 康生 (1898-1975)

Mao's chief henchmen during the late 1930s and early 1940s, Kang masterminded all of the chairman's purges in Yan'an, such as the anti-Trotskyite campaign and rectification. Kang fell out of favour with Mao in 1945. He lost all of his positions in the CCP's central leadership, and was sent by Mao to oversee the implementation of land reform during the late 1940s. Kang formed an alliance with Rao Shushi to discredit and purge Li Yu and Shandong's other major party leaders, and became Rao's assistant in the province afterwards.



Rao Shushi 饶漱石 (1903-1975)

Rao was the senior party figure in central China during the early 1940s. He became head of the CCP's eastern bureau, an organization in charge of all provinces in China's east coast, including Shandong from late 1946 on. A political opportunist who was always trying to increase his personal power, Rao used the CCP centre's changing positions towards land reform to engineer a purge of all major party leaders in Shandong in 1947 and 1948. He also initiated a violent stage of land reform in the province in 1947.

Key non-CCP Political Figures in Haiyang, Muping and Jiaodong from the 1920s to the 1940s

Date Junnosuke (伊達順之助): An infamous Japanese adventurer, mercenary and spy, Date spoke fluent Chinese. He served as Zhang Zongchang's military advisor during the 1920s, and claimed to be his sworn brother. Sent by the Japanese to impose order on Jiaodong in 1938, Date organized a large collaborationist army and took over much of the Peninsula in that year. He was defeated by an alliance of CCP and pro-GMD forces in 1939 and faded from Jiaodong politics.

Han Fuju (韩复榘): Han was the military ruler of Shandong from 1930 to 1937. He first seized western Shandong in 1930, and became ruler of the entire province in late 1932 after ousting Liu Zhennian from Jiaodong. Han was a competent administrator and was well-liked in Shandong during his rule. He was obsessed with controlling the province for himself, and nearly destroyed its CCP organizations during his rule. Han also expelled GMD organizations from Shandong in an effort to consolidate his power during the mid-1930s. He was put in an uncomfortable position by the war with Japan. Concerned mainly with maintaining his military strength and power, he refused to fight the Japanese when they entered his province, and withdrew with his army. Han was executed by Chiang Kai-shek for his unwillingness to fight in early 1938.

Li Jianwu (李建吾): A prominent elite figure in western Haiyang, Li was sympathetic to the CCP, and flirted with the party on forming a joint government in the county in 1938. He backed off later, but was a secret ally of the CCP over the next few years.

Liu Zhennian (刘珍年): A former subordinate of Zhang Zongchang's, Liu seized control of Jiaodong after Zhang's collapse in Shandong in 1928. He managed to rule the Peninsula until 1932, when he was defeated and ousted by Han Fuju.

Shen Honglie (沈鸿烈): Commander of Manchurian militarist Zhang Xueliang's navy, Shen ruled Qingdao with Han Fuju as part of a power-sharing agreement between Han and Zhang Xueliang over governance of the city. He earned great renown in Shandong and across China for blowing up a large number of Japanese owned factories in Qingdao at the start of the Resistance War. He was appointed by Chiang Kai-shek to replace Han Fuju as the governor of Shandong after Han was executed.

Zhang Jinming (张金铭): Zhang was the head of a GMD organization in Pingdu during the mid-1930s. He briefly led all pro-GMD forces in Jiaodong in 1938, and launched an invasion of Yexian in the spring of that year to drive the CCP from the county. Zhang, however, was driven back by the CCP forces in northern

Jiaodong. He suffered further defeats at the hands of Japanese collaborationist forces later that year, and was no longer a major figure in Jiaodong politics afterwards.

Zhang Zongchang (张宗昌): Militarist ruler of Shandong from 1925 to 1928, Zhang plundered the province for his army building and extravagant personal life. His rule led to rampant banditry and social unrest in Shandong. Zhang's downfall in May of 1928 led to a struggle for power amongst his former lieutenants in Jiaodong that created a great deal of disorder for several months. Zhang generated further instability in the Peninsula during the first few months of 1929 when he tried to engineer a coup against Liu Zhennian, but was ultimately defeated by Liu.

Zhao Baoyuan (赵保原): A former subordinate of Zhang Zongchang, Zhao was recruited by Date Junnosuke to be collaborationist military commander in 1938. He helped Date seize a large part of Jiaodong that year, but broke away from the Japanese with several thousand soldiers in December. Zhao first cooperated with the CCP in defeating Date in early 1939, but turned against them a few months later. Zhao, from 1940 to 1945, took an ambiguous political position. He led pro-GMD forces in Jiaodong during 1940 and 1941, but began to collaborate with the Japanese in fighting the CCP. Zhao was badly defeated by the CCP in 1941, and was driven out of Jiaodong in 1945. He returned in 1946 and organized an army for the GMD, but was defeated and killed in battle with the CCP.

Zhao Sentang (赵森堂): A GMD member in Yexian, Zhao was sympathetic to the CCP and helped them take over the county in early 1938. He was betrayed by CCP members not long after and executed.