

## CHAPTER ONE

# *Variable Growth*

### CONFRONTATION DEFERRED

Party proclamations at the outset of the war to resist the Japanese army did not envisage only a single offensive against it. Ten months after its invasion of North China, in May 1938, Mao Zedong predicted the war would run through three stages:

The first covers the period of the enemy's offensive and our strategic defensive. The second stage will be the period of the enemy's strategic consolidation and our preparation for the counter-offensive. The third stage will be the period of our strategic counter-offensive and the enemy's strategic retreat.

The second stage was thought of as a 'transitional' and 'most trying period', destined to 'last a comparatively long time'.<sup>1</sup>

Later wartime and official historical party writing has upheld this three-stage theory, with 1940 and 1942 as defining years. According to these sources, the Japanese army concentrated first on defeating the GMD forces, basically leaving the CCP free to engage in organizing. By 1940 this activity had resulted in the growth of the Eighth Route Army in North China from 30,000 to 400,000 and of the countrywide party membership from 40,000 to 800,000. This rapid build-up was dealt a hard blow in the second stage, when the Japanese army turned on the CCP. Its troop strength in North China declined to 300,000 and its base areas shrank drastically, their population falling from 40 to 25 million. In the last stage, lessons drawn from the setbacks enhanced the CCP's abilities to implement appropriate policies, bringing about a renewed expansion. By the end of the war, the Eighth Route Army was 600,000 strong, the village-based militia force boasted 2.2 million (mainly active in North China); total party membership stood at 1.2 million and the base areas were populated by 95.5 million.<sup>2</sup>

This brief account easily invites misconceptions. Above all, it tends to conflate the movement's quantity with the crucial issue of its quality and to pass over area diversity<sup>3</sup> and the closely interwoven socio-economic developments over time. On the other hand, the outline usefully indicates the profound impact of the Japanese occupation policies on the broad evolution of the resistance movement, as the tide-ebb-tide configuration of more detailed figures on regular army strength demonstrates.<sup>4</sup> As background material to the present study, the initial two sections of this chapter will focus on these military trends, while the final one introduces some spatial issues bearing on the movement's complexity.

While the full-scale invasion of North China by the Japanese army began in the summer of 1937, the preceding six years saw its constant encroachment upon China. In late 1931 Japan attacked Manchuria and turned it into a puppet state the following year. Anti-Japanese boycotts in Shanghai in January 1932 were followed by Japanese troop landings and aerial bombardment. In the roughly month-long fierce battle, the GMD army unit resisted tenaciously, contrary to orders from the government in Nanjing. The subsequent 'Peace Agreement' established a demilitarized zone of 25 kilometres around Shanghai. The following year Japan occupied the strategic Shanhaiguan area and the whole of Jehol, thereby controlling the two land routes to the North China plains. The truce concluded at Tanku set up another demilitarized zone from the Great Wall to Beiping-Tianjin. Two agreements in 1935 accorded Japan possession of large parts of the Chahar and Hebei provinces. In the same year two puppet regimes were set up in them, one under General Song Zheyuan who retained a certain autonomy and was provisionally recognized by Nanjing.<sup>5</sup>

Utilizing the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, a rather minor clash between the forces of Song Zheyuan and a company of the Japanese army in the outskirts of Beiping on 7 July 1937, the latter swiftly advanced along two railways linking the ancient capital with Suiyuan to the west and Hankou to the southeast. Another route was the Tianjin-Pukou railway, leading towards Nanjing in the southeast. Zhu De, Commander-in-Chief of the Eighth Route Army, was indeed accurate in thus speaking to Western journalists two weeks before the incident:

Troop units and leaders in the north are none too good. Planning for joint action by the northern leaders with [Nanjing] has hardly begun. The northern troops under such men as General [Song Zheyuan] are both subject to Japanese pressure and influenced by our movement. The lower officers

are very anti-Japanese, but their higher command has no plan of what to do. Once the war comes these units will be destroyed one after another.<sup>6</sup>

Witness accounts by these journalists painted a miserable picture of the early Chinese defence, mainly by warlord forces:

Pulverized by a day's bombardment, with no further direction from the army command, the Chinese had at last abandoned Nanyuan. Cars and military trucks loaded with troops, retreating blindly from the charnelhouse behind them, had been caught by the enfilading fire of machinegun nests on either side of the road; in one spot there were eight hundred Chinese bodies. No veteran of the World War could remember such a slaughter. For even in the War the worst military tactics of either command could not compare with what [Song] had done to his army.<sup>7</sup>

In one terrible retreat through [Shanxi] I had seen the armies of [Jiang] almost completely collapse, soldiers throw away their weapons and officers grab all available transportation, abandon their troops and rush to the rear.<sup>8</sup>

The Japanese units rolled down into [Hebei] and [Shanxi] with relentless speed [the average advance during the first five months was 12 kilometres a day, and sometimes it even stretched to 30 kilometres]... The Japanese offensive developed its momentum almost entirely behind airplane and artillery bombardment, and a vanguard of tanks.<sup>9</sup>

According to other estimates, the Japanese army covered 15 kilometres a day until the occupation of Baoding, and 20 kilometres in the attack on Shijiazhuang.<sup>10</sup> By December 1937 all the main cities, including all provincial capitals, in North China had fallen to the Japanese.

The occupation of China also proceeded from Shanghai. The immediate Japanese pretext was the Oyama incident in August 1937 in which two Japanese were killed. With the defeat of the stubborn defence of Shanghai in November 1937, the Japanese had broken the GMD resistance in central China and the subsequent advance was quick and casualties light. Nanjing fell in December and Wuhan, further east, in October 1938. The GMD settled in Chongqing which, by its remoteness, was safe from the pursuing Japanese armies but not from bombing which caused much destruction. In October 1938, the Japanese occupied Guangzhou and the Hainan Island. Their principal objective was to cut off the GMD's then only supply route to the outside world.

Paradoxically, the more victorious the Japanese army was, the deeper it sank into the quagmire of an inconclusive war. A 1938 party report confidently declared: ‘The more the enemy advances, the vaster becomes the rear area, the weaker his troop strength ... the more favourable to our strategy of “turn the enemy’s rear into his front”, and the more advantageous to our “develop a large-scale guerrilla movement”’.<sup>11</sup> With its limited troop strength Japan was only able to occupy the big cities, important communication lines and parts of some plains, the CCP repeatedly stressed.

The thinness of the Japanese presence was particularly apparent in the early war years. Some illustrative examples are worth mentioning. The Japanese Vice Chief-of-Staff, Mutō Akira, thus described the situation in North China in the spring of 1938: ‘[I]n our occupied areas the army made defence arrangements only along railways and the main roads ... the law and order was bad, [incidents of] railways being blown up were reported daily’.<sup>12</sup> In the second year of the war the central Hebei party authorities still regarded Raoyang county on the province’s strategically important central plain as safe enough to station leading regional resistance organizations close to the county town. In fact, popular mobilization in Raoyang did not have to take note of the Japanese until 1939.<sup>13</sup> Wang Yu-chuan, historian and participant in the resistance movement in southern Shandong, mentions a GMD regiment with over a thousand men and several hundred horses carrying ‘a large quantity of ammunition and two million dollars of cash from Loyang, [Henan], through North [Shandong] to South [Shandong]’ in the autumn of 1938. Marching ‘more than a thousand *li* [500 kilometres], the regiment did not encounter a single Japanese soldier’.<sup>14</sup> When two Western journalists, making their way from Beiping to Yan’an, came into contact with party cadres in a place close to Beiping, allegedly controlled by the Japanese, they found a county magistrate and an elected administration. Two days before their arrival, a large army unit had stayed over there.<sup>15</sup>

As an example of the geographical hindrances to the occupation, consider Ralph Thaxton’s description of the remote Qian Foji, a village in southern Hebei through which the Japanese army marched a number of times but other than through puppet forces never laid siege to for a prolonged period:

To reach Qian Foji from their base in Nanle town, the Japanese had to travel fifteen *li* [7.5 kilometres] on a semi-paved road to Yuancunji, then thirteen *li* [6.5 kilometres] on a rugged, broken-brick road to the Wei River, then ferry across the river, and then pass another three *li* [1.5 kilometres] along a narrow dirty trail.<sup>16</sup>

Referring to China's vastness, a Japanese army doctor serving in southern Shanxi from 1942 has described the grisly consequences for medical treatment of soldiers:

When a man suffered from appendicitis, you could not bring him to a hospital. His appendix had to be removed right there at the front line. But there weren't enough surgeons available. Even ophthalmologists or pediatricians had to be able to do it, and they didn't know how, so they practised.<sup>17</sup>

Add the growing resistance activity and it is obvious that for the Japanese army to extend its sustained control significantly beyond the so-called points and lines required immense efforts and resources – far, it eventually turned out, exceeding those available.

The initial three years of the war may, with regard to Japan's rural occupation policies in North China, be conveniently divided by the fall of Wuhan in October 1938. During the first phase, when the Japanese directed their main efforts at crushing the GMD, their concern was to protect the railway lines. Related operations, which were defensive and not part of an overall plan, involved army units of 3–4,000 and lasted 3–4 days.<sup>18</sup> Keeping the railways safe was an urgent priority by the spring of 1938, since, according to journalist George Taylor, from then on 'hardly a day passed without the destruction by guerrilla units of some section of the North China railway system by the removal of telephone lines, destruction of bridges, attacks on garrisons, derailing of trains'.<sup>19</sup>

The 'protection' villages date from about this time. They were organized along the railways to ensure uninterrupted traffic. Primary responsibility rested with a group of generally three to five men per village, who were on guard day and night in shifts. For other kinds of related security work the villagers were separated into two categories, ages 17–35 and 36–45, with the former receiving military training. Ultimately, responsibility was collective and failure to keep a section of the railway free from sabotage could in the worst cases result in the burning of villages. The Japanese also sought to obtain cooperation by offering incentives in the form of agricultural assistance, medical services, educational and recreational schemes. Blockhouses were built, deep ditches dug and crops higher than one and a half metres were prohibited within 500 metres of the railways.<sup>20</sup>

From late 1938, the Japanese, having completed the military sweep against the GMD in central China, could devote more troops to the 'pacification'

of the northern countryside. These were deployed in two ways: to launch mopping-up campaigns, which, a leading commander of the Eighth Route Army explained, were 'not to take positions but to carry out quick, deep raids designed to annihilate our directing centres and separate detachments';<sup>21</sup> and to enforce the 'cage' policy to limit the resistance forces' manoeuvrability by dividing areas into numerous sections through a network of roads, blockhouses and trenches.

The speedy Japanese advance also implied CCP inability to put up a significant early resistance. Indeed, its regular army was small and certainly not equipped to challenge the modernized Japanese army in a direct, large-scale confrontation. And localized guerrilla and militia forces had not yet gained appreciable strength. The CCP's initial military concern was thus squarely focused on preparation and build-up – not on preventing the occupation of China. Propaganda apart, CCP sources were quite forthright on this score. Mao Zedong conceded in September 1937 that the communist forces 'can at present only play a partial role'.<sup>22</sup> Eighth Route Army commanders were even more blunt in conversations with Western journalists. Outnumbered, one said he would not fight the Japanese in that part of Shanxi.<sup>23</sup> According to another, '[w]e found in our first experience of fighting the Japanese in positions that they would first use bombing, planes, the artillery; finally tanks and armoured cars. To resist such an attack with inferior technique is to invite heavy losses'.<sup>24</sup> Japanese intelligence thus paid tribute to the guerrilla operations 'skillfully avoiding the brunt of the Imperial Army's attack'.<sup>25</sup>

Yet communist and allied resistance units were not merely spectators. Two attacks (in September–October 1937) in which communist organizers played an important role were particularly noteworthy: at Pingxingguan and Xinkou in Shanxi the Japanese army's advance was held up for one month and its deaths exceeded half the total suffered during the invasion of North China.<sup>26</sup> Besides, as Japanese army sources acknowledge, CCP raids on the railway lines were frequent and destructive.<sup>27</sup>

While undramatic, the CCP activities increasingly attracted the attention of the Japanese authorities. As early as October 1937 a foreign ministry report spoke of a 'red force ... gradually expanding in North China' and urged 'utmost vigilance'.<sup>28</sup> A year later the CCP was said to be directing a rapidly expanding anti-Japanese movement in several areas of Shanxi, Hebei and Shandong.<sup>29</sup> An army report mainly on northern Shanxi then admitted the communists enjoyed mass support. The 'pacification situation'

in March 1939 was thus assessed: communist forces were spreading in Hebei and the party's 'thorough' work made it 'extremely difficult' to obtain intelligence in southern Shanxi. In the same month the army warned that 'the continuous stubborn activity of the CCP must not be treated lightly' in the hinterland to the north and south of the railway linking Taiyuan and Shijiazhuang. 'According to latest reports', another army document of December 1939 stated, 'the communist forces have permeated the whole of North China'. Their mass mobilization extended to the outskirts of Beiping and was 'increasingly gaining strength' in Shandong. An army estimate at the time professed: 'Supported by the political forces and masses, resistance organizations are expanding the underground activities... Since hereafter the cancer to peace and order in North China will be the Chinese communist party and army, gathering intelligence on them must be top priority'. The deputy Chief-of-Staff noted in 1940 that 'the communist army's inroads into the areas occupied by us and its activities there are really remarkable and this will hereafter necessitate our greatest attention'.<sup>30</sup>

These appraisals of a rapidly mounting CCP threat were no doubt exaggerated. Yet they do convey an awareness of a gathering storm in a near future. It is therefore difficult to believe that underestimation of the CCP and its potential, as is often assumed in historical writing, applied generally to leading Japanese occupation personnel. Nonetheless, the Japanese were unprepared for the kind of massive series of attacks that the CCP's Hundred Regiments' Offensive constituted. Launched in the last half of 1940, the offensive involved 400,000 men (115 regiments) and was primarily directed against Japanese communication lines.

While it was highly successful in cutting the main railway lines, the CCP's armed forces sustained heavy casualties in the process: 17,590 killed and wounded (5,890 of whom perished in action) and another 21,182 injured from poison gas. The drastic reduction in troop strength proved hard to make up for and gave rise to criticism of the offensive by top army leaders like Luo Ruiqing, Deng Xiaoping and Peng Dehuai when a senior cadre conference met in Taihang in early 1943.<sup>31</sup> Another, pivotal consequence of the offensive was its shifting the Japanese attention to the CCP; more concretely grasping its nature, they became absorbed in plans to eliminate it.

## REGENERATIVE REPRESSION

Japan's pre-Offensive apprehension of CCP activities mainly rested on general reporting – hence its sweeping and impressionistic character and the subsequent realization that a more concrete understanding required intensified information gathering. Japanese concerns centred on the CCP's mass mobilization activities, which were often portrayed in rather alarmist terms.<sup>32</sup>

The reports found practical expression in the Japanese army's dramatically stepped-up warfare against the CCP forces. Its broad, all-out nature was suggested by the slogan 'a total war of military, politics and economics'.<sup>33</sup> To cut off the CCP bases from each other and make them uninhabitable, and consolidate the Japanese hold on other areas, five major 'strengthen order and peace' campaigns were launched from March 1941 through late 1942. The first (March–April) and second (July–September) campaigns were largely preparatory in nature: anti-communist propaganda was conducted and various popular 'self-defence' bodies were set up. The third campaign (November–December) was more offensive and directly aimed at the CCP bases. An economic blockade was instituted to prevent the flow of certain goods from the occupied zones to the bases and these were raided to seize the harvest. The last two campaigns (March–June and October–December 1942) continued the economic blockade and greatly escalated the grain raids. In the occupied zones cooperatives were set up to increase food and cotton production.<sup>34</sup>

Japanese occupation policies varied in content depending on whether the area was designated 'orderly', 'semi-orderly' or 'disorderly' – the criterion thus being the degree of control exerted by the Japanese. The principal objective in the 'orderly' areas was to eradicate the resistance and strengthen the old Chinese *baojia* system of collective responsibility, in which ten households made up a *jia* and ten *jia* a *bao*. This system was designed to check the villagers' movements and included issuing identity cards (following a census check), placing notices in front of houses with details on the occupants, requiring travel permits, setting up checkpoints and forming a militia. Party sources readily admitted this surveillance could limit its ability to penetrate villages as peasants feared Japanese reprisals.<sup>35</sup> A Japanese investigation report described how the old elite rule was revived with the creation of *baojia* in a village of Anguo county, Hebei, following its seizure from the CCP in 1939. Puppet organizations were kept under close scrutiny and occasionally purged of the possibly disloyal or the too incompetent.<sup>36</sup>



In the 'semi-orderly' areas the Japanese forced their way step by step. First, agents gathered information on the CCP and engaged in secret organizing. Then smaller Japanese army units launched surprise attacks and strongholds were erected. Finally, the area was 'pacified' by repression and the formation of a puppet administration/armed force. To eliminate resistance, the Japanese divided these areas into small sectors surrounded by massive works of strongholds, blockhouses, stone walls and trenches. Railways and roads were repaired and built to facilitate quick troop deployment. Much of this activity was undertaken on the plains of central and southern Hebei. The former was cut into 2,700 tiny compartments; in the latter 1,103 blockhouses and strongholds were constructed, one for each 15 square kilometres. The distance between them was at most five kilometres, in places only one kilometre. Here the bigger resistance units found their manoeuvrability severely circumscribed.<sup>37</sup>

Towards the 'disorderly', largely mountainous areas, the Japanese sought to wreak such destruction as to undermine the conditions of the strong CCP influence and the people's will to resist. The chief methods were mopping-up campaigns and the 'three-all policy' (*sankō seisaku*) of 'kill all, burn all, destroy all' in an area. The campaign pattern shifted from brief attacks to longer offensives, from small-unit operations to concentrating a vastly superior force, from direct attacks to gradual advance. The long-range raids could penetrate as far as the very core of the CCP bases. Yet these assaults also exposed the Japanese to weaknesses – fatigue and inability to use superior firepower – as well as dangers – severed supply lines and troops being trapped. In 1941–42, party sources say, the number of mopping-up operations (176) and the total troop strength (833,900) more than doubled compared to 1939–40.<sup>38</sup>

The Japanese military pressure on the three area categories was closely coordinated, like man-made waves surging out from the occupied zones and reaching, with lessened power, all the way to the heart of CCP control.

Japan's strategic aim, as elucidated in the three-year plan drawn up by the army in July 1941, was to expand the 'orderly' areas and to reduce the other two area categories. The plan considered that 10 per cent of North China had at the time been 'pacified', with another 10 per cent being under strong communist influence and the remaining 80 per cent having a 'complex' character. In 60 per cent of the last area the Japanese army was thought to hold the upper hand. The envisaged percentage shifts of the different area categories were: the 'orderly' areas from 10 (July 1941) to 70 (end of 1943),

the 'semi-orderly' areas from 60 to 20 and the 'disorderly' areas from 30 to 10.<sup>39</sup>

To the CCP, this plan reflected the Japanese realization that a quick victory was not possible. Japanese army leaders had at first indeed believed in the speedy subjugation of China. War Minister Sugiyama told the emperor that 'the China Incident will be over in a month'.<sup>40</sup> On another occasion he asserted: 'We'll send large forces, smash them in a hurry and get the whole thing over quickly'. As the army general staff admitted, '[w]e thought China would soon throw up its hands and quit'.<sup>41</sup> An army ministry analysis of the CCP army in November 1936 dismissed it as 'local bandits' and 'forcibly recruited peasants' and as being 'little different from Chinese armies in general'.<sup>42</sup>

The Japanese military offensives from 1941 certainly inflicted painful losses on the CCP. In December 1941 a *Jiefang Ribao* editorial declared that the guerrilla war had entered a new stage, 'the present task' being to consolidate, not expand, the CCP bases. A month later the same organ acknowledged that these had been badly damaged. General estimates of their contraction indicate the scale of the CCP's setbacks. By the spring of 1942, the base areas in North China had been reduced by one-sixth and their population was down by one-third. Reports from the JiLuYu region in 1942 said it had shrunk by one-fifth within a year and its population had dropped from 3.5 to two million. Elsewhere in JinJiLuYu, the area in Taihang under party control was reduced by 20 per cent, while in Taiyue the party was for a period unable to retain control over a single whole county. The base area in JinSui contracted to the extent that its population declined from three to less than one million. In the Shandong base area, a PRC source states, 'the basic area [*jibenqu*] shrank, the enemy occupied numerous villages, strategic areas were divided into many sections, mass organizations were destroyed'. A military report on JinChaJi in September 1942 said that army contingents were forced to withdraw from the plains to the mountains. A month later it was conceded that 'regular base construction cannot be carried out' on the plains in North China.<sup>43</sup>

The CCP forces on the plains were of course most vulnerable to the onslaughts. In southern Hebei, the CCP-held area shrank by 60 per cent and only half of the regular army units, party members and party branches remained after a big mopping-up operation in 1942. In the central part of the province the situation became so critical that all leading party, govern-

ment and army organs were transferred to a safer location. In June 1942 losses for the main armed forces [*zuli budui*] and local armed forces reached 35 and 46.8 per cent respectively, and one-third of the cadres at district and higher levels were killed.<sup>44</sup>

The consequences of the Japanese campaigns were thus a generalized weakening of the resistance capacity. Further documentation will underscore this point. A 1943 report from the JiLuYu military district shows how the bases were deprived of essential personnel. To mention only the most prominent military data, in that year's mopping-up operations involving a force between 500 and 10,000 Japanese and puppet soldiers, the resistance casualties amounted to: 1,317 soldiers and 364 cadres died and 3,149 soldiers and 645 cadres were wounded. In addition, 316 soldiers and 77 cadres were captured.<sup>45</sup>

The campaigns' most immediate political damage to the CCP was their disintegration of many party branches, the key organization for mobilizing resources at the village level. In one JiLuYu county, the 104 branches and their thousand members were halved. About 40 branches collapsed in two other counties of this region. No less than 80 branches met the same fate in an area of Taihang. Where they held out, a serious weakening might ensue, as when 'comrades in ... branches 5 kilometres from an enemy stronghold did not dare to live at home', or when internal rifts surfaced and cadres 'wavered'.<sup>46</sup>

The economic implications of shrinking base areas were likewise severe. Above all, tax revenue declined. According to a JinChaJi source, the public grain revenue, the main financial income, having almost doubled in the years 1938–40, thereafter dropped so that by 1942 it was only 85.57 per cent of the 1938 figure.<sup>47</sup> From JiLuYu it was reported that taxable land contracted drastically within a year from 1941, creating 'great financial difficulties'.<sup>48</sup> The other side of the coin was an extension of Japanese economic impositions. A *Jiefang Ribao* article in January 1942 said that the Japanese were able to collect land taxes and surtaxes and to draft labour within 2.5–5 kilometres of their points and lines.<sup>49</sup> In places they could even reach 15 kilometres from their strongholds and make villagers secretly supply them. This applied, for example, to 47 per cent of the people in Fan county, western Shandong, described as 'our core area'.<sup>50</sup>

Territorial losses also had strongly inflationary effects. During the first half of 1942, Japanese seizures of the more resource-rich areas in Beiyue were the main reason for the following sharp price rises: one decalitre of

rice from 8.7 to 29 *yuan*, one bolt of cloth from 9 to 26 *yuan*, half a kilogram of salt from 1.6 to 4 *yuan*.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the market price for one decalitre of millet in central Hebei jumped from 15 *yuan* in June 1942 to 110 *yuan* in February 1943.<sup>52</sup> A 30-per-cent price increase within merely two months in Taihang was attributed primarily to Japanese encroachments.<sup>53</sup>

It has been observed that not even the strongest resistance areas were safe from Japanese attacks. In fact, party sources claimed some of them were specifically targeted.<sup>54</sup> Hence serious losses were suffered also 'where the foundation of our work has been best', a JiLuYu document noted.<sup>55</sup> According to another report summing up the work in the same region, in localities with a long party presence 'many party branches fell to pieces and the work came to a standstill'.<sup>56</sup> Possibly reflecting this state of affairs, a sense of crisis permeated the *Jiefang Ribao* editorials in September 1942; as if fearing the resistance was on the verge of collapse, these frequently promised victory within a year, while simultaneously urging preparation for a long and difficult war.<sup>57</sup>

If the scale and destructive impact of the Hundred Regiments' Offensive took the Japanese by surprise, their subsequent military campaigns arguably caught the CCP even more off guard; hence the magnitude of its losses. In November 1940, the area party committee of JinJiYu, discussing the Offensive, acknowledged that '[b]efore it, we did not reckon the enemy would come and "mop up" the base area hinterland so swiftly'.<sup>58</sup> In the same month another party document said that enemy attacks extended to the 'rear of our base area', adding 'we thought these areas were quite secure but it is precisely these which experience the brunt of the enemy's mopping up operations'. The prediction that 'our work in the days to come' would be characterized by a 'very greatly increased fluidity' did indeed prove true.<sup>59</sup>

As noted in the first section, however, these setbacks, large-scale and manifold though they were, did not prevent the vast expansion of the CCP movement in the final war years. Some additional, rough indicators of it will suffice.

The recollections of the senior staff officer of the Japanese army in North China, Samukawa Yoshimitsu, are extremely suggestive. In his evaluation, of the 400 counties occupied by the Japanese in the autumn of 1944 only seven (1.4 per cent) were at the time firmly controlled, while 139 counties (31.5 per cent) had been abandoned to the CCP. In the intermediate zone comprising 295 counties (66.9 per cent) the strength of both sides

'fluctuated enormously' and 'the people tended to be sympathetic to the communists in many areas'.<sup>60</sup> Compared to the Japanese army's estimate of the two antagonists' degree of influence in mid-1941, when the three-year plan for routing the resistance bases was devised, and to the CCP's own assessment of the defeats in 1941–42/43, Samukawa's figures do point to a very different situation. Interestingly, the existence of a large intermediate zone characterized by a high volatility is confirmed by party documents and will be stressed in various contexts in later chapters.

According to another Japanese war reminiscence, by the spring of 1944 the Japanese and the puppet forces only controlled the stations along the Beiping–Hankou railway in the strategically important plain of southern Hebei. The Eighth Route Army moved around freely in the areas in between the stations even in daytime, and the county towns off the railway lines had fallen into isolation.<sup>61</sup> An American foreign-service officer in China, John Service, supplied further evidence of CCP spread, although his conclusion was no doubt exaggerated. Based on non-CCP sources, particularly 'the large number of American airmen (now some 20) who have dropped to safety in those areas', i.e. CCP base areas, he wrote in March 1945:

The Communists have rescued men [US aviators] near Shanghai, [Hankou,] Canton, [Nanjing] and Taiyuan – all important Japanese-held bases in China. Flyers have dropped safely within a mile of Japanese airfields and blockhouses.

Over a hundred American crossings of Japanese-held railways have been made safely... We must accept as substantially correct the Communist claims to control the countryside of North and Central China behind the line of Japanese penetration.<sup>62</sup>

The CCP movement's great leap forward during 1943–45 connected with the conduct of the *three* wartime politico-military forces: in addition to the CCP, the Japanese authorities (plus the puppet organizations) and the GMD and its associated armies. Paradoxically, the Japanese offensives of 1941–42 exposed their essential weaknesses, that is, the inability to consolidate gains of however destructive and extensive an anti-CCP warfare. The patently inadequate Japanese troop strength to garrison significant portions of the vast Chinese countryside and the low quality of the puppet forces was one factor.<sup>63</sup> Another, more basic one, was the occupation policies' alienating impact on the populace. Transfers of some better trained troops to the Pacific war theatre compounded Japanese vulnerability.

Not only were the Japanese successes of a very temporary kind: ultimately they reinigorated the CCP movement by forcing it to deepen and elaborate upon its earlier socially transformative and related organizational efforts. The result was a critical qualitative injection into the movement, not wholesale but sufficient to lend it a certain increased efficiency in dealing with the war-generated opportunities, hazards and difficulties. Yet the extent to which related policy measures bore upon the CCP's enlargement was also significantly influenced by the GMD's posture. Let us take a closer look at the issue.

For many people, a basic reference point was then the relative difference in the wartime performance between the CCP and the GMD (including its allied forces). The severe test that both were subjected to by the war conditions provided excellent material for judgement. The outcome was that while the CCP movement exhibited a wide variety of qualities – ranging from outstanding to decidedly unfavourable ones – these projected an overall image clearly distinguishable from the overwhelmingly negative reputation the GMD earned. Presented with a choice of either, the CCP was to many people not only the preferable alternative; it also appeared in a light that, given the GMD's dismal record, was arguably more positive than justified. Popular support for the CCP, therefore, was not solely self-generated. Unwittingly, its internal competitors for power and influence lent a helping hand.

To appreciate the GMD's contribution to the CCP's cause, as well as to put the latter's own efforts in a proper, comparative perspective, the GMD's wartime features deserve outlining, despite their being well known. In the first year or so of the war the GMD was more active.<sup>64</sup> Yet driven from the coastal regions and all the way down to the inaccessible southwestern part of China by the end of 1938, its degeneration set in. John Service, writing in mid-1944, gave an appalling picture of GMD China:

China *is* dying a lingering death by slow strangulation. China *does not* now constitute any threat to Japan... China faces economic collapse... Morale is low and discouragement widespread. There is a general feeling of hopelessness... The government and military structure is being permeated and demoralized from top to bottom by corruption, unprecedented in scale and openness... Unrest within the armies is increasing... It [the GMD] seems unable to revive itself with fresh blood, and its unchanging leadership shows a growing ossification and loss of a sense of reality.<sup>65</sup>

The army was also crumbling. Journalists T. White and A. Jacoby had seen much of the GMD armies and their assessment is corroborated by numerous other sources: 'The years of stalemate [1938–44 when no major military initiative was taken along the Japanese–GMD fronts] had made the Chinese army a pulp, a tired, dispirited, unorganized mass, despised by the enemy, alien to its own people, neglected by its own government, ridiculed by its allies'.<sup>66</sup> Recruitment methods and treatment of conscripts that were barbarous continuously melted away substantial parts of the army. This applied even to the better units. Hence death and desertion in the 18th division of the 18th Army resulted in a loss of 6,000 out of its 11,000 men in 1942, despite being stationed in a combat-free area. Add the inefficiency, incompetence, disunity and rampant corruption of the armies and it is easy to see why the Japanese had little to worry about on their southern front from late 1938.<sup>67</sup>

When in 1944 the Japanese resumed their southward advance, the operation *Ichigō*, GMD losses within seven months amounted to 700,000 troops, 146 towns, 200,000 square kilometres of territory, 36 airfields and over 60 million people. US intelligence sources frequently complained of GMD inactivity: the best armies, these said, were either used to blockade CCP areas or conserved, along with hoarded equipment, for the envisaged post-war liquidation of the CCP.<sup>68</sup>

A de facto truce was in effect at the GMD–Japanese army fronts. 'For hundreds of miles along the front', US intelligence noted, 'peaceful conditions prevailed for years until the outbreak of the Japanese offensive in 1944'. Besides, the same source pointed out, '[a] flourishing smuggling trade developed which was controlled by the military authorities on both sides of the front', while GMD troops in Xian 'occupied themselves chiefly with more close relations with the puppet forces'.<sup>69</sup> During 1941–43, 69 generals and 500,000 troops defected to the Japanese.<sup>70</sup> Although relatively few GMD troops were involved and most were provincial forces, they nevertheless served under Jiang Jieshi.

The army's behaviour precluded solidarity with the people. An American embassy official's report from 'the anti-Communist blockade zone in [Shaanxi]' states that 'the imposition of onerous grain and fuel taxes, miscellaneous exactions and the ever-increasing corruption and graft on the part of officials' created an 'extremely unsatisfactory' relationship with the peasants. The report said that this 'is typical of conditions in many areas of [Shaanxi], [Henan], [Anhui], and other provinces'.<sup>71</sup> One historian

writes, '[i]n almost every province in the [GMD] area, from [Fujian], and [Guangdong] to [Sichuan] and [Gansu], there were peasant uprisings, usually in protest against conscription and tax exactions'.<sup>72</sup> Another historian tells of soldiers pillaging the people, causing 'numerous incidents of friction' – and he continues: 'Probably the worst case occurred in [Henan] during the early phase of Operation Ichigo. When the Chinese troops retreated in defeat, more soldiers were killed by the indignant local population than by the Japanese'.<sup>73</sup>

Of course the GMD, etc. forces' negative demonstration effect must not be exaggerated; China's vastness meant that many villages had little contact with these armies, and what in the final analysis gave the CCP movement a relative staying power derived from its policy endeavours at the grassroots. Nonetheless, the negative factor is easily underestimated: the CCP was hard pressed in several respects and even a minor 'outside' assistance was likely to have significant effects.

## UNSETTLED CONDITIONS

The wartime North China landscape exhibited manifold variations. Two were basic to the resistance movement. At the most general level, areas were differentiated by the shifting degree of influence wielded by it and the Japanese (plus their puppet organizations). The second kind emanated in part from these military realities, but included in addition the whole range of local specificities and confronted the CCP with the thorny issue of how to account for these in policy implementation

### *Problematic control*

Beginning with the former category, the CCP generally classified North China into anti-Japanese base areas, guerrilla zones and enemy-occupied areas. (These corresponded roughly in character to the Japanese-designated disorderly, semi-orderly and orderly areas.) While the CCP's specification of occupied areas – big cities and towns, and regions crossed by important communication lines – is fairly sound, its sharp distinction between base areas and guerrilla zones is untenable. This was how Lin Biao described the base areas in a 1965 essay commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Japanese surrender:

In these base areas, we built the Party, ran the organs of state power, built the people's armed forces and set up mass organizations; we engaged in



industry and agriculture and operated cultural, educational and all other undertakings necessary for the independent existence of a separate region. Our base areas were in fact a state in miniature.<sup>74</sup>

In the guerrilla zones, on the other hand, Mao declared in 1938 that ‘the enemy will not be able to set up stable puppet regimes, however much he tries to maintain control, while we, on our part, will not be able to achieve the aim of establishing anti-Japanese political power, however much we develop guerrilla warfare.’<sup>75</sup>

In reality, patterns of CCP military control were of a more relative nature. As earlier cited CCP losses in the mid-years of the war indicate, almost no place was safe from Japanese attacks. More broadly, clearcut area demarcations conceal the complex impact of the party policies. It is a recurrent theme of this study that even so-called core areas of CCP control contained striking contrasts of strengths and weaknesses. The general description of ‘advanced’, ‘average’ and ‘backward’ areas, it was declared at a 1943 cadre conference on the mass movement in Taihang, was complicated by local differences within the base area and even within each county and district.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, a 1941 document on the militia in JinJiYu drew attention to ‘blank space’ in the base areas.<sup>77</sup> Nor must it be forgotten that identifiable battlelines were non-existent.

Nevertheless, when citing party documents, their terminology of base and guerrilla areas has sometimes been retained in the text. These then signify differences in the degree of CCP influence, the latter being of a highly insecure and fluctuating nature.

One very rough area division can, however, be made between mountainous and plain-located CCP bases, the former generally having far more developed and securely grounded structures and hence also superior strength. This geographical characteristic of primary CCP entrenchment in fact conformed to that of traditional peasant rebels. In Jean Chesneau’s words:

The traditional seed-bed of peasant insurrection was not in the middle of a province, where the rice-growing plains were thickly populated and economically well developed, but along the wooded, mountainous border between provinces. Such areas were less accessible to the forces of repression. Since the government control over these inter-provincial frontiers were attenuated, they constituted a kind of administrative no-man’s-land.

Chesneaux describes the features of these regions in terms of economic backwardness, loose integration into the market economy, weak state/enemy influence and landlord rule, sparse population and advantages for defence.<sup>78</sup> A Japanese intelligence report indeed noted that the mountainous setting, with its poorly developed communications, strongly favoured the CCP's guerrilla warfare. The heavily equipped Japanese army was easily outmanoeuvred by the lightly armed Eighth Route Army which 'always changed its movements at will' and 'no matter what efforts were made to capture and catch up with the Eighth Route Army, the results were insignificant'.<sup>79</sup> No wonder a top party leader held that '[t]he best terrain has poor transportation and is hilly'.<sup>80</sup>

But this environment also had definite drawbacks for the CCP: inconvenient communications raised obstacles to integrating broader areas of CCP control and to establishing liaison between higher and lower organs. 'Communication difficulties' was cited by a Chinese journalist as one reason (the other was the war environment) as to why the first JinChaJi border region assembly was not convened until January 1943 although elections to it were held in 1940.<sup>81</sup> Travelling in JinChaJi about two years after the war, journalist Jack Belden described the communications as 'so primitive that a journey of twenty miles by government mule took from sunrise to sunset, a telephone call of the same distance often required a week, a telegram might never be delivered and a letter posted to a destination a few miles away might take forty days'. Travel and transportation by motorized means were rare and traditional methods like wheelbarrows, carts, animals and on foot were still the norm.<sup>82</sup>

The poverty and sparse population were even more serious constraints on building up mountain bases. It was therefore imperative that the CCP extend its influence to sizeable parts of the more fertile and populous plains to secure desperately needed supplies of agricultural products and recruits for the swelling armies. According to a 1941 Japanese newspaper report, about 60 per cent of the goods for a CCP-held area in western Hebei came from 'outside', and supplies were still inadequate.<sup>83</sup>

As a consequence, the CCP strove hard to link the mountain bases with the plains. During the period from July 1940 to the spring of 1941, for example, the JinChaJi border region government organized large-scale transportation of grain along four main routes from the central Hebei plain to the mountainous western part of the province. In the operations, several hundred carts were at first used, with the Eighth Route Army and

the militia providing armed cover. But as the Japanese reinforced attempts to stop the transportation by digging dykes, people had to carry the grain on their shoulders. The scale of the operations and the frequent fighting that accompanied them is suggested by the participation of a militia force amounting to 620,000, whose average work performance was four days per person.<sup>84</sup> The effectiveness of these operations is alluded to in a Japanese army source of October 1940 that said whole villages were mobilized on a relay basis, making it 'hard to determine the direction of the transports by infiltrating spies'.<sup>85</sup> The Japanese were of course aware of the significance of this strategy: 'So far as the integration of the guerrilla areas on the plains and the mountain bases is consolidated, the elimination of the communist bandits will become very difficult'.<sup>86</sup>

The extremely adverse conditions for fighting on the plains – the flat terrain heavily favoured the deployment of Japan's modern weapons – created an all the greater need for bases there as well. In these areas, the guerrillas typically had to operate swiftly and in small and dispersed units, keep the initiative, attack quickly and be adept at camouflage. Bases on the plains were part of a vast hierarchy of bases that branched out from the mountainous resistance strongholds. While highly diverse, these bases were small and vulnerable to Japanese penetration, necessitating their frequent shifts; so precarious was the CCP's influence that its administrative organs often had to go underground.<sup>87</sup> But as Japanese intelligence pointed out, although these bases were fluid and incapable of putting up strong resistance, their political impact, through propaganda and mass mobilization, was 'very great' – especially as they could be organized and dismantled almost everywhere.<sup>88</sup>

Bases on the plains were critical to sustaining their characteristic tunnel warfare. Tunnels originated in areas close to Japanese fortresses in the form of caves for hiding and became increasingly elaborate and extensive, connecting first several families and then whole villages. One Western journalist witnessed

an amazing system of tunnels linking hundreds of villages for miles and miles around... The tunnels are big enough to house the people together with their livestock and their provisions and are equipped with sufficient food and water for an extended siege... Tunnels were built zigzag, up and down; they connected, through emergency entrances, with wholly independent subsidiary tunnel systems at different levels going off in all directions.<sup>89</sup>

Japanese and CCP sources alike justly stressed the importance of bases to the resistance. In these, the CCP armies and guerrillas could take refuge and rest, base their operations, make military preparations and accumulate strength by replenishment and training – though to quite varying degrees depending on the base’s character.<sup>90</sup> While most bases, whatever their size and location, thus contributed to keeping up an extensive harassment of the Japanese army, the build-up of strong, consolidated bases was essential to sustaining the resistance movement generally. Yet this was an extremely intricate task. Specifically, how was one to combine the socio-economic, political and military factors to create a measure of stability and security essential for further deepening popular mobilization and social transformation, processes which in turn were a precondition for a long-term resistance activity?

Experience taught the party there that was a very real danger of local cadres becoming so absorbed in pressing military commitments as to lose sight of the need to develop socio-economic and political base structures. A report at a 1942 JiLuYu conference of district level cadres concretely spelled out the likely consequences when ‘leading cadres’ had ‘for a rather long time failed to appreciate the importance of building a base’. As the work of devising, let alone implementing, novel administrative and economic systems had proceeded very tardily, ‘the base masses have not yet obtained the democratic and livelihood benefits they are entitled to’, leaving many village and district governments in the hands of landlords and bandits who manipulated taxation to their advantage. Reflecting the low level of popular activism, ‘cadres substituted themselves for the people’s struggles’. Even more seriously, cadre practices ‘made enemies everywhere’, even leading to ‘indiscriminate attacks on traitors’ in which ‘many fellow travellers were wiped out’. Under these circumstances, ‘the united front work made little progress’. All this severely hampered the resistance effort: the organization of locally based armed bodies was neglected, causing breaches of discipline, desertions, corruption, arrogance towards the people, etc.; and in the absence of broad, coordinated efforts, the enemy was engaged in a random manner.<sup>91</sup>

The tone of this report was no doubt influenced by the defeats then being inflicted upon the CCP movement. In large part, these stemmed from the as yet unsystematic endeavours to erect mutually supportive base structures. Hence the report’s apparent objective to warn cadres against a

narrow military perspective – and a resultant lack of a mass basis and sense of direction.

### *Adaptable limits*

Processes of executing the various policy programmes revealed the sheer diversity of conditions and the trials these exposed the party to. Since this is an enormous subject, only some aspects immediately relevant to this study will be mentioned.

Unsurprisingly, military factors loomed large. Slogans of war mobilization are an illustrative case. Where CCP influence was stronger, these contained a straight activist message: ‘Good men go to the front!’ and ‘Protect the native place! Protect the border region!’ The stress in more fluid circumstances, however, had a defensive or pre-emptive character like ‘Chinese do not serve Japan as soldiers!’ and ‘Oppose the devils’ seizure of able-bodied men!’<sup>92</sup> An even greater caution was observed in the occupied areas where the recommended course of action was as follows:

Quietly immerse yourself in hard work; lie low for a long period; do not reveal [your identity]; build up [oppositional] forces gradually. Adopt several methods – feudal, semi-feudal, superstitious and even those practised by the enemy and the puppets – and gather all those who are not willing to become slaves of a foreign power.<sup>93</sup>

The resistance tasks of the village-based militia shifted so that it concentrated on ‘traitor elimination’ work and training in the more secure areas, frequently engaged in combat where the Japanese army operated, and mainly sought to discourage ‘wavering elements’ from collaborating openly and to force those serving the Japanese to be more vigilant in the occupied areas.<sup>94</sup>

The Japanese army’s impact on socio-economic policies varied. The greater its proximity, the more pervasive the military element in mass mobilization and in organizational forms and activities. The large-scale production campaigns launched in the second half of the war could hardly be conducted in a uniform manner. Where the CCP was weaker, protecting production – elaborate systems were devised for this purpose – was just as important as promoting production itself. Overall taxation was heavier in the core CCP areas since people in the more war-ravaged zones were less able to share in the expenses.

Since the issue of policy adjustments to non-military facets is touched upon in later chapters, a few brief remarks will suffice. The village's level of economic development was another important criterion for determining tax rates. In calculating the amount of rent, several economic factors were taken into account, a prime example being land quality. The size of the mutual aid teams, higher party organs emphatically reminded cadres, had to accord with conditions in the individual villages.<sup>95</sup> Local modification meant that schools differed in terms of time schedule, teaching material, physical setting and staffing – and so on.

While thus acutely aware of the necessity to accommodate policy measures to dissimilar realities, the CCP was also deeply concerned that the considerable local autonomy required for flexible implementation must not endanger the central organs' broad control over the movement's direction. The CCP's stated formula for coming to grips with this intricacy was 'centralized leadership and dispersed management'. This enjoined local cadres to 'carry out the work independently and have the ability to work independently' and to revise higher-level directives when these proved impracticable. There was to be no 'blind obedience' to them.<sup>96</sup>

Such admonitions were frequent. A southern Hebei document emphasized that 'party committees at various levels should conduct concrete and detailed discussions in conformity with the situation in the area.'<sup>97</sup> A conference declaration of party cadres in JinJiYu called for 'investigation and understanding of dissimilar conditions' and added that to carry out the work accordingly was an 'iron rule.'<sup>98</sup> Mass mobilization practices had to proceed from the villagers' locally specific living conditions and related demands: 'one can definitely not adopt average work methods.'<sup>99</sup> In carrying out the tax policy, 'propaganda and mobilization work must not be generalized and simplified. One should convene several kinds of mobilization meetings and, depending on the object, present a different content'. Concrete examples were to be raised and connected with actualities.<sup>100</sup> Since 'the local situation develops unevenly', a 1944 party investigation declared, 'a highly flexible implementation of the [land] policy is necessary.'<sup>101</sup> A similar point was made in regard to law, which 'cannot be regarded as an unchangeable dead dogma'.<sup>102</sup>

Practical steps to adapt policies cited earlier – and elaborated upon later – show that the CCP expended great labours on it. However, the magnitude of the task by far exceeded the party's abilities to cope with it. Hence local party organizations were reprimanded for disregarding local specificities, at

times resulting in policy instructions based on the consolidated resistance areas being applied to the guerrilla zones, or for lacking detailed knowledge of their area and issuing unrealistic orders.<sup>103</sup>

Basically, the inadequacies of the 'dispersed management' practice stemmed from the enormously rich local diversity. In southern Hebei this was said to apply to every county, district and village; each differed in regard to the extent and methods of Japanese army destruction, changes in class relationships, popular attitudes to the resistance and to the degree of party influence. It followed that 'our leaders have to investigate the dissimilar situations and local characteristics in detail', and on this basis work out policies, organizational forms and kinds of struggles appropriate to the area. Consequently, cadres were warned against 'work plans and work directives that are stereotyped and are of the same old stuff'.<sup>104</sup> Note here that the effects of the war on the social fabric and on the people's perceptions added a greatly complicating element of fluidity and unpredictability to dissimilarities emanating from local social structural and cultural patterns.

Sometimes 'dispersed management' also ran into troubles with 'centralized leadership' whose top-down decision-making process applied sanctions of varying severity against those thought to be deviating from acceptable standards. The call for independence placed local cadres in a quandary: how much latitude did they have in taking initiatives on their own? Yet considering the geographically limited impact of a strongly exerted higher party leadership this aspect was not as pervasive.

Variable circumstances thus precluded any generally valid evolutionary policy scheme. The processes of mass mobilization proceeded along different paths. What work to begin with, the party's JiLuYu regional sub-bureau instructed local party committees, depended on the concrete conditions at the time and in the locality, and on 'the masses' urgent demands'. This could mean that rent reduction took precedence in one place and struggles against corruption and 'tyrants' in another. Preferably, struggles related to livelihood issues were to be given priority since they facilitated forming a leadership nucleus, but there was to be no 'rigid' rule concerning policy sequence, the directive concluded.<sup>105</sup>

A PRC work illustrates the issue by reference to the Pu and Fan counties in the same region. Following the description, the two counties contrasted sharply. In the former, hardline anti-CCP (or 'diehard') forces dominated 'from top to bottom' as GMD troops had long been stationed there. The oppressive rule generated demands for democratization and livelihood

reforms. On the other hand, Fan county had 'been under CCP control ever since the outbreak of the war.' Yet inadequate popular mobilization enabled the hardliners to maintain their commanding position at the grassroots level; their feigning compliance to higher level authorities concealed realities. As a consequence, party policies designed to benefit the people did not take effect. For example, 60 per cent of the cultivated land remained unreported, despite the early launching of tax reforms.

These differences produced divergent policy approaches. In Pu county, anti-corruption and tax reforms assumed primacy, with rent and interest reduction and reform of the village administration being undertaken thereafter. Corruption here referred to hardliners extorting the people and tax evasion by powerholders. Within 25 days, it is asserted, tax reforms were carried out in 370 villages, i.e. in 88 per cent of the county. A different policy order was followed in Fan county: first rent and interest reduction and wage increases; thereafter anti-corruption struggles and investigation of unreported land; and finally reform of the village administration. The stated significance of the initial measures was their extending tangible gains to the farmhands, tenants and poor peasants who had not been activated and uniting them with the middle peasants against the landlords and other powerholders.<sup>106</sup>

Although this account may well contain inaccuracies and simplifications, it highlights the diversity of policy routes. Party documents did of course draw attention to this phenomenon. During the popular mobilization drives of 1939–40 in Taihang, for example, the principal focus in one village was on clearing up debts, in another village on struggles to obtain grain from the well-off and to equalize taxation.<sup>107</sup>

Given these complications, to what extent is it possible to generalize and discern major policy trends? In our view, the CCP's diversity of policy methods and strivings focused essentially on an issue-complex largely shaped by the specific historical conjuncture of the Japanese invasion: the already identified interaction of a substantial social levelling with a broad class cooperation. In short, a conspicuous dissimilarity existed within a clearly definable framework.

The implication is of course not that policy variations moved straight and inexorably towards unity of purpose. On the contrary, it will be demonstrated that policy processes at the village level were rife with shifts, conflicts, tensions and incompatibilities. Moreover, and inevitably, the



mismatch between policy measures and the great variety of area-specific peasant needs and yearnings was frequent. These raised crucial problems for the CCP: unless the measures taken had a certain correspondence with local peculiarities, the people were unlikely to be activated. Thus a Taihang investigation report admonished cadres to keep firmly in mind the peasants' 'manifold' demands, covering a broad variety of land problems, debt settlements, tax reforms, production campaigns, relief aid, etc.<sup>108</sup>

The theme of the present study is therefore how the CCP wrestled hard with the wartime issue-complex. The following two chapters will discuss its features in general terms, with a more concrete policy analysis undertaken in the subsequent parts.

## NOTES

1. SW II, pp. 136–137, 139–140.
2. Zhu De, 'Lun jiefangqu zhanchang', JR, 9.5.1945; Li Yiye, *Zhongguo renmin zenyang dabai Riben diguozhuyi* (Beijing: Kaiming shudian, 1951), p. 75; Renmin chubanshe (ed.), *KangRi zhanzheng shiqi jiefangqu gaikuang* (Beijing, 1953), pp. 1–3; Renmin chubanshe (ed.), *KangRi zhanzheng shiqi de Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun* (Beijing, 1954), p. 219.
3. For example, whereas Odoric Wou notes three 'distinct phases' of the war in Henan, a PRC book on central Hebei discerns five stages. *Mobilizing the Masses* (1994), p. 180; Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun Hebei junqu zhengzhibu (ed.), *Jizhong kangRi zhanzheng jianshi* (Baoding: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1958), p. 2.
4. CCP-sources give the following figures: 1937 (30,000–90,000); 1938 (120,000–156,700); 1939 (270,000); 1940 (400,000); 1941 (303,000–305,000); 1942 (300,000–340,000); 1943 (339,000); 1944 (320,800–470,286); 1945 (600,000). Xue Zizheng, 'Lun zhanlüe fangong zhong de jiefangqu zhanchang', QZ, 10.7.1945, pp. 440–441; SWIII, p. 167; Dong Biwu, *Zhongguo jiefangqu shilu* (San Francisco: Hezuo chubanshe, 1946), p. 8; Li Ye, p. 55; He Ganzhi, *Zhongguo xiandai geming shi* (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1954), p. 218; Renmin chubanshe (ed.) (1953), p. 2, (1954), p. 219. Statements by party leaders to Westerners: T.A. Bisson, *Yenan in June 1937: Talks with the Chinese Communist Leaders* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 39; Edgar Snow, *Random Notes on Red China (1936–1945)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 24.
5. For an analysis of these developments see John H. Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937–1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 27–41; Ienaga Saburō, *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931–1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), pp. 65–70.
6. Bisson, (1973), p. 40.
7. James Bertram, *North China Front* (London: MacMillan, 1939), pp. 77–78.
8. Jack Belden, *China Shakes the World* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 46. See also p. 51. (First published in 1949.)

9. Edgar Snow, *The Battle for Asia* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1941), p. 26.
10. Hata Ikuhiko, *Nitchū sensō shi* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1972), p. 279.
11. Peng Xuefeng, 'Lun zai diren houfang huzuo', JF, 8.8.1938, p. 14.
12. Cited in Kobayashi Hideo, *Nihon gunsei ka no Ajia* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998), p. 28.
13. Friedman et al., *Chinese Village, Socialist State*, (1991), pp. 34–35.
14. Wang Yu-chuan, 'The Organization of a Typical Guerrilla Area in South Shantung', p. 120. Appendix to Evans F. Carlson, *The Chinese Army* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), pp. 84–130.
15. Claire and William Band, *Dragon Fangs: Two Years with the Chinese Guerrillas* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1947), p. 20. This was how Peng Zhen, a leading party figure in JinChaji, characterized the initial occupation: 'The enemy was in the stage of strategic offensive, advancing frenziedly. He still had no time to concern himself with what he had left behind, and he did not yet seem to realize the importance of turning back to take care of the problems in his rear.' *Guanyu JinChaji bianqu dang de gongzuo he juti zhengce baogao* (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1981), p. 133. First published in 1941. Hereafter cited as *Peng Zhen baogao*.
16. Thaxton, *Salt of the Earth*, (1997), pp. 241–242.
17. Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. 148.
18. Li Menglin, 'Jizhong junqu de jianlue jieshao', BZ, No.9, 1939, p. 111.
19. George Taylor, *The Struggle for North China* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), pp. 50–51.
20. Based on *ibid.*, pp. 49–50; Lee Ngok, 'The Chinese Communist Bases in North China 1938–1943'. Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1968, pp. 137–158.
21. Epstein, *The Unfinished Revolution in China*, (1947), p. 159.
22. Mō Takutō Shū (Tokyo: Hokubōsha, 1970–72), vol. 5, p. 273. Revised in SW II, p. 44.
23. Agnes Smedley, *China Fights Back: An American Woman with the Eighth Route Army* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), p. 143.
24. Bertram, p. 228.
25. Zai Pekin Nihon taishikan keimubu, *Saikin Kahoku ni okeru Chūgoku kyōsan undō no gaikyō* (Beiping, 1939), p. 46.
26. Hata, p. 279.
27. For example, Hoku Shina hōmengun sanbōchō, 'Gunjin guntai no tai jūmin kōi ni taisuru chūi no ken tsūchō', 27.6.1938, in Awaya Kentarō and Chadani Seiichi (eds), *Nitchū sensō. Tai Chūgoku jōhōsen shiryō* (Tokyo: Gendai shiryō shuppan, 2000), vol. 2, p. 109.
28. Gaimushō Tōakyoku, *Saikin ni okeru Chūgoku kyōsan undō* (1937), pp. 9–11.
29. Chūkaminokoku shinminkai, chūō shidōbu, *Kahokushō ni okeru kokkyō ryōtō no seiji kōsaku gaikyō*, (1938), pp. 3–4; Hoku Shina hōmengun shireibu, 'Hoku Shina

- hōmengun senryō chiiki nai chian jōkyō', 25.11.1938, in Awaya and Chadani (eds), vol. 2, pp. 170–173.
30. Above documents given in Bōeichō bōei kenkyūjo senshishitsu, *Hokushi no chiansen* (Tokyo: Chōun shinbunsha, 1968, 1971), vol. 1, (1968), pp. 66–67, 137–139, 145, 148, 215–216, 275.
  31. Qi Wu, *JinJiLuYu bianqu shi* (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo chubanshe, 1995), pp. 112–113; Li Da, *KangRi zhanzheng zhong de Balujun yierjiu shi* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 258. The debates among historians in the PRC on the Offensive's import are introduced by Wei Hongyun, 'KangRi genjudi shi yanjiu shuping', *KangRi Zhanzheng Yanjiu*, No.1, 1991, pp. 167–170.
  32. Bōeichō, vol. 1, pp. 373, 383; 'Sekishoku Shinsatsuki henku no jissō', *Tōa*, 1.10.1941, p. 52; Hokushi hōmengun shireibu, 'Shinsatsuki henku shukusei sakusen hōdō senden keishō', 18.7.1941, p. 1; 'Chūgoku kyōsantō no genkyō, dōkō narabi ni taisaku', *Jōhō*, 1.1.1942, p. 4.
  33. Inoue Hisashi, 'Kahoku kōnichi ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu', in Fujiwara Akira and Nozawa Yutaka (eds), *Nihon fashizumu to hīgashi Ajia* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1977), p. 185; Tao Zhu, 'Lun muqian dihou zhanzheng de tedian', *JR*, 3.5.1943.
  34. Di Hua and Xue Hui, 'Dikou zai Huabei de "qianghua zhian yundong"', *JR*, 15.1.1942; Li Fanfu, 'Ping di wuci "zhian qianghua yundong"', *JR*, 16.11.1942; Inoue, pp. 185–186; 'Hokushi no chian to shinminkai', *Tōa*, 1.1.1943, pp. 35–37.
  35. Ya Su, 'Dikou zai Jin xibei zhengdou zhengquan de huodong', *JR*, 12.8.1942; 'Dizhanqu zhengquan gongzuo jige wenti de shangque', *JR*, 4.7.1942.
  36. Zai Pekin Nihon taishikan, *Chūkyō dōkō jittai chōsa* (Beiping, 1943), p. 19; Bōeichō, vol. 1, p. 533.
  37. Bōeichō, vol. 1, p. 533; Liu Bocheng, 'JinJiLuYu shengli huihuang', *JR*, 21.9.1941; 'Dihou youji zhanzheng de xin renwu', *JR*, 7.12.1941; 'Huabei ge kangRi genjudi chu zai kongqian canku douzheng zhong', *JR*, 7.6.1942; 'Jianchi Huabei pingyuan youji zhanzheng de tiaojian', *JR*, 25.10.1942; 'Jin xibei zai fan canshi douzheng de liehuo zhong', *JR*, 15.12.1942; Lü Zhengcao, 'Chuancha zai gouxian zhong de youji zhanzheng', *JR*, 16.7.1943; Zhong Renfang, 'Dihou zhanzheng de xin xingshi', *JR*, 2.6.1943; Xiao Hua, 'Shandong fan canshi douzheng de shengli', *JR*, 18.7.1944; Xiao Ke, 'Zai JinChaJi bianqu dang zheng jun gaogan huiyishang de junshi baogao', *JK*, vol. 2, p. 688.
  38. Bōeichō, vol. 1, p. 534; 'Dikou dui JinChaji junqu de saodang', *JR*, 11.10.1941; Di Hua, 'Jinnian Huabei de saodang yu fan saodang', *JR*, 28.12.1941; Da Feng, 'Jin xibei renmin zai dikou "saodang" zhong', *JR*, 31.5.1942; 'Diren "saodang" Taiyue de sange tedian', *JR*, 14.3.1943. Wartime party documents sometimes gave extremely detailed accounts of how the Japanese army carried out mopping-up operations, including routes taken, number of troops and military and other equipment deployed, variety of occupation practices, etc. See for example Yang Dezhi, 'Bianqu nian lai zhanlue zhanshu de jiantao', *July 1942, ZJ*, vol. 2, pp. 234–236.
  39. Bōeichō, vol. 1, pp. 532–533.
  40. Boyle, p. 53.
  41. Ienaga, (1978), p. 85.

42. Taken from Eguchi Keiichi, 'Chūgoku sensen no Nihon gun', in Fujiwara Akira and Imai Seiichi (eds), *Jūgo nen sensōshi 2. Nitchū sensō* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1988), p. 52.
43. 'Dihou youji zhanzheng de xin renwu'; Di Hua and Xue Hui, 'Dikou'; Peng Dehuai, 'Dikou "zhian qianghua" yundong xia de yinmou yu women de jiben renwu', 1.11.1941, JK, vol. 2, p. 548; Renmin chubanshe (ed.), (1954), p. 122; 'JiLuYu bianqu gongzuo de chubu zongjie', 1942, ZJ, vol. 2, p. 459; 'JiLuYu jingjian fangan', August 1942, ZJ, vol. 2, p. 250; Qi Wu, *Yige geming genjudi de chengzhang* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1958), p. 75; Mu Xin, *JinSui jiefangqu niaokan* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1984), p. 57 (first published in 1946); Renmin chubanshe (ed.), (1953), p. 92; 'Jianchi Huabei pingyuan youji zhanzheng de tiaojian'; Xiao Ke, p. 688.
44. Qi Wu, (1958), pp. 84–85; Wei Hongyun (ed.), *Huabei kangRi genjudi jishi* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1986), pp. 321, 324.
45. 'JiLuYu junqu yijiusisan nian junshi gongzuo zongjie baogao', 1943, ZJ, vol. 2, p. 908.
46. 'JiLuYu gonggu dang cankao ziliao', December 1941, ZJ, vol. 2, p. 192; Tao Lujia, 'Er fenqu zuzhi jianshe tigang', 28.9.1941, DJ, p. 217; 'JiLuYu gonggu dang cankao ziliao', p. 192; Tao Lujia, pp. 217–218.
47. Wei Hongyun (ed.), *JinChaji kangRi genjudi caizheng jingji shigao* (Beijing: Dangan chubanshe, 1990), p. 161.
48. 'JiLuYu jingjian fangan', p. 250.
49. Di Hua and Xue Hui, 'Dikou'.
50. 'JiLuYu bianqu kangRi genjudi fazhan shilüe', 1944, ZJ, vol. 3, p. 414.
51. 'Guanyu Beiyuequ maoyi gongzuo ji zuzhi de jue ding', 29.7.1942, KC, vol. 3, p. 359.
52. Wei Hongyun (ed.), (1990), p. 160.
53. Rong Wusheng, 'Jiaqiang jingji zhanxian fazhan duidi de jingji douzheng', 28.4.1941, CS, vol. 1, p. 58. Rong Wusheng was sometimes the name used by Rong Zihe, a top party leader in JinJiLuYu.
54. Details given in 'JiLuYu bianqu huanying xingshi ji cunzheng jianshe xiankuang baogao', August 1942, ZJ, vol. 2, pp. 258–259.
55. 'JiLuYu jingjian fangan', p. 250.
56. 'JiLuYu bianqu gongzuo de chubu zongjie', p. 460. Five areas are mentioned.
57. 'Yige jiqi zhongyao de zhengce', JR, 7.9.1942; 'Women shizhong tong laobaixing zai yiqi', JR, 4.9.1942; 'Dihou xingshi yu wojun zhengzhi gongzuo', JR, 9.9.1942.
58. 'Zhonggong JinJiYu qu dangwei guanyu baituan dazhan zhong difang gongzuo de chubu zongjie taolun tigang', 12.11.1940, TD, vol. 3, pp. 772–773.
59. 'Jinan Taihang Taiyue xingzheng lianhe banshichu jiaotong zongju guanyu jianchi gongzuo, shiying zhanzheng jiaotong gei gedi jiaotong gongzuo fuze tongzhi de zhishixin', 10.11.1940, in Taihang geming genjudi shi zongbian weihui (ed.), *Jiaotong youzheng* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1987), p. 36.
60. Bōeichō, vol. 2, p. 536.
61. Hirai Minokichi, *Rao konkyochi* (Tokyo, 1976), p. 274.
62. Joseph W. Esherick (ed.), *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Despatches of John S. Service* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), pp. 245–246. Service concluded:

'Almost all the important Communist-held areas in North and Central China have now been visited by American army observers or rescued American air crews. All evidence verifies Communist claims of controlling substantially all the countryside of "occupied" China.' p. 244.

63. On the puppet organizations, see Boyle.
64. CCP sources acknowledge the early GMD resistance effort. See for example Zhu De's military report to the seventh party congress in April 1945. Zhu De, 'Lun jiefangqu zhanchang', JR, 9.5,1945. The GMD's strictly military record was thus not uniformly negative; individual army units did put up a determined fight. See the relevant essays in James C. Hsiung and Steven Levine (eds), *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan 1937-1945* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1992). My concern here is only to note some broadly conspicuous GMD traits and their consequences, not to draw a comprehensive picture.
65. Esherick, (1975), pp. 138-140.
66. Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby, *Thunder out of China* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1947), p. 128.
67. Lloyd Eastman, 'Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945', in Eastman et al. (eds) (1991), pp. 137-143; Esherick, (1975), pp. 6,33,39; James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History, 1912-1949* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), pp. 261-262; White and Jacoby, p. 135.
68. Lyman P. Van Slyke (ed.), *The Chinese Communist Movement: A Report of the United States War Department, July 1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 89-90; Esherick, (1975), pp. 53, 91-92, 142-143, 145, 148.
69. Van Slyke, (1968), pp. 95, 97. See also Esherick, (1975), p. 18.
70. Eastman, p. 139.
71. Van Slyke, (1968), p. 97.
72. Eastman, p. 174.
73. Hsi-sheng Ch'i, 'The Military Dimension, 1942-1945', in Hsiung and Levine (eds), (1992), p. 171. On how the bad relationship of the GMD guerrillas to the people in Shandong manifested itself see David M. Paulson, 'Nationalist Guerrillas in the Sino-Japanese War: The "Diehards" in the Shandong Province', in Hartford and Goldstein, (eds), (1989), pp. 145-147.
74. *Peking Review*, 3.9.1965, p. 16.
75. SW II, p. 97.
76. Li Dazhang, 'Guoqu qunzhong gongzuo de jianfan huigu yu jinhou de gongzuo fangzhen', February 1943, QY, p. 196.
77. 'JinJiYuqu yinian lai qunzhong wuzhuang gongzuo baogao', September 1941, DW, p. 188.
78. Jean Chesneaux, *Peasant Revolts in China 1840-1949* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), pp. 67, 104-105, 126.
79. Bōeichō, vol. 1, pp. 356-357.
80. Lecture given by Liu Shaoqi on 'Work experiences in the North China work zone' at the Resistance University in Yan'an in March 1938. Translated by Henry G. Schwarz,

- 'Liu Shao-Ch'i and "People's War": A Report on the Creation of Base Areas in 1938' (University of Kansas, 1969), pp. 31–57. Hereafter cited as 'Liu Shaoqi lecture, 1938'.
81. Zhou Erfu, *JinChaji xing* (Yangguan chubanshe, 1946), p. 66.
  82. Belden, p. 109.
  83. The newspaper was published in Beiping. Taken from Inoue, p. 185.
  84. Wei Hongyun (ed.), (1990), pp. 241–243.
  85. Tada butai sanbōbu, 'Konji kyōsangun no shūgeki ni kansuru jōhō kimmu ni kansuru sankō narabini kyōkun jikō', 24.10.1940, in Awaya and Chadani (eds), vol. 6, p. 549.
  86. Chianbu sanbōshi, *Chūgoku kyōsantō no katsudō to sono taisaku*, (1942), p. 212.
  87. Lü Zhengcao, 'Cong Jizhongqu de jingyan tan pingyuan youji zhanzheng', BZ, No.9, 1939, pp. 37,50; Zhou Shiti, 'Lun pingdi youjizhan de jige wenti', BZ, No. 2, 1939, p. 35; Liu Zhijian, 'Pingyuan youji zhanzheng de budui', *Qianxian*, September 1940, p. 31; Li Suoruo, 'Jinan youjidui de shengchan yu zuozhan de jingguo', in Zhang Bingzhi (ed.), *KangRi youji zhanzheng de lilun yu jingyan* (Shanghai, 1938), pp. 119–120.
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  93. Yang Shangkun, 'Lun Jinan zhengzhi shibian de jiaoxun', February 1940, WX, p. 11.
  94. Cheng Zihua, 'Jizhong pingyuanshang de minbing douzheng', JR, 9.7.1944.
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*Variable Growth*

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