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The Role of Class Struggle in the Chinese Communist Party's Social Reform

A Case Study of Rushan County from 1943 to 1949

By

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

in History

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Abstract

One of the most critical turning points in Chinese history, the civil war of 1945-1949 heralded both the military victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the beginnings of nearly three decades of Marxist totalitarianism. Yet, despite its significance in shaping China, this period remains one of the most grossly understudied subjects in Western historical inquiry. Using the example of one county, Rushan, in the eastern Chinese province of Shandong, I aim not only to bring to light the often forgotten history of the Civil War, but to view CCP mobilization and success from alternative perspectives, as well as offer perspectives for future study. Through the use of both recently released archival materials from mainland China and a hermeneutic method of interpretation, my research uncovers a tumultuous and often dark story, and a strong, coercive and top-down aspect in CCP policy, often shaped by conflicting policy agendas rather than coherent strategies of mobilization. All this points to the importance of understanding the process of mobilization and CCP inner politics in order to understand the Communist victory.

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Finally, I want to express my love and gratitude to my parents, who have always formed the backbone of my inspiration and achievements, and the guiding lights of my life.

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Introduction

Introduction and Historiography

The victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949 represented one of the greatest achievements of social organization in human history. It marked the culmination of a turbulent era, which saw the Communist party rise from near defeat in 1937 to mastery over nearly a quarter of mankind in a space of just over twelve years. The period saw not only the military triumph of the CCP, but the development and expansion within areas of Communist control of a vast bureaucratic system the likes of which was never seen in Chinese history, and a social transformation that would affect China forever. Traditional elites and social groupings were systematically eliminated, and a hierarchical system of class labels was imposed on all individuals which would affect their status and success in society for decades to come. These policies, which were applied all over China by the advancing Communist armies, would lay the foundations of the Maoist era, paving the way for almost thirty years of Marxist totalitarianism.

How can this great transformation be explained? This question will always be tied to rural China, where the CCP's support was built up where it was ultimately leading to national victory. It is well known that China during the early 20th century had been plagued by a convulsion of cataclysmic events, ranging from poverty, internal strife and natural disasters to Japanese invasion and the weakness of the then Nationalist (GMD) government in dealing with these matters, all of which hit the countryside especially hard and could have made the country ripe for revolution. Yet, there are no easy answers. Shaped by nationalism, Marxist ideology and a desire to legitimate the party's rule over China, official Communist interpretations have often emphasized the popular appeal of

the CCP, stressing its commitment and "selfless dedication" towards relieving rural poverty, its role in organizing peasants towards national resistance against Japan, the material benefits of its class based policies in improving the lives of many, and the importance of these measures in forging a bond of "flesh and blood" between the party and rural "masses".[1] However, this treatment ignores the many complexities behind the party's rural mobilization, as well as the often contradictory image between its presented ideology and actual practice. Chief amongst these is the absence of many issues that the CCP had built its revolution on and sought to relieve, such as widespread tenancy and land concentration by a few, in the parts of China in which it operated, a fact that has often been pointed out in Western studies and even acknowledged by some Communist works, as well as the often arbitrary nature of its class labels and classification.[2]

Historians in the English speaking West, where the bulk of academic interest in the subject has been concentrated, have grappled with a wide range of issues and questions. Early studies, such as Chalmers Johnson's 1962 work, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power*, and Mark Selden's 1971 book, *The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China*, have often emphasized the importance of larger, pre-existing trends in Communist success, viewing the party as a popular force that rose to power by harnessing social forces favoring revolution. Johnson, for example, argues that the Communists came to power on the back of a growing nationalist awakening in the Chinese countryside caused by the Japanese invasion, by portraying itself as the savior of the Chinese nation against foreign aggression.[3] Selden, similarly, asserts that the CCP succeeded through innovative policies, such as progressive taxation, rent reduction, agricultural cooperatives, local election and the mass line, which reversed a long trend of

economic stagnation and social collapse in rural China. These policies, he argues, greatly improved agricultural productivity, made government authorities more in touch with local situations, and unleashed the creative revolutionary potential of peasants by fostering collective action and empowering them towards political participation.[4]

These interpretations, however, have come under increasing scrutiny since the late 1970s, by a new wave of researchers who argue that the pre-occupation with single, large factor explanations places excessive emphasis on developing totalizing conceptualizations of Communist success, while understating the diversity of environments that the CCP operated in, and the actual response of rural societies and social structures towards the party's mobilization. Armed with a growing variety of sources made available after China's opening to the outside world, these scholars have sought to broaden both the scope and depth of study on CCP success, and to view it from a larger, comparative political science and sociological perspective. Rejecting grand interpretations on Communist mobilization, their works have centered on understanding the revolution from a localized perspective, by studying the process of mobilization in specific regions, counties and even villages, and exploring the interactions between peasant traditions and the larger ideological and organizational goals of the CCP.[5]

Shifts in the approach and focus of study have led to a number of debates regarding both the nature of CCP victory and the revolutionary potential of rural society. Heavily influenced by Theda Skocpol's 1979 work on the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, *States and Social Revolutions*, many have viewed Communist success from a structural perspective, emphasizing the conservative and reactive nature of rural communities, the incompatibility of local situations with the CCP's national/class based

agendas, and the creative role of the party in fostering revolutionary conflict amid social and cultural constraints.[6] Research such as Elizabeth Perry's 1980 work, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945* and Odoric Wou's 1994 book *Mobilizing the Masses: Building Revolution in Henan* has consistently highlighted the cohesive nature of village ties, lineage associations, local self defense groups and other parochial relations, the predominance and persistence of gentry power, and the role of these groupings in holding peasants in powerful bonds of "conservative solidarity" and "non-reciprocal" patron/client relationships with rural elites. The CCP, they contend, for the large part succeeded not through violent conflict or the direct mobilization of peasants, who were by nature timid, self-centered or uncontrollable beyond structural confines, but by taking advantage of periods of war and political instability to infiltrate villages from the top down, out maneuvering weakened elites through cooperative agreements that in theory preserved their authority, while slowly shifting the balance of power to the Communists by implementing moderate reforms that completely altered the social and economic composition of rural communities. Wou, in particular, has emphasized the role of party organizers in "stage-managing" peasants, presenting the CCP's ideological goals in ways compatible to their narrow, materialistic mindset, and slowly breaking them away from traditional parochialism through the manipulation of conservative rural norms.[7]

Other works, such as Suzanne Pepper's 1978 study, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* and Chen Yung-Fa's 1986 work *Making Revolution*, a study on CCP mobilization in Central China, have stressed the coercive and manipulative nature of Communist rule, arguing that the party succeeded primarily through its ability to "polarize" rural communities with a process of selective courting, purges and

calculated direct coercion. This process, they argue, allowed the party to essentially reshape rural society in its own image, slowly neutralizing traditional elites under the pretense of political cooperation while rallying politically indifferent peasants with the material benefits of class struggle, and in places where social stratification was minimal, to manufacture artificial class lines by manipulating existing social tensions. Selective polarization not only transformed society with new divisions, but according to Chen, gave the CCP both the support and resources to entrench its hold over rural China through the expansion of its bureaucratic apparatus and mass organizations, incorporating rural China into a cohesive, multi-layered administrative system that effectively blocked outside opposition and expanded the party's organizational reach to all levels of society.[8]

These interpretations have been challenged by moral economists such as Ralph Thaxton, who in his 1983 and 1997 books *China Turned Right Side Up* and *Salt of the Earth* has sought to explain Communist success through the innate traditional capacity of peasants for self-preservation amid overwhelming poverty and hardships in life, and collective opposition of rural communities against state authorities and corrupt elites who threaten their basic survival. Thaxton argues that rural society in China was traditionally governed by a system of state benevolence and paternalistic concern by local elites for the welfare of peasants, and a peasant "little tradition" of revolt if such bonds were broken. Peasants, he asserts, joined the CCP's revolutionary cause mainly as a result of the breakdown of morality amongst traditional elites, and the intrusion of state authorities on essential peasant subsistence through excessive taxation and the breakdown of traditional welfare, which the party corrected through its just rule and policies that respected the peasant's right for survival and subsistence.[9]

The focus of research shifted again in mid-1990s, with the works of scholars such as Joseph Esherick, who argue that the pre-occupation with theoretical interpretations and explaining CCP success in many ways undercuts the localized approach of recent studies, ignoring the fluidity of actual situations and the contingent influence of period specific events in the party's mobilization. Esherick also asserts that the desire to understand how mobilization was achieved needlessly dichotomizes the interaction between the party and rural society, viewing them as separate entities without realizing that the CCP carried out its policies primarily through the use of indigenous organizers. Though agreeing with some structural theorists on the manipulative and coercive nature of CCP rule, Esherick contends that the mobilization is much more a mutual process, in which the party asserted its agenda using local activists, but was in turn shaped by the actions and backgrounds of these individuals. Breaking with existing trends, Esherick, in his studies, has emphasized a new approach for understanding CCP mobilization, giving exclusive focus to the actual process of revolution in local areas, and the interaction of individuals in shaping it.[10]

Focus and Objectives

Despite all their differences, studies on CCP mobilization in the last four decades have shared one similarity, an interest in the 1937-1949 period primarily through the events of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Most point to the war as a critical turning point in CCP fortunes, tracing the roots of Communist victory in 1949 to this period. The early works, such as that by Johnson, emphasized the vital role of the Japanese invasion in reshaping peasant mentality, destroying parochial ties through violence and social dislocation, while inducing an emerging nationalism as peasants began to link their survival to that of their nation.[11] Later works stressed the critical importance of the war

in giving the CCP room to maneuver, by weakening Nationalist and elite power and allowing the Communists space to carry out their social agenda, as well as vie for power under the guise of the 1937 United Front agreement officially suspending CCP/GMD rivalry in favor of national resistance.[12] Many point especially to the importance of the early years of the war (1937-1940) in the Communist success, as Japanese armies swept away Nationalist authority in much of North and Central China but failed to fill it, creating a power vacuum that provided the basis for Communist activities and expansion.

Often overlooked by these works is the Civil War of 1945-1949 which followed the war with Japan. Despite its significance as the period that actually saw the CCP rise topower across China, historians, with a few exceptions, have seldom touched on the subject. Though some, such as Joseph Esherick, have called for increased attention to the period in recent years, the Civil War has on the whole attracted little scholarly interest. It has become, in the words of Esherick, an "era of no significance."[13]

Yet this seems contradictory, especially in light of the increasingly localized, process-based approach in recent studies, which give special weight to period-specific events. More importantly, the fixation with the Sino-Japanese war often imposes an artificial geographical and period focus, giving undue attention to areas where Communist rule had long been established and refined, without realizing that the shifts in strategic priorities and battlefield lines following 1945 often led the CCP to draw its support not from core areas during the conflict with Japan, but those that had been either insignificant or conquered late in the war. Most of all, the tendency to trace the CCP's success as a linear progression from 1937 to 1949 also leads historians to give priority to certain developments over others, seeing later events exclusively within the context of

earlier ones, as well as viewing Communist success through period-specific frameworks that overemphasize continuities while side-lining developments outside their interpretations. Even worse, it also has the possibility of drawing historians into larger CCP organizational agendas, giving more focus to events from a top down perspective, while ignoring local developments and mobilization issues.

These issues point to the importance of studying the Civil War, a need to see it beyond the frameworks of earlier studies, and to offer new ways of understanding CCP success through viewing the developments of this period from alternative perspectives. I shall do this with the example of one county, Rushan, and its role in one province, Shandong, both of which are in many ways representative of my argument. Though considered a key base of Communist operations, Shandong was relatively obscure in its policy developments, party expansion and overall political influence during the Sino-Japanese war. Beset by a series of difficulties, including internal dissension, heavy Japanese garrisons and unusually powerful remnant Nationalist forces, which outnumbered the CCP ten to one during the early stages of the war, Communist presence was confined largely in several pockets, and did not expand significantly until late 1943, when the collapse of the Nationalist movement in the province and Japanese withdrawals following reverses in the Pacific left the party significant space to maneuver.[14]

Yet, the province's role changed dramatically as the CCP shifted its goals from expansion to war for national supremacy following Japan's surrender. Traditionally regarded as a gateway between North and south China and an as artery for two main railways connecting the country in modern times, the province became a major battlefield, as well as a key focus of the ensuing Civil War.[15] Communist forces in the province,

according to most historians, tied down more Nationalist forces than in any other part of China, and sealed the fate of the war with their victory at Huaihai near the Shandong/Jiangsu border in late 1948, dealing the GMD a blow it from which it would never recover.[16] During the course of the war, nine million Shandong inhabitants, nearly a third of the province's population, were sent to the front as soldiers and support laborers, representing the greatest mobilization triumphs by the CCP in the pre-1949 period.[17]

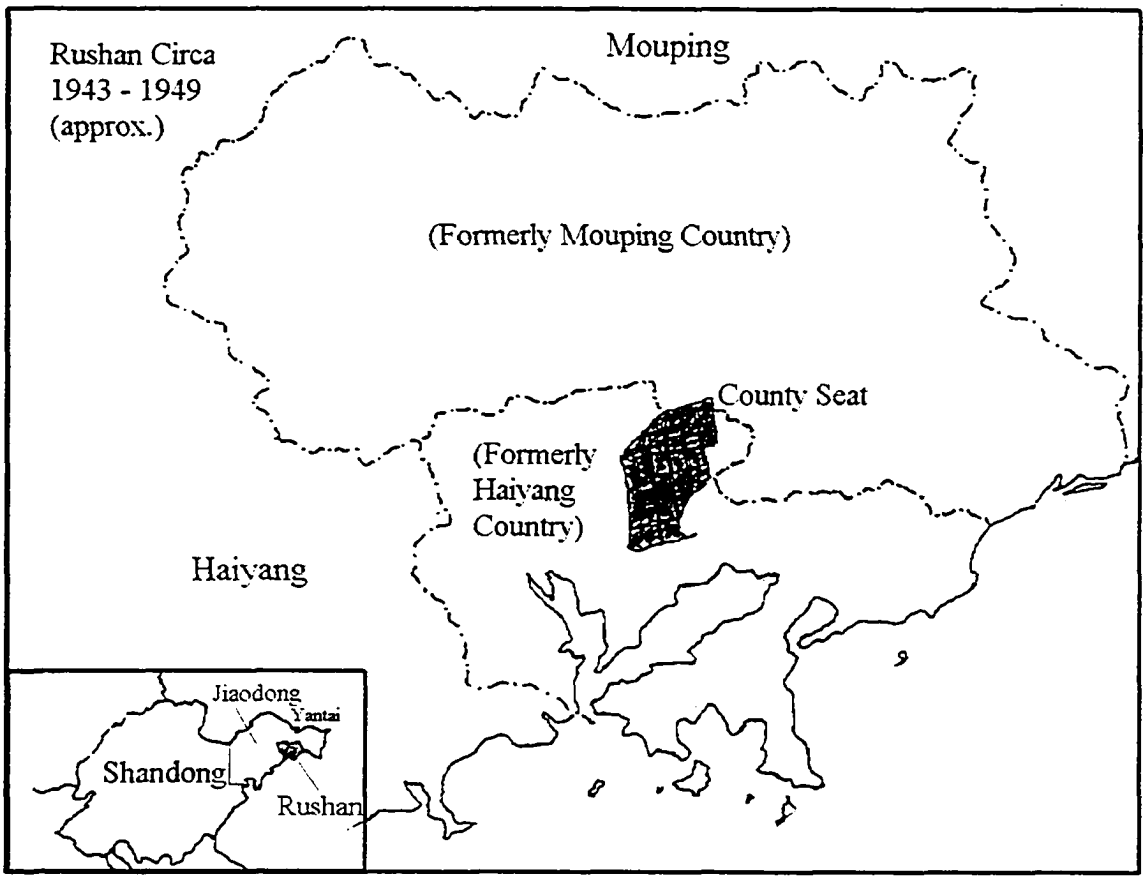
Research on Shandong to date has focused almost exclusively on the southern, central and southeastern coast of the province, areas where the party's control was strongest during the Sino-Japanese war and its presence had been long established. While this treatment is important for understanding the overall dynamics of party development in the province, it ignores several key issues, chiefly that the main support for the party after 1945 was not drawn from areas that had been bases of CCP operation during the Sino-Japanese war, but from outlying northern regions of Shandong that had been hotly contested with the Nationalists and Japanese during the war and not acquired until its final stages. It also ignores the diversity of environments in which the party had operated in throughout the province, and the complex histories of CCP mobilization leading up to 1949.

Rushan County in the Jiaodong region of Shandong is a perfect example of the diverse nature of CCP mobilization and its geographic shift following 1945. Though often overlooked by previous studies, the Jiaodong region particularly around the city of Yantai in its eastern tip, where Rushan is situated, had long been a hotbed of Communist activity, having a revolutionary tradition to rival those in the south of Shandong. It was

the site of the "November 4th" uprising of 1935, one of the largest CCP-led rebellions in Shandong prior to the Sino-Japanese war. Though slow in its overall development, it was also one of the first places in the province where the party had established areas of control following Japan's invasion.[18] While Jiaodong did not witness the longest or heaviest fighting during the Civil War, its contributions were some of the most crucial in the province. Some 285,839 men from Jiaodong volunteered during the war, more than any other area of Shandong, and nearly a million others served as laborers along side the CCP armies.[19] More than 200,000 joined up during 1946 and 1947, the most challenging phase of the war for the CCP, and these recruits allowed the party to rebuild two decimated divisions in less than two months in early 1947, greatly improving its military situation in the province.[20] It was to this area that the bulk of the CCP armies in Shandong retreated in the summer of 1947, following defeats in central Shandong, and it was also here that the GMD advance in the province was halted, paving the way for a number of Communist offensives in 1948 that would ultimately secure CCP dominance across China.

In keeping with the new focus I have outlined, I chose Rushan for a number of reasons. Considered a key county in which the CCP drew its support from during the Civil War, Rushan is in many ways reflective of larger developments in Jiaodong prior to 1945. Situated near the tip of the Shandong peninsula, Rushan (Ru Mountain, see map) was a distinct CCP creation. Named after a landmark in its vicinity, the county was carved out of two pre-existing counties in the Jiaodong area, Mouping and Haiyang. One of the earliest areas in Jiaodong to see Communist presence, the county was a hot spot of CCP activity prior to 1937, and was a key site for the "November 4th" revolt. However,

like much of Jiaodong, the party's history in Rushan prior to the later phases of the Sino-Japanese war was far from eventful. Faced with heavy GMD pressure, cohesive party and government structures were not established until early 1941, after eight failed attempts starting from 1932, which resulted in the virtual collapse of party organizations in the county in each case, and the arrest or death of four party secretaries, as well as one senior Jiaodong-level official.



Source: There is no map of wartime Rushan available in any publications in North America. This figure is an estimate based on two maps, found in: Shandongsheng Rushanshi difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Rushan shizhi* (Historical Records of Rushan City) (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1998), overleaf; and Yu Qingpan et al. *Mouping xianzhi* (Mouping Gazetteer) (1936; reprint Taibei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), 234-235.

The start of the war with Japan allowed the CCP to pick up momentum in its activities, but did not give it a major opportunity to expand until 1940, when a Japanese mopping-up operation severely crippled Nationalist forces in the area. Taking advantage of the space left by the attack, party organizers quickly rushed in, establishing an administrative area out of roughly 700 villages in the Mouping and Haiyang counties, designated Mouhai (Mouping/Haiyang) a year later, which would later be renamed Rushan. Despite this, Communist organizations still faced stiff opposition from several thousand remnant Nationalist forces, which would not be repelled until the fall of 1942, as well as consistent Japanese attacks on the county that did not subside until early 1943. The military situation in Rushan was not resolved until the summer of 1943, when weakening of GMD and Japanese pressure across Shandong effectively ended all fighting in the county, and left the CCP in firm control.[21]

Like all parts of Jiaodong, Rushan played a critical role in ensuring CCP victory, sending some 12,000 men to the Communist armies, including 8,159 during the critical years of 1946 and 1947, as well as 20,000 laborers during the Civil War.[22] However, I chose Rushan not for its war contributions, or any distinctions in serving the CCP cause. Rushan's contributions, though not to be overlooked, are neither more significant than nor below those of other Jiaodong counties. Nor do I assume it to be a "typical" county, since given the complexity of political and military situations in Jiaodong and Shandong during the 1937-1949 period, no two counties are the same in their mobilization and developments. However, Rushan, as I will show, is similar enough to the rest of the region in its geography, social composition and the influence of larger policies during and

leading up to the Civil War that it can be used to analyze, draw frameworks, and raise questions on the general trends of CCP mobilization during this period.

I also chose Rushan for another important reason, its overall obscurity during the process of the CCP success in Shandong. Previous studies, both due to the availability of sources and a need to understand the roots of Communist victory, have tended to focus on showcase examples which have been claimed to have contributed greatly to the CCP victory, or policy test samples, whose documents have often been used by the party as models for widespread application, and have been readily published in documentary collections. Though these studies are useful in understanding Communist mobilization, they are also limited in their scope and show only part of the picture. As examples of effective mobilization, they can also be deceptive, highlighting only certain aspects of Communist policies, over emphasizing CCP pragmatism without accounting for other influences and conflicts within the implementation of party agendas. Documents from model cases, in addition, are also subject to spin doctoring by higher Communist authorities, potentially overstating the coherence of party strategy and aims and drawing historians into uncritically accepting the larger organizational and policy frameworks the CCP is trying to promote, as well as its bureaucratic and ideological assumptions over the issues and difficulties of mobilization. More importantly, while some areas were extraordinary in their contributions to Communist victory, we must note that the party drew the bulk of its support not from model cases, but from the greater Chinese countryside under its control.

A study of Rushan, a more or less "ordinary" county, in this case, has the potential of allowing us to view CCP mobilization from different angles, and highlight

aspects often ignored in larger Communist mobilization efforts, which reinforces the local and process-based approach of viewing the CCP's rise to power as a series of multi-stranded small revolutions, each affected by different circumstances. Though I have emphasized the importance of the Civil War, my goal is not necessarily to expose the significance of the period in its own terms, but to transcend artificial barriers placed by the fixation with the Sino-Japanese war and the need to trace CCP success in linear, sequence based formats, and uncover histories hidden through their frameworks. To do so, I will begin my study in late 1943, as Rushan, as well as most of Shandong, was breathing a sigh of relief after years of wartime pressure, and as the CCP in the province began shifting towards the next stage in the party's rise to power, the Civil War.

Sources

Although I am drawn to Rushan for many reasons, what led me first to the county were its archival records. These were by far some of the most extensive in Shandong, being readily available in both the provincial and Rushan's local archives, and have been catalogued and even put on display by archivists in the county over the internet.[23] What I found even more interesting was that these documents were made public only within the last five years, and had never been accessed by anyone outside China. Written by senior political and party leaders in Rushan throughout the course of the county's mobilization from 1943 to 1949, they contain detailed descriptions of many incidents, events, and figures that are critical in understanding the history of the period.

These sources, however, are not without limitations. As policy documents, they are always subject to the political and organizational dictates of the party, and are shaped

by a strong ideological influence in selecting and representing events. Subordinate to the CCP and its larger policies, reports by cadres were also often written to conform to specific party lines echoed from senior directives, and are not actual reflections of the true intent of their authors. It is, for example, very typical for a report to follow the pattern of trying to achieve a balance by both confirming their achievements as well as identifying problems in a way that is in tune with directions from above. In examining CCP documents, I also felt the power of language in shaping CCP policy and its understanding of reality in rural China. Events in these sources are often encoded in a loosely defined vocabulary, describing different things in different times, but nevertheless reducing rural society in China to a universal picture of exploiters and the exploited, where personal background and character was often decided by simple equations of land ownership and tenancy, and the bulk of rural society grouped under a monolithic title of the "masses", meant to take on select "oppressors" and do the party's bidding.

Nevertheless, I find these sources to be significant to the aims of the study in several respects. Early in my investigation, I was often appalled by the incoherence and denseness of these texts. Hoping to identify the larger issues behind mobilization in Rushan, I began with an analysis of its documents in a systematic fashion, in an attempt to pinpoint specific strategies, the party's analysis and solutions to certain problems arising from the application of its social and political agendas, shifts in policy and responses from the multiple communities in the county. What I found, however, was a perplexing picture. Though seeming to follow a specific party line, the documents were often conflicting and contradictory in their strategies, aims and descriptions of policy implementation. Contradictions between the documents are amplified when compared to

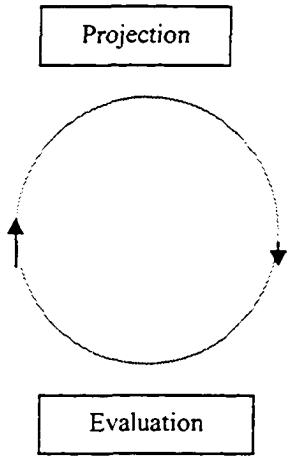
the provincial directives where their instructions had originated. Put together, they reveal not a coherent or flexible strategy for mobilization and social reform, but a series of mixed and often arbitrary intentions, reflecting not so much realistic assessments of policy issues but various conflicting agendas, as well as many inconsistencies and gaps in communication between various levels of the party, both deliberate and unintentional.

Here lies the importance of these sources. They are, on one hand, official texts and reflect the larger patterns in CCP policy across Jiaodong and the rest of province, as well as the assumptions of senior levels. Yet, at the same time, they also contain sufficient inconsistencies, conflicts, hints and other details to shed light on the local complexities of mobilization in Rushan, the nature of rural society in the county, and the interaction of individuals behind the party's agendas. Collectively, these documents give us insight into the inter-penetration between state and society, the influence of the two on each other and the implementation of larger policy aims, and the inter-connections between peasants, organizers and local social relations during the process of mobilization in Rushan. From a larger perspective, they are a window into the relationships between different levels of the CCP, and when juxtaposed with documents from the central, provincial and Jiaodong levels of the party, which I have drawn largely from published documentary compilations, provide fascinating clues into the relationships, power dynamics and other intricacies behind policy developments in Shandong during the mid and late 1940s, as well as how they were inserted into and impacted the local developments of Rushan through the inter-penetration of state and society.

Theory and Interpretation

The complexity of these sources highlights the importance of method and interpretation in my research. To better understand these texts, I have borrowed insights from hermeneutic interpretation. One of the oldest schools of metaphysics, hermeneutics originated in a theological context, and was used as a form of uncovering hidden and lost messages from biblical texts. It became generalized as a method of textual interpretation during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and under a series of thinkers, including Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, was applied to understand human interpretation. Often considered the origin of the critical tradition of post-modernism, post-structuralism and a ubiquitous influence on the current intellectual landscape, hermeneutics argues that interpretation is inherently subjective, "pre-judged" and shaped by one's own experiences, background and cultural context. It also asserts that understanding is "dialogical" and "inter-subjective", acquired through communication with others and their systems of meanings, and is constantly reshaped by this process. Proponents of hermeneutics contend that objective understanding of others is neither possible nor attainable through empirical inquiry, since human beings are always viewing each other through their own meanings and "horizons", but argue we can learn to better understand others, as well as gain glimpses into their world of meanings by questioning the perspectives and ways in which we interact and build meaning with them. Gadamer, in particular, has argued this through the concept of "effective historical consciousness", asserting that human beings are transformed in their understanding with what they can gain through interaction with others, but how they are transformed is dependent on the ways in which they communicate, and their openness in the process.[24]

Hermeneutic researchers, such as J. L. Ellis, have proposed an examination of one's own views on interpretation through the continual application and evaluation of one's own methods and strategies, in what is termed a "Hermeneutic Circle". Ellis divides this process into a cycle of two parts:



1. Projection: Attempting to make sense of others or data through using all aspects of the researcher's knowledge on the subject and strategies of interpretation, an act that is inherently shaped by one's own background, context and pre-conceptions.

2. Evaluation: Critically examining and questioning interpretations of data for contradictions, gaps, inconsistencies, and validations to the method and strategy used, pointing out limits of the interpretation.

The purpose of this approach, according to Ellis, is to constantly raise questions over the perceptions of the researcher on the data, disrupt preconceptions, and in the process of exposing contradictory details, raise new questions and directions for understanding the data. Hermeneutics on the whole rejects drawing definitive conclusions, but argues that data can be clarified and its intentions made more comprehensible through the researcher's self-examination.[25] Other hermeneutic researchers, such as David G. Smith, have also emphasized the importance of viewing data from a holistic perspective, constantly playing back and forth between the specific and the general, parts and wholes, as well macro and micros, using contradictions in one's own interpretations to re-evaluate its context and asking "what is the big picture of which little things speak?"[26]

I chose hermeneutics primarily because of my documents, which are, on the one hand, filled with ideological language and overtones, but on the other hand often vague and full of contradictions that raise many questions over their context. With its emphasis on uncovering context and understanding the connections between the details and holistic aspects of specific texts, hermeneutics is well suited to my study, and will allow me to explore the developments in Rushan from a systematic and ever expanding perspective while at the same time constantly questioning the connections between my data. Since virtually all my sources are of CCP origin and, as with any historical inquiry, I can never acquire sufficient data to grasp the totality of the situation in the county, hermeneutics also allows me to understand and raise new perspectives to the documents in an open-ended and non-objective fashion, avoiding the over generalization of the selected sources or falling into their frameworks. Hermeneutics, in addition, also fits the purpose of recent studies as outlined by Esherick, which seek not to explain CCP mobilization using set strategies, but instead view localized developments in a process, progression based format, drawing issues and details from this approach. Using hermeneutic interpretation, in this case, would allow me to better understand the process of revolution in Rushan, as well as the connections of different factors in this process.

My approach in this study is two fold. Following the Hermeneutic circle of interpretation, I will begin by reading the documents from both bottom up and top down perspectives, in an attempt to understand them for what they say officially, identifying emphases, frameworks and ideological and policy terms used to highlight them, while keeping an eye open for inconsistencies, contradictions, and gaps within these sources. Written under the influence of communist ideology, the authors of these documents tend

to view everything they wrote from the perspective of class. Every person and event in their texts was depicted as black or white. It was a constant effort to judge how events in the documents were presented by the authors, and their ideological and possible personal bias towards the people depicted in the events. While I was reading CCP directives and reports by local Communist cadres, I was also dealing with my own bias. Attempting to make sense of these texts, I tried to use all my knowledge on the topic and strategies of interpretation. I realized that this act was inherently shaped by my own background, context and pre-conceptions. Using the hermeneutic method, I accepted my personal bias as the platform for my interpretations, and at the same time continued to use the forward and backward arc of the hermeneutic circle to reflect on the texts and my interpretations, and to challenge the bias of both the documents and myself in order to reach a sound understanding.

Many questions arose. The most basic were: What were the objectives of the CCP's class based strategies? What were the policies guiding these social measures? How were policies perceived by the cadres, peasants and land owners? How was the reform carried out? In addition, what were the short and long term effects of the reform on Rushan locally and on the CCP agenda in taking over the country in general? Official Communist answers to these questions as presented by these documents were always very straightforward: The population of the rural areas was formed by five classes according to their possession of land and relationship in renting the lands. They were landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and labourers. The landlords were few but they owned the majority of land, with rich peasants the next. They exploited the majority of the population by renting land to the poor peasants and labourers and

collecting high rents from them. The exploitation was mostly aggressive and cruel and this was the reason that most of the peasants lived in deplorable conditions. The objective of the CCP reform was to relieve the exploited through rent reduction and weaken the power of the landlord class. The landlords would not give up their power and economic interest and they resisted the movement through every possible means. The task of the CCP was to make sure that the rents were reduced according to the policy. The exploited classes of poor peasants and labourers had long been intimidated by their exploiting landlords and they had neither the class consciousness nor the courage to stand up against them. They needed to be educated by the CCP and the most effective ways of mobilizing them was through mass movements to struggle against their class enemies. The ultimate goal of the CCP was to wipe out the exploiting classes completely.

When I was combing through these blurred and twisted handwritten documents often with a magnifying glass, trying to decipher all the intentional and unintentional expressions, reading between lines and detecting what was left unsaid, I gradually realized that the focus of all the events described in the documents was about class struggle. The documents were filled with demands for increasingly severe and large-scale struggles, and reports describing local cadres' ignorance of party policies, as well as complaints against the excessive use of class struggle. There were also so many inconsistencies in the central and provincial government's directives on how to deal with class struggles, when the landlords should be attacked or protected, what actions were considered appropriate and excessive, and how to stir up the masses to carry out the struggles. I found that I was constantly encountering one question: Was the resistance from the landlords to the CCP's economic policies, such as rent reduction, the cause of

the struggles? In other words, did landlord resistance make the struggle against them necessary? Only if this question was answered, could I further explore other questions, such as why the local cadres were criticized frequently for not doing a good job in carrying the party policy and finding the right measures of the scale of struggles.

To find the answers to this key question, I tried to put together all the information about landlord resistance, including all the details I could get out of the CCP documents that I had been studying, the previous studies on the subject, and other possible sources that provide information on landownership and renting relations in the county, such as Rushan's modern Gazetteer. By putting together cited cases of landlord resistance, analyzing its forms and scale and putting it in the context of the general development of events, I gradually realized that although some of this resistance was called vicious and conspicuous, it was evident that there was not a great deal of overt landlord resistance in Rushan. There were very few cited examples of landlords openly causing problems. One of them described a landlord who was forced to reduce rent for the tenants from another village. He spread rumours which led to villagers from his village against those of another and a large scale conflict was created. However, I could detect the contradictions in the narratives of this incident. Using contradictions as a hermeneutic way of refining my interpretation, I steered into an alternative understanding. This example did not show how people stood in their class lines against each other. It actually showed how the landlord was well supported by his fellow villagers, and far from being hated by them. It was very hard to verify if the conflict was stirred up by the landlord's rumours or by the villagers' concern for their community.[27]

Most cited examples of landlord resistance were landlords trying to sell their lands or cancelling the renting contract with their tenants in order to avoid loss. Some even used publicized CCP policy to reason with local cadres for their rights. Others tried to win over the local CCP cadres through relationship building and bribes. And some simple donated their land to the public. On the whole the information provided in the documents indicates that the landlords in Rushan as a class had been subdued and suppressed at the very early stage of the reform. Their resistance was mild in form and often connected to unclear CCP policies. On the whole, the power of the landlords was dwindling. Their resistance were.

This led me revisit the CCP central government and Shandong provincial directives that had shaped the policies of this social reform, and to try to find how such policies were connected to the specific events in Rushan. At the central government level, while some of the directives clearly laid out the policies to protect both tenants' and landlords' rights, other documents issued secretly in the inner circle of the party emphasized that the ultimate goal of the CCP was to wipe out the landlord class and took the publicized policy on protecting landlords rights as a tactic for the temporary "united front" to win the war against the Japanese. The strategy of the CCP was to woo the landlords sometimes, and to attack them other times. This left it wide open for the lower level cadres to interpret what could be considered appropriate and what was not at different periods of the reform. The provincial government of Shandong made painstaking efforts to set up detailed rules and regulations for different periods of reform: however, they had to change their tune following changes in the political climate within the CCP. This analysis of the government directives leads to a further question: Was class

struggle a means to meet the goal of rent reduction or was rent reduction the means to achieve the goal of class struggle?

During this process of interpretation, I also used the backward arc of hermeneutics to critically examine and question my interpretations of data for contradictions, gaps, inconsistencies, and validations to the method and strategy that I used and to identify the limits of my interpretation. It took me a long time to evaluate the relationship between rent reduction and class struggle from different perspectives. While I was making interpretations, I felt that they were not definite. They are part of an on-going process always shaped by new contradictions that arise. My understanding of class struggle was furthered by my challenge of the very concept of classes. Through scrutinizing the information on Rushan's landownership and renting relationship provided by the Rushan county gazetteer and the CCP documents, I found that class divisions based on landownership are often arbitrary and problematic. Many areas in Rushan did not have landlords who owned and rented the majority of lands. Instead there were many small land renters and together they formed the majority. Some poor peasants rented lands to others as well. The line between the exploiters and the exploited was very blurry. While all my previous understanding of class struggle was based on the CCP concept of class divisions, the collapse of the very concept of classes made the discussion of class struggle more complicated. This led me to realize the need for a deconstruction of the CCP terminology and basic framework. In the next section, my hermeneutic inquiry will focus on the interpretation of the basic framework and terminology of the CCP social policy.

The journey of hermeneutic inquiry has broadened my vision and deepened my understanding, introduced me to new ways of thinking and armed me with many new

perspectives. In the following chapters I will start give more detailed analysis of my findings starting from the central and provincial levels, analyzing their focuses and policy shifts, while comparing them with how county authorities in Rushan reacted to the directions of these documents. The purpose of this step is to identify local backgrounds, historical contexts, and the influence of various social and economic forces in the county on policy implementation, as well as the actions of cadres and other sections of society by exposing inconsistencies, contradictions and other idiosyncrasies between them and the frameworks and objectives of official policy papers. At the same time, I will also use local findings as a way to challenge and re-evaluate the impact and intent of official policies, primarily through analyzing how such policies were carried out, rural responses to them, and the outcomes and long term consequences of their implementation.

In doing so, my aim is to create an environment of mutual analysis, constantly shifting from central, provincial and local perspectives. In keeping with the aims of both hermeneutics and localized studies, my goal is not to offer definitive answers, but to clarify and make comprehensible the process of mobilization in Rushan, and to use it to offer new directions for future research. Using the hermeneutic circle, I will let the documents from different levels continually challenge each other, using their inconsistencies to reinterpret and offer new perspectives on policy developments in Shandong, expose the hidden agendas, conflicts and other aspects normally subsumed within them and the contexts in which they were made, and in the process gain a better understanding of the nature of and influences behind CCP mobilization in the province. By using this approach, I also aim to understand rural society and relations in Rushan from an interactive perspective, by viewing them not only in terms of the outcomes of

mobilization in the county, but as influences through the process of and development of revolution.

Outline of the Study and its Components

I divide my study into three chapters. The denseness of Rushan's texts, their CCP terms, and differences in the usage of these terms points to the importance of understanding a number of key terms in the Communist political lexicon. These include "leftism" (*zuo*), "rightism" (*you*), "commandism" (*baoban daiti*), "mass" or "masses" (*qunzhong*) and law (*falu*), as well as the party's hierarchical system of class definitions. How these words are used in the documents is a window into the intentions of senior party levels, as well as the difficulties faced by local cadres when applying policy aims. Due to this I will devote the first chapter of my thesis to the explanation of these terms and their origins, as well as their overall intent through the use of central documents. I ask readers to treat this chapter as a starting point to my later observations, and to follow the entire paper with it as a framework. I will then begin my analysis with a study of developments in Rushan during the late Sino-Japanese war period, roughly from late 1943 to early 1946. This chapter provides information on the background of Rushan, as well as developments leading up to the actual Civil War, which I will explore in my third chapter. All this is to be wrapped up by my conclusion, which will summarize the overall findings, and offer issues for future study.

While my study is based exclusively on CCP sources from the 1940s, I have also included, mainly as reference, two other major sources. One of these is Rushan's modern gazetteer, published in 1998. Compiled by the current CCP government, it provides

useful background knowledge on the county for my observations. To analyze the validity of its claims, I have also consulted another major reference, the Republican era gazetteer of Mouping, a neighboring county whose territory was used to form Rushan in the 1940s. My study will focus on two main issues in these texts, rent reduction and land reform. These are, of course, only part of the larger mobilization in the county and province. However, as I will show, they have a special significance to the development of Rushan, and are critical in understanding events in Shandong during the late 1940s.

Chapter 1. Terms and Struggle

CCP Policies, Key Terms and the Emphasis on Class Struggle

How can we make sense of Rushan's documents? From which ways can we gauge their motivations and intent? My approach is to highlight the basic framework that CCP social policy was built on, the key concepts within its ideological world view, and the terms used by the party in its efforts to shape rural society according to this image. In doing so, I will focus on the CCP's system of class labels, the political and economic implications of this analysis of rural society in China, how the party sought to achieve its class based agenda, and the role of policy terms in shaping this process. These concepts and terms have received some analysis in the works on CCP mobilization. However, my approach differs from other works in that it seeks to view these terms not from a purely ideological or organizational standpoint, but in terms of their function in actual policy implementation, shaping the development of local areas, and in the complex interactions between various different levels of the party.

The focus on policy frameworks and terms is closely related to the hermeneutic, process-based approach of my research. In viewing policy developments through these perspectives, I also introduce an alternative angle for studying CCP mobilization. Previous works, such as those of Chen and Wou, have tended to view CCP documents and their assumptions, frameworks, and terminologies from a perspective of drawing generalized conclusions on the party's mobilization, tracing the exact procedures and steps by which Communist success was achieved, and using rural responses to them to formulate interpretations on peasant behaviour during this process. More recent works, rejecting, in the words of Esherick, an exclusive focus on what the party is "doing and

trying to do," have emphasized the importance of socio-economic conditions at the local level, as well as the behaviour and backgrounds of cadres in shaping policy outcomes.

Yet, these approaches are limited in several ways. First of all, the fixation with *how* mobilization was conducted and the procedural aspects of Communist social programs in documents by Chen and Wou ignores the fact that policy implementation is a fluid process with constantly shifting agendas and assigned roles, shaped as much by the perceptions of senior levels, the interaction between different planes of the party system, personal interests, and relationships within the CCP power structure as by practical considerations. Secondly, the focus on local factors and cadre background in process based studies, such as those of Esherick also ignores the bureaucratic and functional aspects of CCP policy and implementation, as well as their role in shaping policy outcomes. It also understates the fact that cadre behaviour is not only shaped by personal background and larger party agendas, but also by the system they worked under, the interaction between different levels of the party, and their understandings and negotiations of official policies and goals. Emphases, terms, and cadre responses within their working conditions, in fact, represent a bureaucratic system that imposes both influence and constraints on the implementation of policy and its outcomes.

This is why I focus on policy frameworks and terms. They are, one on hand, ways of communicating and regulating official party policies and aims, and serve to assign strategies, roles and ground rules for mobilization, as well as ways to report outcomes. Yet, specific usages of policy frameworks and terms are also expressions of the back and forth interactions behind policy implementation, the various interests involved, and collectively serve to impose an influence of their own on how mobilization is carried out.

its outcomes and future implementation. It is also due to these interests that documents are also highly deceptive in their descriptions of policy outcomes, since they represent a struggle and negotiation of meaning as cadres twist official terminology, meanings and frameworks to assert their personal agendas, highlight and impose policy dictates, as well as cover up inner conflicts and flaws behind implementation. Nevertheless, it is because of these factors behind their use that policy frameworks and terms are so important in understanding mobilization. A study of their usage is an insight into the motivations and conflicts of cadres and others in the process of mobilization, as they attempt to apply the ideological agendas of the party in their diverse local conditions and circumstances, and a reflection of their dilemmas and choices as they attempt to reconcile these agendas to their existing social relationships and beliefs about social justice and fairness.

All this highlights the importance of frameworks and terms in understanding CCP mobilization, as well as a need to view CCP documents from a functional and systematic perspective. Some of the issues that I have just outlined have been raised by Chen Yung-fa who notes in *Making Revolution* that Communist documents have a tendency to focus on describing formulas of policy success rather than on actual implementation and its flaws, and often use ideological notions of peasant behaviour to rationalize failures in mobilization. However, possibly to due to a lack of localized sources and documents beyond a few model areas, Chen's work was not able to explore these issues in detail. While the lack of attention to this subject amongst an earlier generation of researchers is understandable, given source constraints and an initial need to identify the actual steps in mobilization, it must be noted that the issue of policy implementation and textual analysis has received scant concern in later works also. Using recently available local materials

and higher level party directives, my study aims to be the first work to draw attention to and properly address these forgotten issues.

With this I introduce an overall definition of the CCP's ideological framework and policy guidelines and the basic terms regulating them. To do so, I will draw mainly from three documents: Mao's 1933 work "How to Differentiate Classes in Chinese Society", and two directives issued by the CCP Central Committee, dating from 1942, which standardized Communist policy and set the basic premise of the party's class-based agenda during the Sino-Japanese war. Collectively, these sources formed the cornerstone of the party's ideological world view and goals for transforming China, and they were constantly referred to by documents in the later 1940s as a starting point and source of legitimacy for overall policy and implementation. I use these documents as the basis of my hermeneutic and functional approach to analyzing CCP mobilization, and throughout the thesis as a way of expanding on and raising questions about previous research on the subject. In tune with my emphasis on frameworks and terminology, I will also view them from a function-based perspective. It is important to see these documents and the framework and terms they outline not solely from an ideological perspective, but as essentially hollow markers in a flexible system of policy implementation, which could easily be modified to assign and reorder the basic controls and roles during mobilization.

Central to the CCP's political and economic strategy was an economic policy based on two premises, a 25 percent reduction in all forms of rent of land per annum, and a 1.5 percent monthly interest rate ceiling on interest for all loans. The two reductions were meant to be applied universally, but were given leeway to adjust to varying conditions across China, with a minimum standard for rentiers to receive not higher than

or substantially below 37.5 percent of total yields from their rented land per year. However, reduction was not simply an economic policy, but was bound to a complex and often contradictory policy governing social relations in rural China, as well as a duplicitous strategy of fomenting class conflict. Key to this policy was a five-fold class system, which divided the entire countryside into: 1. Landlords, who derived their livelihood mainly from renting land to others, 2. Rich peasants, whose income came mostly from hiring labourers to work their land, 3. Middle peasants, small landholders who made a living mainly from working their own lands, 4. Poor peasants, a group composed mainly of tenants who rented most of their lands from others, and 5. farm labourers, who constituted the bottom sections of society and earned their income mainly from hiring themselves out to others.[28] Communist strategy worked mainly from this system, declaring middle, poor peasants and labourers allies of the party while branding landlords and rich peasants as their natural oppressors, but at the same time also describing its supporters according to a broad, non-class based term, "the masses".

Class relations were guided by an opportunistic strategy of double standards. The decision by the CCP central committee on rent reduction in January 1942, for example, articulated three fundamental principles. Issued as a document to the public, it stated that the goal of the CCP in reduction was nationalist rather than class-based. The directive firstly emphasized the role of peasants as the main force in the war against Japan, and argued that, "The party's policy is to support peasants by lessening their exploitation under feudal landlords. Through reduction, we aim to raise their enthusiasm in agricultural production and opposition to Japan by improving their living conditions, and guaranteeing their rights as human beings to life, political participation, ownership of

land and private property." Secondly, it recognized the rights of landlords in these same areas, arguing that they must be protected because most were supportive of the party's aim of resisting Japan. Therefore, the same rights as human beings to life, political participation, ownership of land and private property were also applied to landlords. These three rights of the peasants and the three rights of the landlords became part of the famous policy which was referred to later to in many CCP documents as the Three/Three policy. The documents stressed that the CCP's goal was only to reduce the exploitation of landlords, rather than destroying them. The document, thirdly, sought to clearly define targets for reduction, limiting it only to landlords. It recognized the importance of rich peasants, arguing that their productivity was capitalist in character, and was an advanced means of production in China. As a capitalist class, the directive stated, rich peasants were an invaluable asset to the war effort, a group that must be united and rewarded by the party, rather than weakened by its economic programs.[29]

These three principles were declared by the document as starting point of all party policy regarding issues of land, and were to be adhered to in a "determined", "diligent" and "widespread" fashion for the maintenance of the united front. On issues of rent, the directive took an impartial stand, stating that "Under the United Front, all conflicts between landlords and peasants must be dealt with in according to the three principles." In disputes between landlords and their tenants, party and government branches were instructed to take an absolute by neutral stance, seeking to satisfy their mutual needs while not favouring either side. The directive, in addition, stated that all laws must be based on the mutual interests of landlords and peasants. While landlords must lower rent, peasants were obligated always to pay rent. The decision by the central committee also

affirmed the landlords' right to full control over their lands, including the freedom to sell and pawn land without interference. Any decision to cancel tenancy was made a personal choice between landlords and peasants, with both sides equally capable of terminating leases.[30]

However, the directive on the actual implementation of the decision, issued as a secret inter-party communiqué seven days later, took just the opposite stance, emphasizing the need for class struggle and the mobilization of peasants against landlords. It stated that landlords could only be made to accept the CCP's agenda through struggle, and that "Until the masses have risen up, the landlords will never carry out reduction, and will fiercely oppose the implementation of popular democracy. We (the party) must organize the masses to attack the landlords, to destroy their counter-revolutionary rule over the countryside, and to assert the power of the masses."[31] Though favouring struggle, the directive left a double standard and many ambiguities. On the one hand, it stressed a cautious three-step approach, arguing that landlords must be continuously attacked and wooed at the same time to prevent them from turning against the CCP. (This strategy of "attacking and wooing" was later quoted by many Shandong CCP provincial documents and Rushan county local documents, mostly to support their excessive policy of "attacking".) Cadres were instructed first to educate the masses as a preparatory step towards class struggle, then to incite them towards attacks against landlords, then to reconcile with the landlords by reasserting their rights to property following the episode of struggle, and to continuously repeat this cycle. In line with the party's united front strategy, the directive stressed that the purpose of struggle is to weaken rather than destroy landlords. Attacks were to be limited, focused only on the

largest and most recalcitrant members of the landlord class, and were said to be aimed at "winning over" moderate and neutral landlords through making examples of "stubborn ones".[32]

The directive, however, contradicts itself in many ways. Though calling for caution and restraint during struggle, it continually emphasized the need to generate and maintain widespread class conflict. Restraint, when conflicting with this goal, was easily sacrificed. The document, in fact, states that "The party's policy is not to prevent excesses before they happen, but to arouse the masses, and when they have been *sufficiently* mobilized, take quick action to reason with and dissuade them against committing excesses." It discreetly permitted the violation of its three step approach through a loosely defined dichotomy of "left" and "right". Rightism, described as any actions that hampered the mobilization of the masses, was strongly prohibited, while leftism, exceeding the party's goal of weakening rather than destroying landlords, was vaguely limited and defined. Leftist excesses, according to the document, were "unavoidable" when the masses had been mobilized against landlords, but harmless and permitted if they served the purpose of weakening feudal exploitation and generating strong enthusiasm for struggle amongst the "great majority of masses". The directive cared not so much for the adverse consequences of struggle, but focused mainly on whether it could create lasting class wedges between peasants and those struggled. It set no limit on what actions were acceptable in galvanizing the peasant majority into action, the scale of struggle needed for this to happen, or to what degree landlords must be attacked. Cadres were told to always evaluate their actions from the perspective of maintaining popular enthusiasm towards struggle, and were reminded to never stop

attacks until they were certain that the masses had "risen up" and landlords were in no position to strike back.[33]

From the perspective of cadres, the directive is even more ambiguous. Its instructions deliberately criticized cadres for fearing excesses, even while it urges restraint. The document recommends a three step approach only reject it, calling on cadre to do everything possible to stir up momentum for struggle. While party organizers were specifically pushed towards committing leftist excesses, they were blamed for them if such actions failed to generate the necessary class wedges demanded by the party. Even though struggles were to be incited and heavily stage managed by cadres, the directive sought to define them into two types, those stemming from the "willingness and class awareness" of the masses, generating class tensions, and those "deviating from the masses" and forced "savagely" upon society by cadres. Organizers accused of the latter category, officially labelled by the directive as "commandism", were denounced as opportunist, and were branded by the directive as committing a gross "violation of policy principles" that was "absolutely not permitted".[34]

In sum, then, we see that the policy as laid down by the central level of the CCP contained substantial ambiguities around key terms directing class struggle, and conditions and rules for conducting it. As a whole, the directives on class policy indicate a strategy that was open, flexible in its application and roles, and at the same time could also be manipulated in many different ways. These inconsistencies points again to the vital importance of implementation, and the need for a hermeneutic and process-based approach to understand mobilization. The next chapter will clarify this by examining the policy documents emanating from Shandong Province.

Chapter 2. Shifting Left

Moderate Change in Shandong, 1942-44

What course on class struggle did Shandong follow, and in which ways did its policies reflect the larger policy agendas of the CCP? More importantly, how were the ambiguous directions and terms of central directives guiding struggle used by organizers across the province? What do they say about developments in Shandong and CCP policy? Available documents from the provincial level indicate a series of dramatic, conflicting, and often unforeseen changes, beginning in late 1943, which marked a sharp break in land and class policy in the province. Communist policy, prior to this time, appears to have followed a distinctly cautious and moderate line. Though effort towards the policy began as early as 1940 and was declared by provincial authorities to be a "central" priority that must be "firmly upheld" and "completely realized" two years later, reduction did not become a focus of CCP policy in Shandong until the spring of 1943.[35] Internal documents, in fact, indicate a cautious and pragmatic approach, with considerable attention to avoiding excesses. A directive on reduction in May of 1942, for example, placed strong emphasis on finding test cases in specific counties and villages. Reduction work and personnel were to be focused specifically on these areas, and aimed at gathering information for developing appropriate frameworks that could be adapted to other parts of the province.[36] This cautious approach was further articulated by a directive in March of 1943, which recommended a three step formula, advising local organizers to apply reduction initially to only select villages, building strategies that could be flexibly applied to other areas, and to test them on different communities on a case by case basis. Violent struggles were to be carried out only in areas where CCP control was strong, and cadres

were continually cautioned against making too obvious an effort. Reduction was only one step in a larger policy on transforming the countryside, and according to the directive, was to be carried out only to ensure the enforcement of laws on rent and loans. It was also to be carried out in phases, in conjunction with other programs, such as militia building, rural elections and tax reform, as well as education and literacy campaigns.[37]

Provincial documents, in fact, consistently warned against excesses. Though mentioning the party line that excesses were permitted as long as they were "mass-initiated", the 1942 provincial directive continually called for caution towards landlords. Party organizers were told to engage in continual dialogue with landlords, achieve cooperation from "enlightened" landholders, use them to attract moderate elements, and to attack uncooperative landlords only after great efforts had been made to isolate them from the rest of their class.[38] The March 1943 document also advised caution, emphasizing the need to educate peasants before struggle, prevent excessive violence and demands, and not to antagonize landlords.[39] A supplementary directive on mass work on July 17th of 1943 stressed the same points, stating that while Communist organizers must push ahead with reduction, they must be completely neutral in disputes between landlords and their clients, not favouring any side. Local party and governmental organizations were told to use persuasion instead of forcing decisions on landholders, to view provisions of CCP laws as suggestions to be applied flexibly with respect to the productivity of landlords and rich peasants, and to make tenants and labourers respect their obligations to their masters by doing work and paying rent. It called for restraint in raising wages, instructing cadres not to carry out large-scale struggles to avoid violence, and to fit wage increases to the specific economic conditions of different localities. The

directive even gave landlords the right to cancel their contracts with tenants who did not work or pay rent if they could provide sufficient evidence.[40]

The wording of the texts suggests that calls for restraint were more than simple pragmatism, but reflected an overall reluctance on the part of the provincial leadership to engage in radical programs. The provincial documents, in fact, reveal a great deal of hesitancy on the part of provincial leaders towards permitting excess. Early reports and case studies of test areas spoke of reduction not in class terms, but as a need to abide by the outlines of official policy and establish CCP control over and support in the countryside. Explanations of policy often refrained from direct reference to issues of class, portraying reduction primarily as a matter of leadership in winning over the masses. Class conflict, though never absent, was relegated largely to an effect of reduction and party leadership, to be carefully managed to prevent violations. Examples of official restraint can be seen in a report on reduction in the Binhai area in southeastern Shandong, a designated test area in early 1943. The document took issue mainly with "leftism", arguing that cadres were willing overall to carry out the policy. "Leftism" was defined primarily as the failure to prevent excesses. The report was critical towards cadres for allowing struggles to go on uncontrolled, blaming them for not organizing such actions effectively, not exercising effective leadership, being afraid to lead the masses, and in some cases feeling that the best way to win support was to cater to the "backward" demands of the masses. While it lists cases of cadres either being reluctant to engage in struggle or being bought over by landlords, the report puts the focus mainly on preventing excessive acts during struggle. Instances of cadre reluctance towards reduction were described as a sign of not having the proper leadership to curb excesses. Though it

argued that leftism was unavoidable when the masses have been mobilized, the document also stated that,

> Only when this happens can we demonstrate the importance of party leadership. The masses might be "leftist" but cadres cannot be. If we believe that "leftism" is some kind of a divine will from heaven, then what is the use of the party's leadership? Our policy is not to say that "leftism" is not important and to not correct it. Quite to the contrary, it is something that must be taken into consideration and carefully controlled by the party leadership. If this is not followed, it is a policy mistake, and the cause of "leftist" thought. The real danger of "leftism" is not in the masses, but the immaturity and "rear-guardism" of our cadres. Our entire leadership and leadership branches must take up their responsibilities in this area, or else we will not be able to quickly control or stop "leftism" when it occurs.[41]

A summary of reduction work in August of 1943 also fingered "leftism" as the main policy deviation. Like the Binhai report, the document placed an emphasis on avoiding excess, arguing that,

> In organizing the masses in struggle to improve their lives, we must not be so overly careful as to limit their activism. On the other side, however, we must also not allow mass "leftism" to become an excuse for cadre "leftism". In correcting mass leftism, we must view things from the interests of the masses, using our previous experience to dissuade them from committing excesses. We must avoid directing or ordering the masses or discouraging them with criticism, but at the

same time we must also not let struggles go out of hand, or even abandon our principles and encourage the masses towards leftism.[42]

Attitudes towards reduction were not altered even by a directive from the CCP Politburo in October 1st of 1943, written by Mao Zedong himself, which called for the "complete and thorough" implementation of reduction in all CCP-controlled areas by the end of the year.[43] Despite the official emphasis, documents from Shandong reveal little immediate change in policy. A directive by the Shandong sub-bureau on reduction, issued to local levels in conjunction with the central document, in fact recommended few changes, calling for local party members to continue with the general policy of the July 17th directive. It also noted, "While we must focus especially on mobilizing the activism of the masses, we must at the same time be diligent in explaining policy to elite elements, so as to allay any fears of our party and army."[44]

A report by Li Yu, party secretary for Shandong, at the end of the month also bore little difference from previous sources, stating that "leftism" was the main deviation in Shandong. As with earlier documents, Li called for caution, arguing that reduction must only be applied to areas where the CCP had strong control, and that struggles should be focused primarily towards landlords who refused to reduce rent, as punishment for their violation of law. Cadres were instructed to persuade landlords of the benefits of reduction, not to hamper rich peasant production, and to ensure that tenants obeyed the law and paid rent. Li also emphasized the need to distinguish between classes in reduction, persuading tenants not to struggle or demand reduction from small rentiers, and to investigate and correct cases where rent or wages were reduced or increased excessively. Both documents saw reduction primarily as a means of strengthening party

control, rather than outright class conflict. As with earlier sources, Li's primary concern was not whether cadres were willing to carry out reduction, but their inability to mobilize the masses. He accused organizers of either being too authoritarian, imposing orders without sufficiently arousing peasants first or restraining their enthusiasm with excessive stage management of struggles, or letting attacks go out of hand without effective restraints. Cadres were faulted mainly for corruption, behaving in a "bureaucratic" style that left them out of touch with local realities, and failing to take a balanced approach towards reduction.[45]

Li also acknowledged the complexity of Shandong, noting that "the masses" is an ambiguous concept. To satisfy party ideology, Li made a painstaking effort to explain how the masses had to be won by many different measures. Li blamed slow progress on reduction not on the negligence of cadres, but on an overall inability by different party levels to work together and establish strategies that reflected actual rural situations. He saw struggle not as a wild push for widespread class conflict, calling attempts to do so a dangerous "Lisan line", a term which had been used by the CCP to mean the extreme leftist policy line represented by a former party leader, Li Lisan, who according to the party line under Mao Zedong, had led the party to near doom during the early 1930s. Instead, cadres were advised to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different classes in specific situations, make "objective" decisions based on their experience of whether struggle was feasible, and to strike exploiting classes at their weakest points. He also rejected struggle as the sole method for mobilizing support, arguing,

> We must investigate and be aware of the conditions of struggle, to properly assert the party's policy over it, and to be flexible in our approaches. What we must not

do is to follow the example of some areas, where struggle has become some kind of subjectivist canon, and where cadres have carried out attacks as if it were a form of superstitious belief. Some areas are simply pushing for struggle, including fabricating causes and using struggle to solve everything. This is all wrong. The biggest danger to struggle is to see it from a purely doctrinal perspective, without considering reality, and to view struggle as some form of childish play. If struggle is conducted without any legal basis, it is like sending gifts to our enemies and making a travesty of our party's political influence. Some comrades have said, "The only correct way to mobilize the masses is through struggle". This is falsely interpreting and representing policies from above.[46]

Rather than initiate struggle at all costs, cadres were instructed to win over the masses by helping them on all their needs, while channeling these needs towards the party's larger political agenda, and to slowly foster peasant class consciousness by achieving small victories with selectively calculated struggles. Li outlined his approach by saying,

Why must we use many methods to mobilize the masses? It is because the masses are never the same, but made up of many different people, with many different jobs, ages, sexes, demands, class and territorial backgrounds as well as varying degrees of political and class consciousness. The complexity of the masses dictates that we use many methods to organize them. This is necessary and expected. However, we must unite the masses by channeling their interests towards common directions while organizing them. We cannot mobilize the

majority if we do not use many forms of organization, but if we do not link their interests, we cannot demonstrate the mobilized strength of the masses.[47]

Moving to the Left, 1944-49

These assertions were in stark contrast with the later policies of the CCP. Change towards radical reduction was swift and harsh. It began with a report by Li Yu in December of 1943 entitled "What must we do now?" Contradicting all previous documents, including those by himself, Li set a new tone for CCP policy in the province. In a complete shift from earlier calls for restraint, he spoke aggressively to cadres, dictating the demands of the party and creating a mood of urgency for reduction. Rejecting earlier reports, Li emphasized the centrality of reduction through class struggle. He severely criticized cadres for relying too much on education, local elections and tax reform alongside reduction, arguing that the CCP could only succeed through the continuous mobilization of the masses through class struggle to resolve their economic exploitation, declaring that this was the law of mass movements. Li rebuked other efforts, stating that any peasant who was recruited into CCP organizations through anything but the reduction campaign was probably joining unwillingly, and that anyone opposed to struggle would be "opposed by the masses". More than simply pushing for reduction, Li declared it a matter of loyalty to the party, stating,

> How have our party and organizers viewed reduction? Well I can tell you, many party levels have simply skimmed through official directives, making no plans to investigate or carry out reduction, let alone spread the order to their subordinates and the masses. Such actions reflect a dangerous sense of complacency, and represent an act of disloyalty to the party in the strict sense and failure to

implement its policies with dedication. Some cadres even feel that official directives do not concern them, and are afraid to do anything that was not ordered by their immediate superiors. These people have become experts in all talk and no action, foot-dragging bureaucrats deviating from the party centre. They have forgotten the principles of democratic centralism, with the entire party down to all levels serving its centre. Although we can say some of them are simply mistaken in their sense of our organization, what they are doing is tantamount to independence from the party![48]

Reduction also highlighted class conflict, in the new view. Avoiding previous concerns with excess and fairness, Li decreed,

> We must ask ourselves, have we carried out reduction? Are there still cases of landlord resistance? How is interest reduction progressing? Are there many cases of high interest, and are we mobilizing the masses to settle these matters? Are there labourers still being cheated by low wages, and have we raised their wages enough? If the masses have not dared to stand up and settle these issues, why? Is it because landlords and local bullies are secretly blocking such actions? I'll tell you this, many villages have not truly reduced. Many landlords are still violating our laws, by not reducing rent or by using high interest. These are the inherent demands of the suffering masses, and we have not organized them to settle these or any other of their demands. If our comrades do not encourage the activism of the masses in struggle, we will never truly mobilize or organize the majority of them.[49]

Later documents hammered the point home further. In a sharp reversal to the directions previous documents, provincial directives and reports issued after December 1943 took issue endlessly with "rightism," assigning new meaning to the duality between left and right. A directive by the Shandong sub-bureau in July of 1944, for example, declared reduction to be the primary task facing the party, and set a firm deadline for the mobilization of between sixty to seventy percent of all the population in CCP-controlled areas into party and mass organizations by the end of the year. The document placed exclusive emphasis on struggle, accusing cadres of not seeing the inherent class-based and exploitive nature of the rural economy in China, not realizing that conflict between landlords and peasants is "typical," and holding onto an "illusion" that reduction could be settled peacefully. The directive was concerned not with damage to landlords or the limits of such actions, but with whether actions taken during struggle could initiate mass enthusiasm towards class conflict and the CCP. In contrast to earlier documents, it took a vague stance on "leftism," but placed all actions which failed to mobilize peasant enthusiasm into the category of "rightism."[50] On the issue of struggle, the directive deliberately attempted to bypass any limitations on excesses, noting,

> While our party's policy of struggle and unity must become the rule of mass movements, the masses are bound to exceed it. This is unavoidable. However, it is a fundamental mistake to see policy as a form of limiting mass actions. The three/three law is no excuse for avoiding struggle, for viewing landlords and peasants as equal, or for "throwing cold water" on the fire of mass struggle. Since government based on the three/three is to represent the interests of all people, only

by representing the interests of the majority, the struggling peasants and labourers can it survive.[51]

A decision on land issues by the Shandong political committee in November was even blunter in its calls for class conflict, declaring that,

> Rent reduction is based on struggle with the landlord class, because landlords are deeply rooted in the robbery and cruel exploitation of peasants. Until the revolutionary might of the masses has been mobilized to crush their reactionary power, the landlords, with the exception of a trickle of enlightened ones, will never agree to reduction. Only when the masses have triumphed through long and hard struggle will the landlords as a class submit to reduction to preserve their rights to land and ownership, or at most try to oppose our policy through more peaceful and legalistic means.[52]

Complexity of Policy Implementation

Yet, while pushing to the left, the provincial documents after December 1943 still reveal a great deal of hesitancy. Sources from 1944 raise doubts about to what extent provincial authorities had planned the radical stage of reduction, and the degree of control they had over the program. Despite the harsh tone of Li's directive in late 1943, there is little sign of a coherent effort by the province to articulate a clear strategy on class conflict and consolidating mass activism. Attempts to actively enforce reduction did not come until the summer of 1944, and like Li's directive, appeared in a harsh, unexpected and vague fashion. The July Shandong Sub-bureau directive, as well as an order by the Shandong governing committee in August, placed the burden of responsibility primarily

in the hands of party and government officials from the county level and below, who were told to simply mobilize the "greater" masses through struggle on any issues "beneficial" to the development of a large popular movement. The two documents essentially pushed for struggle by any means, giving virtually no instructions on what was acceptable, or even which classes and situations were to be targeted. Local levels were told to achieve "quick results" through struggle, and were required to submit reports of their progress on a monthly basis under the threat of "severe punishment" if they didn't.[53]

Attempts to establish limits to class struggle did not occur until late November, and only after much anarchy. A directive by the governing committee in late December 1944 spoke of widespread upheavals, including rebellion by entire militias in some places, and warned that serious consequences would occur if excesses were tolerated.[54] Later documents, such as a directive by Li Yu in September of 1945, attempted to explain the events of the previous year as a necessary first step in reduction, arguing that the initial hard push was aimed at galvanizing complacent cadres into action, and generating sufficient momentum for the movement.[55] Yet, despite great chaos, provincial authorities never called for a temporary stop to reduction, or openly advocated reconciliation with landlords. Reports in late 1944 and 1945, instead, pushed for the continuation of struggle and its expansion to more areas, but added increasing restrictions that worked against the goal of creating mass support through violent means. A directive by Li Yu in early January of 1945, in fact, gave cadres sufficient loopholes to avoid struggle in many areas. Organizers at the local level were strongly warned against excessive acts, as well as targeting anyone other than landlords, and were told to pursue leniency, pressuring

landlords to confess rather than attacking them outright. They were instructed to always maintain close dialogue with landlords, to attack only the most "exploitive" and "backwards" elements, and to persuade the majority to reduce peacefully rather than through struggle, and maintain a fair standard of living for all members of the elite while economically weakening them.[56]

Both the July and August directives in 1944 called for all levels and branches of the party to be equally involved and coordinated in their actions during reduction, warning that party members and cadres should not see their functions as separate, believing that only some should be involved in reduction and struggle.[57] The system of responsibility for reduction effectively meant that only organizations and individuals, rather than policy, could be blamed. The ambiguous nature of CCP law aimed at protecting the United Front posed even greater pressures. Vague exhortations using law were used both to ignite struggles by blurring boundaries of protection for landlord rights, and as stopgaps when reduction had reached too far. Cadres were often called upon openly to disregard law, but were criticized for lack of respect towards it once excesses had occurred.

My review of CCP central and provincial documents indicates that the communist ideology with its assumptions of the existence of clear divisions between economic classes and the need for class struggle to defeat the landlords and to win over the masses was problematic. Under these assumptions, the local Communist cadres faced the challenge of determining who belonged to which class, who were the class enemies, how severe the struggles should be, and who were the "masses" they should rely upon and work for. Under these assumptions, the CCP carried out the rural reform in one formula:

rent reduction through class struggle. They shifted between left and right from time to time either to satisfy the party ideology or to keep the situation under control. Ideology often over-ruled realistic assessments of the reality.

In the documents, the words right and left were treated differently. Right was always used directly to mean a sympathetic attitude towards and soft actions against the class enemies. However, when the word left was used, it was often in quotation marks. This was first seen in 1943, and then appeared in most of the provincial, Jiaodong and county-level CCP documents. For example, Li Yu, in a summary of the past three years' government work issued in mid-1943, emphasized correcting both "leftism" and rightism. Similarly, a 1944 provincial directive elaborated on the swing between "leftism" and rightism. It stated:

> On the one hand, the rightists forgot their class positions, and dreamed of reduction by peaceful means. They were scared by the "leftism" of the masses, worrying that they would disturb the traditional social order. If the masses were not taking any action, everybody would be in peace. As soon as the masses were moving, they would complain everywhere: "It is too much to the left!", and thus they were in reality becoming the speakers of the landlord class. They did not understand the mass movement under our party's reduction policy: after a long time of feudal exploitation, some "leftist" actions would be inevitable.[58]

Such different treatments of leftism and rightism indicate that what they were against was not really "left", but the so-called "LEFT", since communist ideology regarded themselves as leftists and therefore there should not be anything wrong with being a leftist. The problem is sometimes they would not like to see things go to the

extreme and get out of hand. It was only in this situation that the party wanted to control and stop the "left" tendency. On several occasions, party directives tried to explain that "left" was actually right in disguise. Driven by such ideology, the smarter communists at all levels would know that it was better to be a leftist than a rightist. Such a tendency was pointed out by the report on the Binhai sub-district, which gave a summary of ten months' mass movement. It pointed out that many cadres "would rather be a 'leftist' than a rightist. They felt 'OK' if they were criticized for being too 'left', but would not be content if they were called rightists."[59]

This tendency was not without reason. One's political career was more likely to be ruined by being too right than by being too left, as Li Yu's own career shows. In fact, Li Yu, despite his calls for pushing to the left since late 1943, would ultimately meet the fate of being called a "rightist" in 1947. After he was denounced, Li made a more obvious criticism of the party line. In a letter directed to the central government, mostly defending himself, he rejected the party's policy that if the leftist movement was initiated by the masses and not controlled by the communist leaders, it could be justified and should be tolerated. He pointed out that "it is impossible for the masses to gather in tens of thousands to form the assemblies of struggles. They must have been planned by some party leaders."[60]

These observations reveal several important issues on the process of mobilization in Shandong. While it is difficult to grasp the motivations behind the sudden policy changes in the province, particularly in 1943 and 1944, documents from Shandong indicate the CCP's approach to rent reduction to be shaped not so much by realistic assessments of rural conditions or necessity as by often conflicting urges towards

initiating class conflict and maintaining order amid the chaos generated by it. Though some of these changes had clear ideological overtones, many developments during policy shifts, such as poor enforcement of radical reduction in early 1944, which happened despite heavy rhetoric from provincial authorities calling for the initiation of widespread class conflict, erratic control of struggles late that year, and the contradictory positions taken by senior cadres such as Li Yu over the subject indicate a larger conflict, tension and power dynamic behind policy implementation. What were these effects of these policy contradictions and shifts on local areas? To explore this, I will focus on Rushan in the next chapter.

Chapter 3. The Case of Rushan

Land Ownership and Renting Relationships in Rushan

In what ways did developments in Rushan reflect the assumptions of higher level documents, and their push for violent class conflict? How did the larger shifts in party policy affect the county? Most of all, what do Rushan's development under these forces reveal about the nature of rural society in the area, and how do they reflect on larger trends in CCP mobilization? These questions require an examination of the county's economic background and social composition, and their interaction with policy implementation. Despite its coastal position, Rushan was heavily agrarian. Its modern gazetteer estimates that over 92 percent of the county's total population in 1941 were engaged in farming.[61] Landholdings in the county of Rushan varied greatly and its overall land ownership was not concentrated. Rushan's modern gazetteer, quoting figures that were collected in 1941, put the total ownership by landlords at ten percent of all land in the county, and that of rich peasants at six percent.[62] A small number of large land holders did exist, with some renting a total of one or two hundred *mu* of land in several different villages. Yet it was not uncommon to find villages without landlords. "Large landlord" was itself a deceptive concept, since the availability of land differed greatly across the county. One landlord, for example, was said to have leased three *mu* of land to six tenants, while one in a different case had leased over one hundred to the same number of clients.[63]

All classes in the county rented land, also though tenancy by landlords and rich peasants constituted the bulk of rented land in Rushan, a 1946 report by the Jiaodong sub-

district notes that mid and poor peasants in the area rented over 37 percent of all land under lease. Middle peasants actually rented out more land than landlords, with close to 31 percent of all leased holdings compared to 23 percent leased by landlords.[64] In some villages, poorer segments of society collectively rented more land than the rich. Nanzhai village in north-western Rushan, for example, had lower middle peasants, poor peasants and poor widows renting 32.2 *mu*, outnumbering the 30.9 rented by landlords, rich peasants and upper middle peasants. Available examples, in fact, indicate that class labels were often applied very inconsistently across the county, being applied to equalize economic differences, and varying greatly according to diverse local circumstances. In Qingkoujian village, one of these examples, 7 landlords and 6 rich peasants were said to have collectively rented 118.2 *mu* of land, with each household leasing only around 9 *mu*. Hujiagou village, another case, had 31 "landlords" renting 260 *mu* to 76 tenants, with each renting an average of no more than 8.4 *mu* to two or three clients, comparable to some middle peasants in other locales.[65]

Tenant composition also varied. Communist documents suggest that renting was not common or widespread in many parts of Rushan. A reduction report in 1944 noted that sixty percent of villages in the county had complained that they had an insignificant numbers of tenants, or that matters of rent were not significant issues in their communities. Neither were most tenants completely reliant on renting land for their livelihoods. The Rushan gazetteer, in fact, claims that only 10,000 out of 84,934 households prior to 1949 were landless.[66] This assertion is supported by neighbouring Mouping County's Republican-era gazetteer, which noted that at least 70 percent of the county's population were self-tillers who owned some land.[67]

Rental rates also differed greatly. In many cases, crop rent exceeded 50 percent of total output per *mu*, and often reached 70 to 80 percent or more. Yet in other cases, levels of rent were below 37 percent of total yield. Differences in rent were not confined to geography. Although a 1943 report noted that rent was generally higher in the mountainous northern regions of the county, where land was scarce, later documents noted that two districts, one in the mountains and another near the coastal plain, had some of the lowest rates in Rushan.[68] High rates of rent were not confined to specific classes either. Impoverished widows, for example, often leased their land at rates higher than most landlords, and were tolerated at times by the CCP in these practices, since rent constituted their only means of survival.[69] Neither was rent always an accurate indicator of income. Concerns, in fact, were expressed by a report on reduction by the Rushan county committee in early 1944, which noted that the fixation with rent often ignored alternative means of income by tenants, for instance that some might be growing produce not specified or deducted under lease agreements, such as watermelons.[70]

Issues of rent were also inter-linked with a maze of land variation. Qualities of soil differed in many places. Communist sources classified at least eight different ratings of land in most villages, and in some places as many as eleven, based on their comparisons of their annual output. Lands with higher classification numbers generally received higher rent, and in some cases were allowed by the CCP to retain rates above stated policy due to their exceptional productivity. Yet, this was not always the case. Different villages often set different rates for the same classifications of land, based on land availability, the overall quality of all lands in the community, the distance of certain lands from the village, and personal relationships between the landlord and tenant.

Communist sources indicate that lower qualities of land, especially classes two and three, were the most commonly rented, while higher classes of land, generally scarce, were often reserved for rent to those close to the owner, such as family members and kin. In numerous cases, the rent for lower classes of land actually exceeded that for higher ones. Various landlords within the county, in fact, required tenants to pay amounts rather than percentages, setting the same amount per *mu* for all the different types of lands they had rented, causing tenants with poor quality lands to shoulder an exceptional rent burden.[71]

Effects of Rent Reduction on Rushan

This complex arrangement in land and rent posed many difficulties for the reduction movement. Rent often had to be set differently according to each soil quality, and by a different standard according to the overall land availability, quality and standard of living in each village. In such conditions, reduction according to the 25 or 37.5 percent rules often meant little. Conflict and uncertainties over rates were never settled through official policy. Attempting to standardize rent across the region, sub-district officials in Jiaodong devised a system that established rates at 25 percent of total yield for land types one to three and 37.5 percent for all other lands, with exceptions permitted in certain cases but not exceeding 45 percent of yearly output.[72] This system, however, was not implemented in Rushan until the early months of 1945, and was never officially approved at the provincial level, which continually insisted on not violating the 37.5 percent rule.[73] Rate setting in Rushan's diverse environment, as a result, was left almost completely in the hands of village cadres, whose choices were constantly scrutinized and rejected by senior levels. County authorities continually revised rates in many areas, causing

widespread confusion. Villages that had already devised new rates and even set contracts or returned rent based on them often had to abandon their work and start over again.[74]

It is apparent that the rent reduction had altered the economic situation of landlords and eroded their social standing. All landlords felt the squeeze of low rates, which were often steep and cut deeper after each attempt by the county to adjust rent. Yet, some documents repeatedly noted that gaps in reduction often allowed clever landlords room to evade the policy. Some used the uncertainty over rates to cancel contracts and take back land, or to transfer tenancy agreements from percentage-based to alternative arrangements not covered by reduction laws. Others secretly sold their land in the confusion, gave their plots to poorer relatives for safe keeping, or even pressured tenants into accepting land as loans which could be easily bought back. It was also reported that scheming landlords continually protested the rate changes, arguing that they were invalid. Others haggled endlessly with cadres over the percentage of reduction for their lands, and used the uncertainty to buy time to sell land or switch it to other arrangements. A number even refused to pay tax, stating that the shifting rates were both unfair and bankrupting them. Using loopholes in the reduction campaign, many landlords attempted to manipulate social ties in their favour. Many sought to expand their social domination over peasants by ensnaring or intimidating them into informal agreements that avoided the establishment of contracts, such as sharecropping, as well as additional labour duties for the landlord alongside rent. The absence of clear standards on reduction, in addition, often left cadres confused over reduction, with little legal justification to challenge resisting land owners. Some cadres, themselves small rentiers, also assisted landlords, intimidating tenants into accepting higher rates or alternative arrangements.

These examples of landlord resistance were used by the reports as the reasons for pushing more thorough reduction and relentless struggles. However, it is very hard to judge according to the reports how many such clever landlords there were and how frequently these strategies of resistance were used.[75] Though certain acts against reduction were deliberate efforts to dodge policy, others reflected desperation on the part of some landlords. Some documents, such as the 1943 report and a summary of reduction efforts by the county committee in the spring of 1944 noted other "tricks", such as giving peasants land in exchange for eternal labour services, and agreements in which the landlord allowed peasants not to pay rent during times of hardship, but reserved the right to levy an unspecified amount during good harvests. Landlords also attempted to bring cadres and peasant associations from their own villages into matters concerning land they owned in other communities, using them to cancel contracts and contest rates set by other governments and mass associations. The 1943 report noted that landlords were less afraid of reduction than of the uncertainty of rates set by cadres and continually adjusted by district and county authorities. Large landowners continually lobbied party and government leaders to respect the basic tenets of reduction, arguing that all rent should either be reduced by 25 percent or levelled to 37.5 percent of total yearly yield. A number of landlords even protested low rates by refusing payment from their tenants, saying that the rent, after various adjustments, was worth nothing.[76]

The repeated emphasis on landlord resistance in most of the communist reports also created new effects. Hearing stories of landlord resistance, zealous cadres often enforced reduction through harsh bureaucratic measures, according to the texts. In some villages, cadres and peasant association officers, fearing attempts by landlords to take

back land illegally, simply forbade the termination of contracts under any circumstances, even for legitimate purposes. Measures against landlords were so strict that cadres and peasant associations had virtually taken over the leasing of land in many places. The 1943 report spoke of party organizers literally becoming "second landlords" in some places, deciding rates, who the landlord could rent to, and collecting rent for landlords. In the most extreme cases, decisions on rent were made without any consultation with the landlord, and peasant associations were accused of corruption over the collection of rent. Cadres in a few cases even decided how much land could be held by each individual in certain localities, forcing landlords to sell excess lands and deciding to whom and for how much they could sell. One cadre, for example, blocked the sale of a piece of land by a landlord, calling the deal exploitative, even though, as the document pointed out, the landlord had made an extremely fair offer and promised to return some rent to his tenant with the sale. Some landlords were so intimidated that they were afraid to even discuss the legality of reduction and rates with cadres. One, when asked by county investigators about his land holdings and leasing rates, replied, "Why don't you ask the peasant association head, he runs everything." Another, enraged by the reduction demands, even said to his client, "You tenants have everything now. What else do you want, me to give you some grain in return!"[77]

These issues point to a number of questions over reduction in Rushan. While resistance from landlords had always been the focus of the CCP, it might not have been the concern of many people. Rural communities, on the whole, did not question the morality of rent or how tenants were treated. Tenants, for the most part, were the last to initiate struggle for their economic interests. Peasants who rented often did not constitute

a significant portion of the population in many communities, and in villages where they did the multi-class nature of tenancy often complicated the situation. One of the worst exploiters mentioned in the document, in fact, was an unnamed middle peasant who continually took advantage of his single client over a rented plot of four *mu*. The tenant was forced to farm an additional four *mu* of land for no profit in exchange for renting land, to put manure on the rentier's other lands for no charge, and to do a number of other chores, and was continually threatened with the termination of his lease for demanding a reduction in rent. The report, in fact, expressed uncertainty over such situations, noting that while some rentiers, being landlords and local bullies, must be forced to reduce, others must be left alone due to their class background. Neither could rent struggles attract large crowds. Rentiers generally had few tenants, and rural communities were overall unsympathetic to the plight of those who rented.[78]

The very low degree of relationship between many tenants and their rentiers, in addition, might have impeded reduction. This arrangement, along with the fact that standards of rates were often communally determined, might have discouraged tenants from questioning the legitimacy of rent. CCP reports initially noted that tenants were more likely to be mobilized through issues of personal and local grievance rather than directly with rent. While reduction ultimately initiated open conflict in many places, it was often aimed not towards specific classes, but rent in general, and affected all rentiers. Issues of rent were often not affected by personal relationships between tenants and rentiers, nor did any side appeal to such ties during rent disputes. Attempts to rally tenants along matters of rent, in fact, often stirred up a host of animosities on unrelated subjects. One tenant, Sun Guiyang, for example, was very hesitant to offend his landlord,

who was also his uncle, and was only persuaded to participate in struggle after a long effort of persuasion by Communist organizers. During the struggle meeting, he framed his discontent not in terms of high rent and his uncles refusal to lower it, but rather accused the uncle of personal cruelty and violating his responsibility as an elder, stating that,

> "Uncle, I once opened some fallow land, but you tricked me into selling it to you. I was so poor that that I had to eat tree bark and leaves, and my wife ran back to her family because we were starving. Later I was overjoyed to hear that the relief association was offering people loans, and my wife even came back to me. Then I heard that I needed two *mu* of land of my own as collateral, and I couldn't get the loan because I sold my land to you. You, my uncle, were the head of the local relief committee at that time, and I still couldn't get a loan. How venomous and cruel are you landlords!"[79]

Available evidence suggests that fear of contract termination was often a major issue in the reluctance of tenants to take part in reduction. Tenants were often deeply afraid of the loss of their access to land, and were often willing to do anything to maintain their leases. One landlord, for example, threatened his tenant over reduction by saying, "If you want to reduce your rent, then why don't you stop renting from me! Good people don't rent land, and isn't it just bad to rent from others!" The tenant was so frightened that he not only continued paying regular rates, but also gave back part of the three *mu* he rented to maintain the contract.[80]

Loss of tenancy, however, was not a parochial issue, but reflected the larger sentiments of peasant attachment to the ownership of land. This attachment at times

allowed the CCP to mobilize large numbers for struggle, such as in attacks against creditors and local bullies, some of whom were landlords, who either seized land from peasants outright or manipulated it from them through high interest loans.[81] Yet, such sentiments could just as easily work against the reduction of rent. Reduction did not challenge the legitimacy of ownership; if anything violated it by establishing arbitrary long term contracts which could not be terminated. Landlords often complained bitterly over the establishment of contracts, arguing that it challenged their ownership of their land. Taking advantage of the peasant need for land, some also sought to indenture them into informal services by either giving tenants land or increasing their rented holdings in exchange for long term labour duties.[82]

Reduction, as a result of Rushan's complex environment, was multi-class. The local leadership found that the simplistic party formula of mobilizing the vast majority of the masses against a small number of class enemies just could not fit their situation. They faced a grave task of interpreting party policies and deciding on who should be targeted and who should be protected, as well as the appropriate rent in each individual cases. Resistance to reduction was often fiercest in places where land was not concentrated, and where multi-class tenancy was common. Cadres in some villages, such as Nanzhai, as mentioned earlier, were said to be extremely lax in carrying out reduction. Party members in Hujiagou, a village with small rentiers, were even accused by a document from the Rushan county government of being GMD spies, secretly permitting alternative arrangements and intimidating some peasants into paying higher rents.[83]

From a social perspective, the reduction campaign achieved mixed results between 1942 and 1944. Contrary to the CCP's agenda of uniting peasants through a

common interest in opposing exploitation, and rectifying cadres by making them more in touch with the suffering of common people, reduction was divisive. If the aim of reduction had been to gradually weaken landlords through rent cuts and erode their social standing by forcing resisting large rentiers into submission, its effects were mostly achieved. While resistance from landlords still existed, such actions were rarely direct, and usually small scale, uncoordinated and covert. The reform did to a large degree destroy the local ties and the rule of rural elites. A hierarchy of the communist governing structure was established. If the aim of reduction was to entrench CCP power through mobilizing peasants towards its political and military superiority and absolute control of Chinese society, however, the party might still feel that the goal had not been achieved. This may explain why the CCP conducted continuous class struggles with more and more violence in Shandong.

The Effect of Class Struggle on Rushan

Under the direct supervision of the provincial government, Rushan's rent reduction also saw some dramatic changes by the fall of 1944, moving from right to left. It was the local cadres who had to bear all the blames and were frequently pressured to follow the party line. The questions still remain about what explains this sudden shift in approach. Why did the party leadership, particularly Li Yu, abandon their previous caution over the use of struggle and push for all out social conflict, even at the price of weakening party authority in some places? The reduction campaign, by far, was also creating the same inflexibility in command that many reports had earlier warned against. In addition, why was the pressure placed exclusively on lower cadres from the county and

below? More importantly, why did directives attribute the poor progress in reduction solely to county and lower cadres even when they had previously acknowledged problems in planning and adapting reduction to local conditions?

Whatever the reasons, the consequences were chaotic. A great deal of uncertainty and confusion can be seen in a report on reduction by Gong Mingshan, the head of the county government, in early October of 1944. Written in an apparent hurry to conform to the provincial government's demand for constant reports on the progress of reduction, Gong's report is often vague and full of inconsistencies, but it in many ways reflected the sense of confusion of all levels in the county. Echoing the directions of higher levels, Gong deliberately encouraged the widespread initiation of struggle. Though he still condemned "leftism", arguing that landlords must be both struggled against and reasoned with, and warned against excessive violence, Gong's language clearly indicated a preference towards excess. The document repeatedly called for mobilizing the "greater masses" into "loud" and "widespread" struggle, even as it urged restraint, stating that attacks must be limited only to the worst landlords. While Gong upheld the concept of law, his document suggests that this was only to be a strategic gesture, disguising the party's true intention of encouraging unchecked class violence. On one hand, cadres were instructed to adhere to legal limits, and to win the trust of the people with it. However, bypassing the notion of law, the later sections of Gong's report repeatedly accused cadres of dwelling on the "small points" of rural economic relations while not realizing the "complexity" of exploitation. Local organizers were ordered to go beyond issues of rent and wages, to stir up the masses "without hesitation", and do so by tackling injustice in its "multitude" of forms.[84]

Gong's report reveals many uncertainties. The goals of creating and maintaining a mass movement in the interests of the CCP often conflicted with specific local concerns. Xujiaxu, a village in eastern Rushan, for example, was noted by Gong as not suited for struggle, and had petitioned and received permission from its district authorities to forgo reduction. The village, however, was forced into struggle by a visiting district cadre, who complained that since everywhere else was struggling, they should too. The result was arbitrary attacks on randomly chosen targets, according to Gong. Actions during struggle often did not serve the direct purpose of encouraging mass reliance and participation in party organizations, while the goal of creating and maintaining widespread struggles often ran counter to the reality of many areas. Told to mobilize the majority of the masses for struggle and to achieve quick results, district and local cadres often encouraged and permitted any sort of violent action against the wealthy, giving sanction to anyone willing to carry out such actions. Without clear definitions of injustice or exploitation, cadres were often unable to decide or limit what was acceptable. Gong's report noted widespread grain seizures and outright robbery, often committed by hooligans with little relation to class struggle. In a few places, looters even fought with each other over the division of food and goods. The fact that most labourers were not working in their own communities also created the danger of parochial conflicts. Though reduction was aimed at only the wealthy, Rushan's complex economy meant that middle and poor peasants were often targeted. Gong's report, in fact, indicates that some of the 14 districts within the county had attempted to control attacks on lower segments of society by setting clear standards on reduction rates and increases for all of the classes. Excess was unavoidable even in purely class-based struggles. Cowed by violence, some landlords simply offered

up everything they had, which their tenants and labourers, encouraged towards attacking their masters with no limitations on their actions, were more than happy to accept.[85]

Policy aims and uncertainties over how far reduction should be carried out posed even greater difficulties. Told not to forcibly stop or throw "cold water" on mass enthusiasm, cadres often had no means of restraining excesses, while the notion of permitting "leftism" as long as it was initiated by the "majority of the masses" made them ever more confused. The vague classification of excess as "rightist" behaviour by cadres often meant that lower level organizers were blamed by their superiors for the faults of the policy, but at the same time were forced to continue initiating struggle and do so "without hesitation". Contradictory pressures of arousing but controlling all sorts of conflicts often served to paralyze cadre authority. Wishing to maintain the momentum of struggle and channel it towards the party's interest, county authorities often gave conflicting directions. While Gong's report noted that the county at times attempted to rein in the situation, providing examples of orderly struggles for cadres to emulate, it also suggests that county officials were responsible for some of the excesses. In one case, a district, alarmed by the number of grain robberies, took their case to the county authorities, demanding the right to halt excesses. County officials, however, reluctant to restrain peasant enthusiasm and uncertain as to the degree of excess, did not give them the authority to do so until the situation had developed too far. Though condemning excessive acts, Gong also left conflicting standards on what was acceptable and encouraged, viewing all events largely in a context of generating party support. He was ambivalent towards several small cases of spontaneous peasant action, in which tenants and labourers rose up against their masters without the influence of cadres, stating that all

struggles must be done according to "law" or receive the guidance of party officials. However, he was at the same time ambiguous and even permissive towards excessive CCP-initiated activities that served the party's purpose. Gong, in fact, praised a case in which peasants struggled against and nearly robbed a landlord creditor clean, stealing his property and dividing nearly his entire 50 *mu* of land, noting that attacks such as these could be used to mobilize large numbers of people.[86]

These ambiguities, in the politically charged environment of reduction, were often dangerous for lower cadres. Action and inaction against excesses often offered the same pitfalls. In one case, the head of a village labourers' committee, alarmed by the actions of his members, took his case to the district, arguing that the labourers had gone too far and were extorting incredible sums in wages from a landlord to the point of bankrupting him. The committee head was severely criticized by his superiors, who growled, "We have rules, but if the landlord is "offering" greater wages, how could you not have the people accept it!" The district, in turn, was rebuked in Gong's report for promoting excess. In another case, labourers from Xinjiatuan, a village in south-eastern Rushan, attacked their employer, a landlord from Leijiazhong, a neighbouring village, forcing him to raise their wages, and proceeded to seize and eat his food stores. The village head of Leijiazhong, appalled by their actions, ordered the militia to stop the labourers, igniting a fight in which three workers were injured. The county, in response, "severely disciplined" the party leadership of both villages, cadres from Leijiazhong for doing too much to restrain peasant excesses and those from the labourers' village for not doing enough to stop it. Faced with increasing uncertainty, many cadres simply stopped taking any actions during reduction, allowing excesses to continue unchecked. In one district in eastern Rushan, the

fourth, party authority essentially collapsed, as county authorities at first accused cadres of not doing enough to mobilize the masses and later criticized them for not restraining the struggles.[87]

Had the aim of reduction been to rally the majority over issues of mutual interest, its effects were just the opposite. Despite calls for widespread radical struggle, the results of reduction were varied and erratic. Tenant difficulties were hardly helped by the shift towards radical reduction. Pushes for struggle merely entangled the program with a host of specific and wide ranging issues, creating uneven and often explosive outcomes. Though officially aimed at lowering rent, violent reduction did little directly to support tenants, but complicated the situation and built up pressure for excess. Reports regularly commented on the poor progress over matters of rent, and the unwillingness of tenants to stand up over the issue. Tenant passivity, however, cannot be attributed simply to economic issues, or the weak nature of the lower classes. Labourers, in contrast, were far easier to mobilize. Gong's document, in fact, indicates that party organizers had deliberately attempted to stir rural communities into conflict through mobilizing labourers, describing their actions as the "vanguardism of the masses", and a major force in motivating tenants and other "oppressed" elements towards struggle.[88] While a complex set of factors might have discouraged tenants, labourers were far less limited by such restraints. Most worked in villages outside their residence, and were not constantly subject to the wrath of those in their employed community or its social standards. Workers, in addition, also had a much more face-to-face relationship of dependency with their employers, who, unlike rentiers, often provided them not only with wages, but also with clothing and meals. Tenants, instead, directed their anger mostly at rent-collecting

middlemen, who were not their direct rentiers and unable to terminate contracts, in some cases rising up against them spontaneously.[89] However, labourers were a very small minority in rural society. Rushan's modern gazetteer indicates that there were less than 8,000 labourers out of a population of nearly 400,000 in the county during the 1940s, a population that was far smaller than tenants.

Although mass struggle was meant to unite cadres and radicalize them into widespread class conflict, continual pushes for it all costs, along with the CCP's definition of reduction as a matter of loyalty, only interfered with the capacity of many local party and government branches in carrying out struggle. Strict provisions for maintaining class conflict and accusations of cadre "rightism" often made different levels of the party constantly suspicious over the actions of those below, and made planning, even at the most senior branches of the county, increasingly difficult. Seeking to remedy excesses, Gong, in a follow-up report in late October of 1944, emphasized the need for strengthening procedure and planning before struggle, as well as the establishment of "chairmanship committees", composed of cadres, who could establish a degree of order by allowing peasants to vent their grievances and challenge their oppressors in a court-like fashion, as well as mediate and decree settlements.[90] Yet, such practices were never approved by higher levels, and were quickly discouraged by hesitant officials below, who, following calls from provincial directives to do anything to motivate peasants, were both hesitant to interfere and distrustful of the motives of cadres who attempted to stop excesses. An analysis of the reduction movement by the Jiaodong sub-district in 1945 would later criticize Rushan for these approaches, accusing them of staging "civilized plays", and not seriously motivating the masses towards struggle. Without any choice but

to continue struggle, documents such as the Jiaodong report could only recommend greater adherence to the "mass line" in reduction and education of peasants prior to struggle, without taking into account the actual situations, or the capacity of county organizations to carry out struggle. In what seems like a larger repeat of Gong's document, it accused Rushan both of being too strict in approving struggle in the initial phases, and of poor planning in the later stages.[91]

Inability to make decisions and control excess increasingly frustrated cadres and discouraged them from their work. Growing resentment was reported by a report on reduction by the Rushan party committee in April of 1945. Summarizing developments since November 1944, the document noted widespread resentment amongst party organizers. Discontent was especially strong amongst the higher levels of the party and government. Astonishingly, the report stated that 80 percent of district and 93 percent of county level cadres had "rightist" leanings towards reduction, being either complacent or reluctant in carrying out the policy, passing the buck to others, or even secretly helping landlords. Many cadres at the county and district and county levels were said to have been even actively trying to escape participation in reduction. Cadres in one district thought that meetings in the spring would end the reduction campaign, and became discouraged and sad when they found that it wouldn't. Many also sought to transfer themselves away from reduction duties. Some who had recently transferred from government and political duties to industry and business bureaus often expressed relief that, "Finally, I don't have to be involved in rent reduction anymore!" Though categorizing such cases as rightism and sympathy to landlords, the document revealed some genuine concerns. Cadre opposition came from a variety of reasons, but was often

vocal and defiant. An investigation of 100 county-level cadres who participated in two reduction meetings in early 1945 found that virtually everyone was opposed to the program, and noted a range of deviations:

Cadres:	Those who only wanted to play a supporting role in reduction	Those who emphasized their job was different from the campaign	Those who felt right to complain	Those who believed the campaign had been too radical to keep the united front	Those who were sympathetic to landlords and believed in a peaceful campaign	Those who did not understand what a 25% rent reduction means
Percentage	67.7%	49.4%	16%	28%	16%	36.5%

Many cadres were clearly appalled by excesses. One district cadre was quoted as saying, "If this is about reducing rent, then why do we need to attack so many people?" Another even claimed "Are we so poor that we have to take things from others to spend a better Chinese New Year?" Cadres also complained of the arbitrary nature of the policy, constant criticism, and an inability to do anything right. One district organizer openly expressed his frustration towards reduction, saying in a rectification session that, "When will it ever end! We don't have any problems but the superiors are still pushing for further reduction." Another even expressed sympathy for a landlord, saying "I feel sad for him! He has already reduced but you keep on struggling against him!"[92]

Strains from many sides only added to the chaos, creating a situation that both disadvantaged tenants and built up pressure for reduction and violence. Instead of causing widespread struggle or imposing any order on such actions, the combined effects of radical reduction and cadre resentment often exacerbated the earlier difficulties of CCP organization in the county, producing a fluctuating double effect. Paralysis in control, on

one hand, increasingly fostered excess. While such acts were widespread, party documents suggest that the worst often occurred in areas where CCP control was already strong, where landlords had been humbled by previous campaigns, and where party and government officials were keen on using their bureaucratic power to enforce rent regulations. In the 9th district, one of the areas described in the 1943 administrative affairs report, 171 households were robbed during November and December of 1944, only four of which were actually classified as landlords.[93] The district fell once again into excess in the fall of 1945, when county officials initially accused it of not conducting enough struggles, and later rebuked it for allowing attacks to go out of control, causing, according to one report in early 1946, many deaths and injuries.[94] Yet, cadre weariness and the retreat of many in all levels of the county from reduction often left resistant local organizers free to hamper the reduction campaign in other areas, and allowed landlord abuses to go unchecked. Taking advantage of the confusion and damage from the excesses, manipulative landlords also spread rumours of a GMD return and a CCP plan to eliminate tenancy and distribute land equally, which often frightened small rentiers and land holders as much as tenants, creating further resentment.[95]

These issues continually reinforced each other, adding to both cadre difficulties and the increasingly explosive situation. The effects of excess and landlord intimidation in some cases increased the burdens of tenants, but also radicalized them. Though initially silent, tenants increasingly and often violently took issue with rent levels by the spring of 1945. Many demanded not only lower rates, but also punishment of rentiers for all their abuses over the matter. Tenants often demanded retribution from landlords for a variety of rent abuses, including compensation for rate hikes before the implementation

of reduction, as well as the reinstatement of leases that were terminated prior to the start of the policy in 1942. Some at times even vented their rage on resistant cadres. In one village, enraged tenants stormed into a landlord's house after seeing some cadres walk into it for dinner, threatening to attack them and shouting "You're selling out our interests!" Such violence further complicated the situation. Incited tenants often attacked rentiers of all classes, with the April 1945 report noting violent actions even against poor peasants who leased land in some places.[96] Uncertainty over rates and adherence to the mass line often led cadres to do whatever enraged tenants wanted, reducing rent in some cases to as low as 10 percent of total yield. Despite its goal to reduce rent, the county found itself increasing it in many places by 1945 in order to ensure maintain the survival of many landlords and other rentiers. Paralysis, continual pushes from above, increasingly radicalized tenants and the opportunism and personal animosities of some individuals and cadres created an often repeating pattern of excess. While expressing discontent at the progress of reduction in some places, the Jiaodong report noted many cases of "excessive struggle" during the fall of 1944. It cited some 122 cases of grain robbery and livestock theft, with 540 pigs alone killed, 62 cases of beatings resulting in injury, and dozens of other incidents in the county during 1944. In some places, struggle victims were left to freeze in the cold, or forced 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, often causing injury.[97] Similar excesses occurred in 1945, causing lynching, beatings, suicides and many other bizarre incidents, such as victims having their beards pulled and a landlord forced to lick his henchmen's buttocks.[98]

What were the results of reduction? Despite widespread anarchy, the policy did achieve some positive results. A report on reduction in March of 1946 noted that some 27,299 peasants had been recruited into mass organizations in a six month period alone, and that more than sixty percent of inhabitants had been mobilized into various CCP associations in close to a quarter of all villages in the county, with another half close to reaching that number. In a number of places, measures geared towards specific local conditions had won considerable support. In one village, where 58 out of 61 households rented and some 16 persons were reported to be beggars, rent reduction and the sale of lands by bankrupt rentiers had allowed virtually everyone to become middle peasants. Villagers continually praised the CCP, and even posted pictures of Mao Zedong in their houses.[99]

Yet, the document revealed many doubts about the efficacy of the mass organizations and their loyalty to the party's agenda. While increasing the penetration of party organizations into society, reduction did little to foster cohesion or unity amongst cadres, and if anything worsened it. The document's description of reduction revealed a great deal of inflexibility amongst lower levels, as well as a general distrust and fear of their superiors. Most cadres were unwilling to take any action over the matter unless given specific orders, and were incredibly reluctant to carry out struggle. Many were said to be "afraid" to engage the masses, and it was only after three extensive pushes by the county government that reduction was carried out in 1945. Rather than becoming radicalized, cadres often behaved erratically, merely attempting to follow what they thought was the policy and greatly uncertain about what it really was. Many were greatly afraid of excess, focusing their attention only on the worst cases of landlord abuse.[100]

Others, however, were increasingly leftist and beyond the control of their superiors, stating that if the goal of reduction was to mobilize the masses through struggle, anything should be permitted. As at earlier times, large numbers of cadres were also reluctant to exercise authority over struggle or restrain excesses. Some, in fact, simply acted like they were trying to please superiors, suddenly jumping in to struggle at official urgings, and only carrying out a select number to show that they were engaged in carrying out reduction.[101]

Was this perhaps what Li Yu had tried to warn about in his September 1945 report, and the intention behind his call for senior cadres to give their subordinates instructions for future struggle rather than blaming them for policy mishaps, as well as taking responsibility for excesses in order not to discourage their enthusiasm? Did he realize the effects of sudden policy pushes, and the potential inflexibility they might cause? Perhaps, but, it is unclear to what extent his directions were followed in the confusion of Rushan. Documents in 1946 continually noted the inability of cadres to understand the report. Sources from Rushan also raise questions over the reliability of many cadres, and their legitimacy in the eyes of peasants. Beyond simply attacking the rural elite, reduction was rapidly increasing and altering the cadre force. The 1946 report on the reduction campaign in Rushan noted that thousands of new cadres had been recruited between September 1945 and the March of 1946 alone, with some 500 rising to higher positions, and over the same period, 930 cadres, party members and mass association officers had been kicked out for unreliability and opposition to reduction. However, this shift did little to improve the quality of party and government organizers. Sudden recruitment, combined with the expansion of cadre power through reduction and

the confusion of struggle only served to increase corruption. The report noted many abuses, including village cadres suddenly getting rich off landlord and rich peasant property, corruptly seizing goods, and even opening a restaurant with public grain. Many cadres, often young men, also spent much of their time over personal matters rather than reduction, using their knowledge of CCP law to get themselves out of arranged marriages and marry others. One district cadre even ordered an entire village to fish for him during a reduction drive, splitting some of the gains with peasants and feasting on the rest.[102]

While rural administration was to be reformed through the mobilization of the "majority masses" and the replacing of unpopular and unreliable leaders, evidence from Rushan suggests quite a different picture in many cases. Rushan's documents, instead, indicate the courting of selected small groups by the CCP. Gong's first report, for example, hints that the party sought to mobilize labourers and channel them into one key organization, the militia, which provided the basis of party power over the countryside. Two prominent examples, in addition, show a greater dominance of personal and group rivalry, as well as actions from senior levels over popular participation. One, described by Gong's report as a case of the poor "standing up" against "bad elements", involved a tussle between the militia and local cadres in Nanhuang, a village in eastern Rushan during the fall of 1944. According to the report, members of the militia had long dominated the village, beating up peasants, serving as guards for a local opium den, and constantly disrupting party activities by intimidating cadres. Seeking to rectify local government and encourage popular participation in it, the village and party branch heads, Gong claims, responded with numerous attempts to reorganize the militia, inserting peasant activists to replace old militia members. The militia, however, managed to gain

the upper hand each time, expelling the new members. They then struck back, hatching a plan to force the cadres into turning 9 *mu* of public land, which the militia had been allowed to farm as part of their job, into their personal property. The cadres, however, learned of their plot beforehand. They confronted the militia members, firmly rejecting their demand. Enraged by this, the militia "threatened" the cadres, saying that they could not "suffer" any longer, and offered to turn in their weapons and quit. The village and party leaders were "deeply frightened" by such gestures, and had all but given up in their efforts, until Qiao Shuguo, a member of the militia who had been kicked out by his companions for his "activism" offered to help. Assisted by Qiao, the cadres took up the militia's offer, an act that compelled militia members to surrender their weapons and disband. Then, in a sharp turn of events, the cadres secretly organized a new militia the next day, composed mostly of Qiao's associates, and held a village meeting to denounce "bad elements" the same evening. Members of the old militia attempted to disrupt the meeting, but fell into a trap by the new force that saw them chased off and their leaders arrested. Both sides then appealed to district authorities the next morning, with the cadres exposing the militia's crimes and the remaining militiamen arguing that they were too afraid to surrender. The case was finally settled when the district offered the militia pardon in exchange for surrender.[103]

This story raises several questions. It seems odd that the militia, having fought so fiercely to keep their power, would challenge the cadres by offering them exactly what they wanted, disarming and disbanding, and then actually comply with it when asked. Gong's one-sided view in favour of the cadres and his brushing up of contradictory evidence also raises doubts about the bias of senior levels over this incident. Regardless

of the militiamen's actual guilt, their downfall hardly constituted mass mobilization. Neither side in the story was clearly popular. Despite the alleged brutality of the militia, the two cadres were not able to achieve support by capitalizing on popular discontent, or to develop a base of sympathizers to confront the militia. Peasants in Nanhuang, in fact, were said to have been reluctant to come to the final meeting, and many had left after the militia were apprehended. The cadres finally succeeded not by winning the cooperation of the majority, but through the help of a former member of the group they sought to remove, whose background was dubious at best.[104]

Personal tensions and the imposition of government from above are even more pronounced in the case of Yu Fangyi, a disgraced village head in Zhougezhuang village. The 1946 report accused Yu of being a saboteur, having long ties with the Yiguandao secret society, and using his position to instigate public discontent towards the CCP. The report notes that Yu had been arrested in 1943 for attending a meeting of the society, but was released due to lack of evidence proving that he was working against the party. Reinstated shortly after his release, Yu, according to the document, began to subvert cadres and party members in his village, inserting Yiguandao members into party and government posts, and used selective benevolence to deceive the masses, making them indifferent to "oppressive feudal forces". Yu's downfall came in late 1945, when he was accused by the head of the village's peasant association of stalling and sabotaging an anti-local bully campaign. Both sides accused each other of mischief, with the relief association head calling Yu a traitor, while Yu alleged that the association head was using the campaign to expropriate seized property and goods. Yu and his accuser took their case to the county government itself, which stalled for a long time over it and only

ruled against Yu and arrested him after uncovering his previous record.[105] Though described as yet another case of reforming village administration, the event had a clear personal element. Yu, according to the report, had been a longtime rival of the association head. Though accused of treason, he was noted as a widely popular character. Yu's opponent, in contrast, was described by the document as impulsive, bitter tempered, being driven by Yu's deceit towards "bureaucratic behavior", cruelty towards villagers, and "mismanaging" the division of seized goods from struggle. Yu's arrest touched off a series of events that would radically shake up the village. Outraged by his incarceration, hundreds of villagers from Zhougezhuang traveled to the county seat and demanded Yu's swift release. Sympathetic cadres and the village militia took things even further, intimidating supporters of the peasant association head and blocking the campaign against bullies. The county reasserted control only through dispatching large numbers of the district militia to Zhougezhuang, disarming the local militia, replacing most party and government officials in the village, and establishing a new administration that favored the association head. Tensions in the village were aroused shortly after, when villagers accused the association head of using the anti-bully movement to attack and seize property from Yu's supporters. These actions, the report notes, caused resentment amongst the "middle" segments of society, which formed a significant element of Yu's support. Taking advantage of the situation, Yu's sympathizers attempted to infiltrate the new party and militia organizations, causing the county again to dispatch the district force. County officials finally resolved the situation by taking over the village, completely running it for weeks, and setting up a totally new government and party structure. The county then turned to Yu. Unlike many other victims of CCP campaigns,

Yu was not publicly struggled against. He was instead made to read a confession to the village confessing guilt in organizing a "counter-revolutionary" organization, his fate then put to public debate, and was finally given a relatively light sentence of one year in prison.[106]

To what extent was Yu guilty of the charges against him? As with the case of the militia, the description of his downfall leaves many things unclear. Though accusing him of subversive activities, the report gives little evidence of him orchestrating any sectarian activities, or of him remaining in Yiguandao following his arrest in 1943. Neither does it link him to any class issues. Attacks against Yu's supporters, in fact, easily alienated many in the community, forcing the county government to take a more planned and cautious approach. Though Yu and his associates were accused of being "local bullies", it is also clear that he was very popular. The 1946 document, in fact, even expressed regrets over the handling of the affair, noting that the county should have tried to undermine Yu slowly instead of arbitrarily arresting him, and either transferred the peasant association head away from his job or kept his actions under a tight leash rather than allowing him to rise to a position of power.[107] The county, instead, removed Yu more out of his widespread popularity and control over the village than for any specific misbehavior. In fact, there is little to suggest that Yu opposed the CCP other than blocking the anti-local bully campaign controlled by the peasant association head, which, in light of his rival's later activities, might have been aimed at undermining Yu and his supporters. It is also possible that Yu, perhaps unwittingly and not realizing to consequences, was attempting to aggrandize his control over Zhougezhuang at the expense of the party, which, combined with his previous history, led county officials to become suspicious of him. In

any case, Yu's example, along with that of the militia, illustrates a much more coercive and imposed effort in administrative reform.

These developments are a further reflection on the importance of policy implementation, as well as the designation of roles and emphases in documents and their impacts. Rushan is in many ways a larger window into the tensions, conflicts, and personal interests behind larger CCP policies, its events heavily shaped by larger trends in Shandong. While developments in Rushan cannot be separated from the county's complex background and social context, policy implementation was clearly a driving force in the course of its mobilization. Difficulties in implementing directives from above, combined with attempts by individuals to interpret and fit their interests and often incompatible situations into the conflicting frameworks and emphases of these texts, more than larger policy aims or the impact of any social forces, was the primary motivation for many events, and the main influence on policy outcomes in the county. I will address the larger implications of these issues in the next and final section of my thesis.

Conclusion

What does my examination of Rushan County reveal about the nature of CCP mobilization and the basis of the CCP victory? From a larger point of view, Rushan's development and history raises many challenges to the wider understandings on Communist expansion and mobilization. While Western scholarship since Chalmers Johnson has emphasized the importance of the Sino-Japanese war in Communist success, in allowing the party room to manoeuvre and to evade GMD persecution, Rushan's case shows quite a different picture. Although Japan's invasion did provide the CCP opportunities for expansion, the county was only acquired after an almost five-year struggle, which saw the Communists triumph mainly through the use of military means against their Nationalist rivals. In contrast to the work of Wou, Chen and Esherick, which have consistently highlighted the manipulative aspects of CCP policies and its ability to slowly destroy potential enemies through a mixture of coercion and courtship, Rushan's history indicates a greater reliance on force than on cooperation and manipulation, against both the GMD and local elites. In fact, events in the county since 1943 suggest that no major attempt was made to maintain the United Front, and landlords were constantly subject to attack and excess, even during non-leftist phases. More importantly, though it is possible that Rushan might not be representative of developments in Shandong and the rest of China, its development suggests a strong coercive aspect in CCP policy both leading up to and during the Civil War.

From a local perspective, the county's history, more than anything, demonstrates the importance of process. Rushan's example, in fact, cautions against understanding mobilization through set formulas of interpretation. Rather than a coherent and adaptable

strategy geared towards local conditions, events in Rushan reveal mobilization to have been a series of poorly devised policy pushes, shaped more by the conflicting ideological agendas of higher levels and the effects of the radical movement they generated. Contrary to some, such as Odoric Wou, who have emphasized the centrality of party organization in "stage-managing" peasants towards revolution, developments in Rushan indicate that mobilization in the county was more often the result of momentary collapses in political authority and the inability of local levels of the party and government to assert control than any calculated action. Neither were senior levels of the party content to leave mobilization in the hands of local organizers, or to allow peasant support to be built up according to any moderate, step-by-step approaches in tune with rural traditions and realities. Instead, provincial and central documents from the 1940s show an increasing dissatisfaction with the progress of policy implementation and the actions of low-level cadres, and a preference for sudden, all-out class-based mass movements over cautious state-building and political consolidation, even at the cost of damaging the very structures of administration the party had sought to impose on society.

All this serves to highlight the coercive and often fragile nature of CCP rule. Documents from Rushan reveal mobilization to have been an authoritarian, imposed and top- down process that often alienated both local organizers and the wider society in the county at large. The CCP suffered not only because of the radical nature of its policies, but also because of the ways in which it attempted to enforce its social agenda, as well as the inherent distrust of lower-level cadres evident in its implementation frameworks. Though it is not clear whether such distrust was genuine, was part of an effort to jump-start the party's radical agenda, or reflected an attempt by provincial levels to divert

attention away from themselves during power struggles and policy disputes, it placed considerable difficulties in the way of carrying out the policies. While works by Chen and Pepper have stressed the CCP's ability to establish control and neutralize opposition through the skilled manipulation and polarization of existing social tensions, using them to both divide communities and orchestrate rural inhabitants towards the party's larger goals, Rushan's case shows the CCP's efforts to initiate class struggle to have been an often difficult and uncontrolled process, with the party stumbling due to bureaucratic constraints and the county's difficulties in organization. Such attempts did sharpen many social tensions in the county, but did so in an uncoordinated way that in fact contributed to the party's difficulties in establishing policy cohesion and widespread support.

Policy pushes, though laying the foundation for a CCP state capable of mobilizing large numbers to its radical agenda and war goals, also planted the roots of widespread resistance to the party. The emphasis on class struggle, while an effective tool for establishing party structures across the county, was also highly divisive. Continuous attempts to push class conflict in Rushan's complex environment did not unite communities but exacerbated tensions between individuals and groups. While struggle did achieve cooperation by the majority in most villages, such support was often artificial. Though some clearly benefited, pushes towards class conflict made virtually all groups equally vulnerable, and highlighted personal, particularistic and other tensions in society. Peasants supported the party out of fear, both of its policies and of each other. While fear fostered compliance, it also led to increasing distrust and uncertainty over the party's goals, which ultimately exploded into anger as struggle reached its highest point.

The fragility of Communist rule is most evident in resistance by cadres. Policy pushes, ironically, caused the greatest damage to the very persons charged with carrying them out. Though meant to create a cohesive, unified Leninist state apparatus, class policies did just the opposite, sowing the seeds of dysfunction and collapse in the party structure. Pressures for struggle, whether intentional or haphazardly pushed down, continuously challenged cadre authority, causing periods of paralysis in control, while subjecting cadres to criticism for the excesses resulting from the breakdown of authority. Class conflict increasingly eroded cadre initiative, creating absenteeism and a growing sense of discontent with official policy, which became more and more manifest as class struggle reached radical points. The absence of clear guidelines on class struggle, combined with the great authority entrusted to lower levels and the growing amounts of undistributed property gained from attacks on the wealthy, only enhanced the selfish side of cadres, breeding corruption and abuses of authority. Flaws in policy, confusion in policy implementation and growing discontent, rather than strengthening cadre cohesion to larger party aims, often made them more connected to their own backgrounds and ties within their communities. Radical policies, more importantly, broke down effective communication between different levels of the party and government, eroding trust between superiors and subordinates. In the case of Rushan, the decline of trust led to continual second guessing by lower levels over the intentions of policy, angry displays of defiance and constant attempts by those below to interpret policy directions in ways that would shift damage away from themselves and their communities, which in turn prevented the effective implementation of any party agendas.

These observations, as a whole, underscore the importance of viewing CCP mobilization as a process, seeing developments not in terms of static or excessively theoretical interpretations, but as a fluid, conflicting and constantly shifting series of events, influences, consequences and outcomes. To better understand this process, I offer several directions for future study. One of these is the importance of the inner politics behind mobilization. Rather than over-emphasizing the flexibility and pragmatism of CCP policy, we must consider the various agendas behind the party's socio-economic programs, the interactions and rivalry between these elements, and their effects on local areas. In the case of Rushan and Shandong, ideological concerns and worries over the practical implementation of the party's radical agenda were in clear confrontation. Clashes between the two in the larger policy direction would shape the course of the county's developments and the overall outcome of its social mobilization.

It is also necessary to examine the tensions between different levels of the party. Future studies must analyze the active process of policy implementation, channels of communication between various levels, how they functioned and shaped the implementation of Communist programs, and the barriers hampering effective contact between the different parts of the party and government structure. These include the gaps in perception and mindset between party leaders, bureaucratic and ideological impulses shaping their decisions, ways in which directives were communicated and enforced, the extent of consultation and debate permitted between various levels over policy, and how leaders on different planes of the CCP power structure attempted to impose, resist and renegotiate policies through the process of implementation. Future studies, in addition, must also analyze the impact of policy shifts and implementation on cadres, how these

shifts shaped the wider bureaucratic system they worked in, and the specific behaviours in policy implementation and administration fostered by such shifts.

In studying mobilization from a local perspective, researchers should also refrain from viewing peasant behaviour according to overarching interpretations of structural constraint, subservience to authority or rebelliousness, overstating the coherence and inward nature of rural relationships and associations, or viewing them according to a single framework. Rushan, in fact, raises many challenges to such assumptions. While the county's complex environment certainly did little to spark revolution or foster the CCP's class-based agenda, it did not blunt the party's excessive policies either. It is interesting to note that the traditional elite in Rushan for the most part failed to generate any large-scale or even open resistance to the CCP, despite the continual periods of violence, collapses in party authority and widespread discontent, as well as the absence, since the early days of Rushan's conquest of any serious efforts to woo them or uphold the United Front. Nor could they effectively appeal to any local or particularistic ties to defend their social status or economic interests. Resistance to Communist policies, though often widespread, was never powerful enough to prevent the party from implementing its misguided programs to the extreme, or to generate any collective unity, even in the many villages against the CCP's agenda. Contrary to Wou, the web of social relations in the county, though constantly present, asserted no unified influence on the violent and often sudden imposition of Communist reforms, despite the chaotic ways in which they were carried out. Specific intersections of village ties and rural beliefs did constrain the CCP's efforts at popular mobilization on some issues, but at the same time also benefited the

party's goals on others, such as wage increases for farm labourers and changes in loan practices.

CCP policy, in fact, was often a source of sustained resistance, by both generating sufficient discontent across society in general and constantly weakening the party's control in many places. More importantly, the CCP's strategy was increasingly dividing society, driving communities and individuals apart from their traditional ties while providing no new forms of unity. This cautions us against over-generalizing the role of rural relations in Communist mobilization, and again stresses the importance of viewing the CCP's relationship with the countryside as an interactive process. Future studies should avoid singular, over-arching interpretations of rural relationships, but should view them as separate and mutually interacting, yet at the same time also contradictory and conflicting. It is also important to view these relationships in practice, exploring their connections with CCP programs, how individuals at specific instances might have appealed to specific ties in their society, and the mutual interactions between the party's agenda and existing social structures and bonds. In doing so, I recommend the use of hermeneutics and other theories in the critical tradition of analysis.

All this points to the importance of breaking through existing frameworks for understanding CCP mobilization and success. Historians on the subject should critically evaluate and transcend larger understandings behind the Communist rise to power, and view developments from all possible alternative angles, including localized and process-based perspectives. Rushan is only one example, and a rather simple case study, since its relative security from a military point of view obscures many larger developments in CCP mobilization across Shandong and the rest of China. However, its developments

point to larger policy influences in the province that cannot be ignored. Significant new research is needed to re-evaluate CCP mobilization and the party's inner developments from a variety of angles, contexts, and environments. My study hopes to be a start in better understanding one of the greatest and most complex developments in both Chinese and larger human history.

End Notes

[1] This statement comes from *Shandong renmin zhiyuan jiefang zhanzhengshi*, (The Shandong people's contributions to the Liberation War) a major compilation published in 1991 under the auspices of senior officials such as revolutionary Marshal Xu Xiangqian, and purporting to be the first study on the contributions of the rural people in China. Despite this, the book devotes little attention to the actual motivations of peasants, which are in many ways obscured by the work's heavy emphasis on party policy and its effects in mobilizing support. Wang Dongming, *Shandong renmin zhiyuan jiefang zhanzhengshi*, (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1991), 47.

[2] In fact, Philip Huang, a senior Chinese-American historian of the rural economy in modern China has noted that tenancy and the concentration of land were especially low in North China and the Yangtze delta, both of which were key areas of CCP activity, as well as major centers of mobilization from 1937 to 1949. See Philip C. C. Huang, "Rural Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution: Representational and Objective Realities from the Land Reform to the Cultural Revolution" *Modern China*, Vol. 21. No. 1 (1995): 114-116.

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

[4] Mark Selden, *The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 1-18, 208-276, 277-278.

[5] Feng, Chongyi and David Goodman, "Explaining Revolution", in *North China at War: The Social Ecology of Revolution, 1937-1945*, comp and ed. Feng Chonyi and David Goodman (Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 2000), 7-8.

[6] Skocpol, in her work, argues that revolutions in agrarian societies are the result of the breakdown of state and elite control over the countryside due to war or economic crisis, resulting in rural anarchy. Under such situations, Skocpol argues, revolutionary groups can supplant the existing state and elite by imposing its own state and economic structures on rural communities. However, Skocpol contends that successful revolutions also depend on the ability of peasants to take collective action, and the degree of solidarity between them. In the case of China, Skocpol asserts that state and elite control began to break down after the death of Yuan Shikai, when power became fragmented, with no government fully able to assert firm control over the countryside. Elite control, Skocpol asserts, also began to collapse after the fall of the Qing dynasty, when the traditional Chinese gentry elite lost their social status and respect as the upholders of the Confucian tradition, and often found themselves unable to work with more modern-minded Republican governments. However, Skocpol argues that state and elite power was still strong enough to contain the CCP prior to 1937, because Chinese peasants lacked the potential for collective action. The Japanese invasion, Skocpol contends, allowed the Communists to expand by further eroding state and elite power, and spared them from persecution through the United Front agreement. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 115-117, 236-262.

[7] Elizabeth Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 208-247; Odoric Y.K. Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses: Building Revolution in Henan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 371-386.

[8] Chen Yung-Fa, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 500-517; Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 429-436.
[9] Ralph Thaxton, *China Turned Right Side Up* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 220-233; *Salt of the Earth: The Political Origins of Peasant Protest and Communist Revolution in China*, (London: University of California Press, 1997), 319-332.
[10] Joseph W. Esherick, "Deconstructing the Construction of the Party-State: Gulin County in the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region" *China Quaterly*, 140 (1994) 1052-1054, 1077-1079; "Revolution in a 'Feudal Fortress': Yangjiagou, Mizhi County, Shaanxi, 1937-1948," *Modern China,* 24. 4 (1998): 339-377 (reprinted in *North China at War: The Social Ecology of Revolution, 1937-1945* comp and ed. Feng Chonyi and David Goodman, (Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 2000), 80.)
[11] Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism*, 2-4.
[12] Wou, 374-375; Thaxton, *China Turned*, 222-223; *Salt of the Earth*, 199-202.
[13] Esherick, "War and Revolution: Chinese Society During the 1940s," *Twentieth Century China.* Vol. 27 No. 1 (2001): 1.
[14] Elise A. Devido, "The Survival of the Shandong Base Area: External Influences and Internal Conflicts" in Feng and Goodman, *North China at War*, 173-177.
[15] James Z. Gao, "From Rural Revolution to Urban Revolutionization: A Case Study of Lu Zhongnan" *Journal of Contemporary China,* 10. 27 (2001): 235-236.
[16] Xiang Lanxin, *Mao's Generals: Chen Yi and the New Fourth Army* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), 135.
[17] Wang, *Shandong renmin zhiyuan jiefang zhanzhengshi,* 123, 179.
[18] Zhonggong Shandong shengwei dangshi yanjiushi, *Zhonggong Shandong difangshi* (Local History of the Shandong Communist Party) (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1998), 149-153.
[19] Wang, *Shandong renmin,* 95, 154.
[20] Wang, 164; Zhonggong Yangtai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji yanjiu weiyuanhui, "Jiefang zhangzheng shiqi Jiaodongqu de tudi gaige yundong" (Land reform movement in the Jiaodong district during the war of liberation) in *STG*, 717.
[21] Shandong sheng Rushanshi difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Rushan shizhi* (Historical Records of Rushan City) (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1998), 177-179.
[22] Calculated based on sources in: Shandong sheng Rushanshi difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Rushan shizhi*, 230-231, 276-277.
[23] Rushan shi danganju, <http://www.rushan.gov.cn/ju/dan/jggk>
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[25] J. L. Ellis, *Teaching From Understanding* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1998), 27.
[26] Smith, "Hermemeutic Inquiry," 198-203.
[27] Mouhai xingshu/Gong Mingshan, "Jiangai xunbao" (Report in response to reduction reforms: September 2nd to September 30th), 10 October 1944, SDPA, 31-1-221-4.

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[29] Zhonggong zhongyang, "Guanyu kangri genjudi tudi zhengce de jueding" (Decision Regarding Land Policy in Anti-Japanese Liberated Areas) in *Shandong de jianzu jianxi*, (Rent and Interest Reduction in Shandong) (referred hereafter as *SJJ*) comp and ed. Shandongsheng danganguan and zhonggong Shandong shengwei dangshi yanjiushi, (Beijing, Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1994), 30-33.
[30] Zhonggong zhongyang, "Guanyu kangri genjudi tudi zhengce de jueding", 30-32.
[31] Zhonggong zhongyang, "Guanyu ruhe shixing tudi zhengce jueding de zhishi" (Regarding How to Implement the Decision Regarding Land Policy in Anti-Japanese Liberated Areas) in *SJJ*, 38.
[32] Zhonggong zhongyang, "Guanyu ruhe shixing tudi zhengce jueding de zhishi", 39-40.
[33] Zhonggong zhongyang, "Guanyu ruhe shixing ", 39-41.
[34] Ibid, 39-40.
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[38] Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, "Guanyu jianzu jianxi gaishan gugong daiyu gongzuo buchong zhishi," 62.
[39] Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, "Guanyu yijiu sisannian qunzhong gongzuo de zhishi", 96.
[40] Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, "Guanyu yijiu sisannian qunzhong", (Supplementary Directive to Mass Work in 1943) in *SJJ*, 127-128.
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[42] Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, "Wunian gongzuo zongjie ji jinhou renwu" (Summary of Five Year's Work and Our Future Task) in *SJJ*, 136.
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[46] Li Yu, "Liunianlai qunzhong gongzuo gaikuo zongjie", 123.
[47] Li, "Liunianlai", 113.
[48] Li, "Muqian jiujing yinggai zuo shenmo" (What Must We do Now?) in *SJJ*, 180-181.
[49] Li, "Muqian jiujing yinggai zuo shenmo" 182.

[50] Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, "Qibajiushi yue qunzhong gongzuo buchong zhishi" (Directive Regarding Mass Work in July, August, September, and October 1944), in *SJJ*, 192.
[51] Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, Qibajiushi yue qunzhong gongzuo buchong zhishi," 185-186.
[52] "Shandongsheng dierci xingzheng huiyi tudi zuzhi zongbao jiegao (caogao)" (Rough Draft of the Summary to the Second Provincial Administrative Conference's Report on Land Issues), in *SJJ*, 259.
[53] Shandongsheng xingzheng weiyuanhui, "Guanyu chajian gongzuo de xunling" (Directive Regarding Reduction Work), in *SJJ*, 199.
[54] Shandongsheng xingzheng weiyuanhui, "Guanyu juti shixing bashi xunling de jueding" (Decision over the Actual Implementation of the August 1st Directive), in *SJJ*, 287-288.
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[57] Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong fenju, "Qibajiushi yue qunzhong gongzuo buchong zhishi", 188-191; Shandongsheng xingzheng weiyuanhui, "Guanyu chajian gongzuo de xunling", 196-199.
[58] Li Yu, "Muqian jiujing yinggai zuo shenmo", 180.
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[61] Ibid, 139.
[62] Ibid, 354.
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[71] Mouhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisinian"; "Yijiu sisannian xia bannian"

[72] Jiaodong xingshu, "Guanyu chajian gongzuo baogao" (Report Regarding Reduction Work), in *SJJ*, 422.
[73] "Shandongsheng dierci xingzheng huiyi tudi zuzhi zongbao jiegao (caogao)," 266.
[74] Mouhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisinian"; "Yijiu sisannian xia bannian."
[75] Mouhai xingshu, "Yijiu sisannian xia bannian."
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Rushanxian zhengfu, "Yijiu sisinian."
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