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NATIONALISTS, COMMUNISTS, AND RURAL LEADERS: POLITICAL
DYNAMICS IN A CHINESE COUNTY, 1927-1937

University of Washington

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Nationalists, Communists, and Rural Leaders: Political

Dynamics in a Chinese County, 1927-1937

by

Lenore Barkan

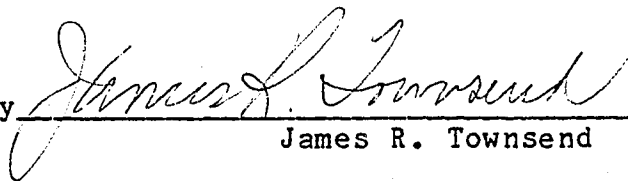
A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1983

Approved by



James R. Townsend

Program Authorized
to Offer Degree

Department of Political Science

Date

March 17, 1983

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The aid which many people extended to me in the research and writing of this dissertation cannot adequately be described or compensated for by a short acknowledgment. Nonetheless, there are a few people to whom I would like to extend a public, even if inadequate, thank-you. Foremost among these individuals is my advisor, James R. Townsend, who, although he denies it, went far beyond the call of duty to help me produce a work that would have been much poorer without his able assistance in everything from the critical questioning of my main ideas to the placement of the final period. From him I have learned far more than most graduate students learn from their advisor, including such fine points as the details of pig-raising and ham production. All were imparted with a "cynical sense of humor" which made the day-to-day drudgery of scholarship so much more bearable. I only hope that in the future I will be able to repay him for what he has done, if not directly, then by doing for some future students what he has so kindly done for me.

In addition, other faculty members of the University of Washington, past and present, significantly aided this endeavor. Among them were Elizabeth Perry, who spent more time than she should have poring over the minutiae of life in Rugao and reminding me that while detail is fine, it only rests comfortably in an analytical framework; Robert Kapp, who originally interested me in the Republican Period and subsequently arranged for me to work in the Nationalist Party Archives on Taiwan; and Daniel Lev, who kindly consented to be part of a project outside of his own area of interest. Without their individual help, it is unlikely that this dissertation would have come to fruition.

Other individuals also made their contributions. Lloyd Eastman, Joseph Esherick, Terry Weidner, and Bill Kirby all commented on earlier versions of at least one of the chapters presented here, and the presence of Bradley Geisert, Robert Womack, Phyllis Waldman, Katie Lynch, and Stephen Averill made life at the Nationalist Party Archives in Taiwan much more interesting and exciting than it otherwise would have been. In the case of the last-named, it even changed my life in a rather unexpected, but not unwelcome, way. I only regret that

for Steve, the result of that chance meeting has been not only the normal pleasures of married life, but a certain number of requests to correct spelling and punctuation as well. To all of these he has assented, even though at times it interfered with the tending of his own grammatical garden.

Other people made the wanderings of this peripatetic scholar a great deal more comfortable. Sherm and Jan Cochran always took great pains to make a visit to Ithaca a joyous (if fattening) occasion. The same can be said for Sandy Perry and Jim Townsend, Barry McCormick and Leslie Spencer-Herrara, Kent Guy, and Elizabeth Perry in Seattle, all of whom provided aid and comfort which were greatly appreciated.

In the course of my study of Nanjing Decade China, I also was assisted by many libraries and archives, as well as their librarians and curators. These include the Nationalist Party Archives on Taiwan and the able person in charge of their day-to-day operation, Lu Fangshan; the libraries of the Academia Sinica, the Central Library, and the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, all on Taiwan; the Toyo Bunko, the Toyo Bunka Kenkyujo, and the Diet Library, all in Tokyo, Japan; and the Hoover Library at Stanford, the

Harvard-Yenching Library, the Cornell University Library and the University of Michigan Library in the United States. Without such libraries, all of which openly welcomed a student from outside their local area, research such as that necessary to complete this dissertation would not have been possible.

I should also like to thank those organizations which supported my work, including the School of International Studies (formerly the East Asian Institute) at the University of Washington and the Fulbright Program of the United States government. For a graduate student like myself, long on dreams but short of cash, the support of such programs and institutions is invaluable.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge Kenyon College, its provost Jerry Irish, its director of academic computing, Robert Rennert, and its computer operator, Tammy Fawcett. Although I was not on the faculty of that institution, they kindly allowed me to use their computer to type and print the final copy of this dissertation, and gave me much advice and assistance in the process. Without access to the Kenyon facilities, the production of this work would have been delayed several months.

Needless to say, none of the above individuals or institutions are responsible for what I have produced in the following pages, except that each in their own way probably made it better than it would have been without their backing or participation. To all of them, my "thanks", and the hope that they will continue to help others as much as they have helped me.

Introduction

During the initial years of their rule, 1927 to 1937, did the Nationalists transform the politics of rural China? As early as two or three years after the Nationalists assumed power, observers of the Chinese scene were aware that the Nationalists' rural political organization was in trouble. In 1930 an article in the North China Herald said that the Nationalists' greatest problem was not its top leadership, but its organization at the local level. It concluded by saying that, "the Tang Pu [dang bu], the district councils of the Kuomintang [Guomindang], are responsible for a large share of Nanking's [Nanjing's] misfortunes." (1) Later, in 1937 Norman Hanwell, a correspondent for Asia magazine and a veteran traveler in China, echoed this theme when he wrote, "What I do question is the ability of any government to control China without a drastic overhauling of that fundamental area of government in China, the village, district and county administration." (2) He went on to say that the Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) government did not have a program for this type of reform. Even after 1937 when Viscount Lindsay, another long-time China resident, assessed the Nationalists' ability to beat

the Communists, he too concluded that, "The real issue is the form of local government," and noted that in the local political arena the Chinese Communists far outshone their Nationalist competitors.(3)

Nationalist politicians also recognized the difficulties their government had in the hinterland, as well as the significance of these difficulties. Ni Bi, a Party activist in Jiangsu, attributed the growth of "counter-revolutionary strength" (a term generally used to refer to any opponent of the Nationalists, including but not necessarily restricted to the Communists) in his province solely to the Nationalists' inability to maintain an effective lower-level political organization. He wrote,

Because the lower-level Party organizations and mass organizations do not have the strength to counter reactionary power, and to energetically carry out new-style reconstruction, reactionary power is secretly growing. All over the place counter-revolutionary groups are forming that might attack us at any time. Because of the lack of lower-level Party organizations and mass organizations, Jiangsu is becoming full of counter-revolution. It is becoming an extremely counter-revolutionary situation.(4)

Moreover, in addition to recognizing the weakness of the Nationalist political apparatus, writers and observers of the 1930's also perceived that there existed in the Chinese countryside a class of people outside the Nationalist Party or government who monopolized political

power. Some referred to these powerholders simply as "gentry" (shishen) or "local gentry" (difang renshi). Others condemned them as "local bullies and evil gentry" (tuhao lieshen). Still others divided local rulers into the two sub-types of "upright gentry" (zhengshen) and "evil gentry" (lieshen).⁽⁵⁾ But no matter what terminology they used, these analysts seemed to think that people in any locale were able to identify and describe certain distinct individuals - most without formal political connections to the Nationalists - who controlled their region's politics, economics, and public security. While individual authors argued about the precise definition of the term "gentry," about who was or was not a gentry member in a particular place, or about whether the gentry in Guangdong were the same as the gentry in Hebei, all agreed that no matter where one went it was the local gentry who firmly controlled local politics. Hanwell put it succinctly when he said, "Local government throughout China is in the hands of the so-called 'gentry' class, often called the 'backbone' of the nation."⁽⁶⁾

But if during the Nationalist era local government was "in the hands" of the "gentry", where were the Nationalists? How did the Nationalists relate to this group of local powerholders? Were they able to control them? Or conversely, did the local power-holders control

the Nationalists?

Existing assessments of the Nationalist political apparatus in the countryside, and the nature of the relationship that developed between the Nationalists and the local elite vary. On one side some, like Norman Hanwell(7), Chen Han-seng(8), and the writers of the essays in the book Agrarian China(9), in whole or in part assert that throughout the Nanjing Decade local governments were understaffed, overworked, insufficiently funded, hopelessly corrupt, and allied with the aforementioned "evil gentry" and "large landlords". This first group concludes that while few Nationalist programs actually were carried out, those that were implemented benefited the wealthy minority rather than the poverty-stricken majority, and that after ten years of Nationalist rule the Chinese countryside was no better off, perhaps worse off, than it had been prior to 1927.

But on the opposite side, Chen Guofu(10), W.H. Ma(11), Hsu Daulin(12), Arthur N. Young(13), and the writers of the articles in The Strenuous Decade: China's Nation-Building Efforts, 1927-1937 edited by Paul T.K. Sih,(14) all argue in some form that although the Nationalists inherited a chaotic and corrupt system of local government and often did not have sufficient funds or personnel to do what they wanted, by 1937, when the

Nationalists were forced to desert the coastal provinces for the interior, they had brought order to local political affairs, reduced corruption, started many reconstruction and other programs to aid the peasants, and broken the power of the "evil gentry" and "large landlords". This second group concludes that in 1937 the future looked bright for the Nationalists, and hypothesizes that if Nationalist rule had not been cut short by Japanese invasion followed by Communist insurrection, the Nationalists would have been able to reduce dramatically if not eliminate the problems of the Chinese countryside and to establish firmly, honest, efficient county-level governments all over China.

Still a third group of more recent scholars like Philip Kuhn(15), Lloyd Eastman(16), James E. Sheridan(17), Noel Ray Miner(18), and Bradley Geisert(19) suggest that the Nationalists at the local level were not independent actors, as both arguments above imply, but instead were hostage to a Chinese countryside ruled by the gentry who in turn were interested only in preserving or expanding their own local sources of power. They believe that even when the Nationalists tried to carry out reforms, their programs, whatever internal problems they may have had, were ultimately defeated because they encountered strong and effective local opposition. These

authors conclude that after ten years of rule the Nationalists faced an increasingly hostile and well-organized Chinese countryside that had resisted effectively and would continue to resist effectively all Nationalist efforts to assert control from above.

But in spite of the differences of opinion that have existed among those who have discussed Nanjing's efforts in the countryside, Nanjing Decade local politics has never been a popular subject for sustained academic inquiry. A few authors such as W.H. Ma, Hsu Daulin, and Chang Ch'un-ming have detailed the paper organizational structure that according to national and provincial laws every county and village should have possessed.(20) Scattered sociologists like Sidney Gamble have set down the formal governmental hierarchy that existed in particular areas which they were studying largely for other reasons.(21) A few historians such as Noel Miner, Bradley Geisert, and Terry Weidner in the process of surveying the affairs of a particular province during the Nanjing Decade, have touched upon local-level politics.(22) Several scholars, including Philip Kuhn and Chen Han-seng, have debated the degree to which the Nationalists were or were not allied with the "traditional gentry" or "local elite".(23) But nobody systematically or completely has analyzed the functioning of the Nationalist

local-level political organization or its impact on local society. As a result, we still do not know the extent to which the political organization in place from 1927 to 1937 actually adhered to its prescribed legal form, the kinds of policies which the Nationalists in reality carried out, the true impact that Nationalist activities had on local residents, the kinds of interactions that took place between Nationalist officials and local leaders, or the extent to which in the end the Nationalists were able to penetrate the Chinese countryside.(24)

One of the reasons that all available works on Nationalist politics - even those that discuss local events - are contradictory and incomplete is that they are often macro-level studies that try to generalize about an entire province, or even all of China. The scope of such works means that more attention is paid to the formulation of policy - done at the central or provincial level and thus easy to follow - than its implementation - carried out at the periphery and thus difficult to find out about. Moreover, because central or provincial documents are easier to obtain than local level accounts, even when policy implementation is studied, it is usually done through the eyes of the policy makers. In addition, because in such studies the examples cited are often

chosen in a random manner, all sense of continuity and feel for the interaction between Nationalists and a particular local environment is lost.

Moreover, to date no micro-level studies have addressed the above problems. Most micro-level studies of the Nationalist era (even including those of the 1937 to 1949 period) are village studies, by sociologists, e.g. Fei Hsiao-t'ung, Peasant Life in China (Gaixiangong in Wujiang County, Jiangsu)(25), Fukutake Tadashi, Asian Rural Society (Fengjiao near Suzhou, Jiangsu)(26) and C.K. Yang, A Chinese Village in Early Communist Transition (Nanzhang near Guangzhou in Guangdong Province)(27). While they describe in rich detail the daily life of the peasant, as well as family and kinship structures, irrigation and other crop-raising techniques, and even in one case (Fei Hsiao-t'ung) the setting up of a silk-producing cooperative, they only infrequently say much about the Nationalist political organization or its programs.

Equally disappointing are the few works which describe Nationalist era affairs in a particular county, for example Chow Yung-teh, Social Mobility in China (Gunyang, Yunnan)(28), Morton Fried, The Fabric of Chinese Society (Qu Xian, Anhui)(29), and Sidney Gamble, Ting Hsien: A North China Rural Community (Hebei)(30). Most

of these authors did extensive field work in the areas about which they wrote, but they too were sociologists and consequently had very little to say about the Nationalist Party and government, or about the Nationalist role in county affairs.

It is because of the shortcomings of the above works that I have chosen to concentrate my effort on one county, and to do a case study of its Nanjing Decade politics. During the Nanjing Decade, as in centuries past, the county (xian) was the pivotal political unit between the central (or provincial) administration and the main body of the Chinese population grouped in the villages. Because all central and provincial-level directives were sent to the counties for implementation, the counties had direct ties with both higher levels of government (who sent them orders) and with the Chinese countryside (where the counties were in charge of carrying out these orders). In other words, during the Nanjing Decade the county was the most important unit of local government in China.

But in spite of its importance, no work currently exists which explores the impact of the Nationalists at the county level. By selecting one particular county and doing a case study, I hope to plumb in depth pre-1927 county-level political structures, the county-level political organization that the Nationalists attempted to

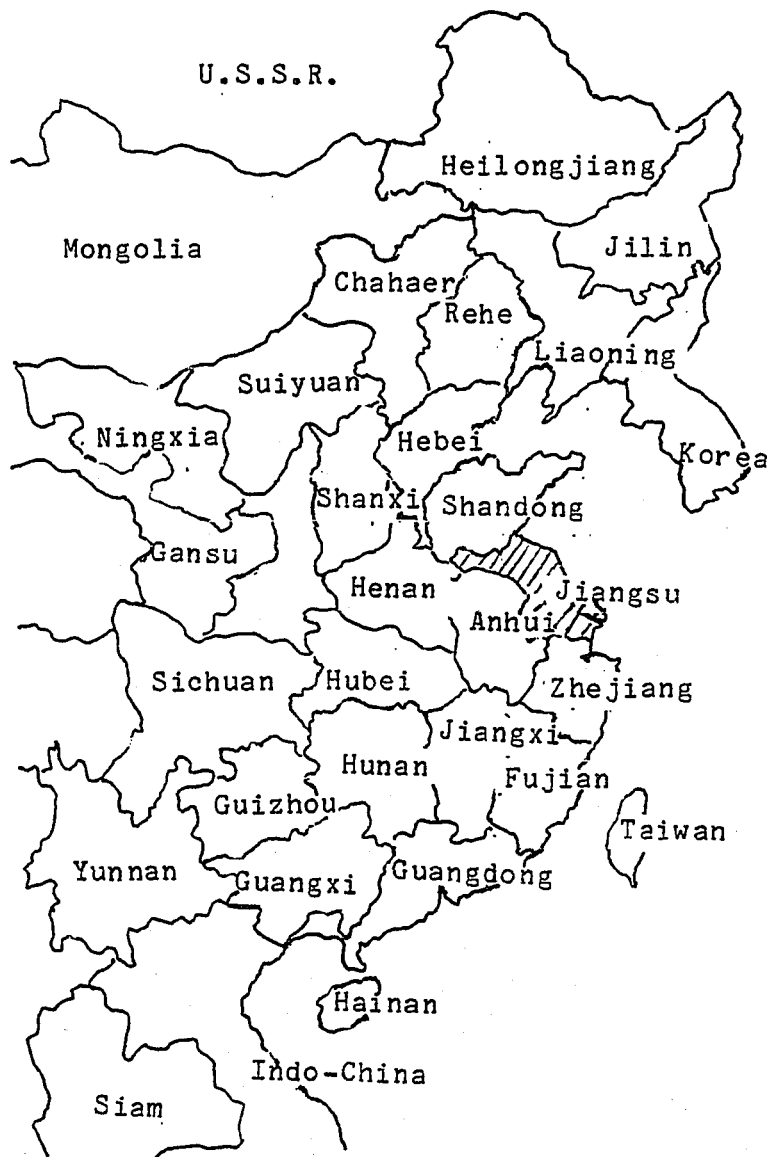
impose after 1927, the political programs the Nationalists tried to carry out in the counties, the reception these programs received, and the extent to which the Nationalists were able to govern the Chinese countryside. I also hope, as a result of my findings about one county, to shed light on some long-standing general questions about the Nationalists. For example, to what degree were the Nationalists allied with or antagonistic to traditional local leaders, and why were the Nationalists unable to win over and to hold China's rural areas?

Rugao County, Jiangsu Province

For the locale of my study, I have chosen Rugao County, Jiangsu Province. Jiangsu was one of the two provinces (the other was Zhejiang) where the Nationalists exercised relatively complete control over local affairs.(31) Rugao County is located in North Jiangsu with borders on both the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) and the Yellow Sea. In the 1930's it was close enough to Shanghai for news of its affairs to be printed frequently in Jiangsu and Shanghai newspapers, but far enough away from Shanghai (or any other any urban center) to have retained its traditional rural character.

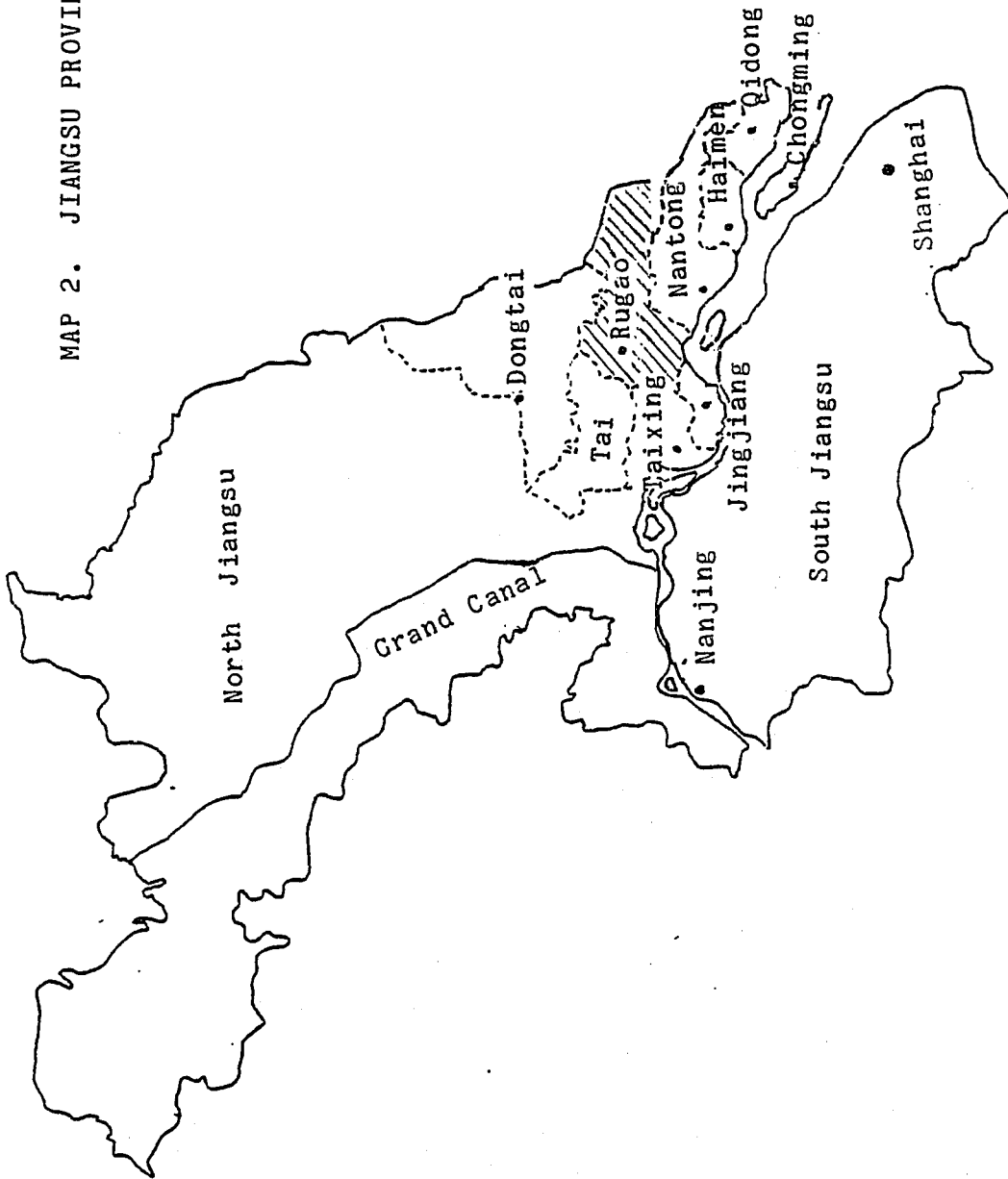
Furthermore, Rugao County in the 1930's was an ordinary sort of place. Politically it was never a county

MAP 1. THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA



Source: Tien Hung-mao, Government and Politics in Kuomintang China: 1927-1937 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972).

MAP 2. JIANGSU PROVINCE



of any particular importance. Under the Qing Dynasty it was part of a prefecture ruled by its more influential neighbor to the southeast, Tongzhou.(32) By 1927, even though it was China's most populous county with a total of one and a half million residents,(33) the Jiangsu government still thought of it administratively as a county of lesser status than Nantong, the new name of Tongzhou.(34)

In economic terms Rugao was no more distinguished. Like its neighbors, Rugao produced abundant cotton. Unlike some of them, Rugao never developed permanent facilities to process this raw material into finished or even semi-finished goods.(35) Rugao's two claims to fame were its turnips and its processed ham. But every August with clockwork regularity the turnips caused massive outbreaks of typhoid and other serious diseases, because they were eaten raw after being washed in contaminated water.(36) The hams were good, but definitely inferior in quality to those produced in Zhejiang and Yunnan.(37)

For some purposes an unimportant place like Rugao would not be worth studying. No great events took place there, no history was made. But for other purposes Rugao holds great fascination; by studying ordinary places one may often gain an understanding of events over a broader area than just the place subjected to scrutiny, and

frequently may achieve greater insights than by studying the famous or the familiar. Indeed, a detailed appraisal of political events in Rugao will reveal a much more complicated picture of county-level politics than past descriptions of or theories about Nationalist county-level politics would lead one to expect.

The following chapters will trace in detail the political events that unfolded in Rugao County between 1927 and 1937. Each chapter or series of chapters will take up one of the four groups that was active in Rugao county politics between 1927 and 1937 - the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party, the Rugao county government, the indigenous local elite, and the Communists - and describe how they influenced political events in Rugao over the course of the Decade.

It might be wondered why the Nationalist Party and government are given separate treatment. The conventional view is that these two organizations had overlapping memberships and often worked together. As a result, most studies of the Nationalist period, such as those produced by Kuhn, Eastman, and Sheridan, place together the Party, the government, and sometimes the quasi-political military organizations that Jiang Jieshi set up under his personal command, and refer to them as "the Nationalist regime".(38) But other works, such as those by Geisert and

Miner, point out that this approach can be misleading.(39) They indicate that, especially during the late 1920's, the Party organization in a particular area and the government organization in that same area often followed radically different policies and frequently came to blows. In fact, just as Geisert and Miner suggest, throughout the Decade the Rugao Party and government were led by different individuals, advocated different policies, and consistently opposed one another even to the extent of bringing suit against each other in the courts. Consequently they must be analyzed as individual units. Hopefully, this distinct treatment will help uncover the intricacies of Rugao county-level politics and allow us further to understand, in a way heretofore not possible, the political dynamics of one Chinese county's political life. It may also aid us in understanding more clearly how it was that the Nationalists came, conquered, and ultimately were vanquished from the Chinese mainland.

Introduction

Notes

(1) North China Herald (Shanghai), July 1, 1930, p. 5. The pinyin system of romanization is used throughout both the text and the notes. Where a well-known personal name, place name, or organization name is first used, it appears in pinyin with the traditional spelling in parentheses. Thereafter, only the pinyin spelling is used. The names of Chinese authors of English language works, or Chinese words that appear in English language titles are rendered as they appear in print.

(2) Norman Hanwell, "Rotten Gentry of China," Asia 37, no. 4: (April 1937):298.

(3) Michael Lindsay, "Victory by Psychological Warfare," in The Kuomintang Debacle of 1949: Collapse or Conquest, ed. Pichon P.Y. Loh (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1965), pp. 16-17.

(4) Ni Bi, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Qingkuang" [The conditions of Jiangsu party affairs], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 12-13 (1 January 1929):10.

(5) For a discussion of the terminology variously applied to local power-holders see Guy S. Alitto, "Rural Elites in Transition: China's Cultural Crisis and the Problem of Legitimacy," Select Papers from the Center for Chinese Studies, No. 3 (1978-1979) (Chicago: University of Chicago), pp. 227-228.

(6) Hanwell, "Rotten Gentry," p. 298. See Chapter Six for a more detailed discussion of the terms "gentry" and "local elite."

(7) Hanwell, "Rotten Gentry," and Norman Hanwell, "The Dragnet of Local Government in China," Pacific Affairs 10, no. 1 (March 1937).

(8) Chen Han-seng, The Present Agrarian Problem in China (Shanghai: China Institute of Pacific Relations, 1933).

(9) Agrarian China: Selected Source Materials from Chinese Authors, comp. and trans. The Research Staff of the Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations (Shanghai:

Kelly and Walsh, Ltd, 1938; reprint ed., Arlington, Va.: University Publications of America, n.d.).

(10) Chen Guofu, Suzheng Huiyi [Recollections of Jiangsu government] ([Taipei, Taiwan]: Zhengzhong Shuju, 1951).

(11) W.H. Ma, "Hsien Government and Functions," The Chinese Recorder 68, no. 8 (August 1937).

(12) Hsu Daulin, "Chinese Local Administration under the National Government," typescript (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington School of International Studies, ([1963])).

(13) Arthur N. Young, China's Nation-Building Effort, 1927-1937 (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1971, p. 420).

(14) Paul Sih, ed., The Strenuous Decade: China's Nation-Building Efforts, 1927-1937 (New York: St. John's University Press, 1970).

(15) Philip A. Kuhn, "Local Self-Government under the Republic: Problems of Control, Autonomy, and Mobilization," in Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

(16) Lloyd Eastman, The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974).

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(34) Although for financial purposes Rugao was officially classified as a "first rank" county, when Jiangsu's counties were grouped for administrative purposes Rugao was always put under the control of Nantong. Nantong was never made subordinate to Rugao nor was Rugao ever put in charge of a group of counties. See Zhao Ruheng, compiler, Jiangsu Sheng Jian [Handbook on Jiangsu Province] (Shanghai: Xin Zhongguo Jiangshe Xuehui, 1935), p. 28 to see how Jiangsu classified its counties for financial purposes, and pp. 20-21 for an example of the same counties classified for administrative purposes.

(35) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xian Zhi, pp. 126-127. Cotton mills briefly were established in Rugao in 1921 (one mill), 1922 (two mills), and 1924 (one mill). None appears to have remained open longer than a year or two. (China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, comp. Ministry of Industry, Bureau of Foreign Trade (Shanghai: Ministry of Industry, Bureau of Foreign Trade, 1933; reprint ed. Taipei, Taiwan: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1973), p. 316).

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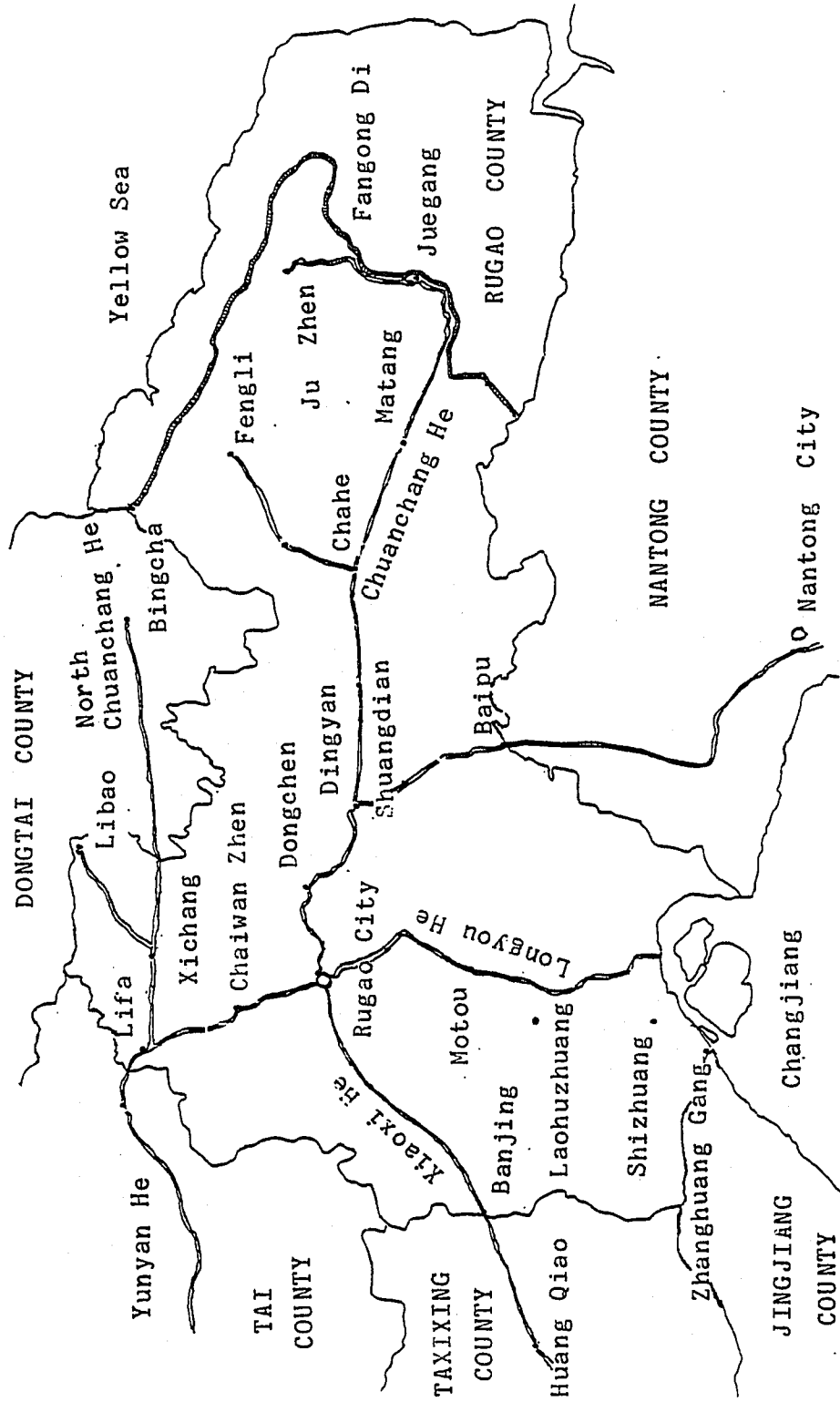
Chapter One

Rugao County

As can be seen from the following map, Rugao bordered on both the Chang Jiang (to the south) and the Yellow Sea (to the east). On its southeast lay the county of Nantong, home of Zhang Jian, the noted early Republican Period reformer.(1) On its southwest was Qingjiang County; on its west, Taixing County; on its northwest, Tai County; and on its north, the large county of Dongtai.(2)

Rugao's central location and proximity to major waterways, however, did not lead it to become one of China's better known areas. Along the coast were many sandbars, but not a single port that could be navigated by large vessels. Only fishing junks could go in and out with the tides.(3) Moreover, recently deposited sediment made up the land closest to the sea. This sediment was salty, infertile, and uncultivated. It formed an additional barrier between the people of Rugao and the outside world.(4)

Rugao did have several comparatively large ports on the Chang Jiang including Zhanghuang Gang.(5) But the distance between these ports and the county seat could only be traversed by small canal boats.(6) In hot dry



MAP 3. RUGAO COUNTY

weather, water in the canals disappeared and a large portion of the trade and communication between Rugao and other places came to a halt.(7)

Because of its poor transportation links, most trade and traffic never got to Rugao. To the west the Grand Canal was a much more attractive artery than the narrow streams found to either side. Coming off the canal, boats first arrived in Taizhou, the capital of Tai County, before they reached Rugao. Many never went any further. To the east vessels coming up-river made their first (and often last) stop at Nantongzhou, the capital of Nantong County. The result was that during the early part of the twentieth century Nantong developed rapidly while Rugao basked in placid backwardness.(8)

Rugao's place in the traditional administrative system reflected its geographical position. Rugao was first established as a county during the Eastern Jin Dynasty (A.D. 317-420). Subsequently it was subsumed under several different political divisions before becoming independent once again (using the name Haiian County) under the Tang (618-960). Later the rulers of the Southern Tang (937-975) restored the name of Rugao, which remained in use until 1949, when the Communists divided the area traditionally known as Rugao into two counties - Rugao and Rudong.(9)

But although Rugao had a long history as a distinct political unit, during most of its existence it was under the thumb of one of its more powerful neighbors. During the Song (960-1279), Yuan (1279-1368), and Ming (1368-1644) it was subordinate to Taizhou.(10) During the Qing (1644-1911) it fell under the jurisdiction of Nantongzhou.(11) During most of the Nanjing Decade, in spite of its being China's most populous county, the Nationalist government continued to give Rugao only a second, or middle, level ranking.(12)

Moreover, Rugao was was never an important political center which produced great leaders, nor a problematic pocket of backwardness which required special attention to keep its dissident elements in check. In the twentieth century it was neither a bustling hub of economic activity helping to propel China rapidly into the modern world, nor a site of grinding poverty requiring outside aid to prevent the starvation of millions. Rugao was, in other words, similar to many other Chinese counties which the Nationalists attempted to govern between 1927 and 1937.

The remainder of this chapter will describe Rugao County along with the problems that the Nationalists faced and had to overcome there if they were to govern successfully. I will take up in turn Rugao's topography and climate, population, agriculture, sideline

occupations, cities and industry, financial institutions, education, communications, transportation, trade, public utilities, sanitation and public health, charitable endeavors, and political organizations.

Topography and Climate

Rugao's topography was unexciting. The county was generally described as being "flat everywhere", with interlocking rivers, streams, and canals, and no large mountains or hills.(13) Because the overall level of the county was slightly higher than that of its neighbors, some called Rugao an "overturned kettle" (although overturned plate probably more accurately invokes the image they had in mind), a favorable comparison as the floods of 1931, which ravaged the lower Chang Jiang valley but spared Rugao, clearly showed.(14)

In fact, Rugao did have several protuberances which were called "mountains" (shan). Their inconsequential size is illustrated best by one that was estimated to be about one hundred feet high (ten zhang). It was said to have been created by a person who got out of a cart and piled up grain.(15)

Rugao's waterways were more important. Altogether there were between one hundred and one hundred fifty miles of river (he) in the county. The largest, making up over

half the total, was the Yunyan He. It flowed east from Tai County, through the town of Lifa, to the Rugao county seat. There it turned south and split into two branches. One branch, now called the Longyou He (or sometimes the Jiushijiu Wan - "ninety-nine bends" - because of its many curves), continued south, ultimately flowing into the Chang Jiang. The second branch went east to Dingyan and then southeast to Nantong. The latter formed the principal link between Rugao, Nantong, and Shanghai. Over it traveled virtually all the mail, goods, and people which entered Rugao from the outside or left the county destined for better-known places.(16)

In addition to the Yunyan He the county had several other notable streams. Largest of these was the Chuanchang He which left the Yunyan He at Dingyan and continued directly east. It connected Rugao City with the towns of Fengli and Juegang as well as all the intervening rural areas. Next in size was the Xiaoxi He, which joined the county seat with the countryside to its west, including the towns of Banjing and Huangqiao (the latter located in neighboring Taixing). Also important was the North Chuanchang He which left the Yunyan He at Lifa and tied that Rugao town to Bingcha in the neighboring county of Dongtai.(17)

Moreover, the county was "well supplied with canals." The most outlying of these extended to "within a few li" of the sea. There high dikes such as the well-known Fangong Dike built in the Tang Dynasty kept salt water from entering and flooding the landscape.(18)

The land through which these rivers and canals flowed was "exceedingly fertile."(19) Near the coast much of the "newly-risen land" (i.e. land recently formed by the deposit of sediment) had a high salt content and could not be cultivated. It was covered with grass which in the fall was cut for fuel. But a few li inland from the sea good soil began and extended all the way to Rugao's neighboring counties.(20) Overall, although Rugao was not the province's largest county, it had the greatest amount of "average quality" or good land (zhong tian) - 1,570,900 mu - about half the county's total cultivated area.(21) Generally speaking, the best soil was found in the east, adjacent to the salt flats. The land in the northwest and southwest was of poorer quality.(22)

Rugao also was less subject to the ravages of nature than many other areas of China. As mentioned earlier, the slightly higher elevation of the county prevented serious flooding. Drought was more often a problem. During the summers of 1932, 1934, and 1936, Rugao did not get enough moisture to harvest some or all of its crops. The drought

of 1932 was especially severe. It extended from the winter of 1932 through the spring of 1933 and caused much hardship.(23)

Overall, Rugao's topography and climate presented fewer problems to the Nationalists than the topography and climate of many other areas of China, for example the Huai River valley or the North China Plain. Most important were the difficulties related to Rugao's many canals, rivers, and streams. If Rugao's population was to avoid hardship during dry spells, dams and spillways in Rugao as well as neighboring counties had to be closely regulated, and even Rugao's smaller waterways regularly dredged of accumulated silt. These two tasks alone were formidable challenges for the Nationalists.

Population

Rugao's fertile land supported a large number of people. In 1930 it was reported that 1,356,777 individuals divided into 266,765 households lived in the county: 712,298 males and 644,454 females.(24) Of these, at least 183,268 were urban dwellers and 2,682 were Buddhist monks.(25) By 1932 the population had grown to 1,428,304 living at a density of 402.40 people per square kilometer. This can be compared to the average Jiangsu county which at the time contained 568,377 souls and had a density of

294 people per square kilometer.(26)

In subsequent years the number of Rugao residents continued to grow. In 1934 it was estimated at 1,480,000, or 180,000 more than in 1927 when the Nationalists came to power.(27) In 1935 it was placed at 1,541,217 including 3,465 temple inhabitants and twenty-five "foreigners" - the latter presumably all missionaries living in the county seat.(28) By 1936 Rugao was said to be home to "over" one and a half million people, making it both Jiangsu and China's largest county.(29)

However, the large size of Rugao's population did not appear to present any unusual administrative problems for the Nationalists. Not once have I found the size of the county mentioned as a cause for difficulties that a particular magistrate faced, or listed as an excuse for why a particular program could not be carried out. Moreover, Rugao's large population entitled it to no special consideration by higher authorities. For example, when the provincial government limited the number of districts in every Jiangsu county to no more than fifteen, Rugao, like every other county, was expected to comply.(30)

Perhaps the size of Rugao's population was so unimportant because of the homogeneity and generally untroublesome character of the county's residents. The

majority of Rugao's denizens were of Han extraction and known for being "thrifty and frugal,"(31) as well as "simple and sincere."(32) They were also commonly viewed as "conservative."(33) One sign of this conservatism was the long queues that as of 1926 were still worn by many of Rugao's peasants. Apparently, at the time of the 1911 revolution soldiers cut off the long hair of many city dwellers but left country residents unshorn.(34)

Agriculture

About seventy per cent of Rugao's population engaged in agriculture and lived on the land.(35) They grew their crops on Rugao's three to four million cultivatable mu (between 500,000 and 600,000 plus acres).(36)

Traditionally, the biggest crops were rice and cotton. Barley, wheat, beans, corn, and sweet potatoes were also important.(37) In most areas wheat was harvested in the spring after which rice, cotton, or some other crop was planted for harvesting in the fall.(38) Due to changing weather conditions, during the 1930's the make-up of the county's crops shifted; cotton, corn, soybeans, and peanuts - all more adaptable to the increasingly dry weather the county experienced after 1932 - replaced rice.(39) By 1934. "very little" rice was grown in Rugao.(40)

Overall, Rugao farmers were prosperous, and in an average year the county was self-sufficient in food grains.(41) In addition, "practically every farmer" planted one to two mu of turnips. This crop, the only one for which Rugao was "famous," apparently sold well in the marketplace and contributed to the county's well-being.(42)

But in spite of its productivity, Rugao's agriculture was old-fashioned. To cultivate the fields manpower, horses, and water buffalo were used. Machinery was rarely seen.(43) Little fertilizer other than the traditional nightsoil provided the plants with nutrients. (In 1936 a mere 2,514 bags of chemical fertilizer were distributed in the whole county.)(44) Moreover, planting methods were said to be the same as those used centuries earlier.(45)

The contractual relationship between Rugao's peasants and landlords was no more modern. The vast majority of cultivators were tenants (75.4%). Only a small minority were either half-owners half-tenants (7.7%), or owner-cultivators (16.9%).(46) As can be seen from the following chart, most of these individuals tilled very small plots of land.

Table 1. Average Cultivated Acreage per Household in Rugao
(1930-1931?)

Percentage of Households	Acreage Cultivated
50%	5-10 <u>mu</u>
30%	10-20 <u>mu</u>
15%	20-39 <u>mu</u>
5%	30-50 <u>mu</u>
"Very few"	over 50 <u>mu</u>

Source: Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang
[Jiangsu Farmer's Bank head office], ed., Disan Nian zhi
Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang [The third year of the
Jiangsu Farmers' Bank] (Zhenjiang: 1930-1932), p. 226.

Rugao, like everywhere in China, had its share of large landlords. The particular Rugao variety had much in common with their counterparts in other North Jiangsu counties. More numerous in the northern and eastern parts of the county, they built many-roomed walled castles on their large - sometimes 10,000 to 20,000 mu - estates.(47) It was these individuals who were the prime targets of attacks during the Communist heyday of 1928 to 1930.(48)

Another kind of large landlord, the big land reclamation company, existed along the Jiangsu coast. The most important such company in Rugao was the Dayu Gongsì headquartered in Juegang. It had been founded in 1916 by Zhang Jizhi. By 1929 it possessed 1,500,000 yuan of capital and had successfully reclaimed 130,000 of the 480,000 mu under its control.(49) Most of the people who lived on this newly reclaimed land were immigrants from the southeastern part of the province, particularly from Haimen. The company divided the land into sections, built houses, irrigation works, and dikes and provided seed. In return the tenants paid the company a part of their crop. Since the land was still fairly salty, and beans and vegetables could not be grown successfully, cotton was the staple product. Every year large amounts of the white fiber were shipped downriver from the Rugao coast to Nantong.(50)

In other parts of the county tenancy arrangements were similar. Generally rent was paid out in kind twice a year: in the spring (wheat and barley) and in the fall (grain or cotton). When the crop was ripe the landlord would appoint someone to assess the amount due him, usually thirty-seven to forty-six percent of the crop standing in the field. At harvest time the tenant would then request the landlord (or, one supposes, his appointee) to come to the fields to supervise the harvest. After the harvest was complete it was divided according to the percentage set earlier.(51)

The backwardness of Rugao's agriculture presented serious challenges to the Nationalists. First, the agricultural sector had to be modernized, a large task involving the introduction of new seed varieties, improved breeding stock, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, and irrigation machinery. Second, the contractual relationship between landlord and peasant needed to be changed to allow the average peasant family to keep a larger percentage of its crop. Moreover, the landholding system, which over the years had led to great inequalities of ownership, needed to be overhauled so that more people would have not only the necessary funds and equipment to farm successfully, but also the incentive to increase their yearly output. In other words, while in

agricultural terms Rugao was considered a comparatively well-off county (although certainly not as rich as those counties of South Jiangsu), like all the other counties of China it presented the Nationalists with serious agricultural problems that had no easy or obvious solutions.

Sideline Occupations

To survive under the difficult conditions they faced, many Rugao peasants engaged in sideline occupations. The most common of these were pig-raising, silkworm production, lace-making, fishing, and skilled and unskilled labor.(52)

Pig-Raising

Pig-raising was foremost among Rugao's sideline occupations. Rugao, along with Yunnan and a small section of Zhejiang, produced what were reputed to be China's best hams. While the Yunnan and Zhejiang meats had a finer flavor, Rugao hams were available in larger quantities and were more reasonable in price.(53)

Rugao's animals were kept in pens and fed grain, grass, and table scraps from local restaurants. When ready to process they were taken to one of the county's small specialized ham factories. There they were

slaughtered, packed in salt and saltpeter, washed, packed in salt again and then dried, a procedure that took several weeks. When done, they were shipped first to Shanghai and then to other parts of China and often the world.(54)

But the raising of pigs was not in and of itself profitable. Each pig was worth about twenty yuan on the marketplace (county residents raised about 30,000 animals a year with a total value of 600,000 yuan), but consumed a like amount of food. Fortunately, there were other benefits. First, a pig supplied additional night soil for a peasant's fields, something the average peasant had no spare capital to buy. Second, a pig acted as a savings institution. Peasants bought grain for a pig daily. When the pig was grown, although the price gotten for the pig was approximately equal to the amount spent on its up keep, the peasant now had a sizeable lump sum which could be used for other purposes.(55)

Silkworm Production

Every spring and summer some of Rugao's peasant women, especially those living in the center of the county around Chahe, produced silkworms. However, silk production was not nearly as important a sideline occupation as pig-raising. Mulberry trees were relatively scarce in

Rugao, and peasant women did not know how to select the best eggs. As a result, the yearly output was worth only between 200,000 and 300,000 yuan.(56) Nevertheless, in 1935 when the price of silk started going up rapidly (it had fallen dramatically in the early 1930's) Rugao was one of thirty-five Jiangsu counties ordered by the Reconstruction Department carefully to tend its mulberry trees so that there would be sufficient food for an increased number of worms.(57)

Lace-Making

In the northern part of the county around the towns of Libao and Dingjiasuo, seventy to eighty percent of the women traditionally engaged in making lace to be shipped to and sold in the markets of Shanghai. Each worker received about .2 yuan a day for her efforts. In any normal year total county production had a value of between 100,000 and 200,000 yuan.(58)

But starting in 1928 Rugao lace makers ran into difficulties. In that year the Wuxi Lace Association (Wuxi huabian gonghui) petitioned the provincial Finance Department asking to be excused from paying transport taxes on its lace. The Finance Department responded favorably. Moreover, it ordered the abolition of all customs duties on lace throughout the province. In south

Jiangsu, much to the benefit of Rugao's competitors, the order was carried out. In North Jiangsu it was not.(59) Representatives were sent to plead Rugao's case,(60) and the county Merchant Association (shang hui) sent in petitions, but it was to no avail.(61) When cotton lace was shipped out of Rugao its owners continued to have to pay the taxes due or the lace was not allowed to pass the internal customs barriers. The result was a drop in production and the laying off of workers.(62) Two years later in 1930, when a surfeit of lace clogged the market, the earnings of Rugao's peasants were forced downward even further.(63)

Fishing

Along the coast and the Chang Jiang peasant families could also engage in fishing. On the coast there were no less than two hundred to three hundred fishing boats.(64) These boats, however, were sometimes subject to the exactions of pirates who throughout the first half of the century also traveled the waters around Rugao.(65)

Hired Labor

Further inland, peasants who needed or wanted extra income hired themselves out to do skilled or unskilled labor. Rugao's cement workers, wood workers, and lacquer

workers were considered skilled labor. The most common jobs in the unskilled labor category were cart pushing (probably actually wheelbarrow pushing), merchandise peddling, and miscellaneous hired labor.(66) Some also hired themselves out to work as agricultural laborers. The latter, if they were male, received .25 yuan a day, 3.50 yuan a month, or 18-26 yuan a year; if they were female, they got only .20 yuan a day, 2.50 yuan a month, or 12-26 yuan a year.(67)

As the wage rates listed in the previous paragraph make clear, as of 1927 all of the sideline industries in which the Rugao peasant traditionally engaged badly needed to be revitalized and in some cases modernized. Occasionally, as in the lace-making industry, such revitalization appeared to await only the removal of internal trade barriers. In other cases, such as silkworm production and fishing, larger social forces had to be brought under control before economic growth could take place.

Cities

That part of Rugao's population not engaged in agriculture - about 30% - dwelled in the various market towns and administrative centers that were strung along Rugao's rivers like beads on a chain. At the center of

the county, located at the most important riverine junction, was the county seat. It was surrounded by a wall twenty feet in height and fifteen feet in width which had been built in the Ming during the reign of the Jiajing Emperor. This wall, which ran for a distance of seven li (approximately two miles) around the city, was punctured by only four gates - one on each side - so narrow that an automobile could not fit through them.(68)

Within the wall, streets were numerous although very narrow.(69) These thoroughfares were bordered by one-story houses, the uniformity of which was only infrequently broken by any large buildings.(70) During the Nanjing Decade the appearance of the city changed only slightly. Before 1931 it was noted that Rugao had only three two-story edifices - "the pawnshop, the mission, and the temple." After that date some two-story residences as well as a tall city tower and a large public meeting place joined the ranks of the elevated.(71)

The city had few public amenities. There was one public park maintained by private citizens.(72) There was also an opera house, but this was in poor shape. In 1934 construction started on a new theater to be located in the public park, but funds ran out before the structure was completed.(73) In addition, 1934 saw the opening of a new centrally located post office and telegraph building.(74)

Several tens of thousands of people living both in and outside of its wall enjoyed the facilities of Rugao City. The only actual figure we have comes from about 1918. At this time Milton Stauffer claimed that Rugao had 50,000 residents, which would have made it one of Jiangsu's twenty-five largest cities.(75) Undoubtedly, by 1927 this figure had grown.(76)

Rugao's other cities were less populous and not surrounded by masonry constructions.(77) Leaving Rugao City by the East Gate and traveling along the Yunyan He, after twenty-five li one reached Dongchen. Thirty-five li further on one arrived at Dingyan. From there one could continue east to Chahe, and then northeast to Fengli (one hundred li from the county seat), or southeast to Matang and finally Juegang (130 li from the county seat and in 1949 renamed Rudong and made a county capital). One could also go southeast to Baipu, an old county seat on the Rugao-Nantong border, and then on to Nantong, the region's most important metropolis after Shanghai. During the Qing, salt factories had been located in both Fengli and Juegang. During the Republican period although salt production declined, the towns, especially Juegang, remained important and prosperous trading centers.(78)

Going out Rugao's South Gate one could travel the Longyou He to the Chang Jiang. Along this route one first

passed the important town of Motou and then, 119 li from the county seat, at the point where the Longyou He and the Changhuang Gang converged, a former inspection station and center of Communist activity during the Nanjing Decade, Shizhuang.

Heading out the West Gate one could travel the Xiaoji He to Banjing, and go on to Huangqiao (Yellow Bridge) in Taixing, while the route out the North Gate along the Yunyou He took one to Chaiwan (at thirteen li) and then to Lifa (at thirty li), before depositing one at Haian in Tai County. Using lesser waterways one could also reach Xichang, thirty-six li from the capital, and Libao, slightly farther away on the Dongtai border.(79)

Rugao's urban areas were primarily trade and administrative hubs, not manufacturing centers. Hardly any industrial enterprises existed. Before 1927 Rugao had been a center for the dyeing industry. Not too long before the arrival of the Nationalists there had been about 120 Chinese dye houses doing a big business using native dyes. By 1937 "only a dozen or so" remained. They had been put out of operation by competition from imported artificial colorings.(80)

Before 1927 the county also had been the site of a privately-run sand factory. By 1928 it too had lost over 300,000 yuan and closed its doors.(81) Moreover, a similar

fate befell the few cotton mills set up in the county. In 1921 Rugao had one mill, in 1922 two mills, in 1924 one mill, and after that none at all.(82)

The lack of any manufacturing base whatsoever in Rugao presented the Nationalists with a serious problem: how to modernize the county and bring it into the contemporary world. By 1927 the failure of Rugao's fledgling industries meant that the county was actually less developed than it had been a decade earlier. Reversing this trend would not be easy.

Financial Institutions

Had modern banks or other facilities for raising capital been more developed in Rugao perhaps the county's industries would have advanced farther. Prior to 1927 Rugao's business was conducted in tong yuan or in silver (yin jiao). Each yuan was worth 2,700 wen or, in silver, ten jiao 400 wen.(83)

Traditionally, residents of the county procured needed funds through private individuals, qinghui (sometimes also called tonghui or gonghui) or credit societies, merchants, or pawnshops. Private individuals lent money at interest rates of 1.5 to 2 percent a month for periods of between several months and a year. If printed money (as opposed to silver or copper, one

supposes) was lent, the interest rate could reach twenty percent per month. Interest rates in credit societies were comparable - 1.2 to 1.5 percent a month - but the loan period was often considerably longer - five to ten years. (84)

Getting credit from merchants was slightly more complex. On the surface the system was simple. Credit was extended but no interest paid, and a customer was expected to settle accounts at each lunar holiday, above all at Chinese New Year. In fact the credit customer, unlike other buyers, was not allowed to haggle over the price of goods so that in the end a given amount of credit bought merchandise worth only eighty percent of its real value. In other word, those who bought on credit paid an effective interest rate of twenty-five percent a year.(85)

Pawnshops were a place of last resort, used primarily by poor peasants to obtain loans against their personal possessions, such as clothes, seeds, and agricultural implements. The monthly interest rate was around 1.8 percent and the standard loan period until 1930 twenty-four months. In the early 1930's the loan period was shortened to eighteen months, and a custom started of calculating all loan periods that extended past the fifth day of a month as if they had run for the whole month.(86) Undoubtedly this hurt those who could least afford the

extra burden and benefited those most well off. In 1933 there were eleven pawnshops in Rugao, with circulating capital totalling 340,000 yuan. Twenty percent of this capital had come from merchants and the remaining eighty percent from landlords.(87)

To store extra cash, people sometimes depended on merchants (For example, the pawnshop merchants just mentioned). More often than not, however, especially in the countryside, instead of investing money individuals hid it in underground vaults or holes. These storage places were frequently damp. During the summer it apparently was common to see country residents drying out their damp money in the sun.(88)

All of the above makes it clear that Rugao desperately needed a modern banking system which the population would trust to safeguard their funds as well as to lend them money at interest rates they could afford. If the Nationalists could set up modern banking institutions to which the majority of the population had access, then perhaps the county's economy could move forward and its economic base develop.

Education

But the utilization of sophisticated financial institutions requires a knowledgeable population, and

neither the residents of Rugao's towns nor their counterparts in the countryside were terribly well educated. In the early years after the 1911 Revolution, the government established over 150 modern primary schools in Rugao, as well as at least one normal school.(89) By 1928 the number of primary schools had increased to 270, and there was a provincially-operated middle school in which the county ran normal school classes, as well as a county-run middle school.(90) In 1930 it was estimated that 400,000 people in the county "recognized characters". But whether these people were truly literate or not is open to question. Of the 400,000, only 40,000 had attended a primary school, 3,000 a middle school, and three hundred a university. The remaining 300,000 plus had received an "old-style" education at one of the county's many private academies, gentry-led institutions which even after 1927 continued to tutor the bulk of Rugao's youth fortunate enough to get any exposure to learning.(91) Given the situation it was no wonder that Rugao's educational system was described as "ultra-conservative."(92)

It should be noted, however, that not all Rugao residents were dependent on the county's facilities to obtain knowledge. Before 1911 some students from Rugao went to Beijing to sit for the imperial examinations.(93)

After the imperial exams were abolished in 1905, many of Rugao's students started attending newly established western-style schools in Nantong, Shanghai, and even Beijing.(94) Of these students, probably the greatest number enrolled at Nantong Normal School, an institution founded by Zhang Jian. Graduates of Nantong Normal later returned to Rugao to hold important leadership positions in both the Communist and Nationalist movements.(95)

But the ability of a few individuals to travel outside the county for self-improvement did not in and of itself raise the county's literacy rate. Only if more children attended primary schools and mass education classes were established for adults would the level of ignorance found in Rugao decline. But the former was dependent on parents being able to afford to send their children to school, as well as on the availability of teachers to instruct them, while from the Nationalist perspective the latter required large amounts of money to get even a rudimentary program set up.

Communications

The backwardness of Rugao's educational and economic systems was often blamed on the county's poor communication and transportation links.(96) And indeed, communication between Rugao and the outside world was

often slow. Mail service to Shanghai took four to five days, the time required for a launch to wend its way down the Yunyan He, the Chang Jiang, and the Huangpu Jiang.(97) When the water in the canals dried up it could take even longer and sometimes stop completely. During such times the only way mail could move between Nantong and Rugao was by hand-pushed wheelbarrow.(98)

The time necessary to receive a message could be shortened by using the telegraph or telephone. For many years prior to 1927 Rugao was connected to the outside world by wireless, although it is unclear if private citizens could use the devices or if they were restricted solely to government business.(99) In the winter of 1927 the government inaugurated long-distance telephone service between Rugao and neighboring areas.(100) This vastly improved Rugao's communications, even though it only linked a few of the county's largest towns.(101)

Residents of Rugao probably also obtained some recent news from foreigners. Initially foreigners were "slow in entering" Rugao. Prior to the early 1920's non-Chinese businessmen or missionaries "were exceedingly rare and when they did make their appearance, it was but for a short trip to establish connections."(102) But the Christian Reformed Church in America, a small denomination with Dutch roots, changed this situation when it

established its only China mission in the county seat. Set up sometime in the mid-1920's, by November 1926 the mission was notable enough to be the target of an anti-foreign demonstration.(103) After 1927 the missionaries continued to reside in the large American-style homes they earlier had built near the city wall, and to run a mission hospital.(104) In 1934 they totalled some twenty-four souls.(105)

A foreigner who was not a missionary also occasionally appeared in Rugao. For example, in March 1928 the "world famous German traveler, Ping Rang" arrived in Rugao. He stayed at the peasant association (nongmin xiehui) and during his five-day visit "talked to every group and every school" before moving on.(106)

Obviously the presence of modern communications equipment, missionaries, and an occasional peripatetic foreigner meant that Rugao was not totally isolated from the outside world. However, the impact of these individuals and machines was felt mainly in the county seat. Little that was new or different penetrated the Rugao countryside, making it difficult for any group - Nationalist or Communist - to publicize their ideas and programs widely, and certainly presenting a challenge for those who tried.

Transportation

Outside of the telegraph and the telephone - to which only a few of the privileged had access - most of Rugao's communications relied on transportation facilities, and these were decidedly inferior. Boats were the most important mode of transport in Rugao, primarily small towboats that were pulled by humans up and down Rugao's many rivers, streams, and canals, and a few small steam-powered launches.(107) But these were dependent on the maintenance of an adequate water level in the canals, good weather, and the ability of boat owners to make a profit and stay in business. Unfortunately, all three of these conditions were sometimes lacking.(108)

In addition to its riverine network, before 1927 Rugao had one motor road (the "county road") which extended from the Nantong border to the county seat. In 1926 this route was in less than ideal condition. One person noted that it had six-inch deep ruts which created fears in him that "the jerking and twisting [of a car]... would tear a wheel off." Getting stuck also was not uncommon and getting out a task requiring much exertion.(109)

Whether because of its poor condition, or for some other reason, not many automobiles used this road. Not many horses or donkeys, of which Rugao had very few, did

either. Instead, most people who elected to move overland, and virtually all freight that was not put on boats, was carried in human-propelled wheelbarrows. These wooden contraptions had two-and-a-half-foot wheels with a seat suspended on each side, one for the passenger and the other for luggage. Needless to say, the barrows did not move very fast.(110)

But whatever its drawbacks, the "county road" did connect Rugao City with the major government and trade centers to its southeast and northwest. What it did not do was to unite the county capital with either the Chang Jiang on the south or the population centers directly to its east and west. Not until a more effective way of linking the various parts of the county together and of tying the county with cities beyond its borders was established would Rugao become receptive to modern ideas and a center for modern manufacturing and trade.

Trade

While poor transportation facilities limited the amount of goods that could be shipped, some items did make their way into or out of the county. Virtually all locally produced goods shipped beyond the county borders ended up in Shanghai.(111) To Shanghai Rugao sent its handicraft items, including lace, as well as eggs,

chickens, pork, and peanuts.(112) For example, two boat lines which called at the Chang Jiang port closest to Rugao City were called the "chicken boats" because of the "many baskets of eggs and chickens" they took to Shanghai daily.(113)

It is more difficult to determine what Rugao got in return for her products, that is, the extent to which Rugao exchanged her raw materials and semi-finished items for manufactured or Western goods that came from Shanghai, or through Shanghai from other parts of China and abroad. In the mid-1930's radios and bicycles appeared in the county. Clearly these were imported from beyond the county lines. In 1933 Russian oil also arrived and was sold at a price below that of the local product.(114) A year later the China Soap Company opened large quarters and was said to be "trying to push its product into every home."(115) Likewise, the amount of coal (not locally mined) being sold in the county increased.(116) In 1937 nurserymen peddling trees that could be planted and later cut down for firewood joined the competition.(117)

But the most unusual product introduced into Rugao was fresh milk. In 1934 a modern dairy was established in Rugao City with cows brought from Shandong.(118) As a result, sterilized milk could be ordered delivered every day, either hot or cold.(119) Needless to say, the "common

people" could not afford such a luxury and it was "limited to hospitals, schools and the better classes."(120)

Less exotic but more essential and affordable goods also reached the county, probably on the backs and in the barrows of peddlers. For example, in December 1933 several businessmen from Wuxi and Shanghai selling Chinese goods set up a temporary bazaar in an old temple. They apparently were very successful. One observer described their activity and impact as follows;

Here in a new semi-modern two story building on the old city temple site the businessmen displayed their wares and advertised heavily. Crowds of people daily throng the former temple courts now covered with little booths displaying many kinds of Chinese made goods. A fine thermos bottle can be purchased for 65 cents, handkerchiefs sell as low as four coppers and many other things sell at equally low prices. These merchantmen have carried many new ideas into the city. Several shops since have put in new display windows and goods are rapidly being introduced. The thermos bottle is finding its way into many homes to take the place of the old fashioned teapot covered with cotton-padded cloth or straw container so common throughout China.(121)

But in spite of the appearance of a few foreign-made items in Rugao, the county was a backwater relatively isolated from the large cities of China, the rest of the world, and its products. Moreover, on the eve of the Nationalists' arrival, it did not appear that the situation was about to change. In other words, if the Nationalists decided that they wanted to modernize Rugao, they would have to take purposeful, concrete actions to

bring such modernization about.

Public Utilities

Rugao's public utilities were not much more developed than its trade and transportation facilities. Sometime before 1927 the Rugao Illumination Company (Yao Ru Dianqi Gongsì) built a plant to provide light for the streets of the county capital.(122)

Outside the county seat at least one other town, Matang, had an electric plant. In the spring of 1926 four of the town's residents proposed and then built a generating plant capitalized at 15,000 yuan. They also erected three hundred light poles throughout the town. In December 1926 electricity was first sent through the wires to illuminate them.(123)

But in spite of these two efforts, Rugao on the eve of the 1927 upheaval cannot be said to have been electrified. On the contrary, only a tiny percentage of Rugao's urban residents could avail themselves of the newly generated power. Rural dwellers had no access to it at all.

Sanitation and Public Health

Sanitary drinking water was also unavailable to the bulk of Rugao's population. The main source of water in

the countryside as well as in the cities was the canals. Unfortunately, these canals were also the main sewer lines, as well as the most frequently used latrines (not to mention the main transportation arteries). For example, one observer in Rugao City noted that "in the early morning excreta is found all along the canal before beggars come to pick it up and sell it for a few pennies."(124)

For drinking purposes at least some Rugao residents - those with enough money to spend for fuel - boiled their water. But for washing dishes or vegetables they almost never did. Moreover, people always washed their vegetables in water before eating them, often in the raw state. The temptation to eat raw vegetables recently washed in canal water was especially strong in August, when the small white turnips for which Rugao was famous were sold raw in the streets for immediate consumption. As a result, the appearance of the turnip crop was almost inevitably followed by major outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as typhoid.(125)

The disposal of garbage presented no less of a difficulty than the disposal of human waste. Rugao was frequently reported to be a "clean city", where streets were swept daily and refuse was regularly collected and carried out of town.(126) However, this only moved the

problem, without solving it. Huge piles of garbage accumulated outside the city's gates, where they rotted and then were eventually sold for fertilizer.(127) At least one writer complained that "although the city is clean, huge piles of garbage are piled up outside each gate to greet the visitor coming in."(128)

Under such conditions the preservation of food presented no small problem. Rugao, in spite of its generating plant, had no refrigeration. Moreover, it did not even have an ice house. Melons and drinks (primarily aerated waters), as well as anything else that anyone wanted cooled, were placed in the city's few (probably contaminated) wells.(129)

The manner in which foodstuffs were sold was also unsanitary. Meat, potentially the greatest health hazard, was not a problem. During the summer months many meat shops were closed and that meat which was sold carried a very high price tag. Consequently, not much was consumed.(130) Vegetables, on the other hand, were a different matter. Traditionally, sellers of produce lined the sides of the main streets with their goods, not only creating unsanitary conditions, but also blocking traffic.(131)

During the hot, dry months of summer, Rugao's lack of sanitary facilities of all types produced exactly the

result that should have been expected - disease. With clockwork regularity outbreaks of man's most devastating illnesses struck the county, and like everything else spread their devastation along the routes of Rugao's rivers, streams, and canals. Meningitis and diptheria were regular visitors which favored the young as hosts.(132) Cholera, typhoid, and dysentery also took their yearly tolls. (133) The latter types of disease were especially serious because a large percentage of Rugao's population suffered from hookworm. Getting an intestinal infection on top of hookworm could be traumatic indeed.(134)

To treat disease Rugao had few medical facilities, especially when looked at in relation to the size of the county's total population. The county seat had two hospitals: a publicly-run hospital and a mission hospital. Both were set up prior to 1927 and both were small, containing only about twenty rooms each.(135) Neither was terribly well-equipped. When the mission hospital got an x-ray machine in 1935 it was big news because it relieved people of having to travel to Nantong or Shanghai if x-rays were needed.(136)

Other than the two hospitals, the county seat at any given time had several additional medical clinics, some specializing in the treatment of one disease, and others

temporarily established to deal with a particular medical emergency.(137) But outside the county seat modern medical care was apparently unheard of. There are no records of any modern medical facilities located in the countryside or of any western-trained doctors venturing out into the rural areas. Undoubtedly, Rugao had many practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine, but the high levels of disease present in the county indicate that they too must have been inadequate. A few of the wealthy may have made it to the county seat when they badly needed treatment, but otherwise most of the people of Rugao were at the mercy of nature, a problem the Nationalists would have to address if they wanted to raise productivity and lengthen the lives of Rugao's citizens.

Charitable Endeavors

Fortunately for the Rugao peasants, what they could produce in the fields coupled with what they could gain by engaging in sideline occupations was more often than not enough to sustain them. But occasionally unforeseeable tragedies did occur with which people could not cope. Most often these were local events which did not affect the county as a whole. They were, however, no less tragic for the individuals involved. For example, we have already mentioned the damage done by drought. In

addition, we shall see that on several occasions locusts plagued the county.(138) Moreover, in 1932 severe famine - the result of pirates, robbers, and flood waters - appeared in areas bordering the sea. As was common under such conditions, parents advertised their children for sale at two to three yuan each.(139)

For "centuries" Rugao had had well-established charitable organizations to take care of individuals who could no longer fend for themselves. There were orphan asylums, homes for the aged and feeble, trade schools for the poor, and institutions which especially during the winter months clothed and fed the cold and hungry. These were maintained by a combination of public and private funds.(140)

Periodically private individuals, either alone or working together with the county government, also took steps to deal with the human results of natural disasters. For example, in 1921 when some sections of Rugao (presumably those along the Chang Jiang and the sea) experienced flooding, local residents raised over 100,000 yuan to aid them.(141)

But sometimes the relief provided to the destitute was insufficient, and they were forced to leave their homes and become migrants. In Rugao, the number of people compelled to become wandering nomads was undoubtedly

smaller than that found in many areas of China, especially the northern plains. But such migrants did exist. Many probably went to Shanghai,(142) but others merely became homeless vagrants residing in their old native places. For example, in 1928 Rugao's magistrate said that "although the county is considered a well-to-do county it still has many homeless vagrants."(143)

Because it was on a commonly used migration route linking the poorer areas to its west and north with the rich cities of the Chang Jiang delta, Rugao also had problems with non-native itinerants. For example, one day in July 1930, eight boats carrying three hundred vagrants unexpectedly arrived in a north Rugao village. After their arrival some of the boats' "passengers" came ashore and robbed two houses. They then went to local officials and were given "several tens" of yuan in the hopes that they would leave. But the "visitors" did not budge. They lingered for two more nights, "treating the belongings of the villages' peasants as if they were their own." Fortunately, after this they departed, leaving much destruction behind them.(144)

There was no established method for dealing with migrants other than that used above. Local gentry and officials gathered (sometimes large) sums of money to give them in the hopes that they would move on to some other

area. If the vagrants refused to move on, nothing more could be done.(145)

After 1927 the number of private individuals involved in Rugao's charitable work appeared to drop sharply. The question then became whether the Nationalist government would move in to fill the remaining gap. To do so would be expensive and necessitate the expansion of the government organization itself. But not to do so would risk further social disorder as the poor and homeless took to the paths of Rugao in search of warmth and sustenance.

Political Organizations

Prior to 1927 Rugao was a county set up under the Jiangsu Provincial Government, the latter ultimately responsible to warlord Sun Chuanfang. The county's most important political official was the xian zhishi.(146) He was responsible to the provincial government (147) and also to the county governing committee, called the xian yishi hui.(148) It was this county governing committee, most often acting on the advice of its executive committee called the canshi hui (chaired by the xian zhishi), which in theory decided all county government policies. The county budget, all county laws, and many other important matters all came before it for final judgement before being transmitted to the county government bureaucracy

(xian shu) for implementation.

In fact, real power appeared to reside, not in the county governing committee, but in its executive committee, which in turn was heavily influenced by the magistrate. For example, all real debate appears to have taken place in the executive committee, while the governing committee appears to have acted only as a rubber stamp.(149)

The xian zhishi also presided over the county government bureaucracy. In addition to the xian zhishi's private staff, this bureaucracy had at least two semi-independent offices, an Education Office (Jiaoyu ju) and a Commerce Office (Shiye ju). They reported both to the county government and to the relevant department in Nanjing, the provincial capital.(150) Subordinate to the Commerce Office was yet another semi-autonomous entity, the Road Construction Office (Lu gongcheng qu). (151)

Below the county level Rugao was divided into eighteen districts (qu) each of which probably had between 50,000 and 75,000 people.(152) Each district had its own government similar in form to that found at the county level. The district political head was known as the zongdong, and he presided over an executive committee whose members were called dongshi. Both were chosen by the district governing committee or qu yishi hui.(153)

As at the county level, the qu yishi hui, in theory, was also the main district policy-making body. It set budgets, etc. which the zongdong was then responsible for carrying out. In fact, similar to its county-level counterpart, the district governing committee appears to have given routine approval to the actions taken at executive committee sessions. The only difference between county and district was that unlike the county magistrate, the district heads had no allegiance or formal ties to higher-level organizations or individuals, and were gentry members resident in the district in which they served.(154)

As far as can be determined, the make-up of the xian yishi hui as well as the various district yishi hui was determined by the local gentry at that particular level or in that particular place. Although members served for fixed terms, no formal procedures for their selection appear to have been followed. Periodically it was announced that the terms of the old yishi hui members (qu yishi hui yuan) had expired and that new members had been chosen. Exactly who did the choosing or how they did so was never detailed.(155)

Below the district level public order was in the hands of dibao, village-level officials responsible for collecting taxes and for arresting thieves and other

disturbers of the public peace.(156) Presumably local gentry members also played a role, although their actual functions are impossible to ascertain.(157) In addition, there were miscellaneous officials such as the officials and soldiers of the salt monopoly,(158) lijin (transportation) tax collectors,(159) and local military men and police,(160) who undoubtedly had a strong impact on local life in whatever area they were assigned.

The Onset of Change

Overall, politics, as everything else in Rugao prior to 1927, appears to have been an orderly, quiet affair. There are no records of any major political disputes, nor any major political upheavals. While many of Rugao's citizens were poor, they seemed reasonably content with their lot and not inclined to protest. Few bandit raids or attacks found their way into the press. Since there is no reason to believe such reports would have been suppressed, we must conclude that Rugao was, indeed, a relatively peaceful place.

But beginning in the mid-1920's new ideas, individuals, and organizations arrived in Rugao to challenge its traditional social and political arrangements. These ideas and organizations were brought in by people who traveled the traditional transportation

system from Shanghai, to Nantong, and then to the Rugao county seat.(161) First they arrived secretly and singly. Later they came openly in large military detachments. But they all confronted the same question: how to organize and govern the fairly prosperous, but backward, isolated, uneducated, conservative people of Rugao. The remaining chapters of this work will describe what happened between 1927 and 1937 as the Nationalist Party, the Nationalist Government, the Communists, and the local elite all in competition with each other tried to resolve this increasingly thorny problem.

Chapter One

Notes

(1) For details about the life of Zhang Jian and his activities in Nantong see Samuel C. Chu, Reformer in Modern China: Chang Chien 1835-1926 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

(2) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianshi [Annals of Jiangsu's sixty-one counties] (Shanghai: Shanghai Yinshuguan, 1936), p. 124. Maps showing Jiangsu's counties can be found in China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, comp. Ministry of Industry, Bureau of Foreign Trade (Shanghai: Ministry of Industry, Bureau of Foreign Trade, 1933; reprint ed., Taipei, Taiwan: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1973); and Xingzheng Yuan, Nong Cun Fuxing Weiyuan Hui [Executive Yuan, Rural Reconstruction Committee], ed., Jiangsu Sheng Nong Cun Diaocha [Investigation of agricultural conditions in Jiangsu Province] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1934).

(3) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 124; and North China Herald (Shanghai), 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(4) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168. Prior to 1911 much salt was produced along the Rugao coast. However, by the mid-Republican period the salt industry had closed down. For more details on the salt industry in Rugao see Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao [Jiangsu Province Government Gazette], no. 838 (7 September 1931), pp. 5-6, and North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(5) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 124.

(6) North China Herald 16 February 1932, p. 244.

(7) The vulnerability of Rugao's communications and transportation links was especially apparent during the drought of 1932-1933. See North China Herald, 10 August 1932, p. 213; 11 January 1933, p. 50; and 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(8) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168. Although no attempt has been made to locate Rugao within Skinner's complex hierarchy of urban centers, using Skinner's method of dividing the Chinese countryside into

"core" and "periphery", Rugao, as expected, appears to fall somewhere in the middle. Specifically, it appears that Skinner would locate Rugao on the edge of the "Lower Yangtze Regional Core" (See maps on pages 214 and 215 of G. William Skinner "Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth-Century China," in The City in Late Imperial China, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1977), and that he would classify it in economic terms as a "local city" and in administrative terms as a "low-level capital". (See G. William Skinner, "Cities and the Hierarchy of Local Systems," in The City in Late Imperial China, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1977) pp. 347-351 for a description of how Skinner classifies cities economically, and Skinner, "Regional Urbanization," p. 222 and Skinner "Cities," pp. 301-307 for a description of how he classifies them administratively).

(9) The following give brief histories of Rugao as an administrative unit through the mid-1930's: "Jiangsu Ge Xian Shi Zhi Lue (Liu): Rugao Xian" [Brief description of Jiangsu's counties and cities (six): Rugao County], Jiangsu Wenxian [Jiangsu Wenxian], no. 13 (16 June 1972), p. 22; Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 124; and Zhao Ruheng, compiler, Jiangsu Sheng Jian [Handbook on Jiangsu Province] (Shanghai: Xin Zhonggui Jiangshe Xuehui, 1935), Section 1, p. 13. For information on Rugao after 1949 see the map in Lu Xiang, Shuixiang Jiangsu [Jiangsu, land of rivers and lakes] (Hong Kong: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1978).

(10) "Jiangsu Ge Xian Shi Zhi Lue," p. 22; and Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, sec. 1, p. 13.

(11) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 124; and "Jiangsu Ge Xian Shi Zhi Lue," p. 22.

(12) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 331 (8 January 1931), p. 9. During the Nanjing Decade, for administrative purposes all Jiangsu counties were divided into three ranks. It would appear that only in 1935 was Rugao for the first time designated a first, or highest level, county. In contrast, Nantong maintained a first-level ranking throughout the Decade and Tai County a second-level one. For county-level rankings in 1931 see Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 331 (8 January 1931), p. 9. For county-level rankings in 1935 see Wang Peitang, Jiangsu Sheng Xiangtu Zhi [The geography and

local history of Jiangsu Province], 2 vols. (Changsha: Shangwu, 1938), p. 226.

(13) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian Xianzheng Gaikuang" [Conditions of Rugao County government], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 5 (11 October 1928): 64. Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, sec. 1, p. 25 lists Rugao as having 5,258,250 shi mu of flat land, no hilly land, and 66,000 shi mu of water. (A shi mu equalled .000,666,667 of a square kilometer. *Ibid.*, p. 22.)

(14) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang [Jiangsu Farmer's Bank head office], ed., Disan Nian zhi Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang [The third year of the Jiangsu Farmer's Bank] (Zhenjiang: 1930-1932), p 221; and North China Herald, 26 April 1932, p. 135.

(15) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 124; and "Jiangsu Ge Xian Shi Zhi Lue," p. 22.

(16) *Ibid.*; and China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, pp. 1022 and 1044.

(17) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 221; China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, pp. 1022-1023; and Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, sec. 5, p. 134. See also the map found on Zhang Qiyun, Gongfei Qieju Xia de Zhongguo Dalu Fen Sheng Ditu [Provincial maps of the Communist-occupied Chinese mainland] (Taipei: Shanghai Yinshua Chang, 1966), plate 17. It should also be noted that some maps show the Xiaoxi He ending at Banjing, or turning south, instead of continuing to Huangqiao. (See Chugoku Dai Chizu [The complete China atlas] (Tokyo: Jimbunsha, 1973), plate 9; and The Times Atlas of China (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Company, 1974), p 43.) However, since it is improbable that no major artery connected Rugao City and Huangqiao (and thus also Rugao and the county seat of Taixing west of Huangqiao), the lack of such a link is probably a cartographer's omission.

(18) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168. For a detailed history of the Fangong Dike see Wang Peitang, Jiangsu Sheng, pp. 163-164.

(19) North China Herald, 19 February 1936, p. 305.

(20) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(21) Wang Peitang, Jiangsu Sheng, p. 288. Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 126 gives a total field area for Rugao of 3,008,349 mu. Jiangsu Sheng Zheng: Jiangsu Jianshe Yuekan [Jiangsu provincial government: Jiangsu reconstruction monthly] 4, no. 3 (1 March 1937); 18 (s.p.) uses a 3,990,992 mu figure. Since both sources were published at approximately the same time, it is unclear what accounts for the difference.

(22) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, pp. 208 and 224-226.

(23) On the 1932 drought see North China Herald, 29 March 1932, p. 476; 10 August 1932, p. 213; 21 August 1932, p. 331; 11 January 1933, p. 50; and 29 March 1933, p. 491. On the 1934 drought see North China Herald, 4 July 1934, p. 12; 18 July 1934, p. 91; and 12 September 1934, p. 385. On the 1936 drought see North China Herald, 11 November 1936, p. 225.

(24) Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan [Jiangsu Party affairs weekly], no. 27 (20 July 1930), p. 92. It should be noted that no population figures from this period are considered completely accurate. The figures given here can at best be taken as a rough indicator of the number of residents Rugao really possessed.

(25) Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 14 March 1929, p. 3. Note that the figures for urban dwellers and monks are for 1929. For 1930 both counts should probably be increased slightly.

(26) Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, sec. 1, p. 33; and China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, p. 10.

(27) North China Herald, 9 January 1935, p. 49.

(28) Su Heng Banyuekan [Su Heng semi-monthly], no. 16 (5 July 1936), p. 61.

(29) Chang Ch'un-ming, A New Government for Rural China: The Political Aspects of Rural Reconstruction (Tientsin: China Institute of Pacific Relations, 1936), p. 243.

(30) For a discussion of the Jiangsu government's regulations concerning district organization, see Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, sec. 3, pp. 37-38. In 1936 Rugao was listed as having the prescribed fifteen

districts. See Su Heng Banyuekan, no. 16 (5 July 1936), p.59.

(31) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 64.

(32) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian p. 220.

(33) Richard H. Pousma, An Eventful Year in the Orient (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1927), p. 77.

(34) Ibid., p. 219.

(35) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 67.

(36) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 126 gives a figure of 3,008,349 mu. Jiangsu Sheng Zheng: Jiangsu Jianshe 4, no. 3 (1 March 1937), p. 18 (s.p.) uses a figure of 3,990,992 mu.

(37) See Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, pp. 221-222 for 1928 county crop figures broken down by type; and China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, pp. 144-200 for 1932-1933 figures. Jiangsu Sheng Zheng: Jiangsu Jianshe 4, no. 3 (1 March 1937), pp. 18, 20, 23, and 25 (s.p.) has some 1935 county crop figures. Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 126 also lists figures for rice and cotton, although his figure for rice production seems too high when compared with the 1928 account.

(38) North China Herald, 15 August 1934, p. 240.

(39) After the 1932-1933 drought this switch in crops is frequently mentioned. See North China Herald, 15 August 1934, p. 240; 5 June 1935, p. 381; 28 June 1933, p. 490; and 4 July 1934, p. 12.

(40) North China Herald, 15 August 1934, p. 240.

(41) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 222.

(42) North China Herald, 7 November 1934, p. 210.

(43) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 67.

(44) Jiangsu Sheng Zheng: Jiangsu Jianshe 4, no. 3 (1 March 1937): p. 31 (s.p.).

(45) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 67.

(46) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 226.

(47) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168 says, "To the north and to the east there is poverty among the tenants of the land. At various places landowners with large homes are nestled."

(48) See Chapter Eight for a description of the 1928-1930 Communist movement.

(49) Jing Song, Jiangsu Zhengzhi Zhuangkuang yu Dang de Renwu he Celue [Political conditions in Jiangsu and the Party's mission and strategy], (n.p., 1929), p. 18; Wei Duo, "Jiangbei Yan Hai zhi Jufeng Eliang Huo" [Hurricanes and tidal waves of the North Jiangsu coast], Shehui Xinwen ["Society Mercury"] 4, no. 26 (18 September 1933): 409; and Li Jixing, "Duiyu Jiangsu Kenhuang zhi Yijian" [An opinion on Jiangsu's reclaimed land], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 12-13 (1 January 1929): 85.

(50) North China Herald, 23 October 1935, p. 147; and China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, pp. 231 and 234-235.

(51) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 224.

(52) *Ibid.*, p. 222.

(53) North China Herald, 17 May 1933, p. 254; and China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, p. 555.

(54) North China Herald, 17 May 1933, p. 254; and China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, pp. 555-560. For example, because a Philippine firm controlled one of the ham-producing plants in Rugao, most of the hams sent from China to the Philippines came from Rugao. (North China Herald, 7 November 1934, p. 210.

(55) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 222.

- (56) *Ibid.*, p. 223.
- (57) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 2151 (16 December 1935), p. 12.
- (58) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 222; and Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 67.
- (59) Shi Bao, 19 August 1928, p. 4.
- (60) *Ibid.*
- (61) Shi Bao, 19 November 1928, p. 8.
- (62) *Ibid.*
- (63) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 222.
- (64) *Ibid.*
- (65) See Chapter Four for a description of these sea bandits and how they operated.
- (66) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, pp. 222-223.
- (67) China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, p. 37.
- (68) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 125; and Pousma, An Eventful Year, p. 87. North China Herald, 14 March 1934, p. 407 mentions that the city wall "on top is wide enough for 2 - 3 motor cars to pass if they could get up there."
- (69) Pousma, An Eventful Year, pp. 84-85.
- (70) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 125.
- (71) North China Herald, 24 November 1931, p. 269.
- (72) North China Herald, 23 February 1932, p. 284. Because the article says that the park was a "credit to the public spirited citizens of Jukao [Rugaol]," I assume it was privately supported.
- (73) North China Herald, 14 March 1934, p. 407; and 4 July 1934, p. 12.

(74) North China Herald, 4 July 1934, p. 12; and 12 September 1934, p. 385.

(75) Milton T. Stauffer, The Christian Occupation of China (Shanghai: China Continuation Committee, 1922), p. 134. Stauffer lists twelve Jiangsu cities with populations over 100,000 and ten Jiangsu cities with populations between 50,000 and 100,000.

(76) The North China Herald, 19 February 1936 says, "Only a few 10's of thousands live in the walled city of Rugao." It is hard to know what this statement means, since much of Rugao City's population (although it is not clear how much) lived immediately outside the wall.

(77) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(78) Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi, p. 125.

(79) China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, p. 316.

(80) Ibid., pp. 125-126.

(81) North China Herald, 7 July 1937, p. 11.

(82) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 67.

(83) Shi Bao, 24 January 1927, sec.1, p. 4; and China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, p. 58. I have not been able to locate a source that lists an American dollar equivalent.

(84) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 225.

(85) Ibid.

(86) Ibid., p. 226.

(87) Chen Han-seng, The Present Agrarian Problem in China (Shanghai: China Institute of Pacific Relations, 1933), p. 21. The figures must refer to Rugao City alone, since the number seems too low to be for the entire county.

(88) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 226.

(89) Chu, Reformer, p. 104. Stauffer, Christian Occupation, p. 143 lists the number of primary schools in 1916 at 263. This is probably a typographical error.

(90) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 65

(91) Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan, no. 27 (20 July 1930), p. 92.

(92) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 64. It should be noted that during the Nanjing Decade in regard to educational affairs Rugao did not seem to be out of step with other Jiangsu counties. Rugao had the largest population of any Jiangsu county, but it also had one of the largest educational budgets - between 220,000 and 240,000 yuan in 1928. Only two counties - Shanghai and Wujiang - were spending more than Rugao at this time, and only one county - Wuxi - equalled it. (Shi Bao, 11 March 1928, p. 7.) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 7 also mentions a 230,000 figure for the 1928 Rugao educational budget.

(93) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(94) Figures for the number of students who left the county to attend school elsewhere are impossible to obtain. However, biographies of Rugao natives who later served in the local Nationalist Party and government, as well as in the opposition Communist movement, reveal that many followed this course.

(95) For more information on Nantong Normal and the role it played in the Rugao Communist movement see Chapter Eight. Ironically, both a major Communist leader, Wang Yingzhao, and an important local gentry member who also held several major posts in the Nationalist government, Sha Shidu, were graduates of Nantong Normal. See Jiangsu Jiaoyu Gailan [An overview of Jiangsu Education] (n.p., 1932; reprint ed., Taipei, Taiwan: Chuanji Wenxue Chubanshe, 1971) sec. 1, p. 133 for information on Sha.

(96) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 64.

(97) North China Herald, 12 September 1934, p. 385.

(98) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(99) I have not been able to determine when Rugao officials started using the telegraph. However, by 1926

frequent references to the wireless device appeared in the press.

(100) Shi Bao, 13 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.

(101) See Chapter Four for a description of the subsequent county government expansion of the telephone network.

(102) North China Herald, 1 February 1933, p. 168.

(103) Pousma, An Eventful Year, pp. 81-82, p. 216.

(104) Pousma, An Eventful Year, p. 77 for a picture of the missionary residences. They must have appeared quite anomalous in Rugao. The North China Herald throughout the Nanjing Decade ran articles about the mission hospital. They are too numerous to cite here.

(105) North China Herald, 19 September 1936, p. 422.

(106) Shi Bao, 30 March 1928, p. 7.

(107) North China Herald, 24 November 1931, p. 269; and 26 April 1932, p. 135. Most of the towboats were pulled by three people. For a detailed description of how the towboat system worked see Pousma, An Eventful Year, p. 75. Some small watercraft probably also were poled up and down Rugao's canals. However, I have seen no references to the use of this technique.

(108) The lack of water in the canals and its impact on transportation was frequently mentioned in the press. For example, see North China Herald, 10 August 1932, p. 213; 11 January 1933, p. 50; 1 February 1933, p. 168; and Shi Bao 24 August 1928, p. 8. Before 1935 bad weather conditions often delayed the boats that linked the northern and southern banks of the Chang Jiang. In May 1935 a new ferry service was inaugurated with boats that supposedly would not be affected by inclement conditions. (North China Herald, 5 June 1935, p. 381.) The dependence on private enterprise to supply launches for public travel often meant that transportation was inconvenient or unavailable. For example, in 1928 it was said that transportation between Rugao City and Juegang was difficult in spite of the fact that these were the county's two most important cities. (Shi Bao, 29 December 1928, p. 4.) Launch companies plying the route between the two seemed to go in and out of business with a

great deal of regularity. For example, see Shi Bao, 9 April 1928, p. 7; and 29 December 1928, p. 4.

(109) Pousma, an Eventful Year, p. 75.

(110) Pousma, An Eventful Year, p. 76. In 1933 the entire county had only 1,000 donkeys and no horses or mules. (China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, p. 270.)

(111) Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan, no. 27 (20 July 1930), p. 92.

(112) North China Herald, 29 March 1932, p. 476; 26 April 1933, p. 134; and 10 April 1935, p. 55.

(113) North China Herald, 10 April 1935, p. 55.

(114) North China Herald, 26 April 1933, p. 134.

(115) North China Herald, 12 September 1934, p. 385.

(116) North China Herald, 13 February 1934, p. 283.

(117) North China Herald, 24 March 1937, p. 493.

(118) North China Herald, 9 January 1935, p. 49.

(119) North China Herald, 14 October 1936, p. 56.

(120) North China Herald, 6 February 1935, p. 208.

(121) North China Herald, 19 January 1934, p. 47.

(122) The company existed as early as November 1926 when it agreed to keep the electric lights illuminated longer hours because of the danger of bandits. (Shi Bao, 19 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.)

(123) Shi Bao, 17 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.

(124) North China Herald, 14 October 1936, p. 54.

(125) Ibid.

(126) North China Herald, 6 June 1934, p. 344; 5 June 1935, p. 381; and 6 January 1937, p. 13.

(127) North China Herald, 6 June 1934, p. 341, 5 June 1935, p. 381.

(128) North China Herald, 18 October 1933, p. 90.

(129) North China Herald, 26 July 1933, p. 129.

(130) North China Herald, 16 September 1936, p. 487.

(131) North China Herald, 18 October 1933, p. 90.

(132) For example, Shi Bao, 9 March 1930, p. 4; and 21 May 1931 mention meningitis, and Shi Bao, 18 June 1928, p. 3; and 9 March 1930, p. 4 mention diphtheria.

(133) On cholera see North China Herald, 26 July 1933, p. 129; on typhoid see North China Herald, 16 September 1936, p. 487; and 9 December 1936, p. 400; on dysentery see North China Herald, 19 September 1934, p. 422.

(134) North China Herald, 19 September 1934, p. 422.

(135) The public hospital was founded in 1921 (Shi Bao, 13 November 1926, p. 4). It is unclear when the mission hospital was set up. Apparently no additional medical facilities were built during the Nanjing Decade. North China Herald, 18 October 1933, p. 90 still mentions only these two hospitals.

(136) North China Herald, 25 September 1935, p. 502.

(137) See Chapter Six.

(138) See Chapter Four for a description of Rugao's locust problem.

(139) North China Herald, 16 February 1932, p. 244. The article actually says \$2 - \$3. I have assumed that in this case the writer meant not American dollars but Chinese dollars or yuan.

(140) See North China Herald, 1 November 1933, p. 171; and 5 December 1934, p. 370; and Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 370 for descriptions of various charitable organizations that existed in the county seat. Shi Bao, 1 August 1928, p. 4 mentions a similar organization set up in the port of Zhanghuang Gang. Although we have few references to charitable organizations outside the county seat, there is no reason to assume they did not exist.

(141) Shi Bao, 18 December 1927, p. 3.

(142) North China Herald, 1 November 1933, p. 171 mentions that when Rugao lepers were thrown out of work they went to Shanghai. North China Herald, 3 February 1937, p. 187 says unemployed boat people went to Shanghai to work in the factories.

(143) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 168.

(144) Shi Bao, 13 July 1930, p. 4. For another report on incoming migrants see Shi Bao, 12 April 1927, p. 4.

(145) Shi Bao, 14 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2 describes an incident where over five hundred migrants from Hubei arrived in Rugao. Here too, local gentry raised capital to send the new arrivals beyond the county's borders. Shi Bao, 2 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4 provides another similar example.

(146) Because almost all articles about county government before April 1927 contain a reference to the zhishi, references to his activity are too numerous to cite here. See for example Shi Bao, 31 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 5 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 7 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 1 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 4 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 19 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; 1 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; and 24 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.

(147) See Shi Bao, 23 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 31 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2 for examples of the subordination of the zhishi to the provincial government.

(148) For example, it was the County Governing Committee, not the xian zhishi, which ultimately had to approve all local budgets. (Shi Bao, 3 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.)

(149) See Shi Bao, 11 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 12 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 10 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 14 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; and 13 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4 for the kinds of issues the canshi hui took up. Issues approved by the canshi hui were then transferred to the yishi hui for final authorization. For examples of other yishi hui activity, see Shi Bao, 2 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; 21 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; 13 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4;

and 21 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.

(150) Shi Bao, 16 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2 provides an example of how the Education Office was responsible to the provincial Education Department, and 17 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2 of how it interacted with the county governing committee. See also Shi Bao, 26 October, sec. 1, p. 2 for an example of Education Office interaction with other governing bodies. See Shi Bao, 26 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 30 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 4 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4 for examples of Commerce Office activity and its relationship to both county and provincial government organizations.

(151) For an example of the activities of the Road Construction Office see Shi Bao, 5 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.

(152) For example, the Lifa district had 60,000 people.

(153) See Shi Bao, 28 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 14 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 22 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 26 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2 for descriptions of how the canshi hui was chosen in Dingyan, Chahe, Juegang, and Dongchen respectively. See Shi Bao, 20 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; 27 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; 5 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; and 18 February 1927, sec. 1 p. 4 for examples of congdong activities.

(154) For examples of yishi hui activity see Shi Bao, 10 November 1926 sec. 1, p. 4; 6 February 1927, sec. 1, p. 4; and 2 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4. See Shi Bao, 6 February 1927 for an example of dongshi hui activity.

(155) For example, see Shi Bao, 21 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2, which announces the selection of yiyuan in the town of Juegang, and Shi Bao, 28 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2, which announces the selection of yiyuan in the town of Chahe.

(156) See Chapter Four for a detailed history of Rugao's dibao.

(157) Gentry members (shishen or yishen) are referred to frequently in articles about pre-1927 county or district-level government in Rugao. See for example Shi Bao, 4 September 1926, sec. 1, p. ; 14 October 1926,

sec. 1, p. 2; 16 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; 11 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; and 9 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4. Unfortunately, we have no references to their role below the district level, although it is hard to imagine that it was not substantial.

(158) Salt monopoly soldiers were often drafted locally. See Shi Bao, 26 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(159) See Shi Bao, 27 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 5 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 3 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 21 July 1927, p. 8 for examples of the impact that lijin tax collectors could have on a particular area.

(160) The county police and their equipment are described in Shi Bao, 1 December 1926 sec. 1, p. 4.

(161) Often these travelers were returning Rugao natives who had originally set out to seek education or fortune away from their place of birth.

Chapter Two

The Nationalist Party Organization in Rugao

In March 1926 the Nationalist Party officially established two district-level Party offices (qu dang bu) in Rugao. In December of the same year five Rugao Party members, Wang Yingzhao, Lu Jinghuai, Ji Yun, Tang Kezuo, and Ma Jianbo opened a third district-level Party office. A short month later, in January 1927, the Nationalists in Rugao, led by the same five just-mentioned individuals, announced the founding of the Rugao County Party Headquarters (Rugao Xian dang bu). Under its auspices were the three already existing district Party offices, thirty-five sub-district Party offices (qu fen bu), and eighty-six Party members.(1)

What was the nature of the Rugao Nationalist Party? As we shall see, the Rugao Party was not a static entity. Quite the contrary. The Rugao Nationalist Party changed dramatically during the ten years of the Nanjing Decade. At its founding in early 1927, the members of the Rugao Party branch were young, idealistic, and enthusiastic. Most were also simultaneously members of the Rugao Communist Party. Throughout the first phase of Nationalist Party activity in Rugao (May 1927 to May 1928)

this group of people attacked previous local elite leaders, worked to set up mass organizations among Rugao's students, workers and peasants, and strived to carry out both Nationalist and Communist Party objectives through the launching of various mass campaigns.

As a result of the activities of its early members, the Nationalist Party, for a brief period, became the most important political group in Rugao. The government, as succeeding chapters will show, opposed Party policies but was too weak to do anything effective to counter them. The local elite, as also will become apparent later in this narrative, stunned by Party attacks and by the threat of future attacks, voluntarily in many instances and not so voluntarily in others, reduced their role in county affairs. This left only the Party organization to carry on the day-to-day governing of Rugao.

But the Party's moment of glory was a short one. During the second phase of its existence (from May 1928 to October 1930) the Nationalist Party was severely weakened by the departure of the Communists from its ranks and the resulting drop in its membership, from over five hundred to fewer than two hundred individuals. Nevertheless, during this time the Party, under the leadership of Dong Xiaosu, continued to carry out some of its old programs, noticeably a mass campaign against merchants who sold

Japanese goods.

During the third phase of its activity (October 1930 to late 1937) the Rugao Nationalist Party became an empty shell. Rugao's Party members seemed more concerned with personal advancement than idealistic causes, more involved in petty individual feuds and disputes than in the healing of the nation's ills. What had started as a vibrant revolutionary tidal wave had become a stagnant pool.

The remainder of this chapter will trace the dramatic rise and subsequent fall of the Rugao Nationalist Party. It will take up in turn each of the three periods or phases into which the activities of the Party seem to easily fall, and for each phase describe the characteristics of Party members, the Party organization, and the programs and policies which the Party tried to carry out. In so doing it will attempt to uncover that sequence of events through which Rugao's Nationalist Party progressed from an active agent of change to a passive acceptor and preserver of the status quo, and to identify those factors, internal or external, which caused the Rugao Party to follow the path that it did.

Furthermore, through a study of Nationalist Party organization and activities in Rugao, I hope not only to detail events in Rugao, but also to shed light on the nature of the Nationalist movement in general. During the

Nanjing Deacde Rugao was neither an early Party center which produced important leaders active on the national and provincial levels, nor an area where the Nationalist Party had trouble getting established. No major Party politician had a base in Rugao and no major Party event of special significance took place within Rugao's borders, yet Rugao did have an active Party with several hundred members. In other words, in its Party politics, as in everything else, Rugao was an ordinary sort of place very much like most Chinese counties in which the Nationalist Party tried to gain a toehold between 1927 and 1937.(2) Thus, as in everything else, it is the ordinariness of Rugao that makes it a fascinating place to examine.

Table 2. Summary of Organizational Changes in the
Rugao County Party Headquarters

Date	Party Leadership Organization	Group in Control
<u>Underground Party</u>		
1926 March-December	Formation of district-level Party offices	Communists
1927 January	County Party Headquarters established	Communists
<u>First Period</u>		
1927 June 3-7 (approx.)	Provisional Committee	Communists
1927 July 15-November	Special Committee	Communists
1927 November-1928 February	Provisional Executive Committee	Western Hills Clique
1928 February	Restored Special Committee (First)	Communists
<u>Second Period</u>		
1928 February-April	Restored Special Committee (Second)	FF Clique
1928 May-June	Party Custodianship under Dong Xiaosu	FF Clique
1928 July-1929 February	Party Directorate	FF Clique

Date (cont.)	Party Leadership Organization (cont.)	Group in Control (cont.)
1929 February- 1930 mid-Sept- ember	Executive and Super- visory Committees	FF Clique
(1930 June)	(County Party Congress)	(FF Clique)

Third Period

1930 mid-Sept- ember	Party Affairs Rectifi- cation Committee	FF Clique
1931 August-	Second Stage Executive and Supervisory Com- mittees	FF Clique

The Founding and Secret Period of the Nationalist Party in Rugao

Not much information is available about Rugao's early Nationalist Party members. We know that three of its five founders were technical or normal school graduates and that almost all other individuals for whom biographical data is available had some college or advanced specialized training. It seems that the greatest number obtained their higher education either in the city of Rugao itself, in the neighboring county capital of Nantong, or in Shanghai. In these cities most attended a normal school or some kind of specialized training institute. After graduation the majority appeared to make their living by teaching, most in one of Rugao's elementary schools.(3)

Missing from the ranks of the early Rugao Party were workers and peasants. On the one hand the lack of workers is easy to understand. Because Rugao had no well-developed industries, it also had very few workers. On the other hand, the absence of peasants from the Party is harder to comprehend. At this time seventy-five to eighty per cent of Rugao's population were peasants. Most likely the Rugao Party's failure to include peasants within its ranks was the direct result of the way in which the Rugao Nationalists grew and spread - that is through contacts made in the schools - which for financial reasons

few peasants could afford to attend.(4)

The lack of workers and peasants in the Party probably also reflected the early Party's lack of any mass organizations to recruit the uneducated. In the few months after the Party's founding the only active mass organizations the Rugao Party directed were a student association (xuesheng hui) and the Elementary School Teacher's Association (Xiaoxue jiaoyuan lianhehui). Both clearly indicated that the Nationalist Party in Rugao originated among the learned - primarily teaching professionals - and those with whom the educated had direct contact.(5)

In their early years Rugao's Nationalists almost uniformly supported radical social and political ideas. Many had close ties to the equally pubescent Rugao Communist Party. Two of the five founders of the Rugao Nationalist Party, Wang Yingzhao and Lu Jinghuai, simultaneously were active members of the Rugao Communist Party, and many other individuals (in accordance with the provisions of the 1922 First United Front agreement worked out between the Communists and the Nationalists) held dual registration cards. In this respect the Rugao Party was not unlike the higher-level Jiangsu Provincial Nationalist Party organization or the majority of other county-level Nationalist Party organizations within the province at

this time.(6)

Equally striking are the indications that even those Nationalist Party leaders who did not identify with the Communists supported a range of ideas and programs similar to those advocated by their Communist counterparts. Ji Yun, one of the founding members of the Rugao Nationalist Party and apparently its first Party secretary, was not a Communist, but he was radical enough to be accused of Communist ties and in the summer of 1927 for a brief time clapped in jail. Later, in June 1928, along with two other active and frequent dissenters from Nationalist Party policies, Ji, probably to make better known the unorthodox views of himself and his followers, started to publish a newspaper. Subsequently, Ji was appointed to head Rugao's government-operated experimental cotton farm. Ostensibly this last appointment was made because Ji had received vocational training in how to raise cotton. In fact, it was probably made to keep Ji out of the way, and out of politics. His name was never mentioned again in connection with Nationalist Party activities in Rugao.(7)

Tang Kezuo, another Party founder who was not a Communist, received similar treatment. In September 1930, along with several others known to be active in Rugao's mass organizations, Tang was arrested. Later the court

temporarily released him on bail. (The outcome of his trial, if it took place, is not recorded.) Of the original Rugao County Nationalist Party leaders, only Ma Jianbo held views mild enough - or conservative enough - to keep him out of later trouble.(8)

We do not know a great deal about the accomplishments of the Rugao Party's initial leadership. By early April 1927 the National Revolutionary Army had occupied all of Jiangsu south of the Chang Jiang, but it did not cross that waterway until May. As a result, during the tenure of the initial leadership, the so-called "secret period" (mimi shiqi - January-May 1927) Party operations in Rugao were underground, primarily of a military rather than a political nature, and not well publicized. We know that the Party organized a "guide battalion" (xiangdao dui) which provided the National Revolutionary Army with data on local geography and communications as well as knowledge about the strength of opposing warlord armies. Furthermore, we are aware that the Party aided the revolutionary effort by financing all Party activities out of the pockets of individual members rather than by appealing to the central Party office or army headquarters for funds. But we have no evidence that the Rugao Party made any attempts to organize workers or peasants, or that it sent out propaganda troops to precede the army in its

travels through the country, as reports from elsewhere might lead one to expect.(9)

The Provisional and Special Party Committees: The Communists and Left-wing Come to Power

On May 26, 1927 the second division of He Yingqin's First Route Army occupied Rugao. They stayed one day and then moved on to the north and west. But other Nationalist soldiers came to take their places and over the next week Rugao was the scene of much activity as troop after troop of fighters passed through in pursuit of Sun Chuanfang's fleeing forces.(10)

On June 3, a week after the arrival of He's army, the Nationalists installed a new county magistrate. For the first time they also openly and publicly established a Rugao County Nationalist Party office. He Yingqin himself appointed the magistrate. The origins of the new county Nationalist Party organization were more obscure.(11)

As of the first week in June, the group in charge of Party affairs in Rugao was called the Rugao County Party Provisional Committee (Rugao Xian dangbu linshi weiyuanhui). At least one member of the Provisional Committee was simultaneously a leader of the county's Communist Party. Two others were active in left-wing causes and organizations, especially those concerning or

related to Rugao's schools.(12) In other words, in spite of events at the National level, or even in relatively nearby Shanghai where Communists were being bloodily purged from Nationalist Party ranks, the Communists and other like-minded individuals continued to hold sway in Rugao.

Moreover, taking advantage of its close ties with the schools, often thought of as centers of Communist agitation, the Rugao Nationalist Party continued to expand. Several days after the setting up of the Rugao County Party Provisional Committee, the Rugao City district-level Party Headquarters, otherwise known as the First District Party Headquarters (Diyi qu dang bu), was openly established. Its office was located in the county government's Education Office. It was responsible for supervising ten previously inaugurated sub-district Party offices located in or near to Rugao City.(13)

But the Party did not confine itself to educational and organizational affairs. Soon after it started operating openly, the fledgling Party started ferreting out and removing the county's so-called "evil gentry" (lieshen). Unfortunately, we have no description of what the Party, or even particular Party members, meant by the term "evil gentry", or why they chose certain individuals as targets rather than others. All we have are reports on

the trials of several victims and the names of many more. However, from the information available on particular cases we can see that as a result of Party policy many previously powerful local leaders were set upon by crowds, accused in public documents, jailed, and even occasionally formally tried, sometimes in more than one court.

For example, in West Market (Xichang) - an important market town in the northwest corner of the county - a police officer (xunguan) named Yu Zhaocai was accused of "climbing on the coattails" of an officer in Sun Chuanfang's army and exacting "squeeze" from all with whom he had official dealings. It was said that the people hated him. After the National Revolutionary Army appeared, a crowd of several hundred local people bound up Yu and beat him until he was in severe pain. Moreover, they widely "propagandized" his "crimes", and then sent him to the county government to be tried.(14)

Another individual, Han Guojun, while on his way to the county seat passed through the market town of Dingyan Zhen. There the local party committee made an accusation against him and he was imprisoned. Subsequently, one of the special courts set up to handle cases against the gentry - this one located in Nantong - cabled the Rugao magistrate telling him to set Han free. The magistrate obliged and Han proceeded on his way, ultimately arriving

in Shanghai. However, the result was what the Party had intended. Henceforth, as a consequence of his experiences, Han "decided" to live in "retirement."(15)

But in spite of its activities the Provisional Committee was destined to be exactly what its name implied. On June 13 - less than two weeks after it was established - the Jiangsu Provincial Party Headquarters (to which the Rugao County Party was directly responsible) disbanded Rugao's Provisional Committee, and as part of a general shake-up of the Party committees in forty-two out of Jiangsu's sixty-one counties dispatched Cheng Changwu as the special representative (tepai yuan) in charge of reorganizing the Rugao Party. At the same time the Provincial Party designated Shen Mingxuan and Gu Zhangwu as the sole members of a new Rugao County Party Special Committee (Rugao Xian dangbu tebie weiyuanhui) the Provincial Party said it wanted to establish in the county as the Provisional Committee's successor.(16)

Most likely, the appointment of the new Special Committee represented an attempt by a particular faction active in Jiangsu Nationalist Party politics at this time - probably a right-wing faction and possibly a part of the then embryonic CC clique - to wrest control of the Rugao Party away from both the Communists and others of the left wing, as well as from Rugao natives. Unlike most of the

founding members of the Rugao Party, or the majority of the members of the Provisional Committee, neither Shen nor Gu (and perhaps not even Cheng) were Rugao inhabitants. Before going to Rugao, Cheng and Gu had been teachers at Zhenjiang's Mincheng School (Mincheng Xiao). As a result, they obviously had political ties to each other as well as to groups outside Rugao county. Although the nature of these ties is not known, it is clear from the disputes which occurred after the group's arrival in Rugao that neither Cheng nor Gu were connected to the Communists or to followers of the Nationalist Party's left wing.(17)

Soon after their appointment, Cheng, Shen, and Gu arrived in Rugao. On July 4 they went to the County Party Headquarters (Xian dangbu) to try to collect the documents, seals, and remaining funds of their predecessors - a ritual which had to be carried out before they could officially assume office. But the required documents, funds, and seals were nowhere to be found. Earlier they had been removed and hidden by the old Provisional Committee members. Clearly the old Provisional Committee members had no use for their replacements. The battle between left and right for control of the Rugao Nationalist Party was now in full swing.(18)

The immediate struggle did not last long. Two days after it started Cheng capitulated. Acting under local pressure he requested the Provincial Nationalist Party Headquarters to name three additional members to the Rugao County Party Special Committee. One of the new members, Wang Yingzhao, was a Party founder and by this time the most important Communist, as well as Nationalist, leader in Rugao. The other two, Ji Kai, and Ji Zhongzhuo, were formerly students in Beijing, one at Beijing University, the other at Beijing People's University (Beijing pingmin daxue). Both also were left-wing, although not openly tied to the Communist Party.(19)

At least for the time being, the appointment of these three new members assured continued Communist and left-wing domination of Rugao Party affairs. Although throughout the rest of his tenure as Rugao's special Party representative Cheng continued to struggle against Wang Yingzhao and others of Wang's persuasion, he never succeeded in gaining control over Rugao's Nationalist Party affairs.

The Rugao Party Special Committee was inaugurated on July 15 and five days later, on July 20, held its first meeting. At this meeting the Committee divided up the responsibilities for Party work. The most powerful posts went to leftists, who were put in charge of the

all-important Organization Department (Zuzhi bu), the Propaganda Department (Xuanchuan bu), and the Peasant, Workers, and Merchants Department (Nongmin jian gong shang bu). Only the two least important assignments, the headships of the Youth Department (Qingnian bu) and the Women's Department (Funu bu) went to rightists, i.e. to the followers of Cheng Changwu.(20) Nothing makes clearer Cheng's defeat than this division of responsibility. Through its control over organization and propaganda, the left wing of the Party, under the direction of Communist Wang Yingzhao, now had a free hand in Rugao.

Moreover, under the auspices of the leftist-dominated Special Committee, within a few months the Party expanded to include six district Party headquarters and thirty-four sub-district Party headquarters. Simultaneously, Party membership increased five times, from eighty-six to over five hundred. In addition, a County Party newspaper, the Rugao Party Journal (Rugao Dang Bao) was set up, and Party finances became regularized. For the first time since its founding, the Rugao Party started to receive a dependable monthly appropriation of something over one thousand yuan (presumably from the coffers of the county government), and thus no longer had to depend completely on the contributions of its members for survival.(21)

However, the tenure of the Special Committee was not without its drama. At the end of August warlord troops moved south and reoccupied all of Jiangsu north of the Chang Jiang, including Rugao. As a result, some county Party leaders fled to Shanghai where they continued to carry out their work. Other Party members remained in Rugao, but had to stop all open Party activity.(22)

Fortunately for Rugao Party members, peace returned to the county in mid-September. Once again the warlord soldiers fled north out of Rugao, and the Rugao Party Special Committee was back in its own domain.(23)

The Activities of the Party Special Committee: Mass Organizations, Mass Campaigns, and Attacks on the Local Elite

During its four months in office - July through November 1927 - the Nationalist Party Special Committee carried out activities consistent with the left-wing views of its members: it started mass organizations for workers, peasants, merchants, and women; it carried out mass propaganda campaigns against the Japanese; it agitated in educational circles both to spread Party ideology and to raise teachers' wages; it attacked members of the non-Party local elite and sought to have them jailed; and it fought to protect itself against a hostile county government controlled by an appointee of

Jiang Jieshi loyalist He Yingqin, and against antagonistic Rugao Nationalist Party elements, such as Cheng Changwu, who were often acting at the request of higher Nationalist Party leaders.

The Party started organizing Rugao's workers immediately after the arrival of National Revolutionary Army troops. First it organized the water and wood workers, and the printing company workers, forming respectively a Water and Woodworkers' Union (Shui mu zuogong hui), and a Printing Company Workers' Union (Yinshua ye gong hui). Subsequently, the Party made attempts to set up other workers' groups, although there is no record that these groups ever established official unions.(24)

By October the Party was ready to set up a county-wide general labor union that would encompass all the heretofore independent sectors. To achieve this end the Special Committee appointed a General Labor Union Preparatory Committee (Zong gong hui choubei chu) and designated five people, including three Communists, as Preparatory Committee members. In other words, in labor organizing, as in everything else concerning the Rugao Nationalist Party at this time, the Communists played a dominant role.(25)

The Party also tried to organize the peasants. It set up a County Peasant Association (Rugao Xian nongmin xiehui) and nominated three Party members, including one Communist, to serve as Preparatory Committee members.(26) Merchants too had their society. In mid-August the Party established the County Merchants' Association (Xian shangmin xiehui). It had a seven-person Preparatory Committee which included one Communist and at least one other individual who was active in left-wing causes. Interestingly, the Merchant Association Preparatory Committee's headquarters was located in the county's lower-middle school (Xianli chuji zhong xiao).(27)

In addition to all the foregoing groups, the Party also initiated plans for a Women's Association (Funu xiehui). It soon became the most active of all the mass organizations. In June, shortly after the arrival of Nationalist troops, the Women's Association established a planning office (choubei qu) at the Temple of the War God (Huoxing Miao) near the city's north gate. On June 5 they held their first meeting. By mid-July over one thousand women had registered to enter the organization. As a group they investigated the hardships of ordinary people in order to set up ways to alleviate them. In addition, from August 6 to August 8 the Association put on a very successful carnival in order to raise money to aid popular

education (pingmin jiaoyu).(28)

Besides setting up mass organizations, the Rugao Nationalists under the direction of the Special Committee also actively carried out at least one mass campaign, a campaign against the Japanese. As with the mass organizations, the initial impetus for the campaign came from the left wing of the Party, particularly from the Communists. Led by Wang Yingzhao, on June 16 and 17 the County Party convened a large meeting of organizational representatives for the purpose of setting up a preparatory committee for an Association to Oppose the Dispatching of Japanese Troops to Shandong (Fandui Riben chubing Shandong hui). At the meeting the representatives laid plans for a large demonstration to take place on June 20 at the public exercise field (tiyu chang). The costs of the demonstration were to be borne by the Nationalist Party.(29)

By late June, Cheng Changwu (perhaps to compete with Wang Yingzhao) also felt compelled to become active in anti-Japanese affairs. He organized an Anti-Japanese Boycott Association (Dui Ri jingji juejiao weiyuanhui) which in mid-July decided to notify every Rugao merchant that effective immediately they were not to purchase any more Japanese-made goods; that within five months they had to sell all Japanese-made goods they had on hand;

that after five months they had to turn over any remaining Japanese-made goods to the Association for sale at auction; and that after a two-month auction period no Japanese goods whatsoever would be allowed on the Rugao market.(30) Presumably, at least to some degree (although there is only scattered evidence for it), the boycott was carried out throughout the Special Committee period.

The Party was also concerned with the schools, which it saw as a good vehicle for spreading the Party ideology. But in order for the Party to use the schools in this manner, teachers had to know the Party ideology. Therefore, to inform the teachers better, the Special Committee in cooperation with the county Education Office organized teacher training sessions led by Party members. At least one of these sessions was held in June while the schools were still in session. Another was carried out during the summer vacation. The latter cost 2,132 yuan - not an inconsiderable sum - and was attended by two representatives from each provincially- or county-run elementary school and one representative from each provincially- or county-run middle school, a total of over three hundred people.(31)

Additionally, through its individual members - many of whom were teachers or school principals - the Party was active in educational circles in a variety of other ways.

For example, in July Nationalist Party members played a major role in the founding of the Rugao County Educational Association (Rugao Xian jiaoyu xiehui), a group primarily made up of educational professionals. After the establishment of the Association, many Party members were chosen to sit on its executive committee. Moreover, two of the Association's most important positions went to Party activists. One of the left-wing members of the Party's recently disbanded Temporary Committee was made chairperson of the Association's organization section (zuzhi gu), and a leader in the Party's mass organizations was made one of the heads of the editorial section (bianji gu). (32)

Furthermore, throughout the Special Committee period Party leaders played a major role in the sporadic protests staged by elementary school principals and teachers. In July, for an unreported reason (unreported presumably because of ~~press~~ censorship) many school principals simultaneously asked to resign. The resignations were not accepted, but neither was the problem solved. (33)

Shortly after the school principals' threatened resignations, three hundred of the county's elementary school teachers held a meeting at which they demanded that all elementary school teachers' wages immediately be quadrupled, and threatened that if this were not done all

the elementary school teachers would resign. The teachers attending the meeting then elected thirty-six representatives, two from each of Rugao's administrative districts, to go to the county governing office, the County Party Headquarters, and the county Education Office to present the teachers' grievances.(34)

But apparently there was no time for the grievances to be seriously considered. Shortly after the teachers met, Sun Chuanfang reoccupied the county and many of the government and Party officials, and presumably some of the teachers, fled. During the remainder of the Special Committee period, there is no evidence that the issue of teachers' wages was raised again.

Under the Party Special Committee attacks upon the "evil gentry", initiated immediately after the Nationalists' arrival in Rugao also went on apace. Again, we have no official policy statements, and no cumulative statistics. But the existing descriptions of individual cases make clear that by the summer of 1927, throughout the county, previously powerful local leaders were becoming increasingly vulnerable to Nationalist attack, and in many instances fleeing before the Nationalists had time to pick them up. For instance a Libao branch office tax official named Xia Jiying was accused of levying exorbitant taxes and oppressing the people while Sun

Chuanfang was in power, and of smoking opium. But when Xia heard the charges against him, like so many others of his class, he fled, leaving the government holding a warrant, but having no one on whom to serve it.(35)

Xia was not alone. Perhaps best documented is the case of He Lin, a political power in the northern Rugao market town of Lifa. In July, as a result of allegedly committing six offenses the most serious of which was supplying money to an officer in Sun's army, He was charged with being an "evil gentry" (tulie). On July 18 he was arrested and jailed. Subsequently, Cheng Changwu in his capacity as the Rugao Party Special Representative issued a general notice saying that if any members of the general population knew of He's "unsavory record" and had evidence against He, they should, within five days, present this evidence to the government. But justice was not as swift as the Party notice implied. A year later He was still in jail, and an even more extensive investigation of He and his property was going on.(36)

Throughout Rugao, many other cases similar to those of Xia and He occurred. But even more notable is that an official Rugao Party history written in 1928 mentions that during the Special Committee period the Party carried out attacks on the "evil gentry".(37) Writers of Party histories are often unwilling to discuss such events.

That this particular work mentioned attacks on the local elite at all indicates that such attacks were significant and important.

But during the Special Committee period the Rugao Party was not always on the offensive. It faced stiff opposition from the county government (controlled by a magistrate with connections to the right wing of the Party, specifically those loyal to He Yingqin) and from right-wing individuals within the Party itself, notably Cheng Changwu. Often these opponents used the same tactics against the Special Committee or its members that the Committee used against the "evil gentry"; that is, leveling accusations, and then demanding an individual's trial and imprisonment based on the evidence gathered as a result of those accusations.

In terms of its relationship with its adversaries, things did not start off auspiciously for the Special Committee. Neither the magistrate nor the heads of the county government's Public Safety or Education Offices attended the Committee's swearing-in ceremony (as they would have been expected to do if an amiable relationship had existed between the Party and the government). Instead, the government showed its disdain for the Party by sending other, lesser, representatives.(38)

Then there was the case of the County Party secretary, Ji Yun. Ji was one of the founders of the Rugao Party and in the summer of 1927 still an important county Party leader. But several days after the members of the Special Committee officially were approved by the Provincial Party headquarters, local gentry, probably working together with the county magistrate and Cheng Changwu, accused Ji of being a Communist and of using the Party purge to "plan multitudinous evils". Cheng Changwu then arrested Ji and brought him before the county government, the garrison headquarters (weishu silingbu), and the Provincial Party Special Representative's Management Office (Sheng tepai yuan banshichu) for questioning. Finally, the evidence gathered by the three organizations was sent by telegram to Jiang Jieshi's General Military Headquarters (Zong siling bu) and to the offices of He Yingqin, the patron of Cheng Changwu, and they were asked to "handle" the affair.(39)

But the General Military Headquarters refused to get involved. It sent a telegram to the county magistrate ordering that "in accordance with the law" Ji and all the evidence concerning his case be sent to the Jiangsu Party Purge Committee (Jiangsu Sheng qing dang weiyuanhui), the provincial committee specially set up to investigate those suspected of being Communists. A like-minded provincial

government similarly declined to adjudicate and also turned its role in the matter over to the Party Purge Committee. Consequently, on July 27 Ji was sent to Nanjing for trial by the Committee.(40) Subsequently, as was noted earlier, Ji was assigned to direct an agricultural extension program, a job most likely designed to keep him out of politics.

But the most dramatic attack on Party members occurred later in the fall of 1927. Unfortunately not many details are available, but it is known that eight of the Party's leaders (including two members of the Special Committee), all of them apparently left-wing, were accused of conspiring with someone named Chen Tianwu in order, it was alleged, to bring about the downfall of a "virtuous person", obviously Cheng Changwu. For this "crime" they were expelled from the Party.(41)

But such setbacks were temporary. Overall, the Communists and other left-wing elements of the Party were able to outmaneuver their right-wing opponents. By the late fall of 1927 there was no doubt that the Communists and their left-wing allies held power within the Rugao Party. Outside the Rugao Party, especially at higher Party and government levels, right-wing followers of Jiang Jieshi were ascendant. Through such appointees as Cheng Changwu, they obviously tried to oust their opponents. In

Rugao, at least during the fall of 1927, they were not able to do so.

One factor that might have made this left-wing victory possible was that the Rugao County Party Special Committee Purge Committee (Rugao Xian dangbu tebie weiyuanhui qingdang weiyuanhui), that group responsible for expunging Communists from the Party, was itself Communist and left-wing dominated and consequently did not work at its assigned task. The Purge Committee had five members. One member was simultaneously a member of the General Labor Union Preparatory Committee, indicating that he probably was a Communist. Another member was active in anti-Japanese affairs and later briefly in the county Peasant Association, good evidence that he too was left-wing.(42)

The associations of the remaining members of the Committee are not as obvious as those of the two just mentioned, although there are good reasons for assuming that they likewise belonged to the Party's left wing. For example, there is no evidence that the County Purge Committee ever investigated a single case or brought any suspected Communists to trial. Since the Rugao Party was controlled by Communists, this certainly was not for lack of available targets. More likely, because the political loyalties of its members were akin to those it was

supposed to be prosecuting, the Committee had no desire to act.

Moreover, in the one major case where the County Purge Committee should have been involved, the case in which Party member Ji Yun was accused of being a Communist, it was not. Quite the contrary; every effort appears to have been made by those leveling the charges against Ji to avoid the County Purge Committee, and thus presumably the risk that the case would be dismissed. Ji was investigated by the county government, the garrison headquarters, and the Special Representative's Office, but not by those whose specific job it was to carry out such investigations, i.e. the County Purge Committee. Only at the provincial level did his case go to a purge committee, this time the Provincial Purge Committee, presumably because it was controlled by the right wing, specifically the CC clique, and the chances for Ji's conviction and imprisonment improved as a result.(43)

The case of Ji Yun also indicates another factor that enabled the Jiangsu Special Committee to hold onto its power: the Committee's ability to solicit and receive help from higher levels of the Party, specifically from the Provincial Party Headquarters. A week after Ji was arrested, the Provincial Party Executive Committee (Sheng dangbu changwu weiyuanhui) passed a resolution "notifying"

the General Military Headquarters that it should order the garrison headquarters to release Ji and "strictly deal" with the "evil gentry" who "used false names to wrongly accuse him." A few days later in response to a request from the County Party to "pay attention to the fact that evil gentry were making false accusations against loyal Party members" the Provincial Party asked the provincial government to take action.(44)

The Provincial Party also ultimately backed the County Party in its dispute with Cheng Changwu. In September (for undisclosed reasons) it removed Cheng from his post as Special Representative to Rugao, leaving total control over the Rugao Party, in fact as well as in name, in the hands of the Special Committee.(45)

But, interestingly, the Provincial Party refused to allow the Special Committee to get revenge on Cheng. In November over two hundred Rugao citizens, including at least some associated with left-wing Party members, charged Cheng with taking a bribe from one Chen Qicai. They asked the County Special Committee to investigate. In turn the Special Committee requested the Provincial Party Headquarters to handle the matter. In response the Headquarters appointed an investigator to go to Rugao. But the case never got to trial. On November 30 Chen Qicai, perhaps at the request of the Provincial Party,

"left the province", and the Provincial Party used this as an excuse to "conclude the case".(46)

Over a year later, in February 1929, new charges were brought against Cheng, but once again he was allowed to go free, this time because it was said he was ill. However, aside from defending himself against accusations brought by his former enemies on the Special Committee and a brief and unsuccessful reappearance in February 1928, Cheng Changwu never again was active in Rugao politics.(47)

Throughout 1927 the Jiangsu Provincial Party headquarter's support for a County Party dominated by Communists and left-wingers appears odd. The nine-member provincial-level Special Committee in charge of running the Party included at least three members of the right-wing CC clique. In addition the provincial-level Committee members were chosen under the watchful eyes of the even more right-wing Western Hills Group.(48) Why then did the Provincial Party back the Rugao County Special Committee, and ultimately withdraw a Special Representative whose views would appear to have more nearly matched those of the Provincial Party headquarters?

At least two theories are possible. One explanation is that the Rugao Party had ties to particular powerful left-wing individuals within the Provincial Party who were able to defend the Rugao Party's interests. However, no

evidence for such ties exists. Another more probable explanation is that during the Special Committee period the Jiangsu Provincial Party organization was extremely weak. As a result of this weakness, if the Jiangsu Party wanted to maintain a widespread net of subordinate organizations, it had to accept whatever subordinate organizations were already in place, even if by the summer of 1927 the nature of these organizations and the policies they followed were in opposition to those pronounced at higher levels. The only other choice was to disavow the existing organizations and admit that the power of the Nationalist Party did not extend into certain local areas. The latter was an unacceptable alternative, and so in Rugao, where the Communists and other left-wing groups dominated the only Nationalist organization there was, the Provincial and Central Party headquarters had no choice but to back them. In other words, a strong local Party and a comparatively weak Provincial Party, even though they had conflicting ideological outlooks, temporarily became mutual supporters, and in the end the strength of both increased.(49)

With the backing of the Provincial Party, or at least its acquiescence, the County Party successfully was able to take on all its opponents and to repulse any attacks upon County Party members (including ultimately the attack

on Ji Yun). For example, the dramatic assault on eight of the County Party leaders and the expulsion of these leaders from the Party apparently had only a temporary effect. Shortly after their "removal," all of the affected leaders appeared to be as active as ever in Party affairs. Moreover, it appears that at no time during the Special Committee period were any Party members with ties to the left successfully and permanently forced from their posts.

Furthermore, the Special Committee was able to take on other opponents, including the magistrate appointed by He Yingqin and the county government this magistrate controlled. Signs of the Party's dissatisfaction with the government were evident as early as mid-July 1927. At that time one of the Special Committee members brought charges against a member of the old county governing committee who was also a political leader in the market town of Lugang.(50)

But the real attack on the government did not occur until September 1927 after the reoccupation of the county by Sun Chuanfang's forces and their subsequent retreat. In August, when Sun's forces reappeared in Rugao, most Nationalist Party and government officials, including the magistrate, Yue Jian, fled. But Yue did more than just pack his personal belongings and head south. He also took

with him 13,000 yuan which had been illegitimately removed from the public treasury. Several weeks later, after Sun's forces were pushed out of Rugao, Yue returned seeking once more to take up his office. However, instead of being received with open arms, he was met by a hostile Party Special Committee determined to use the fund issue to force his removal.(51)

As soon as Yue returned to Rugao, the County Party headquarters invited representatives from many of the county's anti-Yue organizations to a meeting. At the meeting, the representatives decided to expose Yue to the provincial government's Civil Affairs Department (Min zheng ting), the organization responsible for the appointment of magistrates. They also resolved to send a request to the county Public Security Office (Gongan ju) asking that Yue be investigated. Several days later, on September 24, the Party, again acting together with other groups, held a mass meeting to further express opposition to Yue. In addition, they sent a telegram to the Civil Affairs Department urging that Yue be removed.(52)

By now opposition to Yue apparently had gotten too intense for the Civil Affairs Department to bear. On September 28 the Civil Affairs Department backed down, removed Yue from his post, and appointed a replacement. On October 24, the new magistrate arrived in Rugao, and

Yue formally ordered all of his subordinates to conclude their affairs and hand over the reins of government.(53)

The new magistrate was apparently more in sympathy with the Special Committee than his predecessor. When Yue left office he still had not returned the 13,000 yuan that he had embezzled. The new magistrate, Wang Haoren, now united with the Party and other public bodies to recover the cash. First, the county government and "all public organizations" asked the Public Security Office again to investigate Yue. Then on October 19 a "City Residents' Mass Meeting for the Punishment of Yue" (Cheng Yue shi min da hui) was held in front of the county government office building. More than 5,000 people showed up. Those present demanded that the new magistrate arrest, jail, and try Yue. They also insisted that the magistrate punish four other corrupt government officials associated with Yue. Moreover, after the meeting was over a force was organized to pursue three of Yue's former assistants who had already fled across the county border.(54)

The increasingly diverse group pressing for Yue's punishment was coordinated by a steering committee (zhuxi tuan) made up of representatives from a number of county organizations. As might be expected, it included a Nationalist Party delegate who at the same time was a Communist Party activist. It also had representatives

from the county Education Association, the General Students' Association (Xue lianhui), and the county Education Office. More surprisingly, and probably indicative of what must have been the widespread hostility to Yue, the head of the county Merchant Association joined the effort.(55)

Ultimately the Special Party Committee and its allies won almost a complete victory over Yue. As a result of the October 19 mass meeting, Yue was arrested and imprisoned by the county government for over twenty days. At the end of that time - by now mid-November - Yue produced 10,000 yuan which was accepted by the county government as settlement of his case. The government then released Yue from jail, after which it was reported that he had "left Rugao and gone elsewhere."(56)

After the successful attack on Yue the Special Committee - still dominated by Communists and left-wingers - firmly controlled politics in Rugao. There simply was nobody left to oppose them. All dissident Party members, as well as government officials, had been brought to heel or vanquished. The local elite too, apparently cowed by the Committee's attacks upon them, had either disappeared or been beaten into submission. The only danger the Party faced came from above. If the higher levels of the Party and government withdrew their support would the Rugao

Party survive unchanged?

The Provisional Executive Committee Interregnum: Attack from the Right and Stalemate

Shortly after the case against Yue was settled, the Jiangsu Party Headquarters appointed a representative to go to Rugao to investigate Nationalist Party affairs. On successive days of the third week in November, this representative, accompanied by Wang Yingzhao in his capacity as head of the Special Committee's Propaganda Department, visited each of the county's sub-district Party offices.(57)

The appearance of this representative augured dramatic changes for the Rugao Party. Earlier in the fall control over the Central Party headquarters had passed to a Central Special Committee (Zhongyang tebie weiyuanhui). In theory a coalition of equal numbers of individuals from the Jiang Jieshi-controlled Nanjing branch of the Party, the left-wing Wuhan branch of the Party, and the right-wing Western Hills group based in Shanghai, it was in reality a Committee dominated by the right-wing Western Hills group and their allies, the Guangxi Military Clique. In mid-October this new Western Hills-dominated Central Party headquarters dismissed the individuals controlling the Jiangsu party and replaced them with a Jiangsu

Province Temporary Executive Committee (Jiangsu Sheng linshi zhixing weiyuanhui) also controlled by the Western Hills group. In turn, the Jiangsu Province Provisional Executive Committee ordered all former county-level Special Committees to stop work. By early November it was appointing Western Hills controlled county-level Provisional Executive Committees to take over the former county-level Special Committee's tasks.(58)

On November 24, the Provincial Party approved the five members of a new Rugao Provisional Executive Committee (Rugao Xian dangbu linshi zhixing weiyuanhui), and the single person who constituted the new Provisional Supervisory Committee (Jiancha weiyuanhui). Surprisingly, some of the names were familiar, including those of three Communists. But in addition, three new names, all of them from outside the county, and most presumably from the right-wing or Western Hills group, appeared among the appointees.(59)

The naming of so many known Communist leaders to the Provisional Executive and Supervisory Committees made it look as though, in spite of the increasingly strong Provincial and Central Party headquarters' attempts to oust all Communists from Nationalist Party ranks, the Communists at least had a fighting chance to maintain their position in Rugao. However, this was not to be so.

Within a short time most of the Communists, including their leader, Wang Yingzhao, had left the ranks of the Nationalist Party. (60) In other words, because they disliked their left-wing views, higher Party levels successfully ousted the locally-born Communists and left-wingers who had founded and nurtured the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party, and in their stead put non-locals with strong loyalties to right-wing groups in Shanghai and Nanjing, specifically the Western Hills group.

However, in spite of their official loss of Party positions, the Communists were not yet ready to completely sever their ties to the Nationalists. The old Special Committee members refused to turn over any of the operating funds allocated to the local Party by the county government. Since no additional funds were forthcoming from the government, this meant that the Provisional Executive Committee had no operating budget.(61) To save money the Committee tried to move into the county government offices. But the magistrate would not allow this. Without funds and without an office, the Provisional Executive Committee could not operate, and it apparently ceased to function.(62)

A similar situation existed at the district level. In some districts, the former Special Committees set up

"district Party unified management offices" (qu dangbu lianhe banshi chu). They then turned over their responsibilities and their documents to the management offices instead of to the district-level Provisional Executive Committees. In this manner they prevented the Temporary Executive Committees from assuming their duties. In other districts no Party offices existed because the Special Committees earlier had disbanded them. Presumably because it lacked the resources, the Provisional Executive Committee made no effort to reestablish them. Only in three sub-districts within Rugao City were Provisional Executive Committees actually set up.(63).

Naive as it may seem, the Communists and the left wing also attempted to use propaganda to dislodge the rightists. Working through the Communist and left-wing-controlled Women's Association, as well as the General Labor Union, they spread the slogan "Strike down the Western Hills group" (Dadao Xishan Huiyi Pai). The Provisional Executive Committee counterattacked by issuing orders for the arrest of former Special Committee members; but because the Provisional Executive Committee received instructions to halt work, the arrest orders were never carried out.(64)

As a result of its inability to set up an organization, and its lack of finances, the Provisional

Executive Committee did not achieve much during its brief tenure. Its most notable accomplishment was the establishment of a County Merchant Society (Xian shangmin xiehui), presumably a different group than that which had operated under the same name during the Special Committee period. However, the presence of the Merchant Society did not indicate that harmonious relations existed between the merchant community and the new Committee. For example, on December 16 Rui Yangwu, a leader of the Rugao City merchants and a representative of the Rugao City Merchant Society (Rugao Chengshi shangmin xiehui daibiao), was accused before the Party Committee of misappropriating funds. The Party Committee then requested the Public Security Office to arrest and temporarily detain him in the county government offices.(65) Cases such as Rui's indicate that the Provisional Executive Committee had only tenuous ties with the merchants, the only group with whom it had any connections at all.

In sum, during the Provisional Executive Committee period the Western Hills Group, with Central and Provincial Party support, removed the Communists and the left-wingers from their Rugao Party posts but did not succeed in eliminating them from power. In turn, while unable to regain their positions within the Party, the left was able to prevent the newcomers from setting up a

right-wing organization and from carrying out any political program. By February 1928 when the Provincial Party, acting upon orders received from the Central Party, sent out a directive telling the Provisional Executive Committee to "stop work", a stalemate existed between the two sides.(66)

The Restoration of the Special Committee: Defeat for Both the Left and the Right

The struggle for control over the Rugao Party was quickly resolved. The dissolution of the Provisional Executive Committee ended Western Hills group participation in Rugao Party affairs. During the next year it was noted that the Party experienced no trouble from "reactionaries", a code word for the Western Hills group. Moreover, after February 1928 none of the Provisional Executive Committee members' names again appear in any discussion of Rugao political affairs.(67)

After a brief re-emergence the Communists and the left-wing were similarly vanquished. Following the termination of the Provisional Executive Committee the Special Committee was "restored". Accordingly, Wang Yingzhao and others attempted to assume their former offices. Initially, Cheng Changwu, their old adversary, tried to block them. Probably sensing that higher-level

winds were blowing from the right and that this might allow him to make a comeback, Cheng cabled the Provincial Party headquarters asking that Wang and others be prevented from taking up their previous jobs. Once again, Cheng did not succeed and quietly departed for Nanjing. In contrast, Wang Yingzhao stayed at the County Party headquarters and was put in charge of running Party affairs.(68)

But in spite of his second victory over Cheng, Wang's "restoration" did not last long. At the provincial level the members of the Organization Clique, or CC Clique as it was more commonly known, as well as their sometime allies, the members of the FF Clique (both groups were loyal to Jiang Jieshi, but competed for his favor), were gaining increasing power. During the first two weeks of February three Provincial Party leaders tied to these cliques visited Rugao. Because the Rugao Special Committee was still in Communist, not in CC or FF hands, the three obviously did not like what they saw. They reported back to the Provincial Party that the restored Rugao Special Committee "was not working hard enough". As a result, the Provincial Party dismissed the Rugao Special Committee members, including Wang Yingzhao, and replaced them with five individuals new to Rugao, the most important of whom was Dong Xiaosu. On February 23 another provincial

representative took over the Rugao Party and passed it on to the newly appointed Restored Special Committee members.(69)

At this point the Communists gave up their struggle to remain active in the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party. Feeling that they had become too well-known to avoid violent attacks on their lives much longer, most of Rugao's Communist Party leaders went underground and began to plan attacks on the Nationalists from without.(70) This left the Rugao Nationalist Party firmly in the hands of groups loyal to Jiang Jieshi. For the first time, the Center, working through the Provincial Party headquarters, could, if it chose, exercise real control over the Rugao county-level organization. The question remaining was what the center would do with its new power.

Custodianship and Directorship: The FF Clique Comes to Power

Like their predecessors, the new members of the Restored Special Committee held their offices for only a few months. Immediately after they started to work, the Provincial Party headquarters received an order from the center stating that the Party at all levels again was to cease activity. Subsequently, in May 1928, Dong Xiaosu, one of the members of the Restored Special Committee, was

made "custodian" (baoguan yuan) of the Rugao County Party headquarters, a post he was to hold for the next two months. No formal ceremony initiating the custodianship period was held. Dong merely continued to handle county Party affairs in the manner set up by Yang Jiechen, the Provincial Party representative who had supervised the transfer of power between the leftists and the group around Dong.(71)

There was similar continuity in June when the custodianship gave way to the Rugao County Party Directorate (Rugao Xian zhidao weiyuanhui). At this time the Provincial Party headquarters chose five names out of eleven that were sent to it by the County Party and appointed these five individuals Rugao County Party Directors (Rugao Xian zhidao weiyuan). Once again Dong Xiasosu was among those selected.(72)

Except for the fact that he was a graduate of Beijing University's Economics Department, nothing is known about Dong's background or personal life. Dong's native place, his past Party history, as well as his activities outside the Party prior to February 1928, remain a mystery. All that I have been able to discover is that in February 1928, as a result of higher level decisions, Dong took up the first of what was to become a series of Rugao Party posts, and that at the same time he also apparently

replaced the departed Wang Yingzhao as the leader of the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party. (73)

It seems as though there was not much local opposition to the selection of Dong. The Western Hills group had been routed, and the Communists were underground. All the remaining Party leaders were tied together by their loyalty to Jiang Jieshi. While disputes would later arise between different factions of the Party grouped around Jiang, in early 1928 these differences were either muted or well concealed. In July one of Dong's henchmen was appointed head of the all-important Party Organization Department.(74) The announcement of this appointment indicated both that Dong was firmly in the saddle, and that he had the means to stay there.

Dong's arrival and solidification of power in Rugao also marked the beginning of FF Clique control over the county. The FF ("Five Friends") Clique was a group organized by Ye Xiufeng in 1927 or 1928 during the Special Committee period. It seems to have restricted its activities to Jiangsu where it occupied a middle position between and competed for power with the nationally-based and more powerful CC Clique led by the Chen brothers, as well as the CC Clique's direct opponents, the so-called Anti-CC Clique. In this struggle the FF Clique did not fare well. After 1929 the CC Clique consistently

controlled most of the Jiangsu Party's county-level offices, as well as a large part of the provincial organization. Only a few counties, including Rugao and its more powerful neighbor, Nantong, were left to other groups.(75)

It is not clear why Rugao was one of the few counties that remained outside the CC Clique sphere of influence, or why Rugao became an FF Clique stronghold. No FF Clique leaders appear to have been born in Rugao, or to have used Rugao as their home base. Furthermore, no county-level FF leaders were Rugao natives. Most likely Rugao became subject to FF Clique influence because of its proximity to Nantong. Like Rugao, Nantong was not part of the CC Clique domain, which would have allowed a smaller Party faction, such as the FF Clique, to have a free hand there, as well as in Rugao.(76)

Yet, despite its problems elsewhere, there seems little doubt that the FF Clique held sway in Rugao during most of the Nanjing Decade. One observer noted that in 1929 Rugao was not under CC Clique control and that in 1932 it was under FF stewardship. Since the loyalties of Rugao's leadership appear to have been constant throughout these years, it seems reasonable to conclude that the FF group was in power throughout, and that Dong was an FF affiliate.(77)

The ascent of Dong and the FF Clique marked an important watershed in Rugao Party history. Prior to the spring of 1928 native Rugao Communists and leftists held power over the local Party. After the spring of 1928 the Party was in the hands of non-native conservatives with FF clique ties. Down until 1937, the name and even the make-up of the County Party governing body would change in response to events at higher levels, but the kind of personal power arrangements that made those governing bodies operate, and the ideological outlook of their members, would remain remarkably stable.

Activities of the Rugao County Party Directorate: The FF Clique in Power)

The activities of the Rugao County Party as they developed under the leadership of Dong Xiaosu and the County Party Directorate were more restricted than the activities that had taken place under Wang Yingzhao. Prior to the spring of 1928 the Party carried out an active and progressive political and social program whose emphasis was on expanding the role of the Party in community affairs. After 1928 Dong, in response to higher level orders, obediently and drastically reduced the number of Party members and gradually narrowed the acceptable sphere of activity for those who remained.

Throughout the rest of the Decade the Nationalist Party and its members slowly withdrew from meaningful participation in Rugao's affairs, exactly the reverse of the course that the Party had initially charted for itself.

The main work of the Party during the Directorship period was the registration (or what more accurately should be called the re-registration) of Party members. During the Special Committee period the ranks of the Party swelled. Among those joining or maintaining their memberships were many Communists and left-wingers. Although the Central Party leadership declared that all Communists and "evil gentry" were to be purged from the Party after April 12, 1927, many local parties, including the Rugao Party, did not implement this declaration. Consequently, by mid-1928 the central leadership felt that throughout the country too many leftists were still included on the Party roster. In mid-1928 to rid the Party of these unwanted elements, the central leadership announced that all Party members must reapply for Party membership and undergo a thorough investigation before being granted a Party identification card.(78)

The work of carrying out these background checks and issuing the new membership cards was given to the County-level Party offices. In Rugao 336 people applied

out of a previous membership of over five hundred. (Presumably the remainder had either left the area or assumed that they would not be considered eligible because of their views.) The Party then established an investigation committee (shencha weiyuanhui) to check out the applicants. Of the 336 applicants 159 ultimately were entered on the Party rolls, ninety-four were not admitted but kept under continuing investigation, forty were thrown out because correct registration and investigation procedures could not for some reason be completed, and ninety-three were rejected outright.(79)

In mid-September the registration was completed and on September 14, 1928 the County Party headquarters swore in the new Rugao County Party members. The leftists were now gone, but simultaneously the new Rugao Party had been reduced to one quarter the size it had been only a half a year earlier. In Jiangsu's largest county with a population of over one and half million, there was now just one Party member for approximately every 9,500 people.(80) At a time and in a place where seventy-five to eighty percent of the population was illiterate, where there were no radios, where long distance telephone communication between large cities was just being established, and where travel was hazardous and largely by canal boat, wheelbarrow, or foot, how could these few

Party members ever hope to inform even a small fraction of the population about the goals or programs of the Nationalist Party?

In theory the work of the Party members should have been supplemented by the activities of mass organizations, but in February 1928 all of the mass organizations were either disbanded or suspended. In June the Party Directorate took over the remnants of the former mass organizations, but did nothing to activate them. Under the former Provisional Executive Committee, only one mass organization, the County Merchant Society, had been set up. In February the Party disbanded this Society, placed its property under legal custody and then dispatched a policeman to confiscate it. During the next year nothing was erected in its stead. Rather, the head of the former Merchant Society came under attack and found himself embroiled in a series of lawsuits.(81)

Individuals in the teaching profession who were Party members and activists found their numbers similarly reduced. Sometime after its installation the County Party Directorate received an order to inspect and approve middle and elementary school teachers. By September the Party had completed its assigned task. The result was that eleven teachers, at least one and probably all of them former members of the Nationalist Party's left-wing,

were removed from their jobs.(82)

As well as reducing the number and contacts of its personnel, the Party also reduced the scope and scale of its overall activities. All agitation on behalf of workers, peasants, students, and women ended with the disbanding of the mass organizations. Only the efforts against the "evil gentry" and the Japanese continued. To add to these, the Party Directorate initiated but one new campaign, an anti-superstition movement directed at the local temples.

In its efforts against "evil gentry", the Directorate continued along the same path set by its predecessors, although its activities in this realm were often on a reduced scale and the number of new cases it initiated dropped dramatically. Moreover, while many individuals accused earlier were finally brought to trial and sentenced, the punishments meted out were surprisingly lenient, and even those verdicts often were appealed, thus delaying any real effect they might have had. For example, He Lin, who in 1927 had been accused of being an "evil gentry" and kept in jail for a year awaiting trial, in July 1928 finally was sentenced to four years in prison, to being "completely stripped of his civil rights", and to having ten acres of his cultivated land taken away. Likewise, one Cong Peigong, who also had been

accused of being an "evil gentry" and whose trial had dragged on for months, in December 1928 was sentenced to four years two months in prison and to having one third of his capital confiscated. Needless to say, both men immediately proceeded to take their cases to a higher court.(83)

Unlike the campaign against the gentry, the anti-Japanese movement picked up slightly in intensity during the Directorate Period. A new Party-directed umbrella organization, the Anti-Japanese National Salvation Association (Fan Ri jiuguo yundong hui), made up of representatives from many county groups, was formed. On the one hand, the Committee sent out propaganda groups to spread anti-Japanese propaganda throughout the county. On the other hand it organized teams of Anti-Japanese Committee inspectors (Fan Ri hui jiancha yuan) to investigate merchants suspected of selling Japanese goods. If such merchants were found, any contraband they possessed was seized and later sold at auction with the profits going to the county treasury.(84)

The most well-known case dealt with by the Committee was that of "traitor merchant" Hong Fuji. Sometime before June the Committee found Hong to be dealing in imported Japanese goods and seized his stock. On June 5 the Committee met and decided to hold an auction at the County

Party headquarters where they would sell Hong's goods for seventy percent of their original value, and after the auction burn any merchandise that was left over. Between June and September various groups contested the Committee's decision and delayed the auction. But finally, in early September, the Committee invited "many" cloth merchants to assay the value of Hong's items. Then, between September 1 and September 5 the items were all sold, bringing in the large sum of 12,000 silver yuan which was turned over the county treasury.(85)

Moreover, to fund its activities, the Anti-Japanese Committee used what appeared to be a unique method for its time. In July 1928 the Committee appointed a special representative to go to Shanghai to negotiate for all kinds of traveling artists to come to Rugao. Apparently the representative was very successful. By the end of July a movie and a play had been to the county. Tickets, priced at twenty, forty, and sixty cents, had sold well and apparently raised much cash.(86)

In addition to pursuing merchants who sold Japanese goods, the Directorate also attempted to reduce the influence of the temples. In September 1928 the Party, along with other groups, appointed a nine-member Committee for the Movement to Eradicate Superstition (Pochu mixin yundong hui). On September 25 this group destroyed the

idols in the Rugao city temple, making further worship there impossible. Later, in November, the Party Directorate reported that it had plans to use the temple building to set up a relief agency. The central workshop area was to become a community hall (Zhongshan tang), and the two storerooms were to be made into offices for mass organizations (although no such entities yet existed) or areas where merchants could display their goods. Furthermore, The Party asked the provincial government to forbid the head of the temple to restore the temple idols.(87)

Similar attacks on other temples occurred throughout the county. For example, in West Market, a town directly north of Rugao City, the Temple of the City God underwent a like transformation. It was changed into a mass education center (minzhong jiaoyu guan), a status in which it remained for at least a year.(88)

A question might be asked about why a conservative local Party committee became involved in such radical activities as attacks on the local elite, the merchants, and the temples. In response it must be noted that in at least two of these areas, attacks on the "evil gentry" and the merchants, and probably in the third as well, the Rugao Party Directorate was considerably more moderate than some other County Party Directorates. In many other

parts of Jiangsu, Party members and local leaders actually engaged in minor military skirmishes. Probably because of the conservative nature of the Rugao Party, there is no evidence of such armed struggle in Rugao.(89)

In addition, it is possible that the Rugao Party's campaigns against the gentry, the merchants, and the temples did not have the approval of, and were not actually carried out by Dong and his followers. Rather, it is possible that the campaigns were run by the more liberal anti-Dong elements that still existed within the County Party. For example, it is certain that several of those most active in the prosecution of Hong Fuji, the merchant punished for selling Japanese goods, were opponents of Dong.(90) These anti-Dong elements probably hoped to use the campaigns to rouse popular opinion and topple Dong from power.

Where did the anti-Dong elements get their power? Most probably they were tied to or at least gained support and encouragement from the provincial-level Anti-CC Clique. Throughout the Directorate period the Anti-CC Clique controlled many important provincial-level Party posts, such as the provincial Party's Organization Department, and used these posts to appoint county-level functionaries from within Anti-CC Clique ranks. Often it was these Anti-CC Clique affiliates who carried out the

campaigns against the "evil gentry", the merchants, and the temples.(91) While there is no proof of such ties in Rugao, it is likely that they existed.

However, just as the former Rugao County Special Committee had been able to do, the Rugao County Party Directorate was able to overcome its local opponents. For example, in the fall of 1928 the Party tried to remove one Xu Jiajin from the Rugao political stage. At this time Xu was editor of the County Party newspaper. In June he had managed the auction at which "traitor merchant" Hong Fuji's goods were sold.(92) Obviously, at the beginning of the Directorate period Xu was someone of stature and influence in the local Party, although as later events would reveal, not one of Dong's henchmen.

On October 30 the county government received an order from the Provincial Department of Civil Affairs to capture Xu and send him to Nanjing for trial. Xu was charged with being a "counter-revolutionary", and suspected of being a Communist. After receiving the order the county Public Security Office sent out police who apprehended Xu. That same night the head of the Office personally escorted Xu to Nanjing.(93)

At first it appeared that the attempt to remove Xu would not succeed. In mid-November it was reported that there was "no reliable evidence" in the case, and Xu was

encouraged enough to write a letter to the Directorate requesting them to ask the province to set him free. But six months later Xu's case was still unresolved. Then, in April 1929 the Jiangsu High Court put Xu on trial, again concluded that the evidence was insufficient, and determined that a new trial should be held at which additional testimony could be heard. A year later - in April 1930 - this process was completed and Xu was sentenced to two years in prison. Dong at last had triumphed in removing Xu permanently from the Rugao scene.(94)

The success of the case against Xu also illustrates the high level of cooperation that existed between the Rugao County Party and the Rugao county government during the Directorate period. Without the assistance of the government, Xu could not possibly have been tried and convicted. In addition, there is absolutely no evidence that the Party ever challenged the government, or that the government ever attacked the Party, as had been common under the Special Committee. Rather, Party and government leaders held a number of joint meetings (Dang zheng lianxi huiyi) and worked together on activities such as the anti-Japanese campaign. Furthermore, the county government, without a great deal of protest or grumbling, continued funding the Party organization.(95)

In sum, the new Party leaders who took over the Rugao Party in February 1928 restricted the Party's activities. No longer did they attempt to organize among or even make contact with the lower classes of society. No longer did they search out and identify additional members of the local elite who opposed Party policies. No longer did they actively criticize and confront the county government. Instead, they chose to concentrate on tightening the Party's internal organization and on bringing Rugao Party policies into line with those of the provincial and central leadership.

The Executive and Supervisory Committees Take Office: The FF Group Remains in Power

The Rugao Party Affairs Directorate remained in office until February 1929 when, as part of a centrally-directed reorganization of both the Jiangsu provincial-level Party and all Jiangsu county-level parties, it was replaced by an Executive Committee (Zhixing weiyuanhui) and a Supervisory Committee (Jiancha weiyuanhui). At the end of January 1929 the Rugao Party had sent the names of its nominees for the new committees to the Provincial Party headquarters. As instructed by higher levels, this list contained roughly three times as many names as there were slots. This was to allow the

province to have the final word in appointing the actual Committee members, and to allow them to veto any particular county nominees they thought unsuitable.(96)

On February 4: the Provincial Party organization announced the names of the new office holders. Once again Dong Xiaosu was among them, as were many of Dong's followers. Moreover, of the five regular members of the Executive Committee, four were holdovers from the Party Directorate, while the fifth member of the former Directorate was assigned to the new Supervisory Committee.(97) It is thus safe to say that Dong controlled the Executive and Supervisory Committees in much the same way that he controlled the Party Directorate; the name of the Rugao County Party organization had changed, but not much else.

Because the change was a change in name only, the transition between the Directorate and the Executive Committee was smooth and easy. On February 24: the members of the Directorate held their last meeting. At this gathering they decided that their work was completed, and that on February 27 they would turn over their power to the new Executive Committee. It was so done, and on February 28 the Executive Committee held its first meeting.(98)

Activities of the Executive Committee: Social Retreat Continues

From the beginning the Rugao Party Executive committee appeared to have a firm grip on Rugao Party affairs. For funding purposes each County Party received a ranking from the Provincial Party organization. Funds were then distributed by the county government to the County Party based on this ranking. In May the Provincial Party organization raised Rugao to the status of a second-level county (it had previously been a third-level county), thus ensuring more financial security for the local Party organization. In July seventeen Rugao Party representatives convened the second Rugao Party Congress.(99) Although no record exists of what transpired there, since no changes in either Party personnel or policies resulted, it probably was a routine, not a tumultuous, event.

As would be expected, the Executive Committee continued some of the same policies that had been pursued by the Directorate, such as the suppression of mass organizations, and the prosecution of left-wing elements remaining within the Party's ranks. Also as would be expected, other activities that had gone on under the Directorate, specifically those associated with the Party's more liberal elements such as the campaigns

against the "evil gentry", the Japanese and the temples, were either reduced to symbolic efforts or halted altogether. Instead, the Party seemed to become preoccupied with internal squabbles, one of which led to the downfall of Dong himself.

In mid-January, just before it went out of existence, the old Mass Training Committee (Min xuan hui) of the Directorate had appointed four rectification committees (zhengli weiyuanhui) to reorganize Rugao's mass organizations: a Peasant Association Rectification Committee (Nongxie zhengli weiyuanhui), a Merchant Association Rectification Committee (Shang xie zhengli weiyuanhui), a Youth Association Rectification Committee (Qingnian lianhui zhengli weiyuanhui), and a Women's Association Rectification Committee (Fuxie zhengli weiyuanhui). But instead of going straight to work, the committees languished for lack of funds. On May 2, after three months of inactivity, the various rectification committee members held a joint meeting. After the meeting they sent a petition to the County Party Mass Training Committee asking that the Committee aid them in acquiring the money needed to start carrying out their work. Because nothing happened, all the various Rectification Committee members then cabled the Provincial Party notifying the Party that they were resigning.(100) As far

as can be ascertained, this was the end of mass organizations in Rugao.

Any leftists or individuals with liberal views who tried to move the Party toward greater involvement with the lower strata of society also met their demise. For example, after the Executive Committee took office Cong Xiaohou, a Rugao Party Director and head of the Directorate's Mass Training Department, was demoted to Supervisory Committee membership. (Cong was the only Director not made a member of the Executive committee.) Three months later he was fired from even this relatively unimportant position.(101)

Two followers of Ji Yun - Zhou Shizhong and Wang Zhezai - got similar treatment. As described earlier, Ji was one of the founders of the Nationalist Party in Rugao, and a Party activist who had faded from Party politics in June 1928 at the start of the Directorate period. In the spring of 1929 Zhou and Wang were forced to follow their mentor.

In February both Zhou and Wang were tried on charges of extorting money from Xinshenggang merchants (Xinshenggang was a port on the Chang Jiang) who illicitly sold Japanese goods. They were sentenced to ten months penal servitude and ordered to pay a fine of two hundred yuan. But neither man accepted the verdict and both

appealed. The outcome of the second trial, held in June, is not recorded, but as a consequence Zhou, at least, was removed from the Party register. A year later Wang was brought before the bench again, this time for extorting money from Buddhist monks who were not observing the proper religious rituals. As a result, he was sentenced to jail for a year. According to one report on the event, "this concluded the case which has excited the entire city."(102) Needless to say neither man was ever again active in local Party affairs or held a Party leadership post.

Just as the attacks on leftists accelerated, those on the "evil gentry" waned and finally disappeared altogether. Even those local leaders who in the previous several years had been tried and imprisoned were now released. For example, in April 1929 the Jiangsu High Court suddenly declared that He Lin, whose case was mentioned earlier, was "not guilty" of charges of being an "evil gentry". He was released within the day.(103)

Other campaigns were similarly moderated. At the time of the accession of the Executive Committee, the Provincial Party ordered all references to the anti-Japanese boycott stripped from the name of the Anti-Japanese National Salvation Committee, and it became the National Salvation Committee (Guomin Jiuguo hui).

Membership on the committee was also revised. Previously, many left-wing activists had served on the Committee's Executive Committee. Now all the activists were removed and several leading government officials were appointed in their stead, including the heads of the Public Security and Education Departments. After its make-up changed, there is no evidence that the Party, acting through the Committee, did anything but carry out anti-Japanese propaganda campaigns within the county seat. No longer did they investigate and try individual shopkeepers or auction off the goods of "traitor. merchants".(104) One reporter summed up the situation well when in October 1931 he noted that the "anti-Japanese boycott goes on, yet at the same time Japanese goods are displayed and bought."(105)

In the religious sphere, Party enthusiasm for direct action also ebbed. No longer were temples taken over to be used by the Party for secular activities; "superstitious" rituals, although still not endorsed, were now allowed to continue as long as they did not get out of hand. Moreover, in at least one case, a temple previously appropriated by the Party was retaken by its adherents and returned to religious use.

Events in several of Rugao's districts clearly illustrate this reverse trend. For example, sometime

before 1929, in a village of the Matang District east of Rugao City, the Party's district headquarters drew up "engineering plans", for control of the local waterways. But while these plans ultimately were transmitted to the county government, little was done to implement them. As a result, the villagers took things into their own hands. Relying on "superstition and geomancy" (or so the Party put it), instead of on modern engineering methods such as supposedly had been the basis for the Party's plan, they constructed a new embankment in the middle of a local river.(106)

Because of the villagers' reliance on superstition, the Party was outraged and claimed that the new embankment obstructed transportation and hurt water conservancy. But in actuality, beside venting its spleen, the Party did nothing. It was reported that the county government, presumably at the request of the County Party, ordered the county's Reconstruction Office (Jianshe ju) to investigate. However, as far as is known, the locally-constructed embankment stayed in place.(107)

In the end, the local population was equally successful in West Market, a town where the Party earlier had taken over the Temple of the City God. On July 2, 1929 - a year after the Party's ouster of religious authorities - a crowd of several hundred people carrying

incense gathered in the temple. They rang the gong, beat the drum, and declared that the Temple of the City God was re-established. Then they totally destroyed the Mass Education Center that the Party had established in the temple, as well as the local Party office. Local police officials tried to quell the disturbance but could not. Two weeks later the county's Party and government leaders passed a joint resolution ordering the West Market Mass Education Center re-established, and the leaders of the fracas that had caused its destruction arrested. But as with the embankment, it appears that neither decision was implemented, and that the temple remained a temple after all.(108)

Events such as those at Matang and West Market, coupled with the end of the campaigns against "evil gentry" and "traitor merchants", indicate the way in which the Party leadership during the Executive and Supervisory Committee periods continued the slow, but final and absolute, retreat from attempts to reform local society. However, at the same time that it was withdrawing from society this identical leadership was becoming more involved in an intraparty feud that ultimately would end the tenure of the Executive and Supervisory Committees and the political career of Dong as well.

The major protagonists in the feud were Dong Xiaosu and another Rugao Party member and sometime Party leader, Ji Zhanbei. It is not known if Ji was a Rugao native or where, or even if, he received an education. But no matter what his background, and although he only very infrequently held a major County Party post, Ji was one of the very few individuals to play a continuous role in County Party affairs throughout the Nanjing Decade. In the spring of 1927 Ji was put in charge of the Party purge in the sixth Party district. The following year he was active in the Party's anti-Japanese organization. In January 1929 he became a member of the First District Party Executive Committee (which included Rugao City), and then in February was elevated to the County Party Executive Committee. (109)

It was apparently Ji's position on the County Party Executive Committee that brought him into conflict with Dong. The issues over which the two debated are unclear. But sometime before the late winter or early spring of 1930 Dong and three others formally accused Ji of being a "counter-revolutionary" and had him arrested by the county government. In March the county government sent his case to the Jiangsu High Court. The Court heard the case on April 24 and several days later handed down a verdict of "not guilty".(110) Dong, for the first time, had failed to

remove a rival from the local scene and this did not augur well for his future.

The End of the First Supervisory and Executive Committee:
Dong Falls from Grace

In November 1929 the Jiangsu Provincial Party organization underwent a terrific shock. Four of its Executive Committee members, all of them part of the Anti-CC Clique, were arrested by the head of the Department of Civil Affairs and charged with organizing a rebellion in the southern Jiangsu county of Liyang. Subsequently the four were acquitted, but the arrests and following trial shattered the Jiangsu Party. As a result, in December 1929 the Central Party Executive Committee disbanded the Provincial Party Executive Committee and appointed a Party Affairs Rectification Committee (Dangwu zhengli weiyuanhui) in its place. This new Committee was made up solely of members of the FF and CC Cliques.(111)

The Party Affairs Rectification Committee spent its first five months investigating Party conditions in all of Jiangsu's sixty-one counties and reorganizing various county Party committees. First, it decided to assign each county Party organization to one of three groups: (1) those that did not need to be reformed because they were in accordance with the Central Party; (2) those that

needed to be partially reformed but where most Party headquarter's members were satisfactory and only a minority had "incorrect thoughts"; and (3) those that needed to be totally reformed.(112) One can assume that important criteria used for judging a given County Party's worthiness included whether or not local Party members were loyal to the FF or CC Clique and willing to follow Clique instructions, as well as the degree to which a given Party was wracked by internal feuds which might threaten FF and CC Clique dominance.

After conducting its investigation, the Jiangsu Party decided that over two-thirds of the county parties in Jiangsu needed to be reformed. These county parties were immediately ordered to stop work, and a provincial Party representative temporarily assigned to each county in question to supervise Party affairs. Meanwhile, members of county-level Rectification Committees (xian zhengli weiyuanhui), which were to replace the old Executive Committees, were to be chosen. Only in seventeen counties did the Party not feel the need to revamp completely the Party leadership. In these counties the pre-existing Executive and Supervisory Committees continued to work.(113)

Rugao, probably because of its FF Clique ties, was one of the minority of counties where the Executive and

Supervisory Committees stayed in power. In February 1930 the Party's provincial headquarters announced the names of the new Rectification Committee members in thirty-three counties.(114) Rugao was not among them, indicating that the previous Rugao Executive Committee remained intact. At the same time, the Provincial Party commended the Rugao Party for filing acceptable Party reports, one more sign that the Provincial Party and the Rugao Party had an amiable relationship.

Later, in April, the Provincial Party cited two Rugao Party leaders for the outstanding manner in which they had carried out their jobs. Moreover, on April 12, as a result of reviewing the report of the Provincial Organization Department investigator sent to Rugao, the Provincial Party decided that although Rugao's entire Supervisory Committee had asked to resign it would not be allowed to do so; that instead the Supervisory Committee would be corrected, and that a letter would be sent to the Executive Committee warning it against improper dealings. Moreover, on April 26 the Provincial Party decreed that Rugao, along with the sixteen other county parties that had not undergone reform, should begin to make preparations to hold an All-County Representative Congress (Quan xian daibiao da hui), which in turn (according to Party regulations) would select second stage Executive and

Supervisory Committee members (dier jie zhijian weiyuanhui weiyuan).(115)

In May Rugao Party events continued to follow a peaceful course. Early in the month the Provincial Party decided that the Rugao Party was to continue to have a five-member Executive Committee with three alternates, and three-member Supervisory Committee with one alternate. As it had done previously, the Provincial Party ordered the Rugao County Party to select the names of individuals it wished to have serve on these committees in numbers several times greater than the actual number of positions available, and requested that it send these names to the Provincial Party, which would then choose the actual Committee members. Later in the month the Provincial Party reported that in all seventeen counties, presumably including Rugao, where the work of preparing for Party congresses and choosing second stage county-level Executive and Supervisory Committees was going on, the work was progressing well.(116)

In June Rugao apparently held its representative congress as planned, and the Provincial Organization Department reported that the selection of Rugao's new Executive and Supervisory Committee members was proceeding apace. Rugao's long-established ties to the FF Clique, coupled with the well-entrenched leadership of Dong

Xiaosu, made it look as though Dong would remain in power and that Rugao would remain invulnerable to higher-level party interference.(117)

However, while the Rugao Party moved forward, storm clouds gathered behind it. In April, as mentioned earlier, the Executive Committee, while being allowed to remain in office, had been reprimanded. While no cause for the reprimand was listed, it probably stemmed from the lawsuit involving Executive Committee members Dong and Ji. Then, in June the Provincial Organization Department gave a severe warning to the Rugao Party and fired a Rugao Party official for the alleged reason that in January 1930 the Rugao party's financial report had omitted a small amount of money spent on postage! In the same month the Organization Department also revoked an earlier commendation it had awarded to Cao Hongci, head of the County Party's Propaganda Department and one of Dong's closest henchmen. The Organization Department claimed that an investigation revealed that Cao had falsified reports on his Party work.(118)

During the summer months no published reports about the Rugao Party appeared. But things could not have gone well for Dong and the Executive Committee. In September, probably sensing that the winds of change were blowing against Dong, Ji Zhanbei and several other Party members

filed a suit against Dong and three other members of the Executive Committee. They charged that Dong and the others had "used their positions and power to deprive other people of their physical freedom", (119) or put another way, that in April Dong et. al. had brought false charges of being a "counter-revolutionary" against Ji Zhanbei. In a county where lawsuits and countersuits were common among political rivals, Ji was trying to even the score.

The Jiangsu High Court decided that Dong's case would be heard by the Nantong Court (Nantong fayuan), which, starting in November, called witnesses to the stand. On April 11, 1931 after summoning the accused three times for questioning, the court reached its verdict. Dong Xiaosu and two others with whom he was tried were found "not guilty". The case of the fourth defendant, was thrown out of court. (120)

But the Provincial Party did not wait for Dong to be cleared of the charges that Ji had leveled against him. In mid-September, two weeks after ~~he~~ initiated his suit, the Provincial Party, in accordance with an order from the Central Party organization, declared that all the candidates for the second stage Rugao County Executive and Supervisory Committees nominated in June by the Dong Xiaosu-controlled Party were invalid, and that Rugao would

join the ranks of the majority of Jiangsu counties which were undergoing complete Party reorganization. To carry out this reform the Provincial Party named three individuals from outside the county to a Rugao County Party Affairs Rectification Committee (Rugao Xian zhengli weiyuanhui). In addition it simultaneously appointed two officials from the Provincial Organization Department to go to Rugao to investigate Party affairs.(121) After these dramatic changes were made, Dong Xiaosu was no longer visibly active in Rugao Party affairs.

The Rugao Party during the Remainder of the Nanjing Decade

Dong's ouster most likely was no more than an attempt by central and provincial Party authorities to restore order among two competing groups of otherwise loyal subordinates whose rivalry was based, not on differences of opinion or policy, but in the never-ending struggle for personal power which characterizes factionally based political systems. As a result, the removal of Dong did not significantly alter either the political make-up or the political activities of the Rugao County Party. By the end of 1930 when Dong was removed, both the structure of the County Party organization and the kinds of activities in which that organization engaged were set. They did not change significantly after Dong left the

scene or throughout the remainder of the Nanjing Decade.

After 1930 less detailed information is available about the Rugao County Party. However, there is no reason to believe that, except during the Rectification Committee interval, that the Party organization ever varied from the form laid down for it during the initial Executive and Supervisory Committee period. Presumably the Rectification committee appointed for Rugao finished its work by August 1931, just as similar committees did elsewhere throughout the province. From that date until 1934 we know that the Rugao Party was run by a five-member Executive Committee and a three-person Supervisory Committee.(122) There is no reason to suspect that by 1938, when the Japanese invaded China and pushed the Nationalists out of Jiangsu, the form of the Rugao Party organization had changed.

Moreover, there appears to have been little personnel turnover among the people assigned to these committees, and those changes that did occur were made in an orderly and predictable fashion. For example, in November 1933 the Rugao Party Executive Committee was made up of three individuals who had been on the Committee at least since June 1932 plus two individuals who had been alternate Committee members a year and a half earlier.(123) In other words, when vacancies opened up alternate members

succeeded to full Committee membership in the expected manner, without any apparent outside interference.

Throughout the remainder of the Nanjing Decade the Rugao county lower-level Party organizations also remained stable. Under the County Party headquarters there were three district Party headquarters, and sixteen sub-district Party headquarters. Of the latter, ten were run by local Party committees, and six were directly administered by the County Party organization.(124)

Similarly, the number of Rugao party members did not vary greatly. In 1928 the Party had 157 members. In early 1933 this figure increased to 199. Later in that year it rose to 226 before falling back to 211 in 1934.(125) There is no reason to suspect that by 1937 the number of individuals in the Rugao party was much above or below this figure.

In 1934 (the only year for which data are available) Rugao Party members were overwhelmingly male, and extremely youthful. Only nine females were counted in the Party ranks.(126) Moreover, as the table below shows, over half the members were under thirty, while virtually all of them were under forty.

Table 3. Ages of Rugao's Nationalist Party Members in 1934.

Age Group	Number of Members
Under 20	1
21-30	122
31-40	71
41-50	14
51+	3

Source: Zhao Ruheng, compiler, Jiangsu Sheng Jian [Handbook on Jiangsu Province] (Shanghai: Xin Zhonggui Jianshe Xuehui, 1935), sec. 2, p. 59.

In 1934, as it had been since the county Party's founding in 1926, Party strength was clearly centered in the county's newer and more modern educational institutions. Teachers at modern schools made up the largest occupational group within the Party, and a Party member was more likely to have had a normal school education than an education of any other type.(127) If the background of the individuals listed in the categories of "government" and "Party affairs" on the following chart were known, the tie between the Party and the schools probably would appear even more solid.

Table 4. Occupational Breakdown of Rugao's
Nationalist Party Members in 1934.

Occupation	Number of Party Members
Peasants	18
Workers	-
Merchants	19
Students	14
Teachers	80
Government	32
Police/Military	9
Party Affairs	24
Self-employed	15
Other	-
Total	211

Source: Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, sec. 2, p.

Table 5. Educational Level of Rugao's
Nationalist Party Members in 1934.

Education	Number of Party Members
No education	2
Old-style education	5
Elementary School	24
Vocational School	1
Middle School	43
Normal School	48
Specialized School	36
University	8
Overseas study	-
Other	-
Total	167

Source: Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, sec. 2, p.

But in contrast to the strong ties that existed between the Rugao Party and the schools, the link between the Rugao Party and official government organizations was very weak. Only thirty-two government officials were also Rugao Party members, a very small number. Obviously, being a Party member was not an important prerequisite for office holding in Rugao.

The above figures also indicate that the Party did not reach out to those who constituted the majority of Rugao's society. Eight years after its founding, the Party still contained no workers, and only a very small number of peasants and merchants. It also appeared to encompass virtually no representatives from the seventy-five to eighty per cent of the Rugao population that could neither read nor write. In other words, the Rugao Party remained throughout the Nanjing Decade a small elite group that had very little in common with the population it was supposed to oversee.

To bridge the gap between itself and its constituency, or to overcome its numerical deficiency, the Party, as in previous years, made only token efforts. Mass organizations were small and insignificant. In June 1934 Rugao had a County Peasant Association (Xian nong hui), twelve district-level peasant associations (qu nong hui), and sixty-eight village peasant associations (xiang

nong hui). However, these associations, which needed a total of tens of thousands of members to be effective, could only boast of 4,799 participants. Assuming that eighty per cent of Rugao's households engaged in agriculture, and that five individuals made up an average household, the peasant associations contained a representative from less than two percent of Rugao's peasant families.(128)

With merchants and workers the Party did even worse. In 1934. there was no county-wide merchant society. Only one district-level merchant society (qu shang hui) and one market town merchant society (zhen shang hui) existed. The only worker's organization Rugao was listed as having was a nine-member group of the self-employed (ziyou zhive tuanti).(129)

There is also no evidence that the Party seriously engaged in any mass campaigns. The anti-Japanese boycott was largely carried out by students, and except for a brief resurgence after the Japanese attack on Shanghai during 1931-1932 did not seem to be taken too seriously.(130) It was reported that "throughout the boycott [Japanese] things were bought or 'loaned' from the stores" and that "certain homes had Japanese food,...served tea in Japanese cups,..[and] used things of Japanese make constantly."(131) By December 1935 the

boycott had been lifted altogether.(132)

Religion also was no longer the object of Party attack. Throughout the 1930's people organized prayer sessions and idol processions, both sometimes attended by thousands. New sects and cults were started which erected religious buildings worth enormous sums, sometimes tens of thousands of dollars. Generally, it was noted that

Revival of religion is evident as one goes through the streets of Jukao. Ancient temple rites, previously kept in check by authorities are now flourishing. Temple and incense shops are busy. Waste paper with Chinese characters on it is being collected. Ancestor worship receives the greatest attention. The ancestral halls are being repaired and offerings made. Beggars gathered at their [temple] gates indicates the the number of worshippers is sufficient to give them a fair income.(133)

If it did not run mass organizations and it did not carry out mass campaigns among the population, what did the Rugao Party do during the 1930's? We know it ran a County Party newspaper called Gao Bao although we do not know how often it was published or how substantial it was. We also know that the Party maintained its ties to the FF clique. In 1932, as mentioned earlier, one analyst stated that Rugao was FF territory. Later, in April 1934, when the Jiangsu Party was divided into seven districts and a member of the Provincial Party was put in charge of administering each district, Rugao was assigned to the fourth district under the direction of Zhang Gongren.

Zhang was one of the most important leaders of the FF Clique. The placement of Rugao in Zhang's district indicated that the FF group continued to control events there.(134)

But most important, the Rugao Party members engaged in quarrels with one another. Sometimes these quarrels were based on real infractions committed by those involved in the disputes, but sometimes they were not. In all instances they were most likely tied to struggles for local power and influence. Lacking evidence to the contrary, one can only conclude that these disputes were the main form of Party activity throughout the remainder of the Decade.

One such altercation took place in the middle of December 1930. At that time the Rugao Party Propaganda Department had a newly-appointed head named Shou Nengmu. On December 12 Shou called a special meeting of the County Party Committee to raise funds to be turned over to the Provincial Party for use in "saving the nation". But one of the County Committee's other members, Wang Taihui, was suspicious of Shou. He cabled the Provincial Party Committee and asked if that Committee had really ordered the county to raise money. The Provincial Committee, or at least the person with whom Wang talked, said "no". This meant that Shou had fabricated a

Provincial Party order. Two days later Shou disappeared and was not heard from again.(135) Presumably one more competitor for local power had been removed from the Rugao scene.

Conclusion

In 1926 the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party was founded by individuals who were interested in using the Party to dramatically change Rugao's society. Most of these people were Communists or leftists. They believed that only by overthrowing the existing social, economic and political system, and bringing the population into the political process could China's longstanding problems be solved.

To further their ends these early Rugao Nationalist Party members first did advance work for the National Revolutionary Army led by Jiang Jieshi. Then, after the National Revolutionary Army was victorious, they set up mass organizations of workers, peasants, students, merchants, and women; carried out mass campaigns; and launched attacks on the remaining members of Rugao's old wealthy and corrupt elite. Their goal was to eradicate the old ideas and the old political structures that had resulted in China's disintegration, and to spread a new ideology, as well as new methods of political

organization, that could reunite China and make her people prosperous.

But starting in April 1927 this largely young and idealistic group faced increasing opposition from the Central Party organization. In April 1927 the central leadership severed its ties with groups on the left and started to pull away from the activist policies associated with this leftist leadership. In its place the Party erected a political organization based solely on personal loyalty ties and rooted in clique and factional politics. Its most important function was to maintain the organization itself intact, rather than to carry out any specific policies or programs.

Gradually, as a result of pressure from the top, the local Rugao Party came to resemble its central counterpart. After a year of successful resistance, all of the Communists were forced to flee from Rugao Party ranks. During the next two years more moderate leftists and liberals were likewise thrown, or pushed, out. With the departure of these activists, mass organizations were disbanded, mass campaigns halted, and attacks on "evil gentry", "traitor merchants", and temples ended. Instead, the Rugao Party turned inward and became preoccupied solely with its own bitter quarrels and feuds as each individual Party leader fought to protect their private

piece of political turf. Stability and maintenance of the status quo, not upheaval and change, became the order of the day. A young, vibrant political organization seeking change in order to secure itself in the hearts and minds of the people had become in ten short years a moribund political organization uninterested in taking any action at all, and probably unknown to the vast majority of the people in the county it was supposed to serve.

In contrast to the above view, at least one scholar, Bradley Geisert, argues that the Jiangsu Nationalist Party Organization was successful precisely because, all else aside, by expelling its radical and left-wing members, the Party was able to bring order to Party affairs. But proponents of the above view ignore the fact that the stability achieved by the Jiangsu, and likewise the Rugao, Party was stability bought at a price. Beneath the surface Rugao's society teemed with exactly the same problems that it had before 1927, e.g. old-fashioned agricultural cultivation methods, out-dated and exploitative landlord-tenancy relationships, inadequate water control measures, lack of modern industry, poor schools, and a dearth of modern health and medical facilities. In addition, beyond China's shores a new menace was rising: a highly militarized, strong and aggressive Japan. Should Chinese society be stirred up in

a way that would allow some of its problems to seem alarming to the majority of China's population, or should new problems be caused by the threat from afar, how could the small, elite, inward-looking Rugao Party, a mere shadow of the vibrant group that had claimed power in the county ten years earlier, ever hope to deal with them? In 1927 local Party organizations like the Rugao Party organization had helped Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists win power. In 1937 when this power was threatened both from within and without, this important local ally was missing. By removing Communists and leftists and thus enfeebling local Party organizations, Jiang and the Central Party leadership may have brought temporary stability to particular local areas, but because they failed to replace the Communists and leftists with any sizeable and active political organization of their own, they simultaneously helped to sow the seeds of the Nationalists' later destruction.

Chapter Two

Notes

(1) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang" [Conditions of Party affairs in Rugao], Jiangsu Dangsheng [Jiangsu Party voice], no. 16 (November 11, 1928), p. 14.

(2) For a general history of the Nationalist Party in Jiangsu, see Gu Ziyang, Jiangsu Sheng Tangwu Yange [Evolution of Party affairs in Jiangsu Province] (n.p., n.d.), Nationalist Party Archives, Taipei, Taiwan, no. 34:001.

(3) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 14.

(4) For a description of Rugao's industrial and agricultural sectors, see Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xian Zhi [Annals of Jiangsu's sixty-one counties] (Shanghai: Shanghai Yinshuguan, 1936), pp. 126-127.

(5) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 14.

(6) On the early years of the Jiangsu Party, see Bradley Kent Geisert, "Power and Society: The Kuomintang and Local Elites in Kiangsu Province, China, 1924-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1979), pp. 17-57. On the early years of the Rugao Party, see "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 14.

(7) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 14, asserts that Ji was not a Communist. On Ji's later activities, see Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 11 July 1927, p. 8; 20 July 1927, p. 10; 23 July 1927, p. 2; 28 July 1927, p. 2; 30 July 1927, p. 8; 5 August 1927, p. 3; 9 August 1927, p. 3; 13 August 1927 p. 3; 18 August 1927, p. 3; 15 June 1928, p. 3; and 2 October 1928, p. 8. See also this chapter, pp.

(8) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 14 states that Tang and Ma were not Communist Party members. On Tang's later fate, see Shi Bao, 13 September 1930, p. 4.

(9) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15.

(10) Shi Bao, 28 May 1927, p. 2; 3 June 1927, p. 8.

(11) Shi Bao, 8 June 1927, p. 8; 10 June 1927, p. 8.

(12) Shi Bao, 8 June 1927, p. 8. For information on individual Rugao Nationalist Party members see "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 16, and "Jiangsu Jiangbei Feigong Raoluan Shikuang zhi Diaocha" [Investigation of the Communist disturbances in North Jiangsu], Changong Banyuekan [Communist suppression semi-monthly], no. 5-6 (January 10, 1931), p. 83; and Shi Bao, 10 July 1927, p. 8; 13 July 1927, p. 13; 21 July 1927, p. 8; and 16 August 1927, p. 5.

(13) Shi Bao, 8 June 1927, p. 8.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Shi Bao, 8 June 1927, p. 3.

(16) Shi Bao, 18 June 1927, p. 4; 21 June 1927, p. 3; 23 June 1927, p. 3; and 1 July 1927, p. 8.

(17) On the backgrounds of Cheng, Shen and Gu, see "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15. On the formation of the CC Clique, see Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 61-68.

(18) Shi Bao, 1 July 1927, p. 8; 10 July 1927, p. 8. When a Nationalist Party committee at any level was disbanded, its successor could not take up the vacated office until it received at least the seal of the old committee. As a result, the stealing and hiding of documents, funds, and seals was a common way for the members of a disbanded committee to prevent their successors from taking up office, and often led to much confusion.

(19) Shi Bao, 11 July 1927, p. 2. On Ji Kai and Ji Zhongzhuo, see "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15. There are some indications that Ji Kai either was a Communist or later became associated with the Communists. On October 9, 1930 a man named Ji Kai, the militia head of Xiaobao, was arrested and his troops disarmed. Although it is nowhere stated that Ji was a Communist, it was at this time that Communists were being arrested in this manner. If this is the same Ji Kai who was active in Nationalist Party affairs in 1927, then this event may indicate that Ji did have ties to the Communists. See Shi Bao, 15 October 1930, p. 4.

(20) Shi Bao, 18 July 1927, p. 3; 24 July 1927, p. 3; "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15.

(21) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," pp. 15-16. Different sources disagree on the amount of monthly Party expenditures. "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang" says that the Party spent 1,300 yuan during the time of the Special Committee, while Shi Bao 13 December 1927, pp. 2-3, gives a figure of 1,120 yuan.

(22) Shi Bao, 19 September 1927, p. 7; "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Shi Bao, 8 June 1927, p. 8.

(25) Shi Bao, 13 October 1927, p. 3.

(26) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15; Shi Bao, 3 August 1927, p. 3.

(27) Shi Bao, 14 August 1927, p. 5.

(28) Shi Bao, 8 June 1927, p. 8; 14 August 1927, p. 5. Shen Bao ["The Shun Pao"] (Shanghai), 26 July 1927, p. 10.

(29) Shi Bao, 21 June 1927, p. 8; 22 June 1927, p. 8.

(30) Shi Bao, 5 July 1927, p. 8; 17 July 1927, p. 3.

(31) Shi Bao, 29 June 1927, p. 8; 31 July 1927, p. 5; 13 August 1927, p. 5.

(32) Shi Bao, 13 July 1927, p. 13; 21 July 1927, p. 8; 16 August 1927, p. 5.

(33) Shi Bao, 10 July 1927, p. 8.

(34) Shi Bao, 16 August 1927, p. 5.

(35) Shi Bao, 21 July 1927, p. 8.

(36) Shi Bao, 24 July 1927, p. 3; 31 December 1927, p. 2; 8 July 1928, p. 8.

(37) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 16. For examples of other cases, see Shi Bao, 19 July 1927, p. 2; 11 August 1927, p. 5.

(38) Shi Bao, 18 July 1927, p. 3.

(39) Shi Bao, 11 July 1927, p. 8; 20 July 1927, p. 10; 23 July 1927, p. 10.

(40) Shi Bao, 30 July 1927, p. 8; 9 August 1927, p. 3; 18 August 1927, p. 3.

(41) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15.

(42) Ibid. For information on the former, see Shi Bao, 13 October 1927, p. 3. For information on the latter, see Shi Bao, 3 December 1928, p. 8; 17 January 1929, p. 4.

(43) Geisert, "Power and Society," p. 70, states that the Provincial Purge Committee was CC Clique-controlled, which seems reasonable. However, on pp. 72-73 he also implies that because all members of the county purge committees had to be "introduced" by a member of the Provincial Purge Committee that the county-level committees were CC-dominated as well. As the Rugao case indicates, this was not necessarily true. For a description of Ji's case, see pp. 106-107.

(44) Shi Bao, 28 July 1927, p. 2; 5 August 1927, p. 3; 9 August 1927, p. 3; 13 August 1927, p. 3.

(45) Shi Bao, 17 September 1927, p. 3.

(46) Shi Bao, 20 November 1927, p. 3; 4 December 1927, p. 3.

(47) Shi Bao, 27 February 1929, p. 4; 5 March 1929, p. 3.

(48) Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 70-71.

(49) For this period there is nothing available about the strengths or weaknesses of the provincial Party vis-a-vis the strengths or weaknesses of local parties. Geisert, "Power and Society," the only analytical work on the Party during this period, does not take up this issue.

(50) Shi Bao, 20 July 1927, p. 10.

(51) Shi Bao, 26 September 1927, p. 3.

(52) *Ibid.*; and 3 October 1927, p. 3. It should be noted that different articles give different dates for Yue's return. Some of these sources indicate that the mass meeting would have had to have taken place before Yue's return. It should also be noted that the names of the "other groups" participating in anti-Yue activities are not recorded.

(53) Shi Bao, 29 September 1927, p. 1; 8 October 1927, p. 3; 19 October 1927, p. 3.

(54) Shi Bao, 8 October 1927, p. 3; 28 October 1927, p. 3; 31 October 1927, p. 2.

(55) Shi Bao, 31 October 1927, p. 2.

(56) Shi Bao, 20 November 1927, p. 3.

(57) Shi Bao, 28 November 1927, p. 3.

(58) Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 73-75.

(59) Shi Bao, 29 November 1927, p. 2. For the background of the three newcomers, see "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 16.

(60) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 16.

(61) *Ibid.*

(62) *Ibid.*

(63) *Ibid.*

(64) *Ibid.*

(65) Shi Bao, 23 December 1927, p. 3; "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 16. For an example of Rui's earlier leadership role, see Shi Bao, 16 October 1927, p. 3.

(66) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 17.

(67) *Ibid.*, p. 18. This exit of the Western Hills group from politics in Rugao corresponds to Geisert's general findings about their diminished activities in

Jiangsu politics generally. He says that after January 1928 "the Western Hills group was not a serious factor in Kiangsu politics." Geisert, "Power and Society," p. 80.

(68) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 17.

(69) Ibid.; Shi Bao, 19 February 1928, p. 2; 1 March 1928, p. 7.

(70) For a further discussion of Communist activities in Rugao after this date, see Chapter Eight.

(71) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 17.

(72) Shi Bao, 25 January 1928, p. 3; "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 18.

(73) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 18.

(74) Ibid.

(75) Yun Gong, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangbu Gepai de Lishi ji Qi Huodong" [The history and activities of each faction in the Jiangsu Party Headquarters], Shehui Xinwen ["Society Mercury"] 1, no. 17 (November 21, 1932): 368; Da Ke, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu de Lishi Guan" [A look at the history of Party affairs in Jiangsu Province], Xiandai Shiliao [Contemporary historical materials], Vol. 1 (Shanghai: Hai Tian Chuban She, 1935), p. 102; Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 67-68.

(76) Yun Gong, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangbu," p. 367, says that Nantong was not under CC Clique control, but does not say who held sway there.

(77) Ibid., pp. 367-68.

(78) Ni Pi, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Qingkuang" [The condition of Jiangsu Party affairs], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 12-13 (January 1, 1929): 8-11.

(79) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 18.

(80) Shi Bao, 18 September 1928, p. 4.

(81) Shi Bao, 18 February 1928, p. 7; 23 February 1928, p. 3; 18 July 1928, p. 8; "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 18.

- (82) Shi Bao, 2 October 1928, p. 8.
- (83) Shi Bao, 1 August 1928, p. 4; 22 December 1928, p. 4.
- (84) Shi Bao, 28 May 1928, p. 4.
- (85) Shi Bao, 9 June 1928, p. 2; 12 June 1928, p. 1; 15 June 1928, p. 2; 25 July 1928, p. 8; 17 August 1928, p. 4; 6 September 1928, p. 4; 13 September 1928, p. 4.
- (86) Shi Bao, 29 July 1928, p. 4.
- (87) Shi Bao, 28 September 1928, p. 8; 25 November 1928, p. 3.
- (88) Shi Bao, 8 July 1929, p. 4.
- (89) For information on the campaigns against the local elite and the temples in other Jiangsu counties, see Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 152-166.
- (90) Xu Jiajin, whose case is described below, was one of those individuals who took part in the anti-Japanese campaign and who was also opposed to Dong. Shibao, 9 June 1928, p. 2.
- (91) Geisert, "Power and Society," p. 81.
- (92) Shi Bao, 9 June 1928, p. 2; 15 November 1928, p. 8.
- (93) Shi Bao, 3 November 1928, p. 4; 15 November 1928, p. 8; 13 April 1929, p. 4; 11 April 1930, p. 8.
- (94) Ibid. See also Wei Duo, "Nantong Qingnian Sixiang de Jinxi" [The present and the past of youthful thought in Nantong], Shehui Xinwen 4, no. 15 (August 15, 1933): 234.
- (95) Shi Bao, 22 September 1928, p. 4; "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 18. In fact, Xu was an important Rugao Communist Party leader, but this was not known to the Nationalists at this time. Most likely they thought that he was a member of either the anti-CC Clique or the Reorganizationists, a group around Wang Jingwei. A known Communist would not have received such a light sentence.

(96) Shi Bao, 28 January 1929, p. 3. On the provincial Party reorganization that took place at this time, see Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 84-85. On the general county-level reorganization that also took place, see Shi Bao, 5 February 1929, pp. 2-3; 14 February 1929, p. 2.

(97) Shi Bao, 14 February 1929, p. 2. The three followers of Dong were Cao Hongci, Xia Guangyu, and Miao Yingzhong. Their loyalty to Dong is indicated by their being joined in a lawsuit with Dong. See Shi Bao, 23 November 1930, p. 4. Dong's opponent was Li Zhanbei. More will be said about Li in the following pages.

(98) Shi Bao, 1 March 1929, p. 4; 5 March 1929, p. 3.

(99) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao [Jiangsu Province government gazette], no. 153 (June 7, 1929), p. 4; no. 193 (July 25, 1929), p. 4.

(100) Shi Bao, 17 January 1929, p. 4; 8 May 1929, p. 4.

(101) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 18; Shibao, 14 February 1929, p. 2; 17 May 1929, p. 4.

(102) Shi Bao, 14 February 1929, p. 4; 13 April 1929, p. 4; 14 June 1929, p. 4; 4 July 1929, p. 3; 1 June 1930, p. 2; 8 June 1930, p. 3.

(103) Shi Bao, 2 March 1929, p. 4.

(104) Shi Bao, 4 April 1929, p. 3; North China Herald (Shanghai), 27 October 1931, p. 135.

(105) North China Herald, 27 October 1931, p. 135.

(106) Shi Bao, 12 April 1929, p. 4.

(107) Ibid.

(108) Shi Bao, 8 July 1929, p. 4; 20 July 1929, p. 4.

(109) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 15; Shi Bao, 3 December 1928, p. 8; 11 January 1929, p. 4; 14 February 1929, p. 2.

(110) Shi Bao, 24 March 1930, p. 4; 23 April 1930, p. 4; 28 April 1930, p. 3; 18 May 1930, p. 3.

(111) Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 88-90; Gu Ziyang, Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Yanji, p. 21.

(112) Zhu Jianpai, "Jiangsu Dangwu Gaikuang," [Jiangsu Party affairs], Jiangsu Xunkan, no.58 (April 21, 1936), p. 1.

(113) Ibid.

(114) Shi Bao, 7 February 1930, p. 3; 2 March 1930, p. 3; Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan [Jiangsu Party affairs weekly], no. 13 (April 12, 1930), pp. 91-92, 94.

(115) Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan, no. 21 (June 8, 1930), pp. 83-84, 89.

(116) Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan, no. 25 (July 6, 1930), pp. 118-119, 126; Shi Bao, 5 May 1930, p. 3; 16 May 1930, p. 2.

(117) Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan, no. 27 (July 20, 1930), p. 86.

(118) Ibid., pp. 92-93.

(119) Shi Bao, 5 September 1930, p. 4; 23 November 1930, p. 4.

(120) Shi Bao, 5 September 1930, p. 4; 23 November 1930, p. 4; 22 April 1931, p. 4.

(121) Shi Bao, 17 September 1930, p. 3; 21 September 1930, p. 4.

(122) Information is available on the nature of the Rugao Party leadership structure from June 1932 through November 1933. This is the form it took. See Jiangsu Sheng Ge Xian Dangbu Weiyuan Ming Dan [Name list of each Jiangsu Province county Party Headquarters Committee members], handwritten copy (n.p., n.d.), Nationalist Party Archives, Taipei, Taiwan, no. 435:254, pp. 3, 13.

(123) Ibid.

(124) Zhongguo Guomindang Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Gaikuang Tongji Biao [Statistics on the condition of

Nationalist Party affairs in Jiangsu Province], handwritten copy (n.p., 31 October 1932), Nationalist Party Archives, Taipei, Taiwan, no. 435:207, pp. 11(B), 13(B).

(125) Ibid., pp. 8(A), 11(B), 13(B), 16(B), 18(B), 21; Zhao Ruheng, compiler, Jiangsu Sheng Jian [Handbook on Jiangsu Province] (Shanghai: Xin Zhonggui Jianshe Xuehui, 1935), Section 2, p. 59.

(126) Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, Section 2, p. 59.

(127) Ibid., Section 2, pp. 61, 68.

(128) Ibid., Section 2, p. 33.

(129) Ibid., Section 2, pp. 39, 43.

(130) North China Herald, 27 October 1931, p. 135; 19 October 1932, p. 92; 29 March 1933, p. 491.

(131) North China Herald, 4 October 1933, p. 8.

(132) North China Herald, 18 December 1935, p. 478.

(133) North China Herald, 10 August 1932, p. 213; 26 April 1933, p. 134; 10 January 1934, p. 47; 14 March 1934, p. 403; 18 July 1934, p. 91; 12 September 1934, p. 385; 5 December 1934, p. 370; 23 October 1935, p. 147.

(134) On Rugao's Party paper, see Zhao Ruheng, Jiangsu Sheng Jian, Section 2, p. 28. On the division of Rugao into Party administrative districts, see Ibid., p.13; and Gu Ziyang, Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Yanji, p. 28. On Zhang Gongren's ties to the FF Clique, see Yun Gong, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangbu Gepai de Lishi ji Qi Huodong," p. 368; Da Ke, "Susheng Dangbu Xuanju zhi Yimu" [An act in the selection of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Headquarters], Shehui Xinwen, no. 2 (January 13, 1933), p. 53; Nong, "Susheng Dangbu Gaixuan zhi Qianhou" [The before and after of the selection of the Jiangsu Party Headquarters], Shehui Xinwen, 1 (December 24, 1932), p. 554.

(135) Shi Bao, 14 March 1931, p. 4.

Chapter Three

The First Period of Nationalist Government in Rugao

Like the Rugao Nationalist Party, the Rugao government organization evolved and changed over the course of the Nanjing Decade. During its first phase, from May to October 1927, in sharp contrast to what was occurring in Party circles, the Rugao County government was headed by an appointee of He Yingqin, the commander of the Nationalist armies and a Jiang Jieshi loyalist. The new Nationalist magistrate made few changes in the Rugao government. Many of the same people who had staffed the government offices before May 1927 continued on in their old positions, and no new or radically different policies were carried out.

The second phase of the Nationalist government in Rugao lasted from October 1927 to May 1930. During this phase the government reached the high point of its power. At the insistence of both the provincial government and several reform-minded magistrates, significant changes were effected in both the county government organization and in its personnel. Moreover, the Rugao government compelled the province to allow it to eliminate, at least in name, some of the sub-county governmental structures

such as the dibao, or local headmen, upon which the local elite depended for their strength. In addition, the county government participated in the ultimately successful attack on the strong, well-armed and almost county-wide Communist resistance movement which flourished in the area between 1928 and the summer of 1930.

But in spite of its success in eliminating the Communists, during the subsequent or third phase of its existence, the power of the Rugao government declined. Increasing numbers of local elite members were named to government posts and put in charge of government organizations and programs. As a result, by the end of the Nanjing Decade it was these local elite members, not the Rugao County government, that held power in Rugao.

The remainder of this chapter and the two subsequent chapters will detail the experiences of the Rugao government between 1927 and 1937. Each chapter will deal with one of the three periods into which political events in Rugao can be divided. For the period with which it is concerned, each chapter will set out the form that the government took, assess the particular individuals who held government office, and describe the policies these individuals pursued in the areas of public security, finance and taxes, education, public works, agriculture, and social welfare, among others.

Before beginning, however, it should be noted that like the Rugao Party, the Rugao government during the Nanjing Decade had its quirks and its anomalies, but overall was in no way outstanding or notable. No well-known magistrate ever served in Rugao, but no particularly infamous one did either. Unlike some other locales Rugao never received any special attention from higher-level authorities; it was never designated an "experimental county", nor were any "experimental areas" set up within its borders. But neither was Rugao totally deprived of the few goodies that upper echelons had to dispense. In 1930 a branch of the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank was set up in the county seat, and throughout the Decade road-building projects, cooperatives, and other ventures were undertaken at a pace somewhere between that found in the richer Jiangsu counties south of the Chang Jiang and the poorer Jiangsu counties to Rugao's north.(1)

The only occurrences which in some way made Rugao special were the Communist uprisings that took place between 1928 and 1930. For a short while they did disrupt governmental affairs and caused ferment within county governing circles. However, the uprisings were short-lived, and there is no indication that they had any long-term effect on Rugao's population or politics. After the suppression of the Communists, events within the

county appeared to return to normal.(2)

As mentioned previously, it is specifically because Rugao was such an ordinary yet active place that it is interesting to study. Findings about Rugao's Nanjing Decade government should not be very different from findings about many other of China's county governments. At a minimum the close examination of events in Rugao should provide us with an initial set of hypotheses about the workings of Nationalist county-level government that in the future can be tested in other sections of Jiangsu as well as in China's other provinces.

The Establishment of the Rugao County Nationalist Government

In late March of 1927, while Jiang Jieshi's troops pushed north into South Jiangsu, retreating soldiers from warlord Sun Chuanfang's armies under the command of Zhou Yinren poured into eastern Rugao. This increased movement of military personnel alarmed the Rugao magistrate (Rugao Xian zhishi) and he decided to organize a Local Peace Preservation Committee (Difang zhian weichi hui). On March 22 the new committee met and determined that Rugao could no longer rely solely on public funds and on money borrowed from qian zhuang (native banks) to meet local military expenses, but would have to levy a special

assessment for military needs on the county's well-to-do households as well. They then established the amount that every rich family in the county was to give them, money which they said would be repaid by funds gathered from an increase in the land tax. Two weeks later as conditions got worse, they doubled the figures.(3)

As the last days of March approached, these warlord soldiers neared the county seat. Hearing of their imminent arrival, the "local elders" (difang fulao) specially appointed representatives to go out to receive the incoming military officers. The representatives addressed the officers with the word "honorable" (gui) and requested that military discipline be observed. But unexpectedly, upon hearing the word "honorable" the officers became enraged, started pounding the tables, and brandished their guns. They thought that the representatives had addressed them with "kui" (scattered, defeated) and by doing so meant to ridicule them. In the end each representative had to "apologize at least three times" before the officers "slowly lost their anger".(4)

Meanwhile people from the county government office (xian shu) and the police station (jing[cha] suo), presumably with the aid of the funds recently "raised" by the Local Peace Preservation Committee, scurried around procuring food and lodging for the new arrivals. The

government provided rice, flour, drinks, and dried turnips as well as all the firewood and necessary utensils for their preparation. In addition they turned over for military use temples, schools (classes were halted), guest houses, and government buildings.(5)

For the next month and a half Sun's forces continued to move in, out, and around Rugao, and the above sequence of events was repeated throughout the county. For example, in Shizhuang, Zhenzhou, and Jiangan, all near the mouth of the Chang Jiang, the gentry (shishen) set up branch offices of the Local Peace Preservation Committee (Difang zhian weichi hui fen hui). To the north in Libao and other areas the town executive committees (donghui) directly handed out cash to any soldiers who passed through. In addition, several thousand troops continued to be quartered in the county seat.(6)

During this period of uncertainty, no actual fighting appears to have taken place in Rugao. On April 6 or thereabouts the county police sent out a twelve-member "intelligence troop" (zhentan dui) to gather news and information. On April 7 rumors flew that National Revolutionary Army troops under the command of Zhang Zhongli, a recent defector from Sun's army to the Nationalists, would engage Zhou Yinren in a "fierce battle" near the Rugao-Taixian border. But, perhaps

because of other Nationalist defeats in North Jiangsu and Jiang's resulting decision to temporarily pull back south of the Chang Jiang, the two never exchanged fire.(7)

In the second week of May the Nationalists once again pushed across the Chang Jiang and on May 26 large numbers of Nationalist troops from He Yingqin's First Route Army reached and occupied Rugao. They were followed on successive days by members of the Fourteenth Route Army and the Independent Twenty-sixth Division (later made the Twenty-sixth Route Army). But, by this time Sun's forces all had already fled north and again there was no actual combat. The only casualties were the Rugao county telephone receiver which Sun's men took with them, and a bridge along the "county road" which Sun's departing troops burned as they left.(8)

The Government of Yue Jian: Maintenance of the Status Quo

Following their victory, the Nationalist armies moved quickly to set up a new civilian government in Rugao. On May 29 a representative of the North Jiangsu Pacification Commission (Jiangbei zhaofushi quanquan weiyuanhui) arrived in Rugao, presumably to do preparatory work. Several days later on June 3 He Yingqin, acting in his capacity as commander of the Nationalist First Route Army, appointed Yue Jian as Rugao's first magistrate (xian

zhang). Yue had arrived in Rugao on the second, and on the third in the main hall of the old county government office (xian shu da tang) he took the oath of office and promulgated a so-called "Six Articles of Government" (Zheng gang liu tiao) for the county.(9)

Table 6. Nanjing Decade Rugao Magistrates

Name	Date Started Work	Date Left Office	Length of Term
<u>First Period Magistrates</u>			
Yue Jian	1927 June 3	1927 Aug. 21	3 months
Ye Canzhang	1927 Aug. 25	1927 Sept. ?	2 weeks(?)
Zhang Zunshi	1927 Sept. 12	1927 Sept. ?	1 week(?)
Yue Jian	1927 Sept. 26	1927 Oct. ?	1 week(?)
<u>Second Period Magistrates</u>			
Wang Haoran	1927 Oct. 14	1928 (Oct.?)	12 months
Jiang Fuqin	1928 Oct. 20	1929 June 12	7 months
Wen Qinming	1929 July 1	1929 Oct. 1	3 months
Zhang Lie	Never assumed office		
Liu Changyan	1929 Nov. 8	1930 March 11	5 months
Zhang Yi	1930 April 1	1930 May ?	1 month
<u>Third Period Magistrates</u>			
Qian Zuoyi	1930 May 26	Still serving in June 1933	3 years at least

Zhang Jun	First mentioned in 1935	Still serving in June 1936	1 year at least
Zhang Yuanyang	1936 August 1	Served until Japanese invasion(?)	

Power over the new government initially was concentrated in the hands of Magistrate Yue. On June 4 He Yingqin simultaneously appointed Yue police station head (jingcha suo zhang). Later, on June 27 when the newly empowered Civil Affairs Department (Minzheng ting) of the provincial government changed the police station to a public security office (gongan ju), Yue was appointed the county's first director of public security (gongan ju zhang). A week previously Yue had also assumed the headship of the county Road Construction Office (Lu gongcheng chu). (10)

Yue with his new power tried to abolish some of the remnants of the previous government. The Local Peace Preservation Committee was ordered to turn over its accounts and its excess cash to Yue's government. The branch offices of the Committee were ordered to do the same. But, after an investigation the county government found that the branch offices had not complied. On June 22 Yue gave the branch office committee members three days in which to conclude their affairs or be punished. (11)

Yue also moved to disarm elements of the population unsupportive of his rule. Using soldiers of the North Jiangsu pacification commissioner and the Thirty-third Route Army, he forcibly started to take surrender of weapons still in private hands. But the weapon owners

claimed that their weapons were solely for "self defense" and sent a petition of protest to He Yingqin asking him to put an end to the practice. He agreed. How many weapons remained in private hands as a result is unknown, although the number was probably substantial.(12)

But aside from disbanding the Local Peace Preservation Committee and trying to disarm local citizens, Yue's efforts to reform the county governing apparatus he inherited from before the Nationalist upheaval appeared to be minimal. For example, in the Road Construction Office it was noted that Yue made no changes at all. In the Public Security Office Yue made many reassignments and transfers and also consolidated the local watch force (difang jingbei dui) with the peace preservation forces (baoran dui), but apparently made no attempt to transform the system of police organization.(13)

Below the county, at the sub-county and village level, a similar situation existed. It would appear that Yue made no attempts to extend the Nationalist government system beyond the county seat. Instead, he continued to rely on the well-entrenched dibao to maintain order in the countryside and to notify the county government of any unusual occurrences requiring higher-level attention.(14)

It was not until various departments of the provincial government started appointing their own

county-level officials that new faces began to appear in Rugao and the top-level county governing apparatus started to be reorganized. On July 1 the provincial Finance Department (Cai zheng ting) ordered the former Nantong-Rugao Tax Office (Tong-Ru shuiwu suo) split in two and appointed a Hunanese as the head of the new Rugao Tax Office (Rugao shuiwu suo), although a month was to elapse before the new appointee actually took up his post. On July 2 the provincial Education Department (Jiaoyu ting) ordered the county Education Office reorganized. It requested that the magistrate send three nominees for the post of county Education Office head to the Education Department. Yue complied. Two weeks later the Education Department announced that none of Yue's choices was suitable. Instead, they named their own person, a Rugao citizen and a graduate of the Nanjing Normal School, to the post.(15)

Similarly, on July 24 the provincial Justice Department (Sifa ting) replaced the local jailkeeper (jianyu shuyu), and on July 7 the Civil Affairs Department appointed a Dantu County native, Zhao Guang, to replace Yue as director of public security. Only after Zhao took up the job on the twenty-fourth did the county police force start to be reorganized according to a new and distinctly Nationalist plan. But even after the

departments of the provincial government began taking an interest in county government, change failed to penetrate beyond the county seat. In the towns and villages the dibao continued to reign supreme and the Nationalist revolution must have continued to appear as more of an inconvenience than a reality.(16)

The initial effort to set up a totally new Rugao county government may have been obstructed by squabbles among different army commanders over the appointment and thus control of civilian officials. As the Nationalist armies moved north along the coast it was the First Division of the Twenty-sixth Route Army under Wu Zongren (also known as Wu Wenyuan), not the First Route Army of He Yingqin, that was given responsibility for garrisoning the Rugao area. As a result, it was Wu who probably should have been in charge of setting up the Rugao government. Why He took over from Wu is not clear. All we know is that Wu did fill some lower-level but probably important positions with men from his own ranks, including the head of the Nantong-Rugao Special Cigarette Tax Office (Tong-Ru juanyan te shui ju), the head of the Slaughter Tax Office (Tuzai shuiwu ju), the head of the Rugao District Military and Police Inspection Branch Office (Rugao qu junjing jicha fen chu zhang), and that later the last office was abolished and its duties of inspecting the ships in the

various Rugao ports were taken over directly by the Twenty-sixth Army.(17)

Rugao county governmental reform may also have been hindered by disputes as well as poor or little planning within the central and provincial governments. Such disputes and lack of guidance would have made it hard to know exactly what type of a government was supposed to be set up in Rugao, or what procedures were to be followed once the government was established. For example, after the formal establishment of the Jiangsu provincial government on May 2, 1927, but before the Nationalist troops moved to capture North Jiangsu, the central government and the General Military Headquarters agreed that all county administrators should be subordinate to their provincial governments, not to the military, and directed the Jiangsu government to make plans for the setting up of county-level government organizations in North Jiangsu. But apparently because of differences within the Jiangsu government these plans were never made, and thus it fell to the military to appoint the first civil administration in Rugao.(18)

Moreover, during the spring and summer of 1927 the province twice changed the form a county-level government was supposed to take. In late May the Provincial Governing Committee decided that every county government

was to have four sections (ke): a General Affairs Section (Zongwu ke), a Civil Affairs Section (Minzhi ke), a Finance Section (Cai zheng ke), and a Reconstruction Section (Jianshe ke). The heads of the sections were to be appointed by the magistrate. But in late July a new county governing law was written. It said that the counties were to replace sections with offices (ju) whose heads would be appointed not by the magistrates but by the appropriate department (ting) in the provincial capital. (19)

At the sub-county level affairs were even more confusing. No provincial law concerning sub-county government appeared until the end of July. Then two months later this law was partially thrown out and the Shanxi system of "village government" (cun zhi) temporarily adopted. (20)

But a more important obstacle to the creation of an effective Rugao county government was the hostility that existed between Yue and the local branch office of the Nationalist Party. As we have seen, throughout Yue's tenure as magistrate Communists and members of the Nationalist Party's left wing controlled the Rugao Party. Needless to say, they were not sympathetic to a He Yin-qin-Jiang Jieshi loyalist, nor was such a loyalist sympathetic to them. The result was a constant and

acrimonious struggle for power. In July the Party secretary was accused of being a Communist (which he was not) and of using the Party purge to "plan multitudinous evils". Later, in September, the Party accused Yue of stealing 13,000 yuan from county funds. In the end the Party proved more powerful than the government. After being detained, the Party secretary was released without punishment and returned to continue his activity in Rugao politics. On the other hand, Yue Jian was jailed for several months and freed only after he agreed to repay 10,000 yuan of the misused funds. He was also removed from his post as magistrate. Thereafter, Yue left the county and did not return.(21)

Similar events occurred at the sub-county level. Here the government was trying to rule through the old local elite. Simultaneously, the Party was carrying out a vigorous attack on these same individuals. More often than not the Party was successful. Many local elite members were accused, tried, and incarcerated, or out of fear of being arrested fled the countryside to the relative safety of the larger cities and towns, leaving nobody behind on whom the government could rely.(22)

In retrospect it can be seen that the split with the local Party branch marked a turning point for the Nationalist government in Rugao. At this time the

government lacked both funds and personnel. Moreover, its members were recently arrived outsiders lacking knowledge about the county. In contrast, the Party counted among its membership some five hundred plus persons. In addition, the Party had been established in the county many months before the arrival of the government. Its leaders were not only Rugao natives well-versed in local conditions, but also individuals well-schooled in Nationalist ideas who were loyal to the revolutionary cause rather than to local interests.(23)

Thus it is clear that by attacking the Nationalist Party the government deprived itself of the only possible resource and the only possible means of successfully carrying out an active reform program in Rugao. On the one hand the county government lacked the personnel, funds, and knowledge to construct an organization of its own, and the central and provincial governments were too preoccupied with other efforts, primarily the elimination of the northern warlords, to provide much aid. On the other hand, the local elite were being successfully attacked by the Party and could not provide the support the government needed. Even had they not been so harassed, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that the local elite would not have done the job required of them. As we shall see, when the government later

turned to them for assistance, local elite members proved themselves very unreliable indeed.

It should be noted that the Rugao government's failure to enlist the support of the Rugao branch of the Party did not result solely from local conditions, nor was it an isolated incident. In April 1927 Jiang Jieshi and the Central Party Headquarters broke with the Communist Party and purged all Communists from Nationalist Central Party ranks. They also called for similar purges at the provincial, county, and sub-county levels. After this, compromise between Nationalist and Communist and thus between a Nationalist-controlled government and a Communist and left-wing controlled Party such as that in Rugao became impossible. At the center Jiang was able to eliminate the Communist leadership with one massive and violent blow, the so-called Shanghai Massacre of April 12. At the county level, smaller but similar struggles went on much longer. But in the end Jiang was victorious here too. His desire for ideological purity and personal loyalty defeated the government's need for organizational effectiveness. The tragedy was that once the Communists and other left-wingers were purged from local parties, there was no one to take their place. As a result the local parties became hollow, useless shells, and the remaining "loyal" and ideologically acceptable governments

had no one to implement their programs.(24)

The Policies of Yue Jian

During the three months he was in office, Yue Jian does not seem to have put together any plan for governmental activity in Rugao nor to have taken the initiative in any substantive program area. Neither, as would be expected, did he take part in the activities of the local Party branch, such as the setting up of workers', peasants', merchants' and students' mass organizations, the carrying out of a mass campaign against the Japanese, or attacks on the local gentry. Rather, he seems to have been content merely to carry out those few tasks the provincial government assigned to him, a set of tasks which in no manner revolutionized Rugao government or even differentiated the new Rugao government from its predecessors.

In the area of taxation, as well as in the area of household registration upon which the taxation system was based, the Jiangsu government decided to maintain the old system until some time in the "unspecified future" when it could be reformed. Thus, the only governmental concern about taxes and household registration was that the old registers be protected and the information contained in them not be destroyed. Accordingly, at the beginning of

July the Jiangsu Department of Civil Affairs ordered every county, including Rugao, to safeguard old household registers and all public documents relating to them.(25)

Upon receipt of the provincial order, Magistrate Yue told the person in charge of the household registers (huji ke zhuren) to turn the registers and material relating to them over to the Department of Civil Affairs for inspection. Then he did no more. During the remainder of Yue's tenure, the collection of taxes in Rugao apparently proceeded as it had for decades, unimpeded and unchanged.(26)

In the area of government finance a similar situation existed. Yue did what he was told but made no effort to alter the system of Rugao government accounting or its methods of acquiring needed funds. In late June or early July Yue was informed by the provincial government that he had to sell 250,000 yuan worth of government reserve notes, all of it in Rugao. Upon hearing this, Yue invited Liu Lanqing, a leader of the county's gentry, to be in charge of selling the notes, and held a series of unofficial "meetings" at the county government offices to "discuss" how to "raise" the money. As a result, it was decided to apportion the procurement of the funds among Rugao's eighteen districts according to a set schedule.(27)

A week later the notes had all been "sold" and Magistrate Yue was able to remit a first payment of 51,000 yuan to the provincial government. The remainder was promised as soon as it was collected. It is safe to assume that the "buyers" as of yore were all members of the local gentry, the same people the government had always used to carry out its policies or to raise funds in times of emergency.(28)

In education, the same pattern appeared. After Yue took over his job he appointed Sha Shidu, an important and powerful member of the Rugao gentry, to head the county government's Education Office. Sha oversaw the reopening of the schools, closed since April when Sun's forces first appeared in the county. He also supervised the allotment of the money obtained by the schools to repair the damage caused to school buildings and grounds by military occupation and use, as well as the distribution of other educational funds. Moreover, to reopen the schools Sha obtained 10,000 yuan through "negotiations" with the county government, as well as the Public Property Management Office (Gongkuan gongchang guanli chu), a group of local notables charged with taking care of the county's publicly owned assets.(29)

Besides appointing a local gentry member to supervise the reopening of the schools, the county government seems

to have done little in the educational realm. Consequently, any impetus for changing the educational system came from lower levels. In mid-June, apparently acting on their own initiative, representatives of the elementary school teachers from sixteen of Rugao's eighteen districts met. They discussed how to teach Party principles, how to set up an education association (jiaoyu xiehui), how to get overdue wages owed to teachers, and other issues. In the following weeks organizations of elementary school teachers concerned about these and similar issues sprouted in the county seat as well as in outlying areas.(30)

The county's students were likewise involved. In the beginning of July they began setting up student associations (xuesheng hui) in each of the county's schools. After a week, three such associations were formally set up and the remainder were actively being organized.(31)

In addition, as we have seen, many education officials and teachers were Party members. As a result, the local Party branch took an active interest in educational affairs. For example, the Party strongly supported the teachers' demands for higher wages and the organization of education associations. Furthermore, during the first week of August the Party sponsored a

meeting of the members of the county Education Office and the county Education Association to discuss ways of raising additional money for education.(32)

Only when the provincial Education Department removed Sha Shidu as head of the county Education Office and replaced him with a candidate of its own, not of magistrate Yue's choosing, did the Rugao Education Office start to make some changes in Rugao's educational system. On August 10 the new Education Office head appointed six new members to the county Education Committee (Jiaoyu Weiyuanhui), presumably a group which advised the magistrate on educational policy. Two days later the Education Office decided that all elementary school principals "in accordance with the law" must be graduates of a normal school, and that the heads of all first-stage elementary schools (chujǐ xiǎoxué) must at a minimum have had two years of normal school. Had warlord armies not reappeared in Rugao, even more new orders probably would have been forthcoming from this increasingly active Education Office.(33)

There was only one area in which magistrate Yue attempted to take the initiative. Even after the Nationalist victory there remained a sizeable number of Rugao peasants who refused to cut their queues. Yue decided that this "looked bad" (It was also against

central and provincial government directives). On July 25 he issued a "special order" saying that no matter whether they lived in the city or in the countryside all men must cut their queues before the end of September, or they would have their queues forcibly cut by members of the county government's Public Security Office.(34)

Thus, Yue's interest in social reform seems to have been restricted to the superficial. For example, there are no indications that he was interested in any of the Nationalist government's professed programs of land reform or rent reduction. In 1927 after the Nationalist government came to power in Rugao, it claimed to have: (1) abolished the "common customs" of land holding, (2) "widely publicized that the causing of a tenant not to be able to pay his rent [so that the landlord could seize the tenant's land] was strictly forbidden", and (3) said that "landlords may not randomly increase field rent." (35)

In fact, none of this seems to have transpired. There is no record of any Nationalist program for rent reduction, rent control, or land redistribution in Rugao. Moreover, a report from 1930-1931 makes clear that under Nationalist aegis many evil landholding practices continued. These included exploitation of tenants who were late in their rent payments, exaction of excessive rents, arbitrary rent increases, collection of additional

"small rents" as fees by and for rent collectors, use of oversized measures and inaccurate scales, as well as the collection of rent in advance.(36)

The above illustrates that, contrary to the expectations created by their own rhetoric, the establishment of a Nationalist government in Rugao must have been an anti-climactic affair. A few new faces, but even more old ones in the county government offices; revolutionary slogans, but virtually no new government programs; a Party which decried again "evil gentry", but a government which allowed these same individuals to hold office and to maintain their positions of power and prestige while the government attacked the Party with which it was supposedly allied; this is what the setting up of the Nationalist government in Rugao really meant.

The Northern Warlords Reappear

In mid-August Sun Chuanfang threatened to reinvade Rugao. Not taking any chances, the top officials of the county government fled before his incoming troops. On August 21 magistrate Yue left the county followed by the head of the Public Security Office and the head of the Education Office. Not all were willing to admit their fear of Sun. The head of the Finance Office claimed that he was "sick" and asked for "vacation" before deserting

his post.(37)

On August 24, a Temporary Peace Preservation Committee (Linshi weichi zhian hui), probably made up of members of the old Local Peace Preservation Committee active in April and May, or other gentry members, claimed that because there was no one in a position of responsibility and no way to execute laws or administer justice, they would select a new magistrate (xian zhishi). (It is interesting that they chose to use the pre-1927 term.) The individual they selected was Ye Canzhang. Ye took up his post on the twenty-fifth.(38)

With an apparently different political twist, events in the educational arena followed a like course. On August 27 more than two hundred of the county's remaining elementary school teachers, most of them apparently Nationalists, held a meeting to discuss ways of "preserving" the educational status quo, i.e. that which favored the Nationalists. they decided to set up a Rugao Committee to Preserve Elementary School Education (Xiao xue jiaoyu weichi hui) with the proviso that the committee would be abolished after the county once again assumed responsibility for the schools (39)

The committee did not have long to wait. During the second week in September Nationalist army troops, this time the Ninety-second division of the Thirty-first Army

under the direction of Zhang Zhongli, appeared in Rugao. Like their June counterparts they quickly moved to name a new county magistrate, a military man named Zhang Zunshi who was also the Ninety-second Division command's secretary. Zhang arrived in Rugao on September 12, took up his post that day, and immediately started to appoint lower-level county officials.(40)

But Zhang's position was only a temporary one. The old magistrate, Yue Jian, and at least one of the former county office heads, the head of the Public Security Office, Zhao Guang, heard that peaceful conditions had returned to Rugao. Between September 24 and 26 they came back to Rugao seeking to regain their old appointments. Zhao was successful and once again was put in charge of Rugao's Public Security Office. Because he had absconded with 13,000 yuan of government funds, and also because of the antipathy that existed between him and the Party, magistrate Yue had quite a different experience.(41)

After learning that Yue intended to return to Rugao, but two days before he actually arrived, the Rugao Party branch office, working together with eleven other groups, organized a massive demonstration against Yue on the grounds of an elementary school outside the city's south gate. They also sent a telegram to the Civil Affairs Department urging that Yue be officially removed from the

Rugao magistrate's post.(42)

It was all to no avail. On September 26 Yue returned to Rugao and went to the county government offices to resume his old job.(43) But the Party was not deterred. They immediately convened a meeting of various organizational representatives and decided to set up a Committee of Organizational Representatives to Settle the Accounts of Former Magistrate Yue (Ge tuanti yu Yue Qian xian zhang qingli yanmu weiyuanhui), to expose Yue to the Department of Civil Affairs, and to write a letter to the county Public Security Office asking them to investigate Yue's activities.(44)

This time the Party and its supporters were partially successful. During the first week of October, Yue received a provincial order stripping him of his job. However, the order did not say anything about the 13,000 yuan that Yue was accused of embezzling. This meant that although Yue was no longer the county magistrate, the campaign against him continued.(45)

On October 19 another mass demonstration against Yue was staged. It took place in front of the county government offices. Five thousand people showed up. They demanded that the new county government take Yue into custody and punish several of his old subordinates as well. Meanwhile, other of Yue's old cronies fled across

the county border and were pursued.(46)

In the end, Yue paid a stiff penalty. He was held prisoner in the county government offices for over twenty days and had to pay back 10,000 of the 13,000 yuan he was accused of stealing. Only in mid-November, two full months after he had returned, was he allowed to leave Rugao.(47)

The departure of Yue Jian marked the end of the first period into which the tenure of the Rugao Nationalist government can be divided. During this time not much changed in Rugao either in terms of government programs or in terms of personnel. The Nationalists appointed a new magistrate, but he was content to allow the old county governing organizations to continue functioning much as they had in the past. Some sectors of the Nationalist movement, such as the Party, talked about new programs, but the new magistrate did not attempt to implement any of them. Any impetus for change came from either the local Party or non-governmental groups. Only during the second period of Nationalist government in Rugao would the situation change.

Chapter Three

Notes

(1) See Chapter Four for more details of these programs.

(2) See Chapter Eight for a description of the Rugao Communist movement.

(3) Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 5 April 1927, p. 3; and 10 April 1927, p. 4.

(4) Shi Bao, 19 June 1927, p. 2.

(5) Shi Bao, 5 April 1927, p. 2; 8 April 1927, p. 3; and 10 April 1927, p. 3.

(6) See Shi Bao, 27 April 1927, p. 4 for information on the Chang Jiang towns, and 12 April 1927, p. 4 for information on the towns in the north. See Shi Bao, 12 April 1927, p. 4; 22 May 1927, p. 4; and 28 May 1927, p. 2 for later descriptions of troop movements in and out of the county seat. Richard H. Pousma, an American medical missionary working in Rugao at this time, also describes the events of April-May 1927. See Richard H. Pousma, An Eventful Year in the Orient (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1927), p. 206.

(7) Shi Bao, 12 April 1927, p. 4; and Pousma, An Eventful Year, p. 206.

(8) Shi Bao, 3 June 1927, p. 8; Jiang Zhongzheng, Beifa Zhan Shi [History of the Northern Expedition] ([Taipei, Taiwan]: Guofang Bu Shizheng Ju, 1959), p. 720; and Donald D. Jordan, The Northern Expedition (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 125.

(9) Shi Bao, 3 June 1927, p. 8; and 8 June 1927, p. 8. In theory the magistrate should have been a civilian appointee of the Jiangsu provincial Civil Affairs Department rather than a military appointee. However, the provincial government had difficulty getting the Civil Affairs Department organized, and presumably this is why He Yingqin appointed Yue. See Shi Bao, 23 May 1927, p. 3 for a description of some of the difficulties encountered when setting up the Civil Affairs Department.

(10) Shi Bao, 10 June 1927, p. 8; 25 June 1927, p. 8; and 3 July 1927, p. 8.

(11) Shi Bao, 28 June 1927, p. 8.

(12) Shi Bao, 21 June 1927, p. 8.

(13) On the Road Construction Bureau, see Shi Bao, 25 June 1927, p. 8. On the Public Security Office, see Shi Bao, 13 June 1927, p. 6; 1 July 1927, p. 8; and 17 July 1927, p. 3.

(14) The continued reliance on dibao can be seen in crime reports. It was always a dibao, not a Nationalist government official, who was charged with investigating or handling any criminal offense committed outside the county seat. As a result, during 1927 references to Rugao's dibao occurred frequently in the pages of Shi Bao.

(15) Shi Bao, 3 July 1927, p. 8; 2 July 1927, p. 8; and 18 July 1927, p. 3.

(16) Shi Bao, 31 July 1927, p. 5; 8 July 1927, p. 2; 1 August 1927, p. 8; and 6 August 1927, p. 5.

(17) Jiang Zhongzheng, Beifa, p. 720; Shi Bao, 15 June 1927, p. 5; 28 June 1927, p. 8; 15 June 1927, p. 5; and 13 July 1927, p. 8.

(18) Shi Bao, 27 May 1927, p. 4; 5 May 1927, p. 2.

(19) Shi Bao, 28 May 1927, p. 2; 30 July 1927, p. 3.

(20) Shi Bao, 3 August 1927, p. 2; and Huang Zhaopeng, "Jiangsu Guoqu Difang Zizhi Shibai yu Jinhou Baojia [The past defeat of Jiangsu's local self-government and the future of baojia], Jiangsu Baojia Banyuekan, [Jiangsu baojia semi-monthly], no. 10 (15 June 1935), p. 5.

(21) For information on the case of the Party Secretary, Ji Yun, see Chapter Two. On the fate of Yue, see Shi Bao, 26 September 1927, p. 3; 8 October 1927, p. 3; 28 October 1927, p. 3; 31 October 1927, p. 2; and 20 November 1927, p. 3.

(22) See Chapter Seven for a more detailed discussion of Party attacks on local elite members.

(23) See Chapter Two for a discussion of early Party organization and membership.

(24) For (sometimes conflicting) discussions of central government and Party policies toward the Communists at this time, see James Pinckney Harrison, The Long March to Power: A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1972 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972, pp. 94-117; Donald A. Jordan, The Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928 (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1976), pp. 118-128; Harold R. Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Atheneum, 1966), pp. 175-186; and Lloyd Eastman, The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 6-9.

(25) Shi Bao, 5 July 1927, p. 8.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Shi Bao, 3 July 1927, p. 8.

(28) Shi Bao, 17 July, 1927, p. 3.

(29) Shi Bao, 13 June 1927, p. 6; and 15 June 1927, p. 5.

(30) Shi Bao, 21 June 1927, p. 8; 2 July 1927, p. 8; 5 July 1927, p. 8.

(31) Shi Bao, 8 July 1927, p. 8.

(32) Shi Bao, 11 August 1927, p. 5. Also see Chapter Two.

(33) Shi Bao, 13 August 1927, p. 5; 16 August 1927, p. 5.

(34) Shi Bao, 30 July 1927, p. 8.

(35) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian Xianzheng Gaikuang" [Conditions of Rugao county government], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 5 (11 October 1928): 71.

(36) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang [Jiangsu Farmers' Bank head office], ed., Disan Nian zhi Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang [The third year of the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank] (Zhenjiang: 1930-32), pp. 223-226.

- (37) Shi Bao, 2 September 1927, p. 6; 30 September 1927, p. 3.
- (38) Shi Bao, 2 September 1927, p. 6.
- (39) Ibid.
- (40) Shi Bao, 18 September 1927, p. 3; 22 September 1927, p. 5.
- (41) Shi Bao, 30 September 1927, p. 3.
- (42) Shi Bao, 3 October 1927, p. 3.
- (43) Ibid.
- (44) Shi Bao, 26 September 1927, p. 3.
- (45) Shi Bao, 8 October 1927, p. 3.
- (46) Shi Bao, 28 October 1927, p. 3; 31 October 1927, p. 2.
- (47) Shi Bao, 20 November 1927, p. 3.

Chapter Four

The Second Period of Nationalist Government in Rugao

The second period of Nationalist government in Rugao lasted from the fall of 1927 through the spring of 1930. During this time several reform-minded magistrates tried to shake up the county government bureaucracy, to extend Nationalist authority down to the district and even the village level, and to carry out some modest reform programs. To a limited extent they were successful. As a result, the power of the Rugao government reached its apex. In the end, however, the reformers were defeated. Lack of support from higher levels and the absence of any local government organization to carry out their programs, coupled with the presence of local elite leaders who were always looking for ways to expand their power, doomed all governmental efforts to achieve social and political change.

Rugao's Second Period Magistrates

The first in the series of magistrates who held office during the second period was Wang Haoran. He was appointed to the post on September 28, 1927. Two weeks later on October 24 he arrived in Rugao. At this point

Yue Jian, who was still in the county, ordered the heads of all county government departments to wind up their affairs and transfer them to Wang in an orderly manner.(1)

Wang held office until October 1928, almost exactly a year. During that time he carried out what on the surface at least appeared to be a vigorous reform program, and achieved some results. However, in spite of this program, maybe because of it, or perhaps for some other unrelated reason we do not know, Wang was replaced.(2)

Wang's successor was Jiang Fuqin. Jiang was one of eleven individuals who had passed the magistrates' exam given by Jiangsu Province earlier in September.(3) The assignment to Rugao of one of the individuals who passed the exam (one of two the Nationalists gave in Jiangsu) is particularly noteworthy.

The magistrates' exam, a tortuous affair lasting several days, started out routinely enough. But midway through several examinees claimed that some of their fellow competitors had been given access to the correct answers in advance. A big brouhaha ensued. Order was restored only when the provincial governor, Ye Chucang, came to the examination hall and ordered the testing to continue.(4)

Given the results of the exam, the suspicions of those who complained about corruption were probably

correct. Most of the successful exam candidates held a similar view of local government, i.e. a reformist one, but certainly not a left-wing or radical one. Most later became involved with the magazine Su Zheng (Jiangsu politics) which published articles on local political affairs. Most also were quickly appointed to magistrate's positions in the area of the province around Rugao.(5)

It is not likely that the selection of such a uniform group out of an applicant pool of nearly one thousand happened by accident, or that it was the selection process itself that produced this homogeneity. Rather, it is more probable that one particular group or clique within the provincial government, although which group or clique is unclear, used the magistrate's exam to gain increased power and prestige for its membership, by and large successfully.

Jiang himself arrived in Rugao on October 20, 1928 and took the oath of office on November 10. During the next seven months he continued to carry out a government reform program similar to that of his predecessor. Then, for unknown reasons, the province switched the assignments of the Rugao and Haimen magistrates (Haimen was a county on the Chang Jiang southeast of Rugao), and Jiang, like Wang, left the county.(6)

On July 1, 1929 Wen Qinming, the former Haimen magistrate, took over the Rugao government offices. He thus became the first of four short-term magistrates to serve in Rugao over the next year. All of the four, like Wen, but unlike Yue, Wang, or Jiang, had had previous experience in another Jiangsu magistrate's office. All were also quickly relieved of their duties.

The appointment of two magistrates, Wang and Jiang, each for periods of nine months to a year, followed by a succession of four magistrates in less than a year, was probably related to the growing strength of the Communist movement in Rugao. During the last half of 1929 and the first half of 1930, the Jiangsu government was under increasing pressure to eradicate the Communists. It would appear that one of the ways they attempted to solve the Communist problem was by frequently rotating magistrates in the hope that one of their appointees would have an answer his colleagues had not yet tried.

But the method of rotating magistrates did not appear to work. The Communists grew and prospered well into the fall of 1930. However, the reputations of many Rugao magistrates were sullied. Using the magistrates' inability to control the Communists as an excuse, members of the County Party attacked the magistrates for not adequately performing their jobs. As a result, all the

magistrates lost their offices. In addition, two were unable to continue their political careers.

Magistrate Wen held office for three months. Then, on October 1, 1929, the provincial government officially "removed" him from office, allegedly because it was transferring him to another job. For several weeks an unsuccessful search for a new magistrate ensued. Finally, on October 29 a replacement was named. But perhaps because he was tired of waiting for a successor in order to turn over the seals of office, but also perhaps because while he was waiting the local Party accused him of corruption, Wen, with the cooperation of the head of the county Public Security Office, stole away dramatically in the middle of the night.(7)

The manner in which Wen departed provided a good opportunity for the local Party branch to escalate further their criticism of him as well as to launch attacks on other members of the county government. The day after Wen left, Party members started publicizing the ignominious details of Wen's exodus as well as the story about how his leave-taking had been aided by the head of the Public Security Office. In addition, under the leadership of Dong Xiaosu, the County Party Committee made a decision to file a formal complaint against Wen and the Public Security Office head, and requested the Provincial Party

Committee, the provincial government, and the Civil Affairs Department to carry out an investigation. They were joined in their efforts by the Rugao County Merchant Association who complained that Wen had not made a clear accounting of public funds.(8)

Subsequently, the provincial government asked its Finance Department to investigate the case. At the end of November the Department concluded not only that Wen had not made a clear accounting of his affairs in Rugao, but also that he had not handled county financial affairs properly while acting as magistrate, and simultaneously Finance Office head, in Haimen. It called for further investigations. Meanwhile, based on this preliminary evidence Dong and the County Party got the provincial government to order Wen to return to Rugao so that he could "hand over the affairs of his office in an orderly manner."(9)

What happened after this is unclear. There is no evidence that Wen ever returned to Rugao or that he was ever put on trial. But, there is also no record that would indicate Wen continued in politics or again ever held office. As a result, there are no grounds for claiming either that Wen was an honest man caught in the web of circumstances or that he was more corrupt than his predecessors and received his just deserts. Most likely

Wen's true failing was that he could not make the Communists disappear, a failing the Party through an attack on their only legal rival in the county, the government, exploited in an attempt to increase their power. But in the end, the Party was only partially successful. Wen was forced out of the county, and most likely out of the political arena, but the Public Security Office head who had protected him remained at his job.(10)

After removing Wen, the Civil Affairs Department then assigned Zhang Lie, the magistrate of Wujin in South Jiangsu, to Rugao. But two weeks later Zhang resigned without ever taking up his post. To fill the resulting vacancy the department then named Liu Changyan, the magistrate of Suqian, a large and important North Jiangsu county. Liu, with his "body guard", arrived in Rugao on November 8, 1929 and went to work.(11) But by mid-March Liu, like Wen, had been charged with corruption and removed. The only difference between the cases of the two men was that the head of the Civil Affairs Department, Miao Bin, more honestly also accused Liu of having "no successful method for eliminating the bandits [Communists]".(12)

Liu, like Wen, also left the province with a flourish. On March 14, 1930 at 8 p.m., after receiving his order of dismissal, Liu led a procession of his

subordinates out of the city's north gate, where they boarded boats and left the county. But this was no ordinary leave-taking. Before he departed Liu locked his opponents, including two influential Party members, in the city jail. It was several days before negotiations were completed and these individuals released. It was an even longer period of time (the exact duration is unknown) before lawsuits arising out of Liu's dismissal were concluded.(13)

Liu himself retired to his home city of Suzhou (in South Jiangsu) unperturbed by the disquiet that continued to the north. Here, in the security of his own bailiwick, he refused to acknowledge any complaints against him. In May and June Liu's case went to trial, and to ensure Liu's participation the trial was moved to Suzhou. Even so, Liu, apparently without suffering any adverse consequences, refused to appear. This standoff persisted at least through October of 1930, when the provincial governing committee was still issuing regular orders for Liu's arrest and trial. But since without his presence a trial could not be held, it seems that Liu escaped any permanent injury, although, as with Wen, he does not appear to have held public office again.(14)

To follow Liu, the Civil Affairs Department named one Zhang Yi from Danyang County. But it was a mere two

months before he too was terminated. However, in the end, of the three people who actually held the post of Rugao magistrate from July 1, 1929 to May 1930 only Zhang Yi escaped political ruin. Zhang, a Sichuan native who had studied in France, continued on from Rugao to at least one other magistracy, that of neighboring Taixian.(15)

Why Zhang survived and the others did not can be explained after examining political events that occurred in the provincial capital between the summer of 1929 and the spring of 1930. Under the auspices of Niu Yongjian (governor of Jiangsu from 1927 to 1930) the head of the Jiangsu Department of Civil Affairs, that is Miao Bin, gradually amassed considerable power. Miao was a member of the conservative Hu Hanmin faction of the party. Miao also apparently had no scruples about whom he appointed to county-level offices. One can assume, therefore, that he chose as many of his loyal and conservative followers as possible, and that Wen Qinming and Liu Changyan (as well as Zhang Lie) were such individuals. One can also assume that the reason these individuals were so strongly attacked by members of the County Party Committee was because, as we have seen, the local Party at this time was dominated by members of a different Party faction, the FF clique.(16)

But in November 1929 Miao Bin overstepped his bounds. He accused four more liberal members of the Provincial Party Committee, as well as many of their followers working in the Provincial Party headquarters (all members of yet another faction - the Anti-CC Clique) of taking part in the so-called Liyang uprising (Liyang was the name of the county in South Jiangsu where the uprising occurred), a small-scale revolt led by members of the Party's Reorganization Clique, a group with ties to Wang Jingwei and Chen Gongbo. As a result of Miao's accusation three of the four party leaders immediately were jailed and later tried. But while directing the accusation and trial of these three individuals, Miao acted in a manner that indicated he felt he possessed greater power than more senior Party and government leaders. This was a mistake. In March 1930 Miao was removed from office and "retired" to his hometown of Wuxi. Niu resigned. Neither again was to play a major role in Jiangsu politics.(17)

As would be expected, the followers of Miao Bin - Wen and Liu - met the same fate as their mentor. Along with him they disappeared from the Jiangsu political scene. Zhang Yi, on the other hand, was appointed by Miao Bin's successor. While it is not known whether Zhang belonged to a particular faction or, if he did, which particular faction it was, it is clear that because he was not

associated with Miao Bin his political career continued.

The Second Period Reform of the County Government Organization

During the second period, in spite of the many magistrate changes that occurred and the comparatively short tenure of all who held the office, the Nationalists made some progress in reorganizing the county government so that it was more responsive to Nationalist demands and less subject to control by special, particularly local, interests. Most notably, the quality of county government workers was raised, the county government office was reorganized, and a number of new specialized offices were set up under the county government whose workers were given responsibility for a particular sector of county government activity, e.g. finance or education. The result was to bring a younger, non-native, better educated, less parochial, and less traditional group of bureaucrats to Rugao.

In 1927 when Wang Haoran arrived in Rugao, the county government offices were run by twenty-three clerks (shuji) and ten "other" workers. The clerks earned six yuan a month. The "other" workers got no official pay at all, but were expected to take their "wages" out of the collection for "miscellaneous taxes". According to Wang,

"If they were not all corrupt, they would have to work on empty stomachs."(18)

But not only were the county government workers corrupt. Apparently they also liked a good time. According to Wang, opium, wine, gambling, and visits to houses of prostitution were all popular pastimes of the county government "workers".(19)

Wang was appalled at what he found in Rugao and set out to change it. Therefore, he dismissed unsalaried workers, set up an exam system to screen those applying for salaried lower-level positions, fired those workers who lacked ability, and raised the wages of those who remained. Unfortunately, the major record we have of Wang's activities is a detailed report he himself wrote and submitted to the provincial government. This leaves open the possibility that Wang's changes were a lot less sweeping than he suggests. However, there is some additional evidence indicating that at least in part, as Wang claims, he made substantive reforms.(20)

At a minimum we know that Wang, through the use of an open exam system, attempted to choose lower-level government workers based on merit rather than on recommendation or "connections". For example, in March 1926 when he was asked to select eight people for appointments as students to learn more about public

security affairs (gongan dui jiaodao tuan zhunshi ke xueyuan), Wang declared that all nominees would be middle school graduates who had passed an exam to be given at the county middle school on March 25.(21)

Wang also carried out a reorganization of the county government office itself. In November 1927 the provincial government ordered him to change the "county government office" (xian gong shu), as it was then known, into a "county government" (xian zhengfu). The real meaning was that the previously numbered three general sections into which the county government office was divided were to be changed into specialized sections dealing with civil affairs, finance, and general affairs.(22)

Later during Wang's term in office some additional changes were made. The Finance Section was abolished, perhaps when the county Finance Office was set up. Moreover, a Peasant, Worker, and Merchant Section (Nong gong shang ke) was established, although when the latter occurred is unclear. Although when Jiang took over from Wang the county government was still organized into three sections, and Jiang appointed three new section heads, in outward appearance at least the three sections were vastly different from those inherited by his predecessor.(23)

In addition, during the second period the county government increasingly relied on specialized offices

responsible to both the county government and the relevant provincial department to carry out county governmental affairs. During the first period, an Education Office and a Public Security Office had been set up. During the second period a Finance Office and a Reconstruction Office also were established. But even more important, unlike what had happened during the summer of 1927, these offices were staffed by provincially-appointed personnel, some of whom had qualified for their posts by taking competitive examinations, and virtually all of whom were either not natives of Rugao or were Rugao natives who had received some form of technical education in one of China's large cities.(24)

The names of all of the individuals who headed the four specialized county offices during the second period, let alone information on all of their backgrounds and past experiences, are not available, but what we do know indicates that these individuals represented a new type of government servant. For example Rui Jiarui, Education Office head from January 1929 until September 1931, was born in South Jiangsu's Baoying County. He graduated from the First Jiangsu Provincial Normal School (Jiangsu Sheng li ishi benke) and then spent eight years teaching and being a school administrator. Subsequently he served as Education Office head in Baoying before being transferred

to Rugao. Lu Shiquan, a Reconstruction Office head, had a comparable background. He was a Wuxi native and a graduate of the First Provincial Agricultural School (Sheng li diyi nong xiao nong ke), although it is not known if he served anywhere else before arriving in Rugao.(25)

There were also several office heads who were Rugao natives but who either attended school outside the county, served outside the county, or passed a competitive provincial-level exam before returning to take up a local post. Two examples are Xu Xianji and Qiu Xijue. Both took and passed the exam for reconstruction personnel given by the provincial Reconstruction Department in October 1927. Xu was then directly appointed Rugao Reconstruction Office head. Qiu was first posted to Taixing and only in November 1928 returned to head Rugao's Reconstruction Office. In August he again left Rugao to continue his career as the Jiading County Reconstruction Office head.(26)

As the case of Qiu suggests, what happened to specialized office heads after they left Rugao indicated the type of career civil servants they were. Most continued to hold positions similar to those they held in Rugao, but to move frequently as they were reassigned from county to county. For example, Shen Jinghui was Public

Security Office head in Rugao from January 1928 to January 1930, with only a short break when Rugao's magistrate changed in November and December of 1928. After he left Rugao he became the Shanghai County Public Security Office head, and finally in August 1931 the Jiading Public Security Office head. After this unfortunately there is no record of his whereabouts.(27)

But even more important, as Rugao's specialized office heads are reviewed it is noticed that one kind of individual is missing from their ranks, that is important personages with power bases in local organizations, e.g. merchants, large landlords, the heads of charitable or other financial organizations, and pre-1927 office-holders. The only possible exception is Wu Wenkui, who in November 1927 was named Education Office head. Before being named to this post, Wu, probably a Rugao native, was active in Rugao educational and Party circles and through his association with Party leader Cheng Changwu can be clearly linked to the Party's right wing. Moreover, since he was associated with them in at least one lawsuit, it would appear that Wu also had close ties to local gentry and merchants. Possibly Wu was named to the education post as part of a struggle to root out Communist influence in the schools. If so, his appointment came about in one of those rare moments when

the government cooperated with the right wing of the Party in an attempt to beat their common Communist rival.(28)

But Wu's appointment may have even greater significance. When Wu was appointed to the post of Education Office head it had been vacant for almost three months. The reason for this vacancy is unclear. But the eventual naming of Wu to fill it is one indication that when higher-level government organizations were unwilling or unable to act to protect their interests, local individuals were more than willing to take advantage of the situation to press for their own advancement.(29)

The Elimination of Dibao

During the second period the Nationalists not only reorganized the Rugao county government but extended the power and influence of that government further down into the countryside than it had ever been before. On the one hand, they attempted to eliminate the old sub-county governing system centered around the dibao, or local headman. On the other, they tried to create a new sub-county political system based on districts and sub-districts. As with the reorganization of the county government itself, the goal of the Rugao Nationalists in implementing these reforms was to take power away from members of the local elite with whom it had long resided

and to place it in the hands of younger, better trained officials with proven ties to provincial and central authorities.

Prior to 1927 political control over the Rugao countryside, i.e. that area outside the county seat, was vested in individuals known as dibao. Appointed by the magistrate to act as a liaison between him and the ordinary citizen, these individuals were responsible for collecting taxes, maintaining law and order, and when hostilities broke out, finding enough bodies to meet conscription quotas. Most commonly on a day-to-day basis the dibao investigated crimes or other unusual occurrences in their districts, apprehended criminals and conveyed them to the county seat for trial and punishment, and went door to door fixing tax and conscription duties as well as negotiating for their payment or deferral.(30)

The antecedents of the dibao system in Rugao can be traced back to the Song Dynasty when every ten households were joined into a bao headed by a bao zhang. However, the dibao system itself apparently was not instituted until sometime during the Qing. At that time every ten households were grouped into a pai, ten pai into a jia, and ten jia into a bao. As earlier, each bao had a headman, only now he was known as a bao zheng.(31)

Initially the bao zheng apparently were "upright and virtuous" gentry members who did "get rid of crooks and pacify the people." But after a while the system broke down. Learned individuals no longer were willing to hold bao zheng posts and the office "became an assembly point for rascals".(32)

Why the dibao became so dishonest is not hard to understand. The dibao were not paid for their work nor were they given official ranks. Instead, like the county government office workers they were expected to make their living by keeping for themselves a portion of the monies they collected in the name of the government. The result was a high level of corruption that apparently increased with the passage of time.(33)

In addition, many dibao led lives characterized by dissipation and debauchery, while the people who paid for their wanton behavior often did not have enough to eat. The result was that by the late 1920's most dibao were disliked and distrusted by the people of Rugao and sometimes even came under violent attack. Wen Qinming probably accurately summed up local feelings when he described Rugao's dibao as follows:

They are tyrannical and unlearned. There is no evil they will not do. They will blackmail subordinates in order to make themselves more important and unite with tu lie (evil gentry) for self-protection. Some bring false charges against

the worthy but weak in order to use their blackmailing abilities. Others cheat and oppress the common people and force them to follow their [the dibao's] broken ways. The worst gather their friends and conspire with the bandit parties with whom they sit down to divide up the plunder. They gather in dens and gamble and smoke opium. They bully the weak through their associations with the powerful, and all the localities are disturbed [as a result].(34)

But in spite of their problematic characteristics the second period Rugao government initially did not try to eliminate dibao. Instead, it tried to improve the type of individual holding a dibao appointment. In April 1928 the county governing committee passed a resolution saying that bad dibao ought to be eliminated from office and better dibao appointed; that all dibao ought to be carefully supervised; and that to help meet these goals the county ought to hold dibao training classes. Later on that month in order to weed out unqualified dibao at least one area held a formal exam. Forty-four individuals took the exam, of which thirty-three passed.(35)

Apparently these attempts to reform the dibao system did not work. According to Magistrate Wen, as of October 1929 the people appointed to dibao posts still were no good, and no matter how many times one switched them around they still did little "except order underlings around". Moreover, he said, the dibao "did not really take part in government," and "spread corruption and abuse everywhere".(36)

The result of the above failure was that a year after it was launched, the campaign to improve the dibao system was abandoned and replaced with a movement to eliminate the dibao system entirely. Since the latter was a reform which the Rugao magistrate felt needed provincial approval to be carried out, Rugao became the lead county in a province-wide debate.

The first Rugao county request to eliminate dibao was sent to the province in October 1929. In it Magistrate Wen argued not only that dibao were corrupt, but also that since the "center" had already abolished all vestiges of the traditional governing system besides dibao, including county government office clerks (shiyi) and runners (shuchai), the remaining dibao system was an "unneeded excrescence." In addition, and perhaps more significantly, he also claimed that unless the "center" eliminated the office of dibao it could never hope to eliminate the "evil gentry" and establish a loyal government. In the words of Wen,

The dibao rely on the tu lie to mysteriously help them and the tu lie keep the dibao as retainers. From top to bottom they group together and plot crimes. The employees of the government offices thus become the tools of the evil gentry. If this system is not eliminated, it will be an obstacle to the realization of tutelary government.(37)

Initially the provincial government to whom Wen addressed his petition tried to duck the issue. It sent

the matter to the Civil Affairs Department, which replied to Wen by saying that the dibao system had no basis in current law and that as magistrate he was responsible for punishing any illegal practices in his county, including presumably any corrupt behavior engaged in by individuals holding the post of dibao. But the Rugao magistracy was not to be deterred. In November, Wen's replacement sent another petition to the provincial government. This time the Civil Affairs Department, in order to determine whether total elimination of the dibao system would have any adverse effects on particular areas, responded by ordering an investigation of the system as it existed in every Jiangsu county.(38)

By February 1930 the results were in. Although most Jiangsu magistrates reported that the dibao system continued to exist in their jurisdictions, they also said that they favored its elimination. As a result, on February 11 the provincial governing committee passed a resolution ordering the dibao eliminated and mandating that the duties and obligations of the dibao be taken over by village and market town public offices (xiang zhen gong suo). In other words, at least on paper the Rugao magistrates won their case.(39)

The Establishment of a New District Government System

In order for the elimination of dibao to be effective, the county had to have some other officials in place who could take over the dibao's responsibilities. During the first governing period no such individuals were appointed. During the second governing period, this situation appeared to change.

In the fall of 1927, provincial regulations mandated that township administrative offices (shixiang xingzheng ju) be established directly under each county government. On December 16, 1927 the Rugao government reported that in accordance with provincial orders it had designated eighteen individuals to head the county's eighteen township administrative districts. By February 1928 the county said that the offices, now called district administrative offices (qu xingzheng ju), all were set up. At the same time Magistrate Wang held examinations for the individuals who would fill the district government's lower-level clerkship posts. Several days after the exam the names of the successful candidates were announced.(40)

According to Magistrate Wang's report, the setting up of these district offices and the selection of their personnel was done very carefully. He himself visited every district in order to hold consultation meetings with local residents. Moreover, he required all candidates for

district-level positions to be introduced to him by letter, and that such letters be produced only after much careful deliberation at the consultation meetings. In some districts more than one thousand people showed up at these meetings. The result, said Wang, was "very satisfactory" because it generated local support for the new district-level government offices.(41)

As far as can be determined, the county continued to maintain and to staff the district government offices throughout the remainder of the second period. However, it appears that there were frequent turnovers of personnel. For example, if one compares the list of district heads appointed in December 1927 with the list of those appointed in August 1929, a mere one and a half years later, one finds that only a single name out of eighteen possibilities appears on both rosters.(42)

Why there should have been such turnover is unclear. Although it may have been connected to changes in magistrates, there is no evidence for such a conclusion. The only time we have evidence for the reason behind district office head changes comes in December 1928, when a group of district office heads from areas in which the Communists were active asked to resign "because of the difficulty of carrying out their jobs." Clearly, however, the presence of Communists cannot explain the personnel

turnover throughout the entire county.(43)

But in spite of the rapid movement of personnel, or perhaps because of it, the county government remained concerned about the quality of workers at the district level. During the first half of 1928 Magistrate Wang made plans to recruit sixty graduates of middle schools, to put them through six months of training, and to have them then act as government workers at the district level. He also planned to recruit primary school graduates to undergo two months of training. During any given time two classes were to be in progress, each with one hundred students.(44)

Later, in December 1928, Magistrate Jiang announced plans to select district office heads by examination. To qualify one had to be a county resident, be of good "moral character" and be between twenty-five and forty sui. The exam itself was to have both written and oral sections, and to be given in the county seat.(45)

In the end, forty-eight people took the exam. Of these, five passed and three were designated as alternates. But what happened to the few individuals lucky enough to clear the exam hurdle is less clear. In August 1929 only one of their names appears on the list of those appointed to district office position. Whether the other four ever obtained office is unknown.(46)

The Creation of Sub-District Governments

At the sub-district level, that is in Rugao's small towns and villages, evidence for the establishment and functioning of official government offices is a great deal less pervasive. In June 1928 the county government announced that because the district-level system was in operation it had now taken the next step and appointed village heads (shixiang cun zhang) and assistant village heads (cun fu). Later, in October 1928 Magistrate Wang declared that because all village heads as well as their assistants had been assigned, he was in the process of preparing to establish a Village Government Preparatory Office (Cun zhi choubei chu) to train the new appointees. In addition, we have a report that in at least one township, Baipu, the county government went so far as to designate street heads (jie zhang) and assistant street heads (fu jie zhang).⁽⁴⁷⁾

But beyond this we simply have no information and can make no further comment. Although some attempts to set up working town and village governmental organizations were clearly made, how many sub-district governments were set up, as well as how many individuals became involved in village government work, is not recorded. As a result the exact extent to which official Nationalist government organizations penetrated the Rugao countryside is

difficult to determine. However, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary it must be assumed that the Nationalist presence in the countryside was not very widespread.

The Impact of the Second Period Governmental Reforms

There is no doubt that from 1927 to 1930 the Rugao Nationalists reformed the county government organization, set up district governments in all of Rugao's eighteen sub-county divisions, and established many town and village government offices. It is also clear that these new organizations were staffed by individuals very different from pre-1927 officials, and that these reforms enabled the Nationalists to reach new heights of power in Rugao. However, the mere presence and staffing of these entities did not mean that they were able to, or in fact did, operate in the manner intended. On the contrary, throughout the three-year period there is evidence to suggest that the new county political system in fact failed to function as expected.

The failure of the Rugao county and sub-county governments had two roots. On the one hand, the government did not get adequate backing and resources from higher levels of government. On the other, the government faced stiff and continued opposition from strong, secure,

old local leaders, and from the more traditional groups these leaders dominated. Therefore, throughout the three-year period the inadequately prepared government found itself in an uneven competition with the well-entrenched political organization it had supposedly replaced. Not surprisingly, the latter won.

The lack of higher-level support can be seen in many ways. The county government had problems recruiting and training qualified personnel. If they found the personnel, they then had trouble gathering adequate funds to pay them. Higher-level governments which could have helped provided little or no relief. As a result, a lack of personnel and funds limited the size and effectiveness of the new county and sub-county governments.(48)

But as important as the lack of personnel and funds was both the national and provincial-level governments' lack of planning and resolve. For example, in the end the idea of organizing the county government into specialized sections was shortlived. In December 1928 the province ordered Magistrate Jiang to change the Civil Affairs Section (min zheng ke), the Peasant, Worker, and Merchant Section, and the General Affairs Section (Zong wu ke) back into three consecutively numbered divisions. Jiang did as he was told.(49) Subsequently, the Nationalists made no further efforts to improve Rugao county government

organization. A year after it was instituted the only remnant of the Nationalists' sole attempt at county governmental reform was the use of the term "county government" itself. It remained in place throughout the Decade, a sad reminder of what was supposed to have been.

Reliance on the four specialized offices of finance, public security, education, and reconstruction to carry out particular aspects of county governmental affairs also was temporary, as a look at one office, the Finance Office, shows. Throughout the three-year period the only monies paid to the county Finance Office were those collected from the regular land tax. All cash collected from supplemental taxes (and in Rugao supplemental taxes yielded eighteen times more silver than the regular land tax) went to the Public Property Management Office (Gongkuan gongchan guanli chu), an organization controlled by "upright local gentry".(50) Although the provincial government initially made significant attempts to reform the finance system, it never succeeded in bringing the Public Property Management Office under county government control, or even in obtaining a part of the supplemental tax revenues for county government use.(51)

As a result, during the second period the Finance Office and the Public Property Management Office competed for control of county funds. Frequently, when a major

public project was undertaken the project's organizers appealed both to the county government and to the Public Property Management Office to provide the funds. Usually, it was the latter, not the former, which came forward with the most cash. Finally, in 1933 the provincial government recognized the status quo. It abolished the county Finance Office, unambiguously leaving control over local funds in the hands of the "upright gentry" rather than of government officials.(52)

At the sub-county level the situation was the same. Although in theory dibao had been eliminated, in practice they apparently continued to carry out their traditional functions of collecting taxes, keeping order, and performing other daily governmental tasks that linked the peasant to politics. Why this was so can only be guessed, but surely it was not unrelated to one observer's comment that in 1930 although village and market town public offices had been set up, they existed "in name only."(53)

In other words, during the second period of government in Rugao, the Nationalists did make many far-reaching organizational reforms, but they failed to back up these reforms with the money, personnel, and determination needed to carry them through. In addition, pre-1927 local elite organizations continued to exist and to compete with the reform organizations for power and

prestige. Ultimately, under increasing pressure from the local elite, the government backed down. Toward the end of the second period many reform measures were rescinded. The result was increased government reliance on the local elite, and a corresponding increase in local elite power at the expense of the government.

The Policies of the Second Period Government

During the second period the pattern established in the organizational realm also was seen in the policy area. Many reform programs were launched, many plans and programs laid out. Of these, a few were implemented, most frequently under crisis conditions, usually after long delays, and often not in a well-thought out manner. In the end, the majority failed due to lack of significant higher-level support and too much local opposition.

The government established its strongest programs in those areas related to the viability of the government itself, that is in public security and those areas related to public security, such as the installation of long-distance telephone lines and the construction of roads. It also devoted a large amount of its energy to financial reform, without which, of course, a successful public security program could not be carried out. Only after the demands of public security and finance were met

did the government turn its attention to other areas such as education, agriculture, water conservancy, and social welfare.

It is also important to note that during the second period, unlike during the preceding first or the succeeding third periods, the government did make a conscious effort to carry out its programs independently of the local elite. In fact, some government programs, such as the reform of the county finance system, were in themselves attempts directly to limit the power of local individuals to interfere in government affairs. Unfortunately, all of these efforts were unsuccessful. As the county government's suppression of the Communists showed, even when the county got some high-level support the support was insufficient. Consequently, reliance on local sources became essential if a particular program was to achieve its goal.

Public Security

Throughout the three-year period the government's public security efforts primarily were tied either to the elimination of the Communists in the southwestern part of the county or to the elimination of the bandits along the coast. The Nationalists' struggle with the Rugao Communists is detailed in Chapter Eight. In this fight

the Rugao government initially relied on a strategy of using its own armed men in conjunction with police and soldiers from surrounding counties. But this failed to work. Therefore, as Communist strength continued to grow the government turned increasingly to locally organized and led militia. Finally, the Nationalist victory over the northern warlords freed provincial-level troops for other duties. Some of these additional troops were transferred to Rugao, and as a result the government succeeded in routing its enemy.(54)

The message given to the county government by its experience with the Communists was clear. Acting alone and using its own resources the county government could not hope to survive. Only if it had the support of other groups, either the higher-level provincial and/or national government, or the local elite or some combination of all three, could it hope to carry out its programs. But herein lay a problem. Throughout the Nanjing Decade higher-level governments most often did not aid county governments. In fact, in Rugao the single time they did so on any scale was to help suppress the Communists. This meant that the only place the county government could go for badly needed aid was to local leaders who sometimes were no more than local outlaws and bandits.

The dependence of the Rugao county government on unsavory local leaders can be illustrated by the government's relationship with Pan Kaiqu. Pan was the self-styled "commanding officer" (xunyu shi - a term used during the early Republican period) of a large group of sea bandits sometimes known as the Little Black Outsiders (Xiao Hei Yang). This group was active along the Rugao coast during 1929. Its members were distinguished by their hair (which was kept in a long loose braid), their short black and grey clothing, and the red and green cloth strips which they wound around their arms.(55)

Sometime shortly before March of 1929 Pan and his Little Black Outsiders took over the town of Lusi Chang near the Rugao-Nantong border. Because Lusi Chang had traditionally been a bandit lair, Pan's presence did not attract an undue amount of attention. But Lusi Chang was connected to Juegang, one of Rugao's eighteen district seats and a large coastal market town that produced fish and salt. On March 31 Pan, with over two hundred men and a flotilla of eight boats, some of which were disguised in cotton padding and bamboo leaves, sailed into the Juegang area and landed soldiers. These men then took over several coastal villages. Most brazenly, in one town they attacked the home of a wealthy local notable, killed several of his servants, kidnaped three women, and then

burned his house.(56)

By mid-April Pan was entrenched along the Rugao coast, and his presence had severely affected local life. Farmers were sleeping in their fields to protect their crops, and merchants and other city residents who possessed capital, as well as most of the women, had all fled. Fishing, the major local industry, was severely disrupted because the fish could not be shipped out to South Jiangsu where they normally were sold.(57)

Pan's actions took coastal residents by surprise and they did little to resist. Moreover, since most of the county's soldiers and police were in the western part of the county fighting the Communists, there was no local armed force which could aid them. Although the head of the county Public Security Office himself led soldiers to the coastal area, the provincial Civil Affairs Department sent a Special Troop (te wu dui) of over five hundred men with a "big cannon", and local leaders in Juegang formed a Committee for the Preservation of Sea Defenses (Haifang weichi hui), nothing could be done to dislodge Pan.(58)

But in May the situation changed abruptly and dramatically. On May 9 heavy cannonfire sounded to the east of Juegang. The provincial, county, and city troops, the police, and the members of the local militia, several hundred men in all, prepared their weapons and stationed

sentries. But this time it was not Pan Kaiqu who was attacking. On May 10 the boats of another big bandit, Sang Haishan, moved toward the Rugao shore, firing as they came.(59)

Sang had formerly held some territory near Shanghai, but police and soldiers, including some men from the National government's army and navy, had been sent to exterminate him. Sang had not been strong enough to resist, and so he had fled north. But Sang's flight put him on a collision course with Pan, who was now considered to "control" the "territory" along the Rugao banks.(60)

Pan obviously knew that Sang was coming, as did the Nationalists. Sometime between mid-April and mid-May Pan surrendered to the Nationalist forces, and was made a commander of a unified Nationalist militia force (lianhe baoan tuan) presumably made up of Pan's own former bandit hordes. Pan then apparently continued to be in charge, now officially, of the area along the Rugao coast. Thus, when Sang arrived, it was Pan Kaiqu who was put in charge of defeating him.(61)

Sang concentrated his attack on the coastal town of Bingcha, near Juegang. His first battle lasted several days, but then because he was not "familiar with the geography" he had to retreat. But after several days elapsed Sang again gathered his forces, including a large

group of horses and men, and attacked. This time Pan's strength was insufficient to resist and he retreated. As a result Sang occupied the coastal area. It was said his bandits "were rampant everywhere" and that they had promised to rob Bingcha "clean".(62)

The residents of Bingcha were terrified. As was usual in such circumstances, the women and children left. All expensive and important goods also were moved out. Throughout the city the militia dug trenches and made military preparations.(63)

But the strength of the area's militia was very weak, and they were quickly eliminated. Appeals made to the county and provincial governments for help, as well as the sending of representatives to a five-county unified defense meeting (wu xian lianfang hui) to plead for assistance, failed to produce any reinforcements. Only during the last week of May, when the forces of Pan once again counter-attacked, did the crisis ease. This time Pan captured five of Sang's boats. Sang, with his remaining five craft and the remnants of his men, was forced to flee east to Huangang near the Rugao district seat of Fengli.(64)

Pan, who now had eleven boats and a large following, continued the chase and led his troops victoriously to occupy Fengli, Huangang, and other coastal centers.

Everywhere he was welcomed with great ceremony. For example, in Fengli the local public security office, the district administrative office, and the Merchant Society prepared pork, rice, and fresh water and sent them to Pan and his troops as a "reward."(65)

Ultimately Sang hoisted the white flag of surrender and sat down to negotiate with Pan. On June 2 the two sides reached an agreement under which Sang too would become part of the Nationalist militia under the leadership of Pan. But apparently the agreement did not last long. By the end of June Sang had returned back across the Chang Jiang. Later in July his followers were once again reported harassing the coastal areas along both the Chang Jiang and the sea.(66)

Pan, however, continued to defend Rugao for the Nationalists. In fact his services were in demand. When the district of Ju Zhen was attacked, the district government office reported the matter to the county government and specifically requested the aid of Pan rather than county government troops. Moreover, in July when Nantong, Rugao, Haimen, and Qidong - all counties that bordered both the seacoast and the Chang Jiang - held a meeting to plan for their unified defense the main topic on the agenda was how to meet the "material needs" of Pan. As a result they decided that Pan's "rations" would be

increased to 14,500 yuan, and that in addition he would get money for bullets. Later in August the same group asked Pan to submit a budget for the winter clothing needs of his troops.(67)

In other words, by the summer of 1929 the government and citizens of eastern Rugao no longer looked to the official soldiers and police for protection, but rather to the troops of the ex-bandit and now local strongman Pan Kaiqu. Moreover, the policy appeared to work. Pan was able to rid the area of bandits loyal to Sang Haishan, and to enforce a certain amount of law and order. However, as with the extermination of the Communists, the extermination of bandit Sang meant that the Nationalists became dependent on a group, local militia and bandit leaders, whose basic loyalty was not to the Nationalist cause but to their own particular survival. This created a situation which ultimately might cause the Nationalists more problems than it solved.

Telephones and Roadways

The county government also encountered problems when it attempted to establish a county-wide telephone system and to build county roads. Both kinds of projects were linked to the government's ability to defend itself against Communists and bandits. But in spite of their

strategic importance, both suffered from a lack of higher-level support and local planning. Both were finally carried out only when opposition to the county government reached crisis proportions.

When Magistrate Wang Haoran first arrived in Rugao, he formulated a three-stage plan for the Rugao government. During the first stage, October through December 1927, he projected (and as we have seen carried out) the reorganization of the county government, and the appointment of sub-county government officials. During the second stage, January through June 1928, he proposed (among other things) to set up telephones in the eighteen towns with district-level administrative offices, and to start work on the county's roads. Neither of the latter projects went forward as smoothly as his earlier ones.(68)

In February 1928 Magistrate Wang asked the county governing committee to formulate plans for a long-distance telephone service that would link all district seats. The committee responded by saying that they agreed that all district seats ought to have telephones, but that the telephones ought to be set up by the districts themselves using district, not county, funds. This decision killed the issue. Since the district governments in fact had no funds for public works projects, the telephone lines could not be installed.(69)

A year and a half later the Communists in the county were much stronger and the need for a county-wide communication system much greater. As a result, the provincial Reconstruction Department (Jianshe ting) ordered the county government to make the Planning Office for Long Distance Telephones (a loose organization made up of the eighteen district heads) part of the county Reconstruction Office. Two weeks later, Magistrate Wen, "because at present the Communists are creating disturbances", ordered the Reconstruction Office to have long-distance telephone lines completed within a month. He added that the necessary funds were to come out of the 24,000 yuan "already appropriated" for the establishment of telephone service.(70)

Apparently the phone lines were now put up. Reports on Nationalist actions against the Communists make frequent reference to the use of a telephone system, and later reports throughout the 1930's comment on the relatively high quality of the system and its constant improvement. But even after several years of use the telephone system continued to be less than perfect. According to one reporter living in Rugao in 1935, "The telephone company is getting more efficient. Every morning a girl calls to enquire if the phone is in working order."(71)

Plans for the construction of roads went even more slowly than those for the setting up of telephones. When the Nationalists arrived in Rugao the county had only one "major highway" (By "major highway" is meant a road upon which cars could travel, although there is no indication that this was anything other than a swathe of leveled dirt), a seventy-eight to eighty li strip across the county which linked the road from Nantong with the road to Tai Xian. Wang quickly made plans to add to this total by the construction of two new routes: the Longyou Road, linking Rugao City directly to the Chang Jiang, and the Ru-Tai Road, linking Rugao with Taixing county to the southwest.(72)

But in spite of Wang's plans it was not until the beginning of 1929 that the county took the first steps to prepare for a road-building program. At this time the Rugao Reconstruction Office set up a Public Road Office (Gong Lu Ju) and a Road Governing Committee (Lu Zheng Weiyuanhui). It also started surveying the proposed route from Rugao City to the Chang Jiang.(73)

But all did not go smoothly. Almost a year later, in January 1930, the surveyors still had not completed their mapping of the fifty li road, and more trouble lay ahead. For example, one night after the surveyors finished mapping and confiscating land just south of the town of

Matang, they were attacked by "bandits". Most probably the "bandits" were local residents who had become angered by the government's confiscation of their land (The government usually did not pay for land they confiscated for public works projects). The result was that, although an effort was made to apprehend the trouble-makers, they could not be found, and the surveyors were ordered temporarily to suspend their work and to return to the Reconstruction Office.(74)

But in spite of these kinds of obstacles, the Reconstruction Office set March 18, 1930 as the time at which actual construction work on the road would begin. The date was probably overly optimistic. Although we do not know when work on the road commenced, it is certain that it was not completed until four years later, that is until the spring of 1934. Since it is unlikely that four years was devoted to building this one ribbon of "highway", it would seem apparent that construction work started at a later date than projected.(75)

It should be noted here that later road-building efforts went no more smoothly and produced equally uneven results. Frequently, observers in Rugao made statements such as, "Rugao is sharing in Jiangsu's road-building enterprises. Rugao and Nantong were the pioneers."(1934); "New motor roads have been completed this year." (1934);

"Highway building continues." (1935); and "...boatmen are seeing the light and are beginning to go into other businesses. They cannot successfully compete with motor roads." (1937). But these observations were quickly tempered by others more sobering, such as, "Up to this time there is no road of any importance north of Rugao. Although construction of roads and bridges is now in progress for short distances here and there, if you want to go north from Rugao you must go by boat or slow launch." (1934); and "Many miles of road are returning to farmland because bridges are not completed and the roads are not usable. It is impossible to travel between Rugao and Taichow [Tai Xian] although they are both walled cities a little distance apart." (1935) At least in part, as the last commentator indicates, Rugao's problem was that it had many canals, and expensive bridges had to be built to cross them. But that does not explain why so many major routes were put down without bridges and then allowed to return to dust because they were unusable.(76)

Finances and Taxes

Before 1927 it was unclear who controlled Rugao County finances. In theory it was the magistrate. In fact, for at least ten years prior to 1927 it was Liu Lanqing (also known as Liu Baolin), the manager (jingli)

of the county's "treasury" (ji kuan cang). In his position Liu oversaw the gathering and expenditure of large amounts of money (presumably Rugao's tax money), a certain portion of which, if later accusations are to be believed, he used to enhance his personal well-being.(77)

During the first period of Nationalist rule nothing was done to change the pre-1927 arrangement. Liu continued to hold his post and to oversee county funds. In November 1927 a group of representatives from local organizations formed a Committee to Protect Local Money and Property (Difang kuanchan baoguan weiyuanhui), but it did not appear to take any action.(78)

Only in April 1928 did the government start to make some changes. At this time the county governing body set up a Committee to Audit and Put to Order the [County's] Finances (Qingli cai weiyuanhui). The committee was made up of two finance specialists and the heads of six of the county's eighteen districts.(79)

Apparently the committee scared Liu Lanqing. A week after it was formed Liu resigned. At the same time Magistrate Wang moved to tighten his grip on the county's finances. He replaced Liu by two individuals instead of one, and simultaneously drew up and sent to the province for approval a new set of regulations for the ji kuan cang.(80)

Wang's grasp was even further strengthened by the establishment of the county Finance Office. In accordance with provincial regulations the Rugao Finance Office was set up in October 1928. Magistrate Wang was made its first head. To work with Wang the province appointed an individual who was to act as Wang's "assistant".(81)

In theory the new office was to oversee the collection and disbursement of all county funds. In practice, however, as the second period wore on several factors worked against the Rugao magistracy and its attempt to gain financial control over the county. Foremost was the continued ability of the local elite to maintain fiscal control over the county government and the resulting inability of the county government to collect funds. Secondary, but still important, was the high level of corruption that characterized the use of the funds the county did possess.

In 1928 the province declared that every county along with the county Finance Office should set up a Public Property Management Office (presumably a successor to the organization with the same name that had existed prior to 1927). This office was to be managed by "upright gentry" (gongzheng renshi), and was to "manage public funds and public property and make sure that benefits accrued from their collection and expenditure."(82) Specifically, in

Rugao this office was to take over the responsibilities that had been held by Liu Lanqing, i.e. the management of the county "treasury".(83)

The Rugao Public Property Management Office was set up in June 1928. Since Liu had left the accounts a mess, its first task was to put the old books in order. After this, in an uneventful - or at least uncontroversial - way the office continued to manage the bulk of the county's funds.(84)

The continued operation of the Public Property Management Office was significant. It meant that in spite of the ouster of Liu Lanqing and the efforts of Magistrate Wang, control over the county's revenues still rested in the hands of the local elite, not the government. Moreover, in July 1929, when Sha Shidu was placed in charge of the office, local gentry power was further strengthened.(85) As will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, Sha was one of Rugao's most powerful local leaders, and it was highly unlikely that he had much in the way of loyalty to either the Nationalist Party or the Nationalist government.(86)

The continued strength of the Public Property Management Office (which it will be remembered had access to all the supplemental tax monies while the government only received the income of the formal land tax) meant

that the county government found itself in a state of permanent financial crisis. For example, in 1928 the county had an income of 156,492 yuan and spent 251,351 yuan, thus running up a deficit of 94,859.5 yuan. At the beginning of 1929 the government said it was going to balance the budget for the next year, but since projected expenditures were 80,000 yuan greater than the year before it seems unlikely that this was achieved.(87)

To alleviate its financial woes the Rugao government tried a series of remedies. In early 1929, because the Finance Office "had not received much money into its coffers", it asked the province for permission to establish "branch chests" (fen gui) throughout the county so that it would be easier for the peasants to make tax payments. It established one such group of chests at the end of the lunar year but found that they did not work. It then quickly rushed to set up even more chests, in the hope of increasing desperately needed remittances.(88)

But even the additional chests did not affect collection levels. In June of 1929 the Finance Office said that it had been able to collect less than fifty percent of the land tax, and that "as a result, the need for funds is urgent." It then resorted to a propaganda campaign which seemed primarily to involve the pasting up of slogans urging people to pay their taxes. There is no

report on the success of the campaign, but it would seem safe to assume that it had little effect.(89)

Since it could not collect sufficient amounts of money based on existing taxes, the Rugao government also tried to raise the tax rate in the hopes of extracting more from those willing to pay. In March of 1929 the county had requested such a raise from the provincial government and been turned down, ostensibly because they had not filled out the required forms correctly. In 1930 they once more petitioned the province, saying that there was a "very large" deficit in the Rugao budget and that if the tax was not approved there was no other manner of raising money. This time permission was granted, although it is highly unlikely that the new tax turned out to be the panacea its proponents hoped.(90)

The inability of the county to collect sufficient funds was not aided by the high level of corruption among those who actually handled the funds received. Obviously no complete and comprehensive report of corruption in Rugao exists. But two interesting documents indicate the extent of the mismanagement that must have been common. The first was a study done by the provincial Finance Department. It described how much of the money that was specially collected by various county Finance Offices as special taxes for use on reconstruction projects was never

actually turned over to a particular county's Reconstruction Office for use on those projects. In Rugao the Department found that more than 17,000 yuan from these funds had been "illegally transferred", i.e. used for something other than the designated reconstruction projects, or had simply "disappeared."(91)

Similarly, in 1931 the Civil Affairs Department sent inspectors out to various counties to investigate why the stockpiles of grain for emergency use that each county was supposed to possess was insufficient. In Rugao they found that the large sums which were supposed to have been spent on grain had in fact been spent in the ways indicated in Table 7.

Table 7. Actual use of grain funds in Rugao

Amount	Actual Use
10,000 <u>yuan</u>	"Misused" by the Public Property Management Office in 1927
10,700 <u>yuan</u>	"Misused" by the Local Peace Preservation Committee (<u>Di-fang zhian weichihui</u>) in 1927 (It had been given to troops in Sun's army)
20,600 <u>yuan</u>	"Misused" by the Public Property Management Office in 1929 and 1930
7,000 <u>yuan</u>	"Borrowed" by the Education Office
4,000 <u>yuan</u>	"Wasted" by Liu Lanqing
5,549 <u>yuan</u>	"Borrowed" by the Six-District Disaster Relief Committee (<u>Liuqu zaizhen weiyuanhui</u>)
Unspecified amounts	Used by the county to "sell" [grain] low when prices were high" [and not replaced]

Source: Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 844: (September 14, 1931), p. 4.

The total of something probably over 60,000 yuan is staggering, especially since this was the amount missing from only one section of the county budget. The projects that could have been carried out had the government, rather than private individuals, had access to these funds is hard to even imagine.(92)

But in addition to restricting the amount of money available for government use, the inability of the government to keep its officials honest further strengthened the hand of the local elite, who were able to use charges of dishonesty and foul play to argue for an increase in their own power. The question of who was to collect the slaughter tax provides a good example.

In November of 1927 the county received an order from the provincial government saying that the slaughter tax should be collected by the slaughter-house merchants who would then turn the money over to the county government. Moreover, it set a quota for the tax of 26,000 yuan. Accordingly, to collect the tax Magistrate Wang on November 15 set up a box in the county government office. Before long the slaughter-house merchants had deposited the required amount. That concluded the issue of the tax for 1927.(93)

The following year the system was changed. No longer were slaughter-house merchants to gather the tax and then

deposit it with the county government. Instead, the merchants were to collect the tax and give it to a representative sent out by the provincial government. But this representative "secretly", i.e. illegally, suddenly increased the amount owed to the government by the merchants. As a result, the merchants claimed that they were "unable" to pay. Furthermore, to express their opposition they immediately closed up their shops.(94)

The merchants succeeded in getting the old system re-established. Although the results of the 1928 collection are not recorded, by 1929 the slaughter-house merchants once again were told to appoint their own representatives to gather the tax which would then, presumably as before, be deposited with the county government. Furthermore, the power of the merchants increased. In addition to merely collecting the money, the merchants were given authority to punish anyone who opposed collection of the tax. That this new power improved the merchants' ability to profit from tax collection need not be emphasized to be apparent.(95)

Cases such as the slaughter tax make clear the failure of the government during the second period to gain control over local finance, and conversely the ability of local elite members, in this case the slaughter-house merchants, to maintain and even increase their control.

One other example, the selling of a provincial short-term rehabilitation bond, can be cited to show how, even when it was given a responsibility, the county Finance Office in exactly the same manner as its predecessors had to rely on the local elite to achieve any results.(96)

In October 1928 the provincial Finance Department announced that Rugao would have to raise 80,000 yuan through the sale of rehabilitation bonds. The magistrate properly asked the county governing committee to approve the issue, and the county governing committee then sent it to the Finance Office so that they could "handle the affair." But "handle" it they did not. Instead they assigned the "wealthy" of the county the responsibility for raising 40,000 yuan, the merchants the responsibility of raising 30,000 yuan, and the temples the responsibility of raising 10,000 yuan. In other words, by the end of the second period in Rugao the so-called Finance Office of the county government had become merely one part of the transmission belt whereby government orders were sent to those who actually carried them out, that is, the local elite.(97)

Moreover, in areas related to taxation and finance, notably the surveying of Rugao's population and land, the second period government was also weak. In mid-1928 the provincial government ordered Rugao to conduct a

population survey. By November the county government claimed to have completed the task. But since the survey was completed in such a short time, and there are no records of any funds appropriated for it or personnel assigned to it, it is hardly likely that an actual survey was conducted. Most likely old figures, arbitrarily revised, were merely inserted on new forms.(98)

Concerning land surveying, a matter of vital importance for the complete and correct assessment of taxes, the government was even more lax. In January 1929 the head and vice-head of the Surveying Office (Qingzhang ju) resigned and the office itself was abolished. In March 1930 the provincial governing committee gave permission for a Rugao County Land Office (Tudi ju) to be set up. The office was established, but there is no evidence that it actually surveyed or registered any land.(99)

In sum, it appears that during the second period the Rugao government made a substantial effort to reform the county finance system but in the end was unable to increase either the percentage of the taxes they were able to collect from the peasants or the amount of money once collected that they were able actually to control. At the same time they relied increasingly on the old local elite to collect government levies, as well as to dispense the

funds gathered in the government's name. By 1933, even the provincial government recognized the failure of financial reform at the county level, and it abolished the Finance Office in Rugao and all other Jiangsu counties.(100)

Education

During the second period the main issue that concerned those active in Rugao's educational circles was the availability of funds to pay teachers' wages. Although other issues surfaced from time to time, most important that of the selection and assignment of principals and teachers, none was able to eclipse Rugao educators' perpetual preoccupation with finances.(101)

As early as December 1927 representatives of the elementary school teachers from Rugao's eighteen districts held a meeting to discuss their financial difficulties. They requested that within a year the Education Office "clean up its accumulated debts," that is the back wages owed to teachers, and that teachers' salaries be raised so that elementary school teachers would get a minimum of twenty-five yuan a month. Several months later, in February 1928, the Education Office had not responded except to say that there were no funds available, and to propose to the county governing committee that a new tax

be levied to pay teachers' wages. The county governing committee approved.(102)

It is not clear whether the new tax ever was levied. However, it is obvious that by October 1928 the county had not substantially met the teachers' demands. At that time the elementary school teachers from the county's southern districts (probably not coincidentally that area where the Communists were most active) held another meeting. At this meeting they decided that if the Education Office did not solve the problems arising out of non-payment of wages they would go on strike starting November 1.(103)

The county did not meet the deadline and the teachers walked out, demanding that their back wages be paid in full before the winter teaching season could begin. For several weeks the county tried to solve the matter and failed, largely because petitions to the national government did not bring any financial relief. Then the county requested that the central government send a representative to mediate the dispute. A representative was dispatched, although he also did not achieve any results.(104)

Finally, six weeks after it began, the strike was settled. On December 11 all county organizations, presumably including all the organizations in which local elite members were active, held a joint meeting. At this

meeting an agreement was reached, although its terms were far short of what the teachers were demanding. According to the agreement, before the start of the winter period the county government would dispense 30,000 yuan to teachers. Of this, 10,000 yuan was to be "independently gathered" by the county Finance Office, 10,000 yuan was to be "borrowed" from native banks (qianzhuang) by the heads of the Finance Office, and Public Property Management Office, and the Rugao City administrative Office, and the remaining 10,000 yuan was to come from Education Office funds.(105)

But apparently the 30,000 yuan was not sufficient to cover any back wages for the period before January 1928. In May of 1929 it was reported that wages accumulated before this date still had not been paid, and that funds were still lacking for this as well as other educational expenses. Moreover, in education as in everything else, the county was becoming increasingly dependent on the local elite for the continued operation of the educational system. Of a projected 17,000 yuan that was to be gathered in June of 1929, 5,000 yuan was to come from the county Finance Office, and 11,000 yuan was to come from the local elite-controlled Public Property Management Office. Even this did not insure financial solvency. A year later, in May 1930, the problem of meeting the

county's educational expenses was as important as ever, leading the head of the Education Office himself to request that he be allowed to resign because of insufficient funds.(106)

It can be assumed that if the county did not have enough money to fund the regular school system it certainly would not have had enough to carry out any kind of a mass literacy or other mass educational campaign. Indeed this would appear to have been the case, although during the second period the organizational framework for such an effort was set up. In June 1929 formal opening ceremonies for a Rugao County Mass Education Academy (Rugao Xian li tongshu jiaoyu guan) were held. It was reported that over 10,000 people attended and that "the county had never seen any festivities like it before". Several months later it was said that the Mass Education Office had also set up a night school.(107)

In addition, in April 1929 plans were announced to set up a Peasant Education Academy (Nongmin jiaoyu guan). In January 1930 it was said that the academy's officials had been appointed. However, the number of students served by these institutions must have been minimal. There is no evidence that they established any branches out in the countryside where the majority of Rugao's illiterate peasants actually lived. There are also no indications

that Rugao's high illiteracy rate was reduced even slightly during the course of the Decade.(108)

Agriculture

The county did not do much more to aid the peasants in improving agricultural production than it did in helping them to learn to read. Moreover, the county did not even seem to have an agricultural program.

A few perfunctory efforts were made to set up an umbrella cooperative organization, an agricultural experimental station, and a committee to arbitrate land rent disputes. But most of the limited funds that were available apparently went to fight locusts in the eastern part of the county, a crisis situation that in fact had no known solution.

The impetus for the setting up of an organization to oversee the development of cooperatives clearly came from the provincial government, not from the county. In August 1928 a propaganda team from the Agriculture and Mining Department came to Rugao. It went from village to village extolling the virtues of peasant cooperatives. In addition at least one "engineer" from the same department also came to the county to "lead work."(109)

The provincial efforts failed, probably because they got little financial backing. The following October Wang

Haoran wrote, "Up until now this county has had no cooperatives." To remedy the situation Wang then appointed two individuals to enter a provincially-run training program for officials of cooperatives.(110)

The two individuals attended the classes and graduated from the program. They returned to Rugao and made plans to set up a "leadership office" (zhidao suo) and to appoint a person in each large town to promote cooperatives. But obviously their efforts did not get very far. Six months later one of the two was head of the Education Office in Huaiyin County. Obviously the one and a half million peasants of Rugao did not learn very much about cooperatives from him.(111)

During 1929 the county government was again ordered to set up a County Cooperative Leadership Office (Xian hezuoshe zhidao suo) to push for the establishment of cooperatives. This time the Agriculture and Mining Department appointed its directors. But it made no difference. As before the Rugao countryside continued to lack a single cooperative organization.(112)

Along with agricultural cooperatives the Agriculture and Mining Department also pushed agricultural experimental stations. In September 1928 the department appointed Ji Yun, a left-wing party activist, as head of an agricultural experimental station that was to work on

improving the area's cotton crop (mianzuo nong chang). Ji, who had received special training in cotton raising and was therefore presumably well-qualified for the job, accepted the position. However, it is not recorded whether a functioning experimental station was actually set up at this time, or whether Ji only remained in charge of a paper organization.(113)

A committee to arbitrate peasant land rents was also very much on the minds of Rugao's magistrates during the second period. Magistrate Wang in March of 1928 said that he planned to set up such a committee, and got at least as far as appointing preparatory committee members. Magistrate Wen proposed a province-wide Party-government joint meeting to discuss the problems of the peasants. Out of this came a law governing tenant payments of land rents. Finally, in February 1930 Magistrate Liu actually set up a Committee for the Arbitration of Tenancy Rates (Dianzu zhongcai weiyuanhui) within the county government. This new committee heard at least one case and probably more.(114)

However, the extent to which the arbitration committee served the Rugao peasants must be questioned. As with other similar organizations there is no indication that the committee ever established branch offices outside the county seat. In addition, the three members of the

committee clearly were not tenants themselves, but came from backgrounds much more akin to those of the landlords. One, Xia Guangyu, was a County Party leader. Although we have no information on Xia directly, it is important to remember that a large percentage of Rugao Party members and an even higher percentage of the Party leadership were highly educated. Another, Guo Yongnan, was one of the leading members of the native gentry active in local financial organizations. Still a third, Qiu Youqing, was an important local educator. Given the backgrounds of the committee members it is hard to believe that a poor peasant would get a terribly sympathetic hearing before them.(115)

But all of the above committees and organizations were so small - several individuals at most - that their establishment could not have cost very much. Instead, during this period most of the county's agricultural funds were expended on fighting locusts. In July 1928 locusts were first reported coming into the area from the north. They quickly spread throughout the entire county and caused great damage. The county responded by appointing "many people" to go to the villages to inspect the damage together with the district head (qu zhang) and the public security branch office head (gongan fen ju zhang). In addition a provincial inspector arrived and went on

tour.(116)

Later in the month more concrete action was taken. The county government, the district administrative offices, the Public Security Office, and the Reconstruction Office all organized squads to dig up locusts. Subsequently, with the hope of preventing further locust damage in the fall, the county ordered each district office and public security branch office to set up locust prevention squads. Although at the time there were no known methods for successfully eradicating locusts, at least through the presence of these "squads" the county probably was made aware of the extent of the locust damage and the difficulties it caused.(117)

In 1929 the locusts returned. To meet the renewed threat the county set up an All-County Locust Control Committee (Quan xian zhi huang huiyi). The committee met in the county seat in mid-May, but by the end of May the locusts were thick, especially on the reclaimed lands along the coast. Here it was said they covered an area of over 18,000 mu and were "as thick as ants and as large as bees or flies."(118)

Initially Rugao's major coastal land reclamation company, the Da Yu Gongsi, hired workers to eliminate the locusts. Every day more than three hundred of their people dug ditches and by beating the locusts attempted to

force them into the pits. But the workers were too few, the bugs too numerous, and the cost too high. By the beginning of June the company had ended its locust eradication efforts.(119)

Meanwhile the All-County Locust Control Committee held a meeting to discuss methods for eliminating locusts, as well as the amount of money needed to do so. They concluded that every household ought to be pressed into service, and that along the coast where residents were few laborers should be hired. For this they requested 10,000 yuan from the county government.(120)

Apparently the methods were not successful. The locusts continued to grow, to increase in number, and to spread to parts of the county where they previously had not been seen. In all cases, after the locusts appeared the response of the county government was the same: send an inspector and hire workers to dig out the pests. Unfortunately, the result also was familiar: more locusts, and the destruction of crops. Throughout the remainder of the Decade the pattern did not vary, although after 1930, when locusts were once again reported along the coast, the depredations of the past were not repeated, largely due to natural causes.(121)

In the end the irony of the situation is that the Rugao government seemed to spend the bulk of its

agricultural resources responding to a crisis which it could not have solved even with vastly greater material wealth than it in fact possessed. At the same time long-term projects such as the setting up of peasant cooperatives and agricultural stations which could perhaps somewhere down the road have benefited the peasants, went begging. Only in the third period would this situation be partially reversed, and then under conditions which caused the cooperatives and other county-established agricultural organizations to be of questionable value to the ordinary resident.(122)

Famine Relief

Obviously the pressure of so many locusts in the county created a certain amount of deprivation and even starvation. But the problem caused by locusts was not the only problem in the county's food supply system. Most important, military activities or hoarding by grain merchants, either alone or when combined with a natural disaster such as the locusts, could push the price of food so high that it went beyond the reach of most individuals.

Throughout the second period (and although there is no data presumably throughout the third as well) the price of Rugao's staple food, rice, fluctuated widely in accordance with a yearly pattern. In the fall, usually in

September immediately after the crops were harvested, the price of rice would reach its low point. Then it would gradually escalate until by mid-March it had reached a level high enough to cause panic in the average Chinese household. If natural conditions were bad, if there was hoarding or military activity, the price might then continue to rise, sometimes dramatically, until the following September when it would once more retreat in the wake of the harvest. This pattern can be seen in the chart on the next page.

Table 8. Consumer Rice Prices in Rugao (per shi)

Date (approximate)	Price
1927 March	17.6 <u>yuan</u> (a)
"spring"	18.0 <u>yuan</u>)b)
September 7	14.0 - 14.6 <u>yuan</u> (c)
September 30	10.6 - 10.8 <u>yuan</u> (d)
1929 August	20 <u>yuan</u> (e)
1930 March	19.4 - 19.8 <u>yuan</u> (up to 25 <u>yuan</u> in some places)(f)
April	20.6 - 21.3 <u>yuan</u> (g)
May	28 - 35 <u>yuan</u> (h)
September	14.7 - 15.2 <u>yuan</u> (i)

Sources: a) Shi Bao, 5 April 1927, p. 3. b) Ibid., 7 September 1927, p. 3. c) Ibid. d) Ibid., 30 September 1927, p. 3. e) Ibid., 18 August 1929, p. 4. f) Ibid., 4: March 1930 p. 4, and 10 March 1930, p. 4. g) Ibid., 20 April 1930, p. . h) Ibid., 3 May 1930, p. 4; 10 May 1930, p. 4; and 12 May 1930, p. 4. i) Ibid., 16 September 1930, p. 3.

At times there was nothing the government could do about the rise in rice prices. For example, during the spring of 1927 the price of rice as well as all other daily necessities such as firewood shot up because military hostilities disrupted trade both within and without the county. Only after the Nationalists consolidated their hold on Rugao did prices start to fall.(123)

During all of 1928 prices apparently stayed reasonably low. There is no data, but since the press makes no mention of unusually high prices it is fairly safe to assume that they did not occur. In addition, with the exception of the beginning of the locust invasion there was no evidence for any other natural or man-made disaster.

Starting in the spring of 1929, however, the price of rice once more skyrocketed. The main reason for the high price was that rice merchants were hoarding grain and in violation of local laws smuggling it out of the county to areas where it could be sold at higher rates.(124)

Fortunately, at this time the government could take action. In August Magistrate Wen ordered the rice merchants to stop smuggling. His order, combined with the beginning of the harvest and the shipment of rice into Rugao from other areas, lowered the price to sixteen yuan a shi.(125)

But the price did not stay low for long. The 1929 harvest, probably due both to locust damage and to disruptions caused by the Communists, must have been an exceptionally poor one. October reports from Rugao frequently mention that the price of rice was once again hitting new heights and that the county, especially its eastern section, was experiencing a "food crisis."(126)

The county responded by attempting to sell grain at below market prices. On October 9 members of "all of the county's organizations," presumably that is prominent members of the local elite, met at the Public Property Management Office. They decided that starting on November 1 they would sell 2,700 shi of rice at ninety per cent of the lowest available free market price. As with so many other things, there is no record of whether or not the sale was carried out. However, the sale of this comparatively small amount of rice could not have dramatically affected rice prices throughout the county, nor have fed for very long many of Rugao's hungry million and a half citizens.(127)

Moreover, if things were bad immediately after the harvest of 1929, they could only get worse as the spring and summer of 1930 wore on. In March of 1930 it was said "the poor cannot but be bitter." By May the residents of northern Rugo had stopped eating rice and switched to

other less desirable grains. The result was that the price of the latter also soared, and they too became hard to find.(128)

Again the cause of the latest price hikes appeared to be natural disaster coupled with hoarding by private merchants. For example, south of Rugao in the town of Matang it was reported that more than thirty families were hoarding rice in hopes of selling it later at higher prices.(129)

As before, the government responded by trying to prevent hoarding and increasing the sale of rice. Magistrate Liu himself (with some effect it was said) wrote letters to the thirty Matang families advising them to release their grain. In addition one large merchant in Rugao City started bringing in and selling increased supplies of rice. But unlike a year earlier there is no record of the sale of grain from public granaries. Instead, all we have is the already described report from June 1930 detailing the way in which Rugao's public granaries had been mismanaged and setting down the amounts that had been pilfered by various organizations and individuals.(130)

The 1930 report on Rugao public granaries echoes charges made earlier by Wang Haoran. At that time Wang said that the county granaries had not made progress

because they were not well run. Apparently two years later not much had changed. As in 1929, the granaries could not and did not provide a buffer between the peasant and starvation. Only in September, when the harvest once again came in, did the price of Rugao rice start to fall.(131)

It might be expected that, unable to provide relief to its citizens by offering food for sale at affordable prices, the Rugao government might have set up charitable institutions to distribute food directly. Indeed, they tried to do this, but again not in a well-organized way nor on a massive scale. In September 1928 the county government charged several individuals with the setting up of a relief organization (jiuji yuan). These people apparently did nothing and in November they were replaced by Sha Shidu, that local notable active in many other circles as well. Sha got the organization officially established, although we do not know how many people it was able to serve. Perhaps one indication can be gotten from what we know of another county relief organization which supposedly cared for the "poor and lonely." It got 51.35 yuan a month from the county budget, and with this meager sum was officially given the responsibility of caring for almost 700 people. Needless to say, it was doubtful that the organization was able to carry out its

responsibilities in any meaningful way.(132)

Water Conservancy

It has been noted by some observers that one of the most dramatic ways a government anywhere in China can improve the lot of its peasants is through water conservancy projects.(133) Such a proposition would seem to be particularly apt for Rugao, a county laced with small rivers and canals, and bordering on both the China Sea and the Chang Jiang. And in fact, while not subject to massive floods like the counties to its north, Rugao did suffer severely from problems related to water control. Most important, because there was either an insufficient number of dikes and locks, or because adequate control was not maintained over those dikes and locks that did exist, the water level in Rugao's streams was often too low to allow either irrigation or the passage of boats vital to Rugao's commerce. Moreover, because Rugao's waterways were not dredged, they silted up and impeded transportation even further. Sometimes as a result all significant trade between Rugao and the outside halted for weeks at a time.(134)

In addition there was the constant need to maintain the dikes and embankments that dotted the county in order to protect those living near them from personal and

economic disaster. Throughout the second period many urgently needed water control projects were brought to the attention of the county government. For example, the private citizens of a town on the Chang Jiang asked that their harbor be dredged of sand. The residents of another southern Rugao town asked that the county do something to stop the large slides along the banks of a river in the area. And the districts crossed by the large Fan Gong Dike, which protected Rugao from the sea, repeatedly asked the county to appropriate money for the repair of that badly deteriorated structure.(135)

Moreover, the county was confronted with a steady stream of crisis situations related to water conservancy. For example, in the southwestern town of Zhenzhou, the riverbank started to collapse. During one two-month period more than twenty feet slid away. People in the area moved to the top of the surrounding dike to protect themselves, but the result was not good. Said one observer, "During the night things are not peaceful because conditions are miserable."(136)

In theory it was the Reconstruction Office of the county government which had control over all of the county's water conservancy projects. Furthermore, from a supplemental land tax this office had a budget of about 50,000 to 60,000 yuan a year to carry out these projects.

But as at least one report showed, a large part of this money either was never used for the projects intended, or somehow vanished before such projects could be undertaken. It is probably for this reason that when confronted with either a demand or a crisis involving water control, the county usually either did nothing at all or ordered some subordinate unit or official to solve the problem.(137)

For example, a report from 1931 affirms that the county neither dredged its waterways nor controlled the water level in its streams. It said,

Rivers within the county are not dredged. They totally rely on rainfall to have sufficient [water]. When it is dry the rivers evaporate and transportation, communication and irrigation are impossible. The reason is that the rivers are silted up and shallow and water is not able to flow into them. Moreover, counties on the lower reaches of the Yunyan He [i.e. counties upstream from Rugao] open and close the dikes at will, letting out the water which is already insufficient to maintain the river's level.(138)

Also, in the case of the town that had slides along its river banks the magistrate did nothing himself, but ordered the district administrative office "to draw up detailed plans and then execute them." In yet another instance, when the Da Yu Gongsì secretly opened a lock that affected water levels in four Rugao districts and damaged irrigation ditches, it was each affected area's dibao who were ordered to "collect workers" and repair the damage.(139)

It is unlikely that the district-level offices had either the manpower or funds to repair river banks, so any such order was most likely not fulfilled. As for the request to the dibao, while there is no evidence that it was in fact carried out, there is at least a possibility that by relying on local resources some work may have been done. And so it would seem that in water conservancy, as in everything else, reliance on the local elite and not governmental officials or finances was essential for a project to be implemented.

The importance of local notables, as well as the inability of the county to get the support of higher authorities to help it resolve a dispute, can be seen in the most important water conservancy issue to affect the county during the second period, if not the Decade: the opening of the Xujia Dike. The Xujia Dike (Xujia ba) was located upstream from Rugao in Dongtai County, but it had a great influence over water conservancy in Rugao and all other counties downstream from it. If the dike were to be opened, all of the river's water would in one great uncontrollable gush flow through Rugao and into the sea. A few days later, because all of the river's available moisture had been dissipated, Rugao's fields and streambeds would be dry. As a consequence, for over five hundred years it had been forbidden to open the dike.

Even more stringently, during the Daoguang period of the Qing a law was passed guaranteeing the people of Rugao that the dike would never be touched.(140)

But in February 1928 the promise made in the Qing was broken. The residents of the town where the dike was located, acting on their own, opened the levee. Several days later the effects of the opening were felt in Rugao and it was said that within three days all the streams and irrigation canals in Rugao would be dry.(141)

Upon hearing the disastrous news, the Rugao Reconstruction Office called an immediate meeting of "representatives from all neighboring areas" (presumably people from the similarly affected counties of Nantong, Jingjiang, and Taixian) and "local notables". Those present at the meeting decided to set up a special committee, The Committee to Fight for the Preservation of the Xujia Dike (Lizheng baoliu xujia di weiyuanhui). In turn the committee appointed two representatives to go to Nantong to consult with the Nantong magistrate, and sent a telegram of protest to the provincial Reconstruction Department asking that the dike be closed at once.(142)

At the same time demonstrations protesting the opening of the dike occurred in Rugao City, and three people from Rugao who lived in Nanjing called a meeting of all the Rugao natives present in the national capital.

The latter also set up a committee to "vigorously" fight the opening of the dike. After its formation the committee telegraphed back to all Rugao county organizations telling them to struggle hard, and urging the head of the Reconstruction Office to "argue skillfully" so that he could obtain the desired goal.(143)

The results of all this frenzied activity were not encouraging. In March the Reconstruction Department said that it would not handle the matter and turned it over to the Grand Canal Engineering Office (Yun He gongcheng ju). Rugao then sent two representatives directly to Nanjing to protest this move. Apparently they were not successful. In July the Rugao Committee to Fight for the Preservation of the Xujia Dike was still meeting regularly to formulate new plans for action. In August, the last time we have news of the affair, the dike was still open and Rugao's waterways, as predicted, were dry.(144)

The Anti-Opium Campaign

A pattern of government failure can also be seen in the main social program carried out in Rugao during the period: the program to rid the county of opium. Opium itself was not grown in the county; no opium plants had been seen in Rugao since 1904. But opium addicts were plentiful, especially since before 1927 it was possible

for an addict to obtain a license and then to smoke openly without fear.(145)

The Nationalist program to eradicate opium smoking in Rugao began in October of 1927, the very beginning of the second period. At that time the province designated a special official to head a Rugao anti-opium office. He arrived in Rugao on the sixteenth and set up an office at the Temple of the War God outside the North Gate.(146)

Throughout 1928 and 1929 the campaign against opium continued. Magistrate Wang, according to his own report, "had the sections of the law detailing the penalties for using opium well-publicized among the masses and said that no matter who a person was they would be punished." In June 1928 he also ordered each police district to investigate and wipe out opium dens, and instructed all county government organizations carefully to investigate their personnel and immediately fire anyone who was found to eat or smoke opium. Moreover in July, in accordance with a provincial order, the county appointed a special police force to investigate and seize opium. (147)

But the county's greatest effort in the anti-opium struggle was made to establish a hospital where opium addicts could come to be cured of their addiction. In March 1929 the county government asked the Rugao public hospital to prepare plans and a budget. This was done.

Then a building was rented, and a director appointed. In July the county government approved the hospital's budget. In August the hospital opened to the public for cures that would supposedly take a month.(148)

To a very limited extent the county's anti-opium campaign was successful. Police did arrest several users and the special hospital did serve a number of patients. However, in spite of this the bulk of the available evidence indicates that the Rugao government did not succeed in mounting a very thorough, effective, or longlasting campaign against opium use in the county.(149)

Often because information about police activities was supplied to those they were attempting to apprehend, the police sent out to investigate crimes involving opium were ambushed along the way. For example, in one area the district police received a "secret" report that opium was being sold privately at a certain house. The police office sent six police to investigate. Several hours later, because the police had not returned the police chief himself, along with a plainclothes investigator, went out to make inquiries. While traveling to the scene these two were "jumped" by "bandits". They escaped injury by fleeing into neighboring wheat fields, but returned to their office without proceeding any further in their efforts to track down the opium.(150)

The attempt to purge opium users from official ranks was also not terribly effective, and even the anti-opium offices themselves became corrupt. For example, in one district the head of the district's Public Security Office was accused of colluding with the head of the Anti-Opium Branch Office (Jin van fan suo) to take bribes in return for the protection of opium dens, and of blackmailing local residents. After the magistrate received a report of this activity he ordered an immediate investigation. However, there is no subsequent evidence that any of the individuals were ever tried or dismissed from their posts.(151)

The provincial government was apparently aware of the county government's lack of enthusiasm for anti-opium activities. In May 1929 the Civil Affairs Department ordered the magistrate of Nantong to go to Rugao to supervise the burning of opium smoking equipment. But this outside supervision had minimal effect. The Rugao government claimed that it had not received an order to carry out such an event, and a mass demonstration against opium use quickly planned in its stead was subsequently "postponed." (152)

But perhaps the most telling sign of the way the anti-opium winds were blowing in Rugao concerned the anti-opium hospital. Opened only in August 1929, it was

closed in January 1930 for "lack of funds." The hospital's remaining cash, seven hundred yuan in all, was transferred to a shelter for migrants and to the public hospital. The building housing the hospital was assigned to be used as a detention center for addicts.(153)

By the spring of 1930 all government efforts to deal with opium use in the county temporarily ended, although this was certainly not because the trade in opium had ceased. Evidence of the continued trade abounded. For example, in Shizhuang on the night of May fifteenth, several fishermen were using nets to snare their catch. Suddenly a "thing" appeared in the middle of the river bobbing about. The fishermen devised a means of "catching" it and discovered it was over seventy bao of opium wrapped in black oilcloth. Contained in the bundle was also a bill of sale on which the figure 15,000 [yuan] could be made out.(154)

The anti-opium campaign is perhaps symbolic of the Rugao government's programs and policies during the second period. Using county government personnel and county government money the county organization tried to set up telephone lines and build roads, to eliminate Communists and bandits, to reform county finances, to meet crises caused by locusts and a teachers' strike, and to eliminate opium. In only one of these undertakings, the elimination

of the Communists, did they receive extensive local elite and central government support. The presence of this two-pronged support made the mission a success. In all the other areas the Nationalists achieved little. The telephone lines, probably the government's second most successful project, went in, but only after much procrastination and delay. Few roads were built. The bandits continued to plague the coast. Revenue was not increased. The locusts disappeared temporarily, but because of natural causes, not because of government programs. The teachers' strike was settled, but the problem of teachers' wages was not. Opium was not wiped out.

Moreover, during the period a disturbing trend became visible. At the beginning of the second period the government seemed determined to set up organizations which would directly compete with the local elite for power. By the end of the second period the government had given up this effort. During the third period the government would become almost totally dependent on the local elite to carry out government programs. In the struggle for power over the Chinese countryside the Rugao county government had lost.

Chapter Four

Notes

(1) Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 29 September 1927, p. 1; 19 October 1927, p. 3.

(2) There is no existing announcement of Wang's removal. However, after October 1928 his name no longer appears in accounts of political events in Rugao.

(3) Shi Bao, 24 October 1928, p. 8.

(4) During the fall of 1928 articles on the Jiangsu magistrates' exam frequently appeared in Shi Bao. See for example, Shi Bao 4 September 1928, p. 3; and 6 September 1928, p. 3. Even the North China Herald reported the event. See North China Herald (Shanghai), 29 September 1928, p. 537.

(5) For example, one of the most important individuals in this group was one Kong Chong who later became the magistrate of Taixing. He published articles in Su Zheng, nos. 1 (1 May 1930), 2 (16 May 1930), 3 (1 June 1930), 6 (16 July 1930) and 11 (16 April 1931).

(6) Shi Bao, 24 October 1928, p. 8; 15 November 1928, p. 8; 8 June 1929, p. 1; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao [Jiangsu Province government gazette], no. 152 (12 June 1929), p. 9.

(7) Shen Bao, 3 November 1929, p. 11; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 315 (17 December 1929), pp. 13-14.

(8) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 315 (17 December 1929), pp. 13-14.

(9) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 315 (17 December 1929), pp. 13-14; no. 322 (25 December 1929), pp. 5-6.

(10) The Public Security Office head was Shen Jinghua. He held office until January 1930. See Shi Bao, 6 January 1930, p. 4.

(11) Shen Bao (Shanghai), 12 November 1929, p. 9; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 254 (4 October

1929), p. 10; and no. 266 (19 October 1929), p. 5.

(12) Shen Bao, 12 November 1929, p. 9; Shi Bao, 12 March 1930, p. 4; 15 March 1930, p. 2; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 385 (March 13, 1930), p. 7.

(13) Shi Bao, 20 March 1930, p. 3.

(14) Shi Bao, 4 May 1930, p. 4; 18 May 1930, p. 3; 8 June 1930, p.3; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 452 (1 June 1930), p. 8; no. 564 (9 October 1930), p. 11; no. 570 (17 October 1930), p.23.

(15) Shi Bao, 25 March 1930, p. 3; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 872 (17 October 1931), p. 21.

(16) See Chapter Two. On Miao Bin, see Bradley Kent Geisert, "Power and Society: The Kuomintang and Local Elites in Kiangsu Province, China, 1924-1927" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1979), pp. 87-88, and 169-190; Gu Ziyang, Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Yanji [Evolution of Party affairs in Jiangsu Province] (N.p., n.d.), Nationalist Party Archives, Taipei, Taiwan, no. 34:001, pp. 12, 15, 19, and 22; He Fu, "San Zhong Quan Hui Qian Guomindang Ge Paixi zhi Shi de Fenzhe" [Analysis of the history of Nationalist Party cliques before the Third Plenum of the Fourth Nationalist Party Congress], Shehui Xinwen ["Society Mercury"] 1, no. 25 (15 December 1932): 514; Shen Bao, 25 March 1928, p. 9; and 26 January 1929, p. 148; and North China Herald, 26 January 1929, p. 148; 23 February 1929, p. 301; 6 May 1930, p. 218; and 27 May 1930, p. 345.

(17) Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 88-89; Shi Bao, 1 July 1930, p. 3; North China Herald, 7 December 1929, p. 381; 31 December 1929, p. 539; and 27 May 1930, p. 345; and Tien Hung-mao, Government and Politics in Kuomintang China: 1927-1937 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 186.

(18) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian Xianzheng Gaikuang" [Conditions of Rugao county government], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 5 (11 October 1928): 71.

(19) Ibid.

(20) Ibid.

- (21) Shi Bao, 22 March 1928, p. 3.
- (22) Shi Bao, 2 November 1927, p. 3.
- (23) Shi Bao, 24 October 1928, p. 8.
- (24) For a detailed discussion of the significance of one of the Jiangsu counties' specialized offices, the Finance Office, see Philip A. Kuhn, "Local Self-Government under the Republic: Problems of Control, Autonomy, and Mobilization," in Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). On the setting up of the Rugao Finance Office, see Shi Bao, 24 August 1928, p. 8; and 12 October 1928, p. 4. On the Rugao Reconstruction Office, see Shi Bao, 3 October 1927, p. 3.
- (25) Shi Bao, 6 January 1929, p. 4; 14 January 1928, p. 3; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 135 (15 May 1929), p. 5.
- (26) Shi Bao, 30 August 1929, p. 4; 3 October 1927, p. 3; 8 November 1928, p. 4.
- (27) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 603 (26 November 1930), p. 4; no. 834 (2 September 1931), p. 11.
- (28) Shi Bao, 2 July 1927, p. 8; 5 July 1927, p. 8; 13 July 1927, p. 13; 28 July 1927, p. 2.
- (29) Shi Bao, 19 October 1927, p. 3.
- (30) For a general description of dibao, see North China Herald, 15 April 1930, p. 89. For a description of the evolution of dibao in Jiangsu, see David William Faure, "Local Political Disturbances in Kiangsu Province, China, 1870-1911" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1976), pp. 193-194. For examples of dibao activity in Rugao, see Shi Bao, 18 July 1928, p. 8; 25 July 1928, p. 8; 28 November 1928, p. 4.
- (31) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 265 (October 18, 1929), pp. 13-14.
- (32) North China Herald, 18 April 1930, p. 89; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 265 (18 October 1929), pp. 13-14.

(33) Ibid.

(34) Wen's statement is contained in Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 265 (18 October 1929), pp. 13-14. For an example of an attack on a dibao, see Shi Bao, 30 December 1928, p. 4.

(35) Shi Bao, 11 April 1928, p. 3; 29 April 1928, p. 3.

(36) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 265 (18 October 1929), pp. 13-14.

(37) Ibid. "Tutelary government" was the second stage in the three-stage plan the Nationalists had to set up a democratic constitutional government in China.

(38) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 265 (18 October 1929), pp. 13-14; no. 284 (9 November 1929), p. 8.

(39) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 378 (4 March 1930), pp. 7-8; and Shi Bao, 14 February 1930, p. 2.

(40) Shi Bao, 21 December 1927, p. 2; 19 February 1928, p. 7; 26 February 1928, p. 3.

(41) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 64.

(42) Shi Bao 21 December 1927, p. 2; 13 August 1929, p. 4.

(43) Shi Bao, 23 December 1928, p. 4.

(44) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 63.

(45) Shi Bao, 23 December 1928, p. 4; 12 January 1929, p. 4.

(46) Shi Bao, 24 January 1929, p. 4.

(47) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," pp. 70-71; and Shi Bao, 9 June 1928, p. 3; 21 June 1928, p. 3.

(48) For example, Wang Haoran complained that untrained personnel and lack of funds were the two biggest problems his Rugao government faced. See Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p.72.

(49) Shi Bao, 6 December 1928, p. 8. For example, when Jiang's successor took office, it is recorded that he also appointed the heads of the three consecutively numbered "sections" of the county government. See Shi Bao, 8 July 1929, p. 4.

(50) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," pp. 67-68.

(51) See the sub-section of this chapter entitled "Finances and Taxes" for the details of the county finance system reforms.

(52) Wang Peitang, Jiangsu Sheng Xiangtu Zhi [The geography and local history of Jiangsu Province], 2 vols. (Changsha: Shangwu, 1938), p. 265.

(53) For references to dibao operating after they were supposedly eliminated, see Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 459 (9 June 1930), p. 23; and Shi Bao, 13 July 1930, p. 4; 11 November 1930, p. 4. The comment on village and market town public offices existing "in name only" is found in Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang [Jiangsu farmer's bank head office], ed., Disan Nian zhi Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang [The third year of the Jiangsu Farmer's Bank] (Zhenjiang: 1930-1932), p. 221.

(54) For details of the last phase of the Northern Expedition, see Donald A. Jordan, The Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928 (Honolulu, University Press of Hawaii, 1976), chapters 14-17. For a detailed description of the Communist movement in Rugao and the government's efforts to suppress it, see Chapter Eight of this work.

(55) Shi Bao, 9 August 1928, p. 4; 4 April 1929, p. 3; 5 April 1929, p. 4; 7 April 1929, p. 4.

(56) Shi Bao, 4 April 1929, p. 3; 5 April 1929, p. 4; 7 April 1929, p. 4; 9 April 1929, p. 4; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 147 (29 May 1929), pp. 10-11.

(57) Shi Bao, 22 April 1929, p. 3; 12 May 1929, p. 4.

(58) Shi Bao, 7 April 1929, p. 4; 9 April 1929, p. 4; 12 April 1929, p. 4; 20 April 1929, p. 4; 22 April 1929, p. 3.

- (59) Shi Bao, 17 May 1929, p. 4.
- (60) Shi Bao, 27 May 1929, p. 3.
3. (61) Shi Bao, 17 May 1929, p. 4; 27 May 1929, p. 3.
- (62) Shi Bao, 21 May 1929, p. 4; 24 May 1929, p. 4; 27 May 1929, p. 3.
3. (63) Shi Bao, 24 May 1929, p. 4; 27 May 1929, p. 3.
- (64) Shi Bao, 24 May 1929, p. 4; 27 May 1929, p. 3; 30 May 1929, p. 4.
- (65) Shi Bao, 30 May 1929, p. 4; 1 June 1929, p. 8; 6 June 1929, p. 3.
- (66) Shi Bao, 6 June 1929, p. 3; 23 June 1929, p. 4; 9 July 1929, p. 4.
- (67) Shi Bao, 29 June 1929, p. 3; 9 July 1929, p. 4; 16 July 1929, p. 4; 13 August 1929, p. 4.
- (68) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," pp. 63-64.
- (69) Shi Bao, 26 February 1928, p. 3.
4. (70) Shi Bao, 16 July 1929, p. 4; 2 August 1929, p. 4.
- (71) See Shi Bao, 5 April 1929, p. 4 for one example of the use of telephones in the Nationalist war on the Communists. See the following on the later development of the telephone system: North China Herald, 23 February 1932, p. 284; 19 October 1932, p. 92; 14 March 1934, p. 407; 10 April 1935, p. 55; 25 September 1935, p. 502.
- (72) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 66; and Kang Zhizhen, "Jiangsu Quan Sheng Daolu Shikuang ji Jianglai Jianshe Jihua" [The actual condition of Jiangsu's roads and their future reconstruction], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 12-13 (1 January 1929): 118.
- (73) Shi Bao, 31 January 1929, p. 4; 18 March 1929, p. 4.

- (74) Shi Bao, 20 January 1930, p. 3.
- (75) Shi Bao, 20 March 1930, p. 3; 4 July 1934, p. 12.
- (76) North China Herald, 13 February 1934, p. 283; 18 July 1936, p. 91; 3 August 1935, p. 217; 31 March 1937, p. 541; 9 May 1934, p. 181; 19 February 1936, p. 305; 18 November 1936, p. 271; 11 December 1935, p. 436.
- (77) Shi Bao, 16 December 1928, p. 4.
- (78) Shi Bao, 4 November 1927, p. 3.
- (79) Shi Bao, 18 April 1928, p. 7.
- (80) Shi Bao, 25 April 1928, p. 7.
- (81) Shi Bao, 24 August 1928, p. 8; 12 October 1928, p. 4.
- (82) Wang Peitang, Jiangsu Sheng, p. 265.
- (83) Shi Bao, 8 June 1928, p. 3; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 72 (25 February 1929), pp. 31-32.
- (84) Ibid.
- (85) Shi Bao, 22 July 1929, p. 4; and 29 July 1929, p. 4.
- (86) For more information on Sha, see Chapters Six and Seven.
- (87) Shen Bao, 5 November 1929, p. 9; and Shi Bao, 1 March 1929, p. 4.
- (88) Shi Bao, 31 January 1929, p. 4; 11 March 1929, p. 4.
- (89) Shi Bao, 9 June 1929, p. 3.
- (90) Shi Bao, 21 March 1929, p. 4; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 450 (29 May 1930), pp. 7-8.
- (91) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 482 (July 5, 1930), p. 20.

(92) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 844: (September 14, 1931), p. 4.

(93) Shi Bao, 25 November 1927, p. 3.

(94) Shi Bao, 6 December 1928, p. 8; 14 December 1928, p. 4.

(95) Shi Bao, 22 August 1929, p. 4.

(96) See Chapter Three for a similar description of how the first period magistrate sold such bonds.

(97) Shi Bao, 26 October 1928, p. 8.

(98) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 159 (14 June 1929), p. 7; Shi Bao, 11 November 1928, p. 8; and Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 65.

(99) Shi Bao, 11 January 1929, p. 4; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 390 (19 March 1930), p. 4.

(100) Earlier, in 1930, seventeen county finance offices (not including the Rugao County Finance Office) were abolished because they either were going, or were about to go, bankrupt. See Wang Peitang, Jiangsu Sheng, p. 265; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 422 (26 April 1930), pp. 9-16. Later, in 1931, an additional eight finance offices were shut. See Wang Peitang, Jiangsu Sheng, p. 225.

(101) On the issue of teacher selection and assignment, see Shi Bao, 10 December 1927, p. 3.

(102) Shi Bao, 10 December 1927, p. 3; 9 February 1928, p. 7.

(103) Shi Bao, 8 November 1928, p. 4.

(104) Shi Bao, 8 November 1928, p. 4; 11 November 1928, p. 4; 30 November 1928, p. 4; 2 December 1928, p. 4; 9 December 1928, p. 4.

(105) Shi Bao, 19 December 1928, p. 4; 22 December 1928, p. 4.

(106) Shi Bao, 8 May 1929, p. 4; 13 June 1929, p. 4; 11 May 1930, p. 3.

(107) Shi Bao, 15 June 1928, p. 8; and Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 66.

(108) Shi Bao, 5 April 1929, p. 4; 10 January 1930, p. 4.

(109) Shi Bao, 25 August 1928, p. 4.

(110) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 70.

(111) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p.70; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no 135 (15 May 1929), p. 5.

(112) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 215.

(113) Shi Bao, 2 October 1928, p. 8. On Ji Yun, see Chapter Two.

(114) Shi Bao, 22 March 1928, p. 3; 13 August 1929, p. 4; 6 February 1930, p. 3.

(115) Shi Bao, 6 February 1930, p. 3.

(116) Shi Bao, 23 July 1928, p. 4.

(117) Shi Bao, 27 July 1928, p. 4; 26 August 1928, p. 4.

(118) Shi Bao, 27 May 1929, p. 4.

(119) Shi Bao, 27 May 1929, p. 4; 7 June 1929, p. 4.

(120) Shi Bao, 30 May 1929, p. 4.

(121) Shi Bao, 7 June 1929, p. 4; 11 July 1929, p. 3; 8 June 1930, p. 3; 20 June 1930, p. 4.

(122) On the later development of agricultural experimental stations and cooperatives see Chapter Five.

(123) Shi Bao, 5 April 1927, p. 3; 7 September 1929, p. 3; 30 September 1929, p. 3.

(124) Shi Bao, 18 August 1929, p. 4.

(125) Ibid.

- (126) Shi Bao, 28 October 1929, p. 3.
- (127) Shi Bao, 15 October 1929, p. 4; 28 October 1929, p. 3; 4 March 1930, p. 4.
- (128) Shi Bao, 4 March 1930, p. 4; 10 May 1930, p. 4; 12 May 1930, p. 4.
- (129) Shi Bao, 10 March 1930, p. 4.
- (130) Shi Bao, 10 March 1930, p. 4; 21 April 1930, p. 3; 10 May 1930, p. 4; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 466 (June 17, 1930), p. 9.
- (131) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 65; and Shi Bao, 16 September 1930, p. 3.
- (132) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 70; and Shi Bao, 19 September 1928, p. 4; 14 November 1928, p. 4; 26 November 1928, p. 4.
- (133) Conversation with Elizabeth Perry, August 1982.
- (134) On the breakdown of commerce between Rugao and the rest of China due to low water in the canals, see Shi Bao, 24 August 1928; and North China Herald, 10 August 1932, p. 213; and 1 February 1928, p. 168.
- (135) Shi Bao, 10 March 1928, p. 7; 1 May 1929, p. 4; 8 July 1929, p. 4.
- (136) Shi Bao, 30 August 1929, p. 4.
- (137) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian," p. 67.
- (138) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 221.
- (139) Shi Bao, 10 March 1928, p. 7; 18 July 1928, p. 8.
- (140) Shi Bao, 2 March 1928, p. 3; 4 March 1928, p. 3.
- (141) Shi Bao, 2 March 1928, p. 3.
- (142) Shi Bao, 2 March 1928, p. 3; 4 March 1928, p. 4; 18 March 1928, p. 3.

- (143) Shi Bao, 19 March 1928, p. 7.
- (144) Shi Bao, 19 March 1928, p. 7; 28 March 1928, p. 7; 22 July 1928, p. 4; 9 August 1928, p. 4.
- (145) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 69.
- (146) Shi Bao, 28 October 1927, p. 3.
- (147) Wang Haoran, "Rugaoxian," p. 69; and Shi Bao, 9 June 1928, p. 3; 25 July 1928, p. 8.
- (148) Shi Bao, 15 March 1929, p. 3; 26 July 1929, p. 3; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 558 (2 October 1930), p. 13.
- (149) Shi Bao, 25 July 1928, p. 8.
- (150) Shi Bao, 19 May 1929, p. 4.
- (151) Shi Bao, 14 July 1928, p. 4.
- (152) Shi Bao, 25 May 1929, p. 4.
- (153) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 558 (2 October 1930), p. 13.
- (154) Shi Bao, 24 May 1930, p. 3.

Chapter Five

The Third Period of Nationalist Government in Rugao

The end of the second period and the beginning of the third are not as easy to delineate as the break between the first and second periods. On the one hand, an argument can be made that the division between the second and third periods should be May 14, 1930, the day Magistrate Qian Zuoyi took office. Qian was responsible for reorienting the county government so that it no longer depended primarily on its own resources, but also relied heavily on both local and central aid. The defeat of the Communists resulted. On the other hand, one can understand why October 1930, when victory over the Communists actually occurred, makes a better cutoff point. Up until October 1930 the government was preoccupied with eliminating the Communists. New directions in government, especially the use of the local elite to carry out most government programs, appeared only after the Nationalist victory.

In this work we will use the May 1930 date. Because the first and second periods are delineated by the tenure of particular magistrates, it seems practical to be consistent and continue keeping period divisions aligned

with magistracy appointments. In addition, since Qian stayed in office the relatively long time of at least one and a half years, it makes sense to assume that it was Qian himself who was responsible for reorienting government policy, even though many of these changes did not take place until several months after he started work.

Rugao's Third Period Magistrates

Unfortunately we do not know as much about the particular individuals who held office in Rugao during the third period as we know about their predecessors. Probably due to increased government censorship, after mid-1930 all newspaper reports became sketchier and a great deal less likely to deal with anything of political significance. Starting in 1931 the only articles concerning Rugao that regularly appeared in the Shanghai papers described various bandit depredations. Gone were the stories of lawsuits and corruption that made it possible to get a glimpse into the warp and woof of Rugao's political life.

Documentary evidence is also scarcer, and that which exists similarly whitewashed. For example, the few issues of the Jiangsu Province Government Gazette (Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao) that are available from the post-1930 period are not nearly as informative or as detailed as the

pre-1930 editions. Moreover, for the post-1930 period other government publications simply are harder to find, either because of a drop in publishing activity - again perhaps due to increased government censorship - or because they have been destroyed or in some other manner disappeared.

As mentioned, we do know that in May 1930 the Civil Affairs Department appointed Qian Zuoyi to the post of Rugao magistrate. This appointment was not without controversy. At least one Rugao "citizen" (gongmin), obviously a follower of the old magistrate Zhang Yi, sent a petition to the provincial governing committee requesting that Zhang not be allowed to resign. The Committee was not moved. On May 25th it replied that Zhang had already resigned and that Qian would replace him. In Rugao on May 26th Qian took the oath of office and announced the list of his subordinate officials.(2)

Magistrate Qian held office for at least a year and a half, that is through October 1931. During this period he was frequently commended for his work in Rugao and also twice promoted in rank, once in November 1930 after eliminating the Communists, and again in October 1931. After this, however, we do not know what happened to him.(3)

Throughout the remainder of the 1930's we have very little specific information about who held the various Rugao government positions. In 1934, one report from Rugao noted that "the political head of the county [presumably the magistrate] is being constantly changed as are the Department heads." Another in 1936 said, "the magistrate is energetic and popular and under his leadership there is prosperity." Presumably the latter was referring to one Zhang Jun because in 1936 we once again have the actual names of magistrates. In the first part of 1936 it was Zhang Jun. Then on August 1, 1936 Zhang was replaced by Provincial Party activist Zhang Yuanyang.(4)

The appointment of someone of Zhang Yuanyang's stature to the Rugao magistrate's post was quite unusual and must have created a stir. In February 1929 Zhang had been an alternate member of the Jiangsu Party Supervisory Committee. In December of that year he was made a member of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Affairs Rectification Committee (Jiangsu Sheng dangwu zhengli weiyuanhui) and also head of its secretariat. Following this he was sent as a Jiangsu representative to the Fourth National Party Congress. Finally, in December 1930 he was made an alternate member of the Jiangsu Party Fourth Executive Committee.(5)

In addition to holding many formal Party positions Zhang Yuanyang also was an important actor in the province's informal clique politics. In the fall of 1933 it was said that Zhang controlled his own faction within the Provincial Party, a faction which represented the students at, and presumably the graduates of, the Party school (dang xiao xuesheng). This group was called the Party School Clique (Dang xiao pai). Before the fall 1932 party elections it was also alleged that Zhang led his organization into a union with the Yang Xingqin Clique, a group opposed to the three "big" cliques - the FF, CC, and Anti-CC cliques - which dominated Jiangsu party politics at the time.(6)

It may have been Zhang's association with Yang and his opposition to the three big cliques that led to what appears to be his downfall. After the end of 1932 there is no record of his having held another Provincial Party post. Between 1933 and 1936 we have no news of him at all. He resurfaces only when appointed to the Rugao magistracy.

Zhang, however, was no stranger to Rugao. In December 1928 the Provincial Party Directorate had appointed him a member of the Rugao County Party Directorate. At the time Zhang had been too busy to go to Rugao to take up the post, and so was replaced. In 1936

this clearly was not the case. On August 1 Zhang arrived in Rugao and started work.(7)

How long Zhang stayed in office we do not know. Nor is it known whether he was the last individual to hold the post under a Nationalist administration. Sometime in late fall 1937 or early 1938 the Japanese occupied that part of North Jiangsu immediately north of the Chang Jiang, presumably including Rugao. With the arrival of the Japanese, the Nanjing Decade in Rugao came to an end. Over the next year Nationalist officials, including most magistrates, fled to the interior. Zhang, or perhaps his subsequent replacement if there was one, probably was among those who packed their bags and moved west.(8)

County Government Organization during the Third Period

During the third period no attempts were made either at the central, provincial, or local levels to reorganize the county government system. The only changes were the abolition of the Finance Department in 1933, as previously mentioned, and the establishment of a new Land Administration Office (Di zheng ju). In June 1936 the province listed the government organizations existing at the time. It mentioned a Public Security Office, an Education Office, a Reconstruction Office, and the Land Administration Office. All but the last were identical to

those which had existed throughout the second period.(9)

However, while there was continuity in form, there certainly was no continuity in personnel. In June 1930 the head of the Finance Office changed. In August 1930 the head of the Public Security Office was replaced. The following year the individual who had been head of the Education Office for nearly three years resigned. During this time the Reconstruction Office head also was switched at least once. There is every reason to believe that this pattern of frequently changing office heads remained throughout the Decade.(10)

Moreover, if the size of the one office for which we have figures - the Reconstruction Office - is any indication, the Rugao government during this period was quite small. In 1931 the Reconstruction Office employed twelve workers and had a monthly budget of only 640 yuan.(11)

It should be noted that at this time there were also several other county-level organizations in Rugao "engaged in reconstruction work". They were the Public Road Office (Gong lu ju) with seven workers, a Water Conservancy Affairs Office (Shuili shiwu suo) with eleven workers, a Long-Distance Telephone Switching Office (Chengxiang dianhua jiaohuan suo) with forty-four workers, and an "attached" Mass Education School (Fushe minzheng xuexiao)

with four workers. These organizations had monthly budgets of 434 yuan, 640 yuan, 872 yuan, and fifteen (!) yuan respectively. It was said that these groups were all "under" the provincial Reconstruction Department. Whether this also meant that they were responsible to the county Reconstruction Office is not clear. Perhaps it is immaterial. Even including all of the above, it is obvious that with this few workers and such small budgets (most of which must have gone to pay workers' salaries) not much reconstruction work could have been carried on in Rugao. At most it would appear that the telephone system put in to fight the Communists was kept operable, but that little else was attempted.(12)

In sum, Rugao county-level government organization during the third period followed the pattern laid down at the end of the second period. No changes in bureaucratic form occurred, no new institutions were set up, and no reform programs were carried out. As we shall see, those few structural innovations that were made had their roots largely outside the county government - for example in the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank - and depended on extensive gentry participation for their successful operation.

District Government

For governmental purposes Rugao continued to be divided into districts. The only difference was that in order to conform to a provincial law specifying that no county could have more than fifteen districts Rugao reduced its number of sub-county units from eighteen to fifteen. In 1936 these fifteen districts were subdivided further into 241 xiang and forty-one market towns (zhen).⁽¹³⁾

Like county government office workers, district heads came and went with great frequency. This was especially true immediately after the defeat of the Communists. In the fall of 1930 several apparently well-entrenched and important district heads were removed. Especially notable was the replacement of Min Zhizhong, the district head in the main Communist stronghold of Shizhuang. Min had been appointed to Shizhuang in December 1927. In May 1930 he had survived an attack on his district office by the district police force, during which the police had extorted 1,000 yuan from the office and local notables. At least once between 1927 and 1930 he had previously asked to resign and his offer had been refused.⁽¹⁴⁾

Why the winds suddenly blew against Min in the fall of 1930 is unclear. Most probably it was in some manner connected to the earlier appointment of Qian as

magistrate. After dispersing the Communists Qian probably also wanted to clean out any officials suspected of having been associated with them. Min would have been one of those officials.

Sub-District Government: The Implementation of the Baojia System

So far as is known the sub-district government system during most of the third period was also identical to that which existed in the second period. In theory an elaborate structure of village government existed, but in fact most local affairs were probably handled by local notables acting through dibao. There was one exception, however. In the spring of 1934 the central government, spurred by their struggle with the Communists in Jiangxi, became concerned about sub-district government. The result was that all of China's provinces were ordered to follow the example set in the bandit suppression areas by establishing a baojia system.(15)

The Jiangsu Civil Affairs Department responded to the central directive by deciding to establish the baojia system in the twenty-three counties included in the five administrative inspectorates of North Jiangsu: Nantong, Yancheng, Huaiyin, Donghai, and Tongshan, and in April 1934 formally launched the Jiangsu Baojia Movement

(Jiangsu de Baojia Yundong). According to provincial plans all twenty-three counties were to move through three stages of baojia work: an "organization" stage during which the bao and jia units were to be chosen and a household investigation was to be carried out; a "training" stage in which new baojia personnel were to receive instruction; and a "use" stage in which the baojia would be initiated as the sub-district governmental system.(16)

Rugao, as part of the Nantong Administrative Inspectorate, started setting up baojia in April 1934. By April 1935 it was one of the twenty-seven counties which had completed the organization stage of baojia work. By May it had appointed 3,078 bao heads (bao zhang) and 30,891 jia heads (jia zhang). (17)

Carrying out the second stage of baojia proved more difficult. The need to train over 33,000 people overwhelmed the county government. To cope with the problem the county received permission from the province first to train bao zhang in two groups. All training was to take place in the county seat.(18)

The first training class started on May 13. For the opening ceremonies, held on the public parade ground, 1,316 bao zhang, reported, along with several thousand "people from the masses." Among those attending were one

female bao zhang and "several" bao zhang over seventy years of age, a feat, it was said, that was "difficult to achieve." After the welcome, the bao zhang broke into groups and went to meetings at the Confucian Temple.(19)

The first bao zhang training class lasted until June 1. During the two weeks the bao zhang both attended lectures and in the districts of the county seat also practiced household investigation. Moreover, they familiarized themselves with all the county government organizations, and if over sixty years of age had their picture taken with the magistrate, "for remembrances' sake." The training period concluded with exams, parties given by the county government, and a closing ceremony.(20)

June 10 was set as the date to begin training the second group of bao zhang. Whether these classes took place is not known, although there is no reason to suspect otherwise. Due to the expense and difficulty which would have been involved, however, it does seem unlikely that classes were ever held for the 30,000 jia zhang.(21)

The ability of so many of the bao zhang to attend training classes in the county seat indicates that most bao zhang were members of the gentry class, or at least were quite wealthy. Given the impoverished state of county government finances, it is improbable that the

government paid any travel or lodging expenses. Travel to the county seat as well as a two week stay there would have been very expensive, and certainly out of the reach of the ordinary peasant. Moreover, the holding of the classes during May, the agricultural busy season, meant that there were no ordinary farm laborers in the group. Only those who did not engage in rural manual labor could possibly have afforded two weeks away from their daily tasks.

Overall then, it seems reasonably safe to conclude that the baojia organization was set up in Rugao, at least in name, and that at least half of its top officials received some sort of rudimentary training. Less clear, however, is the extent to which this newly-established system was ever used. We have one report that says that the baojia were used differently in different areas of the county. In one place participants in lawsuits were required to list their bao and jia which were then used as the basis for an investigation. In other areas the units of the baojia were made to correspond to militia units. The xiang zhang was the militia duan zhang, the bao zhang was the dui zhang, and the jia zhang was the zu zhang. In still other districts, especially along the coast, the baojia was used to call up the "young braves" (zhuang ding) to protect the population against sea bandits.

Under this system the "braves" rotated nighttime patrols.(22)

The Rugao magistrate Zhang Jun also set up baojia among the students of the county's Student Association (xuesheng hui). Each student was a "household" and each school a "xiang". Presumably the bao and jia levels were represented at some intermediate level, probably by a class or some other group. Magistrate Zhang claimed that using the baojia in the schools "not only spread knowledge of the baojia but made it easier for schools to manage the students." This is believable because each "school" jia was to set up a system of "mutual guarantees" as well as a system where members of the jia would oversee the activities of other members of the jia.(23)

In all, it would appear that the establishment of the baojia system in Rugao may have been more successful than in other places in Jiangsu. Reports on the conduct of baojia work in Jiangsu in general are not particularly laudatory. One Party report says that of the three areas of "society work" - mass education, cooperatives, and baojia - in which the Party participated between March and December 1934, the least was accomplished in the area of baojia. Another report in April 1935, when baojia organizations were supposedly well-established, said, "This province's baojia organization is now still less

than ten per cent complete." Thus in setting up of baojia it would appear that Rugao did better than the norm.(24)

One might be tempted to argue that with the establishment of baojia the Rugao government closed the gap that separated it from the Chinese peasantry, and linked together in a cohesive and well-ordered system all levels of county and sub-county government. Moreover, one might claim that after the imposition of the baojia Rugao's political system, had it had the time to develop, would have evolved into a successful clientelist or corporatist entity. Unfortunately, the concrete evidence either to affirm or deny these ideas is lacking. However, several points can be made that lead one to doubt the ability of the Rugao Nationalists to use the baojia system in a manner analogous to the way in which other states have used political machines.

Most important, the baojia system functioned primarily as part of a public security system rather than as part of a system to carry out complex and widely varying governmental programs. As such it met a narrow range of government needs - such as discovering the illicit activities in which citizens were engaged, indoctrinating citizens with government ideology, and in certain instances providing for local defense - but was not a mechanism through which the population could make

its legitimate needs and grievances known, or obtain redress for those needs and grievances from the government.

In addition the baojia system had no financial base; that is, even though perhaps expensive to set up and operate, it had no independent income and made no independent expenditures. It was primarily a system for transmitting information and secondarily a system for defense, rather than an executive organization which actually administered all government programs at a particular level or in a particular geographic area. As such it differed fundamentally from a political machine.

Moreover, where the baojia system meshed with the county government system it appeared hopelessly weak. In theory, a new level of government, the xiang, was to be set up between the district and the bao.⁽²⁵⁾ In fact, in Rugao there are no indications that any xiang offices ever existed. Thus in the end the baojia probably served only to strengthen the power of local leaders - the bao zhang and the jia zhang - over the populations under them, while leaving the gap between the county government and local leaders as wide, if not wider, than before.

Overall there are no indications that during the third period Rugao's governmental organization was in any way exceptional. If one were to do a study of county

governmental organizations in other Jiangsu counties one would probably find that between 1930 and 1937 all attempts to reform or enlarge the county government, such as those that had occurred during the second period, came to a halt. Instead, the county governments remained frozen in their 1930 form and increasingly relied on the local elite to carry out their programs.(26)

The Policies of the Third Period Government

During the third period the government no longer had to concentrate its efforts on public security. The Communists, once defeated, scattered. Although there continued to be periodic reports of holdups or robberies organized by individual Communists, no Communist base area again was set up, and no Communist army was active in the area. Similarly, the large, well-organized groups of formerly active bandits seem either to have been brought under the Nationalist banner or forced beyond the county boundaries. While the tides of violence continued to ebb and flow, they at no time reached the heights of the 1928 to 1930 era. Periodically some reporters even said such things as, "The [Rugao] country[side] is practically free from banditry and transport is safe."(26)

Not having to worry so much about public security, the county government turned its attention to areas such

as finance, education, banking, agricultural cooperatives, agricultural extension, and various reconstruction and social welfare projects. In most areas the gains registered were slight. Primarily this was because there were few resources to commit to these projects, and those committed appeared to benefit the wealthy few more than the poverty-stricken many.

Furthermore, during the third period the Rugao county government became almost totally dependent on the local elite. During the second period this trend had already become pronounced. During the third period the already increased strength of local leaders, coupled with increased financial difficulties of the county government, made such complete dependence almost inevitable. The central government's preoccupation with exterminating the Communists, and the dedication of most of their resources to this cause, meant that nothing was forthcoming from higher levels that would reverse the trend toward increased local gentry power.

Finances and Taxes

During the second period, as already noted, the Rugao county government had trouble collecting taxes. As early as 1928 one magistrate reported that in reality only about eight percent of the grain and silver tax (mang cao), and

less than fifty percent of the tax on newly-risen land along the coast (luke), were actually collected. For budget-making purposes, he added, the county used figures based on eighty-five percent of the official grain and silver tax, and forty percent of the tax on newly-risen land.(28)

By the second half of 1930 the situation apparently had worsened. In July a Committee to Shrink Local Government Expenditures (Difang zheng fei jinsuo weiyuanhui) was formed. Not unexpectedly, it met at the Public Property Management Office. The Committee demanded that every county organization submit reduced budget requests to it. If a particular organization did not comply, the committee said, it would make up requests for them.(29)

A year later, in August 1931, the Rugao government decided to tackle the problem from another direction. It requested permission from the provincial government to appoint special tax collectors, or tax pressers (cui zhang li), to levy a special tax to cover the cost of the new officials. The provincial government refused, saying that from 1927 to 1930 Rugao had had more than one million yuan in back taxes outstanding (that is, about one full year's revenues), and that they ought to collect this before they added new taxes. New taxes, said the province, would put

an undue burden on the already impoverished poor peasants, and moreover the proposed new collection system would be illegal under current law. Two years later the story was the same. One observer noted in March 1933, "Taxes are hard to collect and funds dependent on taxes are low."(30)

As during the second period, the government's inability to tax was not aided by its inability to reform the tax assessment system. In 1934 Rugao's taxes were still based on land survey figures obtained in 1919. In 1919 Nantong had started to carry out a land survey and Rugao had followed. The Nantong survey apparently wasted much money and did not produce much in the way of results. In contrast, outside of a small amount of land in the county seat, all of Rugao county was surveyed, and preliminary maps (cao tu) and preliminary registers (cao ce) drawn up before work came to a halt.(31)

In 1934 the provincial Finance Department appointed a representative to go to Rugao to reform the tax registers. Augmenting the 1919 draft maps and draft registers with figures for people who had moved and land that had changed hands, he was to compile new population (huling qiuce) and land (qiuling huice) registers, as well as registers for the levying of the grain tax (zheng liang ce). All of these were then to serve as a base for increasing the county's tax revenue.(32)

Apparently the provincial representative was not totally successful. In 1935 it was reported that because land registers were not complete, Rugao planned to make up its tax bills based on the population registers. Another attempt that year to update the registers based on aerial surveying also had minimal results. By the end of the Decade, there was still no evidence that Rugao was using anything other than the 1919 surveys, perhaps slightly updated, as the basis for its tax system.(33)

Education

The government's inability to raise funds seriously affected the educational system. Throughout the third period (as during the previous periods) the lack of sufficient funds plagued Rugao's schools. In May 1930 it was said that educational expenses in Rugao were "very precarious," that "the present [educational] conditions are insufferable," and that "using the old methods there is no way to change this." In July, because the financial situation of the schools was so bad, the province appointed a provincial education inspector (sheng du xue) to go to Rugao to investigate.(34)

Presumably after looking around, the inspector had a special meeting with the magistrate at which they "established methods to save the situation." As a result,

the county government called a "meeting of all organizations" (usually a euphemism for the county elite), which quickly decided to raise 20,000 yuan to be used exclusively for the schools. Following this, the Education Office held a special gathering of teacher representatives and other educational officials which decided to reduce the education budget and eliminate superfluous teaching personnel. The budget was to be cut by grade, and the number of teachers was to be reduced by eliminating first the unqualified and then the lesser-qualified members of the teaching staff.(35)

Apparently the "methods" worked out by the provincial inspector and various county officials were not sufficient. In mid-August the schools closed because "money was scarce." They reopened the following November when, especially in the southwestern section of the county where the Communists had been active, many new school principals were appointed, and it seemed as though a new start might be made in county education.(36)

But the new start never materialized. In the fall of 1933 it was reported that "public school enrollment is down as is the number of teachers. One of the main reasons is that teachers are underpaid and do not receive their salaries when they are due." In 1935 a reporter said that there still was no middle school of "credible

standing" in the county. And in September 1936 it was observed that "teachers' salaries are still a little behind so that the best teachers go elsewhere."(37)

The failure to expand and improve the schools can be seen by looking at the number of students enrolled in them. At the beginning of the third period in 1930, the number of students in Rugao's modern county-run schools did not exceed between ten and twenty thousand. At the end of the third period in 1936, the number of students was 20,214, a small but not significant increase. At that time it was estimated that over 212,540 school-age children resided in Rugao. This meant that at the end of the Nanjing Decade over ninety per cent of the eligible children were not in school.(38)

Moreover, as with everything else, the Nationalists continued to rely heavily on local leaders to keep the school system operating. We have seen how under crisis conditions educational officials called upon local leaders to provide funds. Under other, less dramatic, circumstances local leaders were also important.

In some areas a school seemed to exist solely because it was funded by a member of the resident gentry. For example, in July 1929 the Education Office decided to set up a new elementary school in Matang. To do so they needed 834.55 yuan, which they entrusted a local gentry

member (difang renshi) to raise. This particular individual initially set up a preparatory committee to raise the cash, but at the committee's first meeting he announced that he personally was going to donate the entire sum needed for the school. In September or October 1931, after the school had been established, the provincial government awarded him an official commendation for his action. Perhaps this was because the county was trying to encourage other gentry members to do likewise; more cynically we may suspect it was because the particular individual in question now had influence at higher levels.(39)

Furthermore, members of the local elite, on a larger scale than their efforts to establish modern education, continued to maintain and run large numbers of traditional private academies (si shu). It is not known how many students attended these primarily rural institutions, whose curricula were probably based on the traditional classics rather than on modern learning. The only report we have says that the pupils in the academies were comparatively numerous, but that their teachers had "stale brains" and were old-fashioned. Whether their graduates were literate, or to what extent they were literate, remains unknown. However, it does appear that as late as 1936 even the unusual Rugao child who had an opportunity

for education was more likely to receive it in a privately-funded and run traditional academy than in a modern government-run school.(40)

In addition, throughout the entire third period access to any sort of learning at the lowest levels, for example through mass education classes, remained out of the question for virtually everyone. In November 1930 the Education Office appointed two individuals to head a County Mass Education Academy (Xian li minzhong jiaoyu guan), and one person to head a similar academy in the town of Matang. The latter appointment makes it appear as though some mass education work may actually have been planned where it was needed. Unfortunately, without evidence of a budget and the hiring of teachers it is difficult to believe that any actual mass education work took place.(41)

Despite its other educational failures, during the third period Rugao did at least establish a public library. In September 1930 it was reported that the library had organized a book reading club (du shu hui), held an exhibition, printed a small reference book, and established a branch at the county Sun Zhongshan Memorial Hall (Zhongshan tang). Proudly the library also reported the statistics on the number of people who used it on a daily basis: 110. In a county of over one and a half

million people, among whom at least eighty per cent could not read, this seems an almost insignificant, if not irrelevant, educational service.(42)

Banking

In contrast to the dismal state of education throughout the period, Rugao does seem to have made significant progress in establishing a modern banking system. Before 1930 Rugao's merchants, wealthy individuals, and (one supposes) government totally relied on native banks and rotating credit societies to meet their financial needs. Then in December 1929 the county Finance Office, the Public Property Management Office, and the county Merchant Society held a meeting at which they decided to set up a local bank. In November 1930 Rugao's first bank, a branch of the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank, opened its doors. This was followed in May 1934 by a branch of the Shanghai Bank of Communications. Both banks remained open throughout the Decade.(43)

The setting up of the Farmers' Bank deserves special attention because the bank was owned publicly, run by government personnel, and capitalized through government assessments. Moreover, the stated purpose of the bank was to set up cooperatives to aid the small farmer. In other words, the Farmers' Bank was one of the few organizations

in Rugao whose sole goal was to aid the average individual.(44)

In 1928 the county took the initial steps necessary to set up a Farmers' Bank. The county governing committee approved an additional land tax of four fen (.04 yuan) per mu, which when collected would be used as starting capital for the bank. In addition, in December all organizations in the city of Rugao and all rural town and district officials who wanted a bank established, held meetings and designated a representative, a powerful member of the local elite, to go to Nanjing to present a petition urging that the bank be established.(45)

Throughout 1929 and early 1930 the county government continued to collect the bank tax, but because of its pre-occupation with eradicating the Communists did little to facilitate the setting up of the bank itself. Moreover, during this period the county still had not collected enough funds to make operation of the bank possible.(46)

By the late summer of 1930 things looked very different. The capital raised to start the Farmers' Bank had reached 110,129 yuan, well over the 100,000 yuan that the province had declared minimally necessary. After some bureaucratic indecision it was decided to stop collecting the special bank tax. At the end of July the central headquarters of the bank appointed a representative to go

to Rugao to set up the bank's office. In October the bank headquarters appointed a Rugao branch manager, and on November 10 the Rugao branch bank of the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank officially opened.(47)

According to the bank's manager, it had not been easy to find a satisfactory public location for the bank. Most of the temples (the kind of building most often commandeered by the government for use as its office buildings) were located in out-of-the-way places and thus were not suitable. Finally the bank settled on renting ten miscellaneous old-style but "strong" buildings with a total of eleven rooms.(48)

The bank had no easier time finding skilled personnel. Initially the bank's organization was very simple. It had a manager with overall responsibility. Under the manager were four departments: clerical (wenshu), accounting (kuaiji), business (yewu), and deposits and withdrawals (chu na). Altogether the four departments employed first seven and then eight people. But because the salaries of the bank's workers were so low, only those with a "spirit of sacrifice" were willing to work. As a result, the employees were inexperienced and often "groped in the dark."(49)

Originally the Rugao bank was supposed to serve not only Rugao but also Nantong, Haimen, and Qidong counties.

Qidong was soon transferred to another branch bank's jurisdiction. Although plans were made to set up branches of the Rugao branch bank (zhihang, as opposed to fenhang) at Nantong and Haimen, it is unlikely that they were implemented. Nantong apparently "arbitrarily" used its bank's capital fund for unintended (and presumably illegal) purposes. Haimen seems not even to have started a fund. Therefore, it seems that in spite of plans to the contrary the Rugao branch bank served Rugao alone.(50)

During its first year, which is the only period for which we have records, the bank engaged in many different kinds of activities. It loaned money to both small farmers and cooperatives, it accepted various kinds of deposits, it conveyed remittances, it issued discounted notes, and it established a granary. For our purposes, the first and the last activities are the most interesting, because they were the activities most likely to benefit the average peasant.(51)

The main goal of the bank was to foster the growth of agricultural cooperatives. Therefore, to borrow money from the bank, a small farmer had to be a member of a borrowing cooperative (jiekuan lianhe hui). Each borrowing cooperative was to include as members seven to eleven peasant households from a one to two square li area of a single village.(52)

But even after establishing a borrowing cooperative it was not easy for a peasant to get funds. After being set up, a cooperative had to choose one member as a "representative-in-charge" (fuze daibiao), and to search for a "reliable guarantor" (kekao zhi baozheng). It was the "reliable guarantor", not a cooperative member of the "representative-in-charge," who was to go to the bank to present a cooperative's request for funds (an amount which could not exceed twenty yuan per member). Moreover, the bank was not supposed automatically to grant all requests. Instead it was required to appoint an investigator to determine whether a particular cooperative's proposal was appropriate. Only if the bank deemed its proposal satisfactory would a cooperative actually receive a loan.(53)

As can be imagined, the above system was not very practical. The only bank office and all the bank employees were in the county seat. For a small loan - the only kind allowed under bank rules - both the requester of the loan and the bank investigator would have to travel great distances, a practice not economical or convenient for either side. Therefore, the bank modified its procedures. In every district the bank asked "upright gentry" (gongzheng renshi) to serve as the bank's managers (jingguan yuan), and to be in charge of the bank's affairs

in their various districts. The bank then signed a contract with these members of the "upright gentry" specifying that each gentry member was in charge of the lending out of the bank's money, and turned over to them the specific sum of cash which could be lent out in their district. In order to avoid corruption, the bank also warned that it planned to carry out periodic on-the-spot inspections.(54)

Several things are notable about the Farmers' Bank loan system. First, it was totally dependent on the local elite for its execution. Only with a "guarantor" - presumably a member of the local elite - could a cooperative apply for a loan. In addition, the agent applied to was not the bank itself, but merely another member of the local elite. In other words, only if they met conditions set by local leaders could peasants ever hope to get a loan, and then only if local leaders were interested in granting them.

In fact, it would appear that very few Rugao peasant households ever benefited from the Farmers' Bank loan service, or that the bank fulfilled its mission of giving small loans to numerous individuals. Instead, under gentry supervision the bank seems solely to have aided the class in charge of its funds. In 1930-1931 only 104 households received loans, and each loan averaged a

whopping 981 yuan. In other words, because the government depended on the gentry to run the bank, the gentry were able to use the bank for their own selfish ends.(55)

The bank did not achieve any greater success in aiding cooperatives. Down to June 1931 the bank made grants to twenty-one cooperatives, hardly a large number. The bank used the excuse that cooperatives in Rugao "were not completely advanced." However, this excuse pales when one considers that the main purpose of the bank was to use the promise of loans to prod the peasants to form cooperative organizations.(56)

The bank also tried to run a granary, apparently with equal lack of success. Because Rugao's agricultural production was most prosperous in the western part of the county, the bank decided to locate the granary there. It rented a closed down oil extraction mill with a big drying yard and sixteen storerooms capable of holding 4,000 to 5,000 dan of grain in the town of Shuangdian. The bank hoped that the peasants would store their grain in the bank's granary while awaiting sale at higher prices, and at the same time take out loans from the bank against the crops they had in storage.(57)

It did not work. For unspecified reasons "the people" failed to develop a "solid trust" in the granary and did not bring in their grain. Although the granary

did not cost very much to set up, and so therefore was not a big loss, in the end it did not help the people of Rugao either.(58)

The granary unfortunately was typical of the entire Farmers' Bank operation. As a result, the report filed by the bank at the end of its first year was a rather pessimistic one. It said that the cooperatives in its area were "not very developed," and that "business was not prosperous". Because of the lack of business for the year the bank recorded a loss of 918,721 yuan.(59)

Agricultural Cooperatives

Like the Farmers' Bank, to whom they were closely but not completely tied, Rugao's cooperatives did not really begin to develop until after the start of the third period. In August 1930 the provincial level Cooperative Leadership Office (Hezuoshe zhidao suo) was broken up and its former employees each sent to lead cooperative work in a particular county. As a result fifty-three counties each received between one and three cooperative leadership workers (hezuoshe zhidao yuan), including Rugao, to which two of the ex-provincial-level personnel were assigned. In September and October further changes were made in the Rugao cooperative leadership organization, and the province charged an additional person with aiding in

Rugao's cooperative effort.(60)

The newly reorganized Cooperative Leadership Office in Rugao then began urging the peasants to set up cooperatives. Representatives of the Cooperative Leadership Office went out to the countryside to propagandize. Although the Farmers' Bank report says that "All over the county people heard [about cooperatives] and rose [to the message] like shoots after a spring rain," by June 1931 only fourteen cooperatives had been set up in the entire county - not even one per district. The fourteen included six credit societies, two agricultural purchasing societies, two credit purchasing societies, one savings utilization society, one credit utilization society, a society to raise fish, and a silk workers' credit society. All told they had 301 members and a pooled value of 3,209 yuan. Among the societies, ten had received aid from the Farmers' Bank.(61)

Later the ranks of cooperatives expanded. By 1934 Rugao was one of a number of counties to have a "large-scale" production and marketing cooperative for cotton. Later, in 1936 the county was ordered to establish a pig-raising cooperative, though whether this ever happened remains unclear. All told, by the end of 1936 Rugao's cooperatives had expanded from fourteen to seventy-three, including seven credit societies, ten

marketing societies, six producing societies, one shipping society, one utilization society, and forty-eight joint management societies. Together they controlled 35,099.50 yuan of capital.(62)

But even after this five-fold expansion Rugao's cooperatives still only included 2,216 individuals, a ridiculously tiny fraction of the county's population. Moreover, it is unclear what sector of the population these two thousand individuals represented. Based on reports from other areas we once again would expect Rugao's cooperative members to be primarily from among the local wealthy. If so, then Rugao's cooperative movement would have been only one more vehicle, along with the Farmers' Bank, through which the local elite was able to increase their hold over Rugao society, and not at all a program for improving the lot of Rugao's ordinary peasant.(63)

Agricultural Experimental Stations and Agricultural Extension Work

During the third period Rugao did increase the amount of work it was doing in agricultural extension and in the running of agricultural experimental stations, concentrating its efforts on the planting of trees, wheat, and cotton as well as the raising of pigs. But the

problem here was the same as with the cooperatives. The program was too small, and it served too tiny a sector of the population to affect the general standard of living in the county.

One of Rugao's earliest agricultural projects involved tree planting. In December 1930 the Rugao County Experimental Station (Rugao Xian xianli nongchang) requested permission to carry out a tree planting project in an "unidentified persons' cemetery" beyond the Fan Gong Dike protecting the coast. The province gave its permission for the project on the condition that the land really was available and indeed could be planted with trees. Moreover, reforestation continued throughout the Decade. In February 1937 Rugao had three county-level organizations concerned with the improvement of agriculture. One of these was a county-run forest (Rugao xianli linchang). (64)

The Rugao government also experimented with new varieties of wheat and cotton. In 1936 the county supervised the planting of over fifty mu in two different types of experimental wheat seed and the planting of almost 8,000 mu with experimental cotton seed. The following year it increased the area planted with experimental cotton to 10,000 mu. The Agricultural Extension Center (Nongmin tuiguang zhongxin) distributed

the seed to peasants, who then planted it on their own land.(65)

In addition, Rugao in 1936 was the site of a Provincial Cotton Experimental Station (Sheng li mianzuo shiyan chang) which, although it cultivated no fields of its own (a rather unusual situation), apparently gathered useful statistics about the acreage and types of cotton planted in the county. In 1937 the work of the Cotton Experimental Station and the Agricultural Extension Center were merged into a Rugao County [Cotton] Planting Station (Rugao Xian zhong miao chang) under county rather than provincial control. The prime goal of this organization was the distribution of new types of seed.(66)

But of more importance to the agronomists of Rugao than either trees, wheat, or cotton was the raising of pigs. As mentioned in Chapter One, pig-raising was an important side industry for Rugao peasants. Consequently, by the mid-thirties the government had become involved in improving the Rugao product. In 1934 one writer who made a trip through North Jiangsu observed that in Rugao the Agricultural Extension Station was interbreeding English pigs with Chinese pigs. In February 1936, two years later, another reporter saw that American pigs were being imported for the same purpose. In June of that year the provincial finance and reconstruction departments asked

the Provincial Governing Committee to approve plans to establish a pig-raising experimental station (zhuzhong baoyu shiyan qu) in Rugao with funds from the provincial budget.(67)

The station was approved and, unlike some other projects, was actually set up. In February 1937 the station definitely existed outside the Rugao City south gate, had 5,000 pigs in residence, and was doing work on preventing pig diseases. In June, just before the Japanese invasion of Jiangsu, one reporter wrote, "The government is making a constant attempt to improve the already excellent Rugao pig. At each gate of the city is a pig market where farmers can go to buy pigs to improve their stock."(68)

How much the "Rugao pig" actually improved remains an unanswered question. How many pigs were available for cross breeding? Could the average peasant afford the improved stock? Was improved stock distributed out in the countryside, or did it remain concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy individuals located near the county seat? The production of several thousand "improved pigs" probably did not have much of an impact on Rugao's pig production, and most likely that was all that occurred. However, here again is illustrated the most critical problem faced by the Nationalist government, that is the

lack of a complete and local organizational network extending down to the lowest reaches of society. Even if the Rugao Pig-Raising Experimental Station had been able to raise one and a half million "improved" pigs, one for every man, woman, and child in Rugao, they would have had no reliable way to distribute them. The only group they could have used was the local elite, the same group called on to help make the loans for the Farmers' Bank. But as we saw in that example, the use of the local elite tended to concentrate benefits in the hands of a few rather than spread them broadly over the entire population. There is no reason to suspect that if given the power to distribute pigs, they would have behaved any differently.

Reconstruction

During the third period the government attempted no major reconstruction projects. As previously noted, the county simply had neither the personnel, the organization, nor the resources for any large undertakings. In some quarters of the provincial government it was suggested that the baojia system could be used to recruit "young braves" to work for either little or no pay on projects such as road-building. In other areas of the province such as those along the Grand Canal, males were forcibly conscripted to perform forced labor on major

reconstruction works. However, neither system appears to have been used in Rugao. Neither, one must also conclude, were any significant roads or waterways built or improved.

During the third period the only reconstruction project to receive government attention was the repair and upkeep of the city wall. Early in the Nanjing Decade, many Jiangsu county governments followed provincial-level directions and tore down the walls surrounding their county seats. Using the stones from the walls they then built motor roads in their place. Not so Rugao. Although during the first and second periods the wall was allowed to fall into disrepair (for example, in May 1929 the East Gate "suddenly collapsed"), the government never suggested that the wall be removed.(69)

Furthermore, starting in the fall of 1931 the government once more started maintaining the wall. In September Magistrate Qian requested 7,000 yuan from the provincial government to repair and close the wall's holes. The province agreed to his request with the condition that the county make plans for repayment. Apparently the repairs were made, and for the remainder of the Decade the wall continued to receive attention. In 1934 it was said that the city wall was "receiving excellent care," and in 1936 that "Rugao's wall is intact"(70)

The ability of the county government to maintain the city wall is not terribly surprising. After all, the wall was located in the county seat and members of the county government without risk or expense to themselves could directly supervise any work that was being done on it. The fact that satisfactory work could be done on the wall, but could not be carried out elsewhere, is just one more indication of the shallowness of the government's organizational structure.

The New Life Movement

During the third period only one major mass campaign was conducted in Rugao, the New Life Movement. In February and March of 1934, Jiang Jieshi outlined his plans to strengthen the nation through a campaign to improve the moral character of its citizens, an endeavor he termed a "movement for a new life." By eliminating such undesirable national traits as "uncleanliness, lack of discipline, laziness and weakness as manifested specifically in such things as bad eating habits, personal uncleanliness, lack of housecleaning, dispirited appearance, and keeping irregular daily schedules," and by replacing them with personal habits marked by "orderliness, cleanliness, simplicity, frugality, promptness and exactness," Jiang hoped to set China on the

road to economic growth and military victory.(71)

To lead the campaign the government set up New Life Movement Promotion Associations. The first association was formed in Nanchang on February 21, two days after Jiang's initial speech. Eventually new associations were established in nineteen of China's provinces and in at least 1,300 of China's counties. Originally the various associations had no central link, but on July 1, 1934 the Nanchang association was given supervisory powers over all the other groups.(72)

During the first year of its existence the movement achieved its greatest success. Concentrating on pursuing only two of its six goals, orderliness and cleanliness, the movement's leaders urged individual followers to obey ninety-six specific rules of conduct. In Nanchang and the surrounding countryside the people were willing and some real results could be seen. But after this the movement declined. The activities of the Promotion Associations "became increasingly restricted to campaigns against spitting, smoking, and the littering of public places with watermelon seeds." By 1936 even Jiang had become disillusioned.(73)

Nowhere can the superficiality of the New Life Movement be seen better than in Rugao. Throughout 1934 and early 1935 the Movement flourished. However, it seems

to have been largely restricted to parades and demonstrations about streetcleaning. Little actual work was accomplished. In April 1934 a correspondent said that the Rugao students were hard at work. They had had a parade for a cleaner city in which they carried banners and brushes, although "not much cleaning was done," a problem the correspondent dismissed by saying that Rugao was a "clean city anyway." (74)

A month later the situation remained unchanged, although the rationale for it had shifted. It was now said,

With the start of warm weather the city health department is working with students to teach them cleanliness. Almost weekly, school children parade with banners and brooms through the streets. They do no actual cleaning but their presence is a fine piece of propaganda. (75)

By November this had become a statement that the New Life Movement was having its effect not so much through parades but "in a spirit of tolerance and helpfulness." By the following May it was averred that "school children parade with banners, mops, and dustpans. They do no actual cleaning but cannot help but inspire the citizens." (76)

Reading between the lines one can only conclude that the New Life Movement had only a minimal effect on Rugao's population. Not only did the Rugao students apparently fail to change the appearance of their city, but also

there is no evidence that even parades and demonstrations were held outside the county seat, or that they continued beyond the early months of 1935. Critics of the movement who allege that it did not penetrate to the rural areas in any meaningful way, and that it did nothing to improve the material lot of the rural resident, therefore would appear to be correct.(77)

Resurgence of Tradition

The New Life Movement was only a small part of the Nationalist re-emphasis on traditional values which became more pronounced during the third period. When the Nationalists came to power in Rugao in 1927 they outlawed the lunar calendar and insisted on the use of the solar calendar, forbid the observance of traditional festivals and insisted on the honoring of new national holidays. By the third period all the new regulations had been dropped, and news reports noted that in Rugao traditional holidays had returned, while Nationalist holidays had faded from sight or were only perfunctorily observed.

For example, in February 1932 it was reported that "China New Years [sic] was celebrated this year with its former glory."(79) In the beginning of 1934. it was said,

A definite revival of old Chinese customs is noticeable as one passes through the country. Not only are the temples and incense shops busy but the various holidays, the fifteenth and the first of the

month are busy days at the ancestral halls and practically every home has again its family idols, altars and incense burners. Marriages and funerals are observed as years ago and once more idol processions pass through the busy streets.(80)

By 1937, the last year of Nationalist rule, it was anticipated that Chinese New Year would be better than ever because of an upturn in business, and traditional New Year preparations were carried on with a great flurry.(81)

All efforts by the Nationalists to stick with the new calendar and to thwart the observance of traditional events seem to have been in vain, as were their efforts to celebrate new events of significance to the Nationalist movement. For example, the Nationalists unsuccessfully tried to keep the schools open during Chinese New Year. During 1935's Chinese New Year celebrations the schools were all open, but not one had "sufficient material on which to run." Moreover, it was said that the opening day of the schools after spring vacation was posted on all the school doors, but that while it was several days prior to the Chinese New Year, the schools were all empty. Later that year on Double Ten, the anniversary of the October 10 uprising which led to the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, and the Nationalists' most important holiday, the reverse was true. Apparently, "the school children paraded, the boy scouts held drills but few of the rest knew it was a holiday."(82)

The Anti-Opium Campaign

The Nationalists apparently had no better luck eliminating opium than they had in abolishing tradition although there appears to have been an increase in the number of addicts arrested by the government. During the early 1930's no special campaigns against opium appear to have been carried out although individual users continued to be apprehended. However, in the spring of 1934, probably as a result of the emphasis on correct behavior propounded by the New Life Movement, as well as central pressure, the campaign against opium gathered momentum. The county government started arresting many users and sellers, and by the fall the jails, hospitals, and poorhouses were reported full of "users." Moreover, it was observed that the price of both opium and the equipment necessary to smoke had gone up and that neither was as readily available as it had formerly been. In addition, on October 16, 1934, as during the second period, the county opened a hospital to treat opium addicts, and some "very respectable people" apparently admitted to being users in order to obtain the free treatment offered there.(83)

The anti-opium campaign continued during 1935, 1936 and 1937, although it is not clear whether it did so at the pace set in early 1934. In 1936 the government said

that the self-registration and investigation of addicts was going on in an "average way" under the direction of the Public Security Office. In May 1937 the number of addicts being detained was so large that old temples "temporarily were requisitioned" to hold them and to keep the prisoners occupied they were "set to building and repairing roads."(84)

It is impossible to gauge the impact on the opium trade of the increased government pressure on people involved in opium use and sale. We have no reliable records for the incidence of actual opium use in the county, or for the number of people arrested and/or put through "treatment" programs. But in a county of one and a half million people with a large amount of opium addiction (as Rugao apparently had) it would have taken a large-scale effort permanently to reduce involvement with the mind-expanding poppy. At least one observer was skeptical of the effects of the Nationalist program. After saying that the neighborhood was a "center for the opium trade" but that "many users and sellers" had "recently been imprisoned," this observer continued on to add that "these periods of suppression come along periodically and seem to be followed by greater use than ever before."(85)

Health and Sanitation

As a result of the New Life Movement's emphasis on improved cleanliness and sanitation, public health also received a great deal of attention during the third period. But here again the Nationalists' efforts were too little, too late, and not sustained over an extended period of time. More often than not the provision of local medical or sanitary facilities depended primarily not on the financially-strapped government but, as in so many other sectors, on the members of the local elite. In this particular case, the efforts of foreign missionaries were also important.

Foreign medical missionaries had arrived in Rugao prior to the Nationalists, and had set up a hospital in Rugao City specializing in the treatment of leprosy, a disease more prevalent in the Rugao area than in any other part of North Jiangsu. By the 1930's the twenty beds and foreign staff of this hospital, together with a few foreign-trained Chinese doctors who ran private clinics, still provided the bulk of modern medical care available in Rugao. Although there was now also a small public hospital with another twenty beds, it was said that "hospitalization...is still quite a problem [in Rugao] and many patients go to Nantongchow and Shanghai when operations are necessary."(86)

But "hospitalization" was only a small part of the enormous medical problem that confronted the Rugao resident. Serious diseases of all sorts reportedly increased throughout the Nanjing Decade. Malaria, rare in Rugao before 1927, by 1935 had "become quite common." In some vicinities it was said that it affected one quarter of the population. Typhoid was similarly rampant, helped by the inattention to adequate sanitation, especially the widespread use of human waste as night soil. One writer, probably a medical missionary, estimated that in 1936 10,000 deaths in Rugao were caused by the two diseases alone.(87)

Faced with these serious epidemics the government did practically nothing. It was said that local "doctors" did not know how to "handle" malaria, and although the government dispatched some "Java quinine", reputedly the best at the time, it was in no way sufficient to meet the needs of the total population; nor was there anyone who knew how to direct its use. Moreover, little or no preventive work was done to halt the spread of typhoid. Observers repeatedly noted the absence of doctors to treat the disease and the lack of sanitation measures to prevent it. The result was that Rugao was subjected to a cyclical pattern of death and dying. During the summer months, aided by heat and flooding canal waters, disease

flourished. During the winter months, as a result of cold temperatures and low waters, it abated.(88)

But Rugao's disease problem was not impossible to combat, provided that somebody took the interest and invested the necessary funds. Prior to 1927 Rugao "had many stray dogs," and "rabies was common." By the end of 1931, however, a campaign to register dogs was "under way," and a dog-pound had been constructed to hold dogs either until their owners paid the dog tax and reclaimed their animals or until they had been held a specified period and were destroyed. This effort reduced the number of stray dogs as well as the number of people molested by them, and greatly lowered the incidence of hydrophobia in the county.(89)

The dog-pound and the campaign against stray dogs were all made possible by a "group" of local men who contributed the funds for its operation. No government money was involved, nor was the effort supervised by any government agency. However, this private sponsorship meant that the continued operation of the pound was dependent on the good will of its backers. In the fall of 1933, after two years of operation, the main supporter of the effort to rid Rugao of dogs and rabies died. The government did not take up the slack. Immediately the pound stopped picking up strays, the land on which the

pound had been located was again turned into farmland, the dogs on the street started multiplying, and rabies once again became common in Rugao.(90)

Rugao's experience with rabies eradication is fairly typical of the way events evolved during the third period. Most public programs, even if - unlike the anti-rabies program - they had government sponsorship, depended on significant contributions from the local elite or other outside sources to survive. Any programs without such support either never got started or withered on the vine. Moreover, since the Nationalist government had only a very tenuous set of ties to the local elite, and since the elite appeared to participate only in programs from which they could gain some advantage, the Nationalists failed to carry out any large-scale sustained programs to benefit the mass of the population.

Conclusions about the Nationalist Government in Rugao

The foregoing three-chapter review of the Nanjing Decade Rugao government and its programs makes several points clear. First, the Nationalist government in Rugao, even at the end of the Nanjing Decade, lacked an organization which could link it to the lower levels of society. The government had made no efforts to establish such an organization in the first period, tried and failed

in the second period, and gave up in the third. In 1937 when the Nationalists were pushed out of Rugao, the official county government was a very small organization whose authority barely extended beyond the county seat. These few people alone could not possibly have hoped to carry out a sweeping program of social, political, and economic development such as that envisioned by Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists.

Second, to compensate for their lack of organization and personnel the Nationalists relied on existing members of the local elite to carry out their programs. These members of the local elite served without pay. However, they exacted their toll in other ways. Under local elite management, programs such as peasant cooperatives never got off the ground, while funds such as those of the Farmers' Bank entrusted to local elite care never were received by the intended peasant beneficiaries. Most important, the elite blocked reforms such as those of the county finance system, which if carried out would have increased the power of the county government at the expense of the local elite.

Third, the result of Nationalist programs was to strengthen the power of particular members of the local elite at the expense of the county government. Most notable was the rise of local militias. At the beginning

of the Nationalist period local militia apparently were very weak. By the end of the Decade the opposite was true. Recruited and trained primarily to fight the Communists and bandits, the local militias by 1937 were a powerful fighting force loyal to local elite members, not to the Nationalists. In comparison, the Nationalist police were few in number and not well armed or trained. By 1937, should the Nationalists have wanted to oppose the local elite, it would not have been possible for them to do so.

Fourth, in spite of their reliance on the local elite and the resulting increased power of that elite, the Nationalists never integrated local elite members into a hierarchical system with regularized rewards and benefits such as that found in clientelist or corporatist states. Or, in other words, the Nationalists never created an effective, functioning political machine with power residing at the apex of the system. Instead, as the Decade progressed power flowed away from the top of the pyramid to the bottom, where it collected in isolated cells, each protected and fortified by a particular member of the local elite. By the end of the Decade it was the elite members, not the office holders who in theory oversaw the linkages between the cells, who controlled the Rugao countryside and the peasants who lived there. Only

when these local elite members were overthrown and power once more concentrated in a strong national government, as the Communists quickly realized, could revolution and change be brought to Rugao and the rest of rural China.

In sum, the last three chapters indicate that the lack of an integrated local governmental structure greatly hindered the Nationalists in Rugao, and differentiates the unsuccessful Chinese Nationalist government from the similar but more successful "machine" and "corporatist" regimes in places like Latin America. They show that the main problem of the Nationalist government in Rugao, and perhaps elsewhere in China, was not merely that it chose a conservative, backward-looking group upon which to rely at the local level, but also that it chose one without an integrated organizational network and then was unwilling or unable to provide that network itself.

Chapter Five

Notes

(1) Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 15 May 1930, p. 2.

(2) Shi Bao, 15 May 1930, p. 2; 30 May 1930, p. 8; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao [Jiangsu Province government gazette], no. 453 (2 June 1930), p. 21.

(3) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 606 (29 November 1930), p. 9; no. 620 (16 December 1930), p. 3; no. 864 (7 October 1931), p. 4; and Shi Bao, 13 June 1931, p. 2.

(4) North China Herald (Shanghai), 15 August 1914, p. 240; 19 February 1936, p. 205; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 2316 (1 July 1936), p. 17; no. 2351 (11 August 1936), p. 32.

(5) Gu Ziyang, Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Yange [Evolution of party affairs in Jiangsu Province] (n.p., n.d.), Nationalist Party Archives, Taipei, Taiwan, no. 34:001, pp. 16, 21, 24, 28; North China Herald, 7 December 1929, p. 375; and Da Ke, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu de Lishi Guan" [A look at the history of party affairs in Jiangsu province], in Xiandai Shiliao [Contemporary historical materials], vol. 1 (Shanghai: Hai Tian Chuban She, 1935), p. 102.

(6) Da Ke, "Su Sheng Dangbu Xuanju zhi Yimu" [An act in the selection of the Jiangsu provincial party headquarters], Shehui Xinwen ["Society Mercury"] 2, no. 5 (13 January 1933): 50; and Nong, "Su sheng Dangbu Gaixuan zhi Qianhou" [The before and after of the selection of the Jiangsu party headquarters], Shehui Xinwen 1, no. 58 (24 December 1932): 555.

(7) Shi Bao, 6 December 1928, p. 8; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 2351 (11 August 1936), p. 32.

(8) For one account of conditions in North Jiangsu after the arrival of the Japanese, see Bao Mingshu, Kang Ri Shiqi Dongnan Dihou [Behind enemy lines in the southeast during the anti-Japanese war period] (Taipei, Taiwan: Bao Mingshu, 1974).

(9) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 2316 (1 July 1936), p. 7.

(10) Shi Bao, 3 August 1930, p. 3; 20 June 1930, p. 4; 13 June 1930, p. 2.

(11) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 836 (4 September 1931), p. 11.

(12) Ibid.

(13) Su Heng Banyuekan [Su Heng semi-monthly], no. 16 (5 July 1936), p. 59.

(14) Shi Bao, 3 November 1930, p. 4; 6 November 1930, p. 4; 21 December 1927, p. 2; 23 December 1928, p. 4; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 471 (23 June 1930), pp. 18-20.

(15) Yu Jingtang, "Yinianlai zhi Jiangsu Minzheng" [The past year of civil government in Jiangsu], Su Sheng Yuekan [Jiangsu voice monthly], 2, no. 1 (January 1935): 40.

(16) Qiu Heqing, "Jin Hou Baojia Gongzuo de Dongxing" [Present and future trends in baojia work], Jiangsu baojia, no. 5 (1 April 1935), p. 5; and Zhou Yibin, "Yinian Lai Jiangsu Sheng Baojia Yundong zhi Huigu" [A review of the past year of the Jiangsu baojia movement], Jiangsu Baojia, no. 5 (1 April 1935), p. 3.

(17) Zhou Yibin, "Yinian Lai Jiangsu Baojia," p. 3; and "Baojiazhang Xunlian Huizhi" [Collected materials on the training of bao and jia heads], Jiangsu Baojia, no. 9 (1 June 1935), p. 17.

(18) "Baojiazhang Xunlian," p. 17.

(19) Ibid.

(20) "Xiang Zhen Baojiazhang Xunlian Huizhi" [Collected materials on the training of xiang, zhen, bao, and jia heads], Jiangsu Baojia, no. 10 (15 June 1935), p. 17.

(21) Ibid.

(22) Baojia Banyuekan [Baojia semi-monthly], no. 1 (1 February 1935), p. 16.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Yu Xilai, "Yinianlai zhi Jiangsu Dangbu Gongzuo Gaikuang" [The working conditions of the past year in the Jiangsu party headquarters], Su Sheng Yuekan 2, no. 1 (January 1935): 4; and Zhou Yibin, "Yinianlai Jiangsu Baojia," p. 4.

(25) Luo Zhiyuan, "Xian Xing Xiangzhen Zhidu Jiantao" [Critique of the current rural town system], Jiangsu Baojia, no. 5 (1 April 1935), p. 12.

(26) Unfortunately, no such studies currently exist; however, the carrying out of such work would make interesting future research.

(27) North China Herald, 20 February 1935, p. 289.

(28) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 199 (1 August 1929), p. 8.

(29) Shi Bao, 30 July 1930, p. 4.

(30) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 848 (8 September 1931), p. 6; and North China Herald, 29 March 1933, p. 491.

(31) Liu Zhifan, "Jiangsu Tianfu Wenti" [Problems of the Jiangsu land tax], Jiangsu Yanjiu [Jiangsu Research], 3, no. 6 [1935?]: 40.

(32) Ibid., pp. 40-41.

(33) Ibid., p. 41.

(34) Shi Bao, 4 May 1930, p. 4; 5 July 1930, p. 4.

(35) Shi Bao, 5 July 1930, p. 4; 7 July 1930, p. 4.

(36) Shi Bao, 19 August 1930, p. 4.

(37) North China Herald, 18 October 1933, p. 90; 25 September 1935, p. 502; 16 September 1936, p. 487.

(38) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang [Jiangsu Farmers' Bank head office], ed., Disan Nian zhi Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang [The third year of the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank] (Zhenjiang: 1930-32), p. 221; and Yin

Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xianzhi [Annals of Jiangsu's sixty-one counties] (Shanghai: Shanghai Yinshuguan, 1936), p. 126.

(39) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 869 (14 October 1931), pp. 11-12.

(40) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang, Disan Nian, p. 221.

(41) Shi Bao, 21 November 1930, p. 4.

(42) Shi Bao, 19 September 1930, p. 4.

(43) Shi Bao, 14 December 1929, p. 4; Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang, Disan Nian, p. 207; and North China Herald, 6 June 1934, p. 344; 19 February 1936, p. 305; 24 March 1937, p. 493.

(44) For information on the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank, see China Industrial Handbooks: Kiangsu, comp. Ministry of Industry, Bureau of Foreign Trade (Shanghai: Ministry of Industry, Bureau of Foreign Trade, 1933; reprint ed., Taipei, Taiwan: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1973), p. 38; Shi Bao, 18 July 1928, p. 3; Chen Guofu, Suzheng Huiyi [Recollections of Jiangsu government] ([Taipei, Taiwan]: Zhengzhong Shuju, 1951), pp. 147 and 150; Tien Hung-mao, Government and Politics in Kuomintang China: 1927-1937 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 51-52; North China Herald, 18 February 1928, p. 252; 3 March 1931, p. 292; The China Weekly Review (Shanghai), 20 August 1927, p. 301; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 453 (21 June 1930), p. 1.

(45) Shi Bao, 22 December 1928, p. 4.

(46) Shi Bao, 19 August 1929, p. 4.

(47) Shi Bao, 28 June 1930, p. 4; 31 October 1930, p. 4; and Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 207; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 506 (August 1930), p. 25; no. 512 (9 August 1930), p. 17.

(48) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, p. 208.

(49) Ibid., 207, 209.

- (50) Ibid., p. 209.
- (51) Ibid., pp. 210-214.
- (52) Ibid., pp. 210-212.
- (53) Ibid.
- (54) Ibid.
- (55) Ibid., p. 211.
- (56) Ibid., p. 210.
- (57) Ibid., p. 208.
- (58) Ibid., pp. 208, 212.
- (59) Ibid., pp. 209, 214.
- (60) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 508 (5 August 1930), pp. 13-15.
- (61) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang, Disan Nian, pp. 215-216, 219.
- (62) Chen Guofu, Suzheng Huiyi [Recollections of Jiangsu government] ([Taipei, Taiwan]: Zhengzhong Shuju, 1951), p. 10; Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 2356 (17 August 1936), p. 13; and "Jiangsu Sheng Hezuo Shiyi zhi Jingwei," Jiangsu Sheng Zheng [Jiangsu provincial government] 3, no. 11 (1 November 1936): chart following p. 2.
- (63) "Jiangsu Sheng Hezuo Shiye," chart following p. 2. See also the essays in the book Agrarian China: Selected Source Materials from Chinese Authors, comp. and trans. The Research Staff of the Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1938: reprint ed., Arlington, Va: University Publications of America, n.d.).
- (64) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 627 (24 December 1930), p. 19.
- (65) Jiangsu Sheng Zheng: Jiangsu Jianshe Yuekan [Jiangsu provincial government: Jiangsu reconstruction monthly] 4, no. 3 (1 March 1937): 2 (s.p.), 9, 11 (s.p.), 60 (s.p.).

(66) Ibid., p. 73 (s.p.), 2 (s.p.).

(67) Shen Lun, "Jiangbei zhi Xing" [Travels in North Jiangsu], Shehui Xinwen 9, no. 1 (1 October 1934): 9; North China Herald, 19 February 1936, p. 305; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 2305 (18 June 1936), p. 10.

(68) Jiangsu Sheng Zheng: Jiangsu Jianshe Yuekan 4, no. 3 (1 March 1937): 2 (s.p.), 9, 11 (s.p.); and North China Herald, 7 July 1937, p. 1.

(69) Shi Bao, 13 May 1929, p. 4. On the provincial policy toward city walls, see Shi Bao, 13 May 1929, p.4; and North China Herald, 25 August 1928, p. 319; and 14 December 1929, p. 424.

(70) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 837 (5 September 1931), p. 27; and North China Herald, 14 March 1934, p. 407; 16 September 1936, p. 487.

(71) This account of the New Life Movement is taken from Samuel C. Chu, The New Life Movement, 1934-1937, Researches in the Social Sciences on China, Columbia University, East Asian Institute (New York: 1957); and James C. Thomson, Jr., While China Faced West: American Reformers in Nationalist China, 1928-1937 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 151-174. The quotation is from Chu, p. 3.

(72) Chu, The New Life Movement, pp. 3-5.

(73) Chu, The New Life Movement, pp. 4-9; and Thomson, While China Faced West, p. 159.

(74) North China Herald, 18 April 1934, p. 65.

(75) North China Herald, 6 June 1934, p. 344.

(76) North China Herald, 5 December 1934, p. 370; 6 June 1935, p. 381.

(77) Chu, The New Life Movement, p. 14; and Thomson, While China Faced West, p. 159.

(78) I can find no specific mention of the dates when these orders were first carried out in Rugao. However, since their later abandonment was noted, they must have been put into effect.

- (79) North China Herald, 23 February 1932, p. 284.
- (80) North China Herald, 10 January 1934, p. 47.
- (81) North China Herald, 3 February 1937, p. 187.
- (82) North China Herald, 20 February 1935, p. 287;
23 October 1935, p. 147.
- (83) For examples of reports on the arrest of opium users, see Shi Bao, 19 October 1930, p. 3; 7 April 1931, p. 4; and North China Herald, 6 June 1934, p. 344; 4 July 1934, p. 12; and 5 December 1934, p. 370. Jiangsu Sheng Jinyan Weiyuanhui, "Bannianlai zhi Jiangsu Yanjin" [The last half-year of opium prohibition in Jiangsu], Su sheng Yuekan 2, no. 1 (January 1935), p. 93-96, lists the number of opium users in the county.
- (84) North China Herald, 9 January 1935, p. 49; 25 September 1935, p. 502; 26 May 1937, p. 318; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 2327 (14 July 1936), p. 14.
- (85) North China Herald, 4 July 1934, p. 12.
- (86) North China Herald, 9 May 1934, p. 181.
- (87) North China Herald, 26 June 1935, p. 513; 31 July 1935, p. 175; 11 December 1935, p. 436; 11 November 1936, p. 225; 18 November 1936, p. 271.
- (88) North China Herald, 31 July 1935, p. 175; 11 December 1935, p. 436; 11 November 1936, p. 225.
- (89) North China Herald, 24 November 1931, p. 269; 19 October 1932, p. 92; 12 July 1933, p. 49.
- (90) North China Herald, 12 July 1933, p. 49; 18 October 1933, p. 90; 14 March 1934, p. 407; 26 December 1934, p. 438.

Chapter Six

The Pre-1927 Local Elite of Rugao

The last four chapters show that in Rugao the Nationalist Party and government organization rarely extended below the county and in some places the district level, and that even at the county and district levels the Party and government rarely successfully implemented their policies. Moreover, they indicate that in part this failure to penetrate the Rugao countryside was due to the Nationalists' lack of a sufficiently well-disciplined political organization and their consequent willingness to rely on members of the pre-1927 local elite to fill in organizational gaps and carry out government programs. But they also make it clear that whenever Nationalist shortcomings became apparent, members of the local elite were more than willing to take advantage of the situation to push for their own advancement, and that as a result by 1937 it was the local elite, not the Nationalist government or Party, which controlled the Rugao countryside.

The next logical set of questions, then, concerns this group of people who ultimately held sway in Rugao and successfully relegated members of the Nationalist movement

to a back seat in their own government. Who were they? What were their aims? How did they ultimately come to be the most powerful political group in Rugao? This chapter and the next will examine some of the individuals who composed the local elite of Rugao and analyze their role in public security, financial, and other county affairs.

What is meant by the term "local elite"?

Who were the local elite? Scholars in the China field have expended much effort attempting to define the term "local elite", as well as its commonly used predecessor "local gentry", but they have not been able to come to any agreement. The background and composition of the local elite, the functions that the local elite performed, and the degree to which the local elite changed as the nineteenth century became the twentieth, are still contentious issues.

Generally, scholars argue over whether the local elite included (1) the educated: those who before 1911 reached a certain rung of the imperial government's examination ladder or after 1911 graduated from a modern school (i.e. one which taught "western learning"); (2) the wealthy: merchants, large landlords, usurers, or others who controlled large amounts of capital; (3) the strong: militia leaders and bandits who controlled a

given area's means of coercion; (4) the political: bureaucrats and other local government functionaries, either active or retired. Some analysts claim that one of the above groups, such as the educated, the wealthy, the strong or the political, was the backbone of local society and because of its monopoly over education, wealth, force, or the governmental system, orchestrated events.(1) Others (and they are by far the majority) claim that some combination (although not always the same combination) of the above elements constituted the local elite, and that it was these elements acting together which determined a locale's destiny.(2)

Because there is such disagreement over what constitutes the local elite, it is impossible when studying a particular local area like Rugao to start with an a priori definition of the local elite and then use it to identify the particular individuals who meet the definition's qualifications. Instead, I propose to accept as members of the Rugao local elite all of those individuals who were viewed as being such by the people who lived in or wrote contemporaneously about the county, and then to try to determine the characteristics these individuals possessed.

For the pre-1927 period, concluding that Rugao's local elite were simply those individuals who were labeled

as the local elite by people familiar with the county makes further analysis comparatively easy. As one reads Chinese documentary and newspaper reports which refer to Rugao, one discovers that members of the local elite are frequently and readily referred to by terms such as vishen, shishen and the like. Thus, identifying those people who were regarded as members of the local elite, and then describing how those individuals operated, is not difficult.

After 1927 things are not so simple. Members of the local elite were no longer frequently labeled as such in the press. However, knowing who constituted the local elite before 1927, it is fairly easy to trace those individuals after 1927 to see whether they were able to ~~maintain~~ maintain their grip over the Rugao countryside or were replaced by new and different Nationalist appointees.

Because so much of my analysis depends on knowing and understanding events that occurred before the arrival of the Nationalists, I first will identify and describe the group of individuals most commonly mentioned as being members of the pre-1927 Rugao local elite. Then I will trace the activities and fates of these individuals during the 1927 to 1937 period in an attempt to ascertain the extent to which, as well as the ways in which, the local elite were able to hold onto their positions of power.

The Pre-1927 Local Elite

First it should be noted that the pre-1927 Rugao local elite, i.e. those individuals referred to most commonly as shishen, but sometimes also as yishen or laoshen, can be divided into two groups: those who lived in the county seat and were active in county-level organizations, and those who lived in more remote towns and participated primarily in district-level activities.(3) Except for a few people who took part in both the events of the county and those of the county seat (known as the first district), there was virtually no overlap between the county-level and district-level groups.(4)

It was also unusual for a member of the district-level gentry simultaneously to have ties to more than one area. Newspapers often identified particular local leaders not only by the term "gentry", but by the term "gentry" preceded by the name of their district, e.g. Libao gentry member Chung Xingchuan, Chahe gentry member Fang Yi. In all of these listings, I have found only one example of the same individual being identified with two different districts.(5) All other local leaders were consistently linked to only one area each.

Moreover, lateral movement between districts was uncommon. Individuals appeared to achieve gentry status

in one district and then to maintain their ties to that district for the rest of their lives. While a select few held higher-level administrative posts at some point during their careers, in general, geographical mobility was absent.

Although they had fixed and permanent ties to a particular geographical area, Rugao's local elite members did not similarly have specific professional or corporate loyalties. Instead, virtually all of Rugao's local leaders either successively or simultaneously held a number of posts in widely varying types of organizations. Sha Yuanbing, the most notable of Rugao's local leaders during the 1920's, provides a good example.

Before 1911, Sha was a member of the imperial government's prestigious Hanlin Academy in Peking. Later he became active in Jiangsu provincial politics and headed the Jiangsu Provincial Assembly (Jiangsu Sheng yihi yi zhang). In addition, at the county level Sha founded organizations for education, charity, commerce, surveying, and water conservancy.(6) Until the year before his death (in February 1927), through these and other local groups, Sha played an important role in all sorts of Rugao County affairs. For example, in May 1926 he chaired the Rugao Illumination Company stockholders' meeting.(7) In August he was one of twenty gentry members making plans

to found a new school that would combine traditional and western learning.(8) In November he helped raise money to buy land for an addition to the county's publicly-run hospital (whose board he also chaired).(9) All this was in addition to his duties as director of the School of Commerce run by the Rugao Merchants' Association (Shang hui si li shangye xue xiao) (He had earlier been head of the Merchant Association itself, but had resigned)(10), head of the county's Surveying Office(11), and chairperson of the Rugao County Water Conservancy Committee.(12)

Moreover, another individual who was probably a member of Sha Yuanbing's family, Sha Yuanju (or Sha Shidu), also held at least two influential positions. As of 1926 he had been head of the county Education Office for at least three years(13). In addition, he was also the leader of the county-wide Boy Scout movement.(14)

Other important members of the pre-1927 county elite were equally versatile. A list of some of their names and the important activities in which they engaged clearly illustrates the wide-ranging interests each member of the Rugao local elite possessed.

Ma Jizhi	Head of the county seat's (first district) Executive Committee.(15)
	District representative in charge of raising the city's portion of a spe-

cial tax for the county shrine.(16)

One of the founders of a granary which sold grain at low prices when the market price was high.(17)

Established a temporary shelter for beggars.(18)

Zhu Guangyue

Succeeded Sha Yuanbing as head of the County Merchant Association and director of the School of Commerce run by the Association.(19)

Used his influence to get an official commendation for a family member.(20)

Took part in discussions concerning the imposition of a winter curfew.(21)

One of the founders of a school that combined traditional and western learning.(22)

Liu Lanqing

Along with Ma Jizhi founded a granary which sold grain at low prices when the market price was high.(23)

Selected by the County Assembly to investigate that part of the 1926 budget dealing with legal affairs.(24)

Huang Qiwu

Member of the County Executive Committee.(25)

Organizer of a stock company to put up western-style buildings and run foreign-style businesses in Rugao City.(26)

Mao Jie

Member of the County Executive Committee.(27)

Member of the Executive Committee to advise the county Education Office on educational affairs.(28)

Member of the Executive Committee of

the county Road Construction Office.(29)

One of the three gentry members sent to Nantong to negotiate differences over the Rugao-Nantong border.(30)

One of the founders of a school to combine traditional and western learning.(31)

Head of the Rugao County Peasant Association. (32)

Shen Chu

Member of the County Executive Committee.(33)

Member of the Executive Committee which advised the county Education Office on educational affairs.(34)

Member of the advisory committee of the Rugao County Peasant Association.(35)

Chang Xiang
(Chang Shaobin)

Helped set up an organization to promote local charities.(36)

One of three gentry members sent to Nantong to negotiate differences over the Rugao-Nantong border.(37)

Member of the Executive Committee of the county Road Construction Office.(38)

Fang Jiazhen

Member of the Executive Committee which advised the county Education Office on educational affairs.(39)

One of three gentry members sent to Nantong to negotiate differences over the Rugao-Nantong border.(40)

Assistant head of the Rugao County Peasant Association.(41)

Ma Shaozhou

Head of a purification movement in the county seat.(42)

Petitioned the county government to ask it to continue using tax money

ring the funds to education.(43)

Guo Heng Head of the county middle school.(44)

 Representative to a county-wide
 Boy Scout representatives meeting.(45)

 Member of the Rugao County Peasant
 Association advisory committee.(46)

At the district level the same pattern prevailed. He Lin, the chairperson of the Lifa Municipal Executive Committee, was the most visible of all the district local elite members.(47) In addition to performing his official duties, He Lin took on a large number of other causes. For example, He was concerned about his district's public security. In June 1926 the county magistrate put He in charge of pacifying the Lifa countryside.(48) When members of a strange sect appeared in the district and "aroused the people with wild talk," He requested Sun Chuanfang to order local officials to investigate and eliminate them. As a result, Sun gave such an order to the heads of the four counties of Nantong, Rugao, Taixian, and Dongtai.(49) Later, in September, He introduced reforms for the Lifa dibao system which were approved by the county government and adopted county-wide.(50)

He Lin was also interested in helping the poor and in water conservancy. To aid the less well-to-do he set up an organization which would make small loans of not more

than five yuan (presumably at low rates of interest) to those in need.(51) When the people in neighboring Dongtai County's town of Hai'an opened a culvert which caused water conservancy problems in Rugao (by allowing upstream water to drain faster than usual, the open culvert caused water in Rugao's rivers and streams to become too low for travel and irrigation), He Lin was active in seeking help to get the damage repaired and the culvert closed.(52)

In Matang gentry member Deng Pujun performed similar services. Deng had formerly been an official in Shandong Province. After retiring to Matang, he was active in getting a county government commendation for a one hundred year old woman who lived in his district,(53) and in organizing and running a local electric company. As a result of the efforts of Deng and three other gentry members, three hundred electric lights were erected in Matang, and that city became one of the first Rugao cities outside the county seat to have nighttime illumination.(54)

In Libao the same pattern appeared, but with a slightly different twist. A very high percentage of Libao's gentry members were surnamed Zhong. Most likely they were all members of one extended family, which through the activities of its individual members dominated and controlled Libao district affairs. The activities of

the most important Zhongs are listed below.

- Zhong Hansan District police chief.(55)
 One of the directors of the Libao granary.(56)
 Chosen by the county magistrate to supervise the selection of Libao Assembly members.(57)
- Zhong Tongqi Head of the Libao Executive Committee.(58)
 Cited by the county Education Office for vigorously promoting learning and raising large sums of money for the Libao schools.(59)
 Appointed by the county to pacify Libao's rural areas.(60)
- Zhong Xingchuan Honorary member of the Libao Assembly.(61)
 Paid for and directed the repair of an important bridge to the west of Libao.(62)
 One of the directors of the Libao granary.(63)
 Donated a large sum to the Libao granary to buy rice.(64)
- Zhong Shouqing Honorary member of the Libao Assembly.(65)
 One of the directors of the Libao granary.(66)
- Zhong Minxin Petitioned the county Water Conservancy Committee asking that something be done to stop the people of Dongtai County from allowing salt water to flow into Rugao's rivers.(67)

In the district of Lugang, the Lu family held an equally strong grip on local affairs. Lu Xisan headed at least part of the family network, a group of about twenty large landlord households who collectively owned over 1,000,000 mu of land.(68) Lu Xisan formerly had been a member of the Jiangsu Provincial Assembly, while his son worked in the district office of neighboring Banjing.(69)

Lugang District political affairs were directed by Lu Tianhuai, the head of the Lugang Executive Committee. Although there is no evidence linking him to the family of Lu Xisan, such ties are certainly a possibility. Moreover, one other member of the four-person Lugang Executive Committee was surnamed Lu.(70)

Besides illustrating their versatility, all of the foregoing descriptions suggest an additional characteristic of Rugao's local elite; that is, while Rugao's local elite members can be divided into groups geographically, the nature of the activities in which each local elite member engaged was remarkably similar no matter in which area the local elite member lived, or at what level - district or county - they were involved. Among these activities politics, finance, education, commerce, public works, and charity appeared to be the most important.

Activities of the Pre-1927 Rugao Local Elite

A look at the activities in which members of the pre-1927 local elite engaged, and the ways in which they solved local problems, gives a clearer picture of who these people were, and what they did. I shall take up in turn the local elite role in formal political organizations, public security, tax collection, education, water conservancy, road building and maintenance, public utilities and public transportation, charity and the operation of public granaries, and public health.

Formal Political Organization

Many local elite members held important political positions. At the county level they often were members of the county governing committee (xian yishi hui) or the county executive committee (xian canshi hui). In addition, as in the case of Sha Shidu, they sometimes headed subordinate offices of the county government. At the district level, local elite members like He Lin often chaired or sat on their district's executive committee (qu dongshi hui), or their district's governing committee (qu yishi hui). (71)

Furthermore, as new political organizations were introduced into Rugao, the local elite showed that they were capable of learning about these organizations and

dominating them. In September 1926 the newly established Rugao Peasant Association chose its officers. Many were leading members of the county gentry, including the Association's head, the vice-head, and at least three members of its advisory committee.(72)

Perhaps even more important, leaders of the local elite often acted formally on behalf of the county in carrying out negotiations either with neighboring counties or with higher level officials. For example, when a newly arisen Chang Jiang sandbar caused Nantong and Rugao to disagree about the location of their joint border in the vicinity of the river, it was three of Rugao's local gentry members who were sent to inspect the sandbar and negotiate (albeit unsuccessfully) with their Nantong counterparts.(73) Similarly, when the people of neighboring Dongtai County destroyed a culvert crucial to water conservancy in the Rugao town of Libao, it was He Lin, the leader of the Libao gentry, who cabled Zhang Jian, who in turn communicated the problem to Sun Chuanfang, who immediately ordered the culvert closed.(74)

Several things are notable about pre-1927 local elite participation in formal government organizations. Foremost, although there is no conclusive evidence on this point, the county magistrate did not appear to be considered a member of the local elite or to take part in

local elite activities. For instance, the magistrate was never referred to by any of the terms used to designate local elite members, nor did he appear to concern himself with things like charity, solely the province of the local elite. Moreover, when the local elite appealed to higher levels, as in the case of the Dongtai culvert, at least some of the time they by-passed the magistrate and dealt directly with either local elite leaders in other counties or with provincial officials.

However, since they occupied all of the important government offices at the district level, when the magistrate wanted his actions carried out he had no choice but to deal with members of the local elite. In other words, in spite of the profusion of local self-government organizations, local politics in pre-1927 Rugao was not much different from what it had been for centuries. The county was still the meeting point for official government (in this case the provincial government of warlord Sun Chuanfang) and unofficial government (or rule by the local elite), and provincial or central authorities were still dependent on the cooperation of local gentry to carry out their programs in the countryside.

Public Security

But in spite of their control over formal political organizations, the local elite did not control the county's public security apparatus. A 1926 survey of Rugao's security forces showed that virtually all locally available armed might was in the hands of either the modern-style police force directly responsible to the county government, or the anti-smuggling (salt) police; it was not in the hands of the local gentry. The survey counted 634 regular policemen and officers stationed throughout the county (possessing 213 guns and about 30,000 bullets) as well as 307 police reserves (with 313 guns and 58,600 bullets), but found only 42 local militia members (with 40 guns and 1,580 bullets) and 28 merchant militia (with 20 guns and 1,000 bullets). In addition, it stated that the anti-smuggling force had 300 or so men.(75)

From the above figures it is clear that if a public security problem arose in Rugao, local leaders could not call out their own men, but would have to appeal either to the county government or to the headquarters of Sun Chuanfang for aid. And indeed, down until 1927, this was the pattern that prevailed. For example, in July 1926, the Zhentao district was troubled by Chang Jiang river pirates who used a district sandbar for some of their

activities. In response to the threat posed by the pirates, the head of the District Executive Committee gathered the local gentry (difang renshi) and asked them to ask the county magistrate to send police to defend the sandbar and bring peace to its villages.(76)

In September the tranquility of another area along the Chang Jiang, Zhanghuang Gang, was threatened. Formerly troops of Sun's forces had been stationed there, but these troops subsequently had been transferred. To fill the vacuum and ensure that the "backdoor for Rugao City" was adequately protected, the area's gentry (shishen) requested the county government to send police.(77)

Appeals from more remote districts were also common. Because sea bandits were rampant, in November the head of the Juegang district along the coast sent a special request to the county government asking that a group of police be sent to guard the district. In his request, he stated that although Juegang did have a merchant militia (shang tuan) as well as a police office, these locally available forces were not nearly sufficient to meet the district's public security needs.(78)

Only in February 1927, when facing the Nationalists, did the local elite (difang renshi) of Juegang take things into their own hands. At that time they decided to set up a Unified Defense Affairs Office (Lian fang shiwu suo)

with an eleven-member governing committee and a budget consisting of funds raised from local residents and storeowners. But even at this time, there is no evidence that this new organization had any soldiers, or commanded any troops in its own name.(79)

Even in individual cases of wrong-doing where an issue of public security was involved, gentry members, at least some of the time, acted only with county government approval. One night in Libao, a "peasant" was fatally stabbed by his wife. After hearing the news, the local gentry (difang renshi) "crowded around boisterously." Finally, one gentry member who represented the magistrate asked the county government office to investigate, and as a result the perpetrator of the crime was sent to the county seat for "handling."(80)

At still other times, the gentry acted to preserve the county's well-being, not by raising armed might, but by raising funds to pay off the individuals posing a threat. The spring and summer of 1926 brought an unusually severe drought to North China, and migrants swarmed into Rugao. Initially they were housed in various temples. But soon the local gentry (shishen) of the county actively began raising capital to send the unwanted and unwelcome newcomers back beyond the county boundaries.(81)

In sum, then, in public security affairs the role of the pre-1927 gentry extended to everything but the actual command of troops. They could entreat higher levels to come to their aid, they could act as intermediaries between the people and the government, or they could raise funds, but at no time did they control the county's, or even a district's, means of coercion. That control remained in the hand of the county magistrate, an appointee and presumably loyal follower of warlord Sun Chuanfang.

Tax Collection

In tax collection the pre-1927 local elite apparently played a bigger part. Sadly, we have no records concerning the collection of the Rugao land tax, and do not know what the local elite role was. Presumably it was large, since we do know that the gentry actively collected other funds designated for the public treasury. For example, the slaughter tax, a source of perpetual trouble in Rugao even after 1927, traditionally was gathered by so-called "merchant kings" (shang wang). Sometime in 1926 the county government decided to collect the tax directly. Under the new system, before presenting an animal to an abattoir, its owner first had to go to the tax office and pay the amount due. Those who did not follow this

procedure were threatened with punishment.(82)

But the people of Rugao City who had animals to slaughter would not accept the new method of tax collection, and held a protest meeting. At the meeting, they decided to go on strike, i.e. to hold their pigs off the market. The next day there was no pork for sale in Rugao. As a result, the reforms apparently were rescinded, and the "merchant kings" restored to their former position as collectors of the slaughter tax.(83)

Similarly, in January 1927 when the Jiangsu government decided to collect a special land tax (tianmu te shui) to be used for military affairs, it ultimately had to put the collection of the tax, at least in Rugao, in the hands of a member of the local elite. First a former Rugao magistrate was assigned the job (It is unclear whether he was a member of the Rugao local elite, although it is doubtful.), but he never took up the post. Instead, a gentry member (yishen) named Gu Rongjing was given the task, an unwelcome one it turned out, since Gu held the job for only a month before he too tendered his resignation.(84)

At the district level, local elite members were also involved in tax collection. For instance, many of Rugao's overseas exports originated in Juegang. For a long time before 1927, the Juegang district levied a tax on these

goods to benefit local schools. This tax was collected by the merchants, not by government officials.(85)

In emergency situations, the local elite's ability to raise and collect funds was even more crucial. In 1925 a fierce war broke out along the Jiangsu-Zhejiang border. Called the Jiangsu-Zhejiang War, it was in reality a fight between two different warlord groups, one of which was headed by Sun Chuanfang. Because the overlord of Rugao was involved, Rugao was required to raise a large sum to support the war effort. In the end, all of the money was "borrowed" from the well-to-do gentry of the various districts (ge qu shen fu), mostly merchants. Later the sum was "repaid" by allowing these same merchants to levy a surcharge on all the goods they sold.(86)

In short, before 1927 the county and district governments appeared to have no tax collecting apparatus of their own, but relied totally on the local elite to provide whatever funds they needed. The result was often less than desirable. For example, the schools were perpetually short of funds and teachers' wages were a subject of constant contention. Roads and bridges, water conservancy projects, and even the county shrine received little government attention, and deteriorated as a result. Even on the eve of the Nationalist victory, however, there is no evidence that the local elite, in whose hands power

over taxation lay, had any intention of remedying the situation.

Education

The main role played by the local elite in education was the founding and funding of both traditional and modern schools. We have no data on the number of traditional academies extant in Rugao prior to 1927, but have reason to believe that it was substantial. None of these institutions had any government support. All were privately established, presumably by local gentry.(87)

Modern schools did receive public monies and did come under government control, but the local elite still influenced them heavily. As we have seen, a member of the most prominent local elite family, Sha Yuanbing, the single most powerful individual in Rugao, took an active interest in educational affairs. Sha Yuanbing was a close associate of Zhang Jian, the leader of neighboring Nantong. Zhang had been instrumental in introducing western-style schools into Nantong, and Sha, following Zhang's lead, did the same for Rugao. However, over time, Zhang - and also Sha - became conservative. By 1927 Rugao's so-called modern schools were said to be bastions of traditionalism, and any teachers who were interested in either the ideas of the Nationalists or the Communists, or

even in introducing vernacular language (hainan) into the curriculum, were subject to dismissal.(88)

Private individuals were also instrumental in the setting up of schools. For example, the Rugao middle school was privately established, although the buildings and money for its operation seemed to come from a mixture of public and private sources.(89) The county also possessed a School of Commerce run by the Merchant Association. In 1926 when the school decided to expand, half the needed funds came from the Association, and half from prosperous local gentry.(90) Later, when plans for a vocational school were formulated by the Education Office and the Commerce Office, local gentry took an interest. At the time plans for the school were to be approved by the Education Office, elections for the office's Executive Committee had not been completed. Local gentry (difang renshi) sent a message saying that they hoped that the elections would be completed soon so that plans for the new school could move forward.(91)

At the district level gentry members were often cited for "vigorously promoting learning", primarily by raising large sums of money for education. In Shuangdian, Libao, Banjing, Matang, Lugang, and Jiangan, local elite members either gave money personally or sat on committees which solicited donations. In some instances they also were

active in the organization and running of the schools they helped support.(92)

In toto, the local elite contribution to education, especially at the district level, was very large. While funds for education made up a sizeable part of the county budget, it is doubtful whether many of the more remote areas of the county would have had any schools at all without the interest of, and contributions from, the area's gentry.

Water Conservancy

The local elite played the same important role in water conservancy that they played in education. On the one hand, they often appealed to the county government to carry out projects that would improve their particular local areas. On the other hand, they sometimes took action directly, either by contributing funds or by personally organizing work crews.

For example, Rugao's three eastern districts along the coast, Fengli, Juegang, and Juzhen, in ordinary times were protected by the Fangong Dike. But some time before April 1926 that large dike was breached by sea water. Immediately the three districts' gentry (shishen) requested that the county appropriate funds to fix the dike. The county government's Water Conservancy Office

responded by sending a representative to negotiate with the local gentry. In the end a compromise was reached: half of the necessary repair funds would come from the county, and half from the elite in each district affected.(93)

Consequently, in the district of Juegang the local elite held a special meeting to discuss how they would raise the money. They decided that fields within the dike would be assessed at varying rates depending on their use, and then requested the county government to send out notices to this effect. Afterwards it was reported that the other districts were planning to copy the Juegang procedure.(94)

In Libao the local elite reversed the procedure. They started work themselves, and only later asked the county government for financial aid. In that instance, the issue was the dredging of a branch of the Yunyan He which connected Libao with Bingcha in Dongtai County. The river was a seventy li-long vital commercial link between the cities of northeastern Rugao and those of neighboring Dongtai. However, for one ten-li stretch, because the power of the water was low, the river narrowed and in dry weather disappeared entirely. In May 1926 gentry members from the two cities got together and started clearing the channel. In the future, they said, they hoped to collect

additional funds from the Rugao districts of Shuangdian and Dongchen, as well as from the Rugao government, so that the job could be completed quickly.(95)

Many more examples of such local elite activity could be cited.(96) While from the available evidence it is impossible to judge the extent to which the efforts of the local elite were proportional to the size of problems that they faced, it is clear that prior to 1927 at least some dikes were repaired, and some important arterials kept cleared for river traffic due to local elite efforts.

Road Building and Maintenance

The county's most pressing land transportation needs centered around the building and maintenance of bridges. Since Rugao possessed so many waterways, even in the immediate vicinity of the county seat, this was no small task. On many occasions members of the local elite became involved in these endeavors, either alone or together with the government. In some instances the initiative was taken by local gentry. For example, in Libao one town gentry member (zhen shen), seeing that a high bridge near the city was in danger of collapsing, himself gathered workmen to plan repairs, and announced he would pay the entire cost.(97) A similar series of events led to the repair of another bridge outside Rugao City's west

gate.(98)

In other instances, a government official first took action on a problem, but then asked the local elite for aid. It was a police official who first decided that an important bridge outside Rugao City's north gate needed repairs. First he asked the city executive committee to ask the county government to appropriate sufficient funds. Then he asked five local gentry members to help. When discussed in the press, the county government had contacted the five in order to decide how the matter should proceed.(99)

On still other occasions notable individuals tried to convince the county government to shoulder the burden of maintaining the land transportation network. Ma Shaozhou, a leading member of the county elite, fought long and hard to persuade the county government to spend tax money repairing the main county artery between Rugao City and Nantong.(100) At the district level, gentry members, such as those in Juegang, frequently petitioned the county Road Construction Office to build new routes that by improving trade and communications would benefit their areas.(101)

In other words, the activities of the local elite on behalf of Rugao's roads closely resembled their activities in support of water conservancy projects, and the choices they faced were identical. Local elite members could

either appeal to the county government to carry out a particular project, or donate the funds themselves and organize the work locally. Both approaches were used.

Public Utilities and Public Transportation

Unlike water conservancy and road building efforts, the initiative for public utilities and public transportation projects came almost exclusively from the local elite, and never from the government. Two types of projects were most common: the organization of electric companies and the setting up of river transportation services.

We have already mentioned that Sha Yuanbing was very active in the affairs of the Rugao Illumination Company(102) and that gentry member Deng Pujun and others in the spring of 1926 raised 15,000 yuan and electrified the streets of Matang.(103) In January 1927 a similar group of gentry became disturbed because residents of the eastern part of the county did not have access to convenient transportation. To remedy the problem, they proposed to organize a steamship company which would send small boats between Juegang on the coast and Hai'an on the county's northwest border. However, before enough capital was raised to launch the first boat, the Nationalist threat apparently ended their efforts.(104)

Charity and the Operation of Public Granaries

All endeavors to aid the poor and the needy likewise were solely in private hands. At least since the Qing (and probably since well before that), Rugao's local elite had run a multitude of charitable organizations including orphanages, soup kitchens, and shelters for the aged.(105) Periodically these were supplemented by temporary groups organized to deal with a pressing emergency situation. For example, in 1921 a committee was set up to relieve the distress of flood victims.(106)

In 1926 Rugao's gentry also set up a kind of umbrella organization to oversee and promote charitable work. All who were actively involved in aiding the poor were considered members. A central office was set up in the Jiangning Merchant's Guild (Jiangning hui guan), and every district seat and other large town made plans to set up branch offices.(107)

But by far the largest and most important charitable effort engaged in by the members of Rugao's pre-1927 local elite was the selling of rice at below market rates during times when the price of rice was so high that the county's poor could not afford it. During the spring and summer of 1926 this activity took two forms: the borrowing of money to purchase rice outside the county for transportation to Rugao and local sale, and the running of local granaries

which would buy grain when the price was low and sell it again when its value had risen. The first activity was restricted solely to the Merchant Association, which borrowed money from local native banks (qian zhuang), bought rice in Nantong, and had it shipped to Rugao.(108) The latter activity was more dispersed. In 1926, granaries run by gentry members were set up and operating in Rugao City,(109) Libao,(110) Jiangan,(111) and probably other towns.

Undoubtedly the granaries and other gentry-run charitable efforts benefited the poor, although, as in other areas, we do not have the data to ascertain whether they adequately addressed the problems of poverty and need faced by Rugao's citizens. Undoubtedly they also enriched some of the gentry members who ran them. We already have seen that Liu Lanqing, one of the operators of the Rugao granary, skimmed money from that endeavor.(112) Apparently, irregular profits were also made from the sale of rice by the Merchant Association. When the Merchant Association purchased the rice it later planned to sell to Rugao's peasants, it estimated that the selling price would be between thirteen and fourteen yuan a shi. In fact, after the rice arrived in Rugao, it sold for 14.62 yuan, or one yuan more than expected. Where was the extra yuan going? Many were curious. Starting in April there

were calls for an investigation, and in November, because the Merchant Association still refused to make its accounts public, an individual named Li brought accusations against the Association in a local court.(113) Although we do not know the outcome of Li's suit, it seems clear that local gentry, at least some of the time, worked at least as much for themselves as for others.

Public Health

Gentry concern for societal problems also extended to public health, although in this area as in the educational realm, the gentry worked together with the county government and its magistrate. On the one hand, gentry members were active in the running and support of the county's public hospital. Sha Yuanbing was in overall charge of the hospital(114). In 1926, five years after the hospital's founding, it was also Sha who made plans to buy ground and raise money so that the hospital could expand. Much of the money, however, appears to have come from the county treasury.(115)

Rugao gentry members also actively worked to combat the seasonal diseases that often struck their area. For example, in 1920, 1921, and 1926, local gentry, together with the police, set up a temporary clinic in Rugao City to combat bubonic plague. Again, although the

organizational effort came from members of the local elite, funding came from the county government office.(116)

Other Local Elite Activities

In addition to their socially oriented activities, members of the local elite also frequently performed services for particular individuals. Most often this seemed to take the form of local elite members using their influence to gain official commendations or rewards for those who had lived a long time or provided some particularly meritorious form of service. For example, a one hundred year-old woman in Chemahu was given a tablet and a book of specially composed poems by well-known people because local leaders requested she be commended.(117) In Dongchen when two respected elementary school teachers died it was the local gentry, along with the elementary school principals, who planned the commemorative ceremony.(118)

But not everything local elite members did was solemn. When they were allowed, gentry members organized drama performances, and paid for actors from Nantong or even Shanghai to visit the county and put on shows. Unfortunately for Rugao's residents, such traveling troupes were regarded by government officials as a source

of potential disturbances. As a result, they more often than not were delayed or cancelled.(119)

Summary of Pre-1927 Local Elite Activities

Prior to 1927, the local elite took a very active role in Rugao County affairs. They were solely responsible for the running of granaries and other public charities, as well as the provision of public utilities and public transportation. They worked together with the county government to organize and fund schools, roads, public health facilities, and water conservancy projects; they acted on behalf of the county government in negotiations with other governmental bodies or politicians, in the collection of taxes, and in the management of the county's finances; and they provided manpower to staff all the local self-government bodies and to carry out governmental affairs.

However, the nature of the activities in which the Rugao local elite took part seems to indicate that they were people who achieved their status and power through the manipulation of only three of the four categories mentioned by earlier writers: education, politics, and wealth. Education, as in the case of Sha Yuanbing, was the basis for many local elite careers. Politics, as the large number of official positions held by local elite

members shows, was also important. Wealth too was essential. Many members of Rugao's local elite, such as Huang Qiwu, were successful merchants and entrepreneurs who were active in the local Merchant Association, and ensured public notice by giving large sums to schools, charities, and public construction projects. Unfortunately, the role played by large landlords is less clear. From our knowledge of Lugang it is obvious that large landlords and their offspring were important actors in local society, but because there is no similar information from other districts, and no data on the landholdings of county-level elite members, the exact nature of that role is unclear.

But absent almost entirely from any description of Rugao's pre-1927 local elite is any mention of control over the means of coercion. Descriptions of elite-controlled militia either at the county or the district level, and references to troops raised and funded by Merchant Associations (shang tuan), all indicate that these organizations were very small, and their armaments insufficient. Instead, when members of the local elite became concerned about the security of the county, or of their own district, they had to rely on either the county police or the troops of warlord Sun Chuanfang. In one instance, in Libao, the head of the district police was

also a local elite member, but there is no indication that this was the usual pattern.(120) In other words, the trend toward increased elite involvement with forms of violence traced by Johanna Meskill,(121) Philip Kuhn,(122) and Guy Alitto(123) seems not to have characterized Rugao. On the contrary, pre-1927 Rugao local society was marked by its comparative peace and tranquility as well as by the traditional nature of its local leaders, who were more concerned with building up the county's infrastructure than with tearing it down. In this regard, Rugao appeared more like the counties of Zhejiang, where Keith Schoppa found that political life during the 1910's and 1920's was orderly, stable, and predictable, a far cry from the chaos that characterized events at the provincial and national levels.(124)

Furthermore, it should be noted that Rugao's pre-1927 local elite members do not offer much support for the idea advanced by Bradley Geisert that members of a local elite can be divided based on their interests(125). Indeed, the various boards and governing bodies that ran Rugao county and district affairs are notable for their overlapping, not their discrete memberships. Consequently, any attempt to argue that some form of the "interest group" model of politics characterized Chinese local society, at least prior to 1927, would seem doomed to failure.

In sum then, while prior to 1927 the Rugao county government had clearly undergone some changes in form, including the introduction of many self-governing institutions such as supervisory and executive committees, it did not differ dramatically in substance from county governments which existed during the late Qing.(128) The 1911 Revolution clearly overthrew the Chinese Emperor and led to the establishment of a new form of national government. At the county level, the Rugao case makes it apparent that the changes effected by the events of 1911 were not quite as dramatic.

Chapter Six

Notes

(1) For example, Chang Chung-li, The Chinese Gentry: Studies on Their Role in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Society (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955), pp. 3-6 emphasizes the role of the educated; Chen Han-seng, The Present Agrarian Problem in China (Shanghai: China Institute of Pacific Relations, 1933), pp. 18-19, the role of the wealthy; Guy Alitto, "Rural Elites in Transition: China's Cultural Crisis and the Problem of Legitimacy," Select Papers from the Center for Chinese Studies, No. 3 (1978-1979) (Chicago: University of Chicago), pp. 9, 39, and 52 the role of the strong; and Fred W. Riggs, "Bureaucrats and Political Development," in Bureaucracy and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 130 the role of the political.

(2) See for example Chow Yung-teh, Social Mobility in China (New York: Atherton Press, 1966), pp. 63-64; Norman Hanwell, "The Dragnet of Local Government in China," Pacific Affairs 10, no. 1 (March 1937): 49; Philip Kuhn, Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 3-4; Johanna Menzel Meskill, A Chinese Pioneer Family: The Lins of Wufeng Taiwan, 1729-1895 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 259-260; and James E. Sheridan, China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History, 1912-1949 (Riverside, New Jersey: The Free Press, 1975), p. 238.

(3) The generalizations made in this and the following paragraphs are based on evidence culled from the Rugao local news section of Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 2 May 1925 - 31 March 1927. Prior to 2 May 1925 Shi Bao did not carry articles about Rugao.

(4) The one exception I have found is Guo Heng. In addition to holding several county-level posts, Guo was also a member of the Juegang Municipal Assembly. (Shi Bao, 21 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.)

(5) Deng Pujun is identified as being both a gentry member from Chemahu (Shi Bao, 14 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2), and a gentry member from Matang (Shi Bao, 17 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; and Zhong Yang Ri Bao [The central

daily news] (Shanghai), 23 February 1928, sec. 3, p. 3.)

- (6) Shi Bao, 18 February 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (7) Shi Bao, 26 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (8) Shi Bao, 9 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (9) Shi Bao, 13 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; and
19 February 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (10) Shi Bao, 21 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 3.
- (11) Shi Bao, 5 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (12) Shi Bao, 2 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (13) Shi Bao, 7 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (14) Shi Bao, 1926 December 14, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (15) Shi Bao, 27 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (16) Shi Bao, 14 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (17) Shi Bao, 19 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 4:
May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (18) Shi Bao, 20 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (19) Shi Bao, 21 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 3.
- (20) Shi Bao, 13 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (21) Shi Bao, 1 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (22) Shi Bao, 9 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (23) Shi Bao, 19 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 4:
May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (24) Shi Bao, 13 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (25) Shi Bao, 10 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (26) Shi Bao, 25 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (27) Shi Bao, 12 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 10 July
1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 10 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 11

September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 12 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 14 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4; and 13 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4;

(28) Shi Bao, 11 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(29) Shi Bao, 15 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(30) Shi Bao, 31 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(31) Shi Bao, 9 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(32) Shi Bao, 25 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(33) Shi Bao, 12 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 10 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 10 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 11 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 12 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 14 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4;

(34) Shi Bao, 11 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2

(35) Shi Bao, 25 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(36) Shi Bao, 10 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(37) Shi Bao, 31 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(38) Shi Bao, 15 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(39) Shi Bao, 11 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(40) Shi Bao, 31 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(41) Shi Bao, 25 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(42) Shi Bao, 8 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(43) Shi Bao, 16 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4;

(44) Shi Bao, 5 February 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.

(45) Shi Bao, 14 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.

(46) Shi Bao, 25 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(47) Shi Bao, 6 February 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.

(48) Shi Bao, 8 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

- (49) Shi Bao, 18 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (50) Shi Bao, 14 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (51) Shi Bao, 27 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (52) Shi Bao, 26 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (53) Shi Bao, 14 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (54) Shi Bao, 17 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (55) Shi Bao, 3 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (56) Shi Bao, 7 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (57) Ibid.
- (58) Shi Bao, 20 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (59) Shi Bao, 11 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (60) Shi Bao, 8 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (61) Shi Bao, 18 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (62) Shi Bao, 19 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (63) Shi Bao, 7 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (64) Shi Bao, 16 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (65) Shi Bao, 18 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (66) Shi Bao, 7 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (67) Shi Bao, 12 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (68) Liu Ruilong, Huiyi Hong Shisi Jun [Remembrances of the Fourteenth Red Army] ([Nanjing]: Jiangsu Renmin Chuban She, 1981), p. 6.
- (69) Ibid., p. 9.
- (70) Shi Bao, 12 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 19 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (71) See pp. 61-63.

- (72) Shi Bao, 25 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (73) Shi Bao, 8 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 24 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 3 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 31 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 7 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 7 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (74) Shi Bao, 26 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (75) Shi Bao, 1 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (76) Shi Bao, 15 July 1926 sec. 1, p. 2.
- (77) Shi Bao, 4 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (78) Shi Bao, 5 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (79) Shi Bao, 18 February 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (80) Shi Bao, 4 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (81) Shi Bao, 14 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (82) Shi Bao, 15 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (83) Ibid.
- (84) Shi Bao, 24 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4; 27 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4; 5 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4; and 16 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (85) Shi Bao, 2 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (86) Shi Bao, 27 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 31 October 1927, p. 2.
- (87) See Chapter One, pp. 44-46.
- (88) Liu Ruilong, Huiyi Hong Shisi Jun, p. 17.
- (89) Shi Bao, 27 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 6 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (90) Shi Bao, 5 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (91) Shi Bao, 12 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (92) Shi Bao, 11 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 4 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 7 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and

7 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(93) Shi Bao, 3 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 13 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(94) Shi Bao, 13 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(95) Shi Bao, 5 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(96) See for example Shi Bao, 12 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 21 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(97) Shi Bao, 19 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(98) Shi Bao, 20 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(99) Shi Bao, 24 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(100) Shi Bao, 16 March 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.

(101) Shi Bao, 15 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(102) See p 373.

(103) See p. 378, and also Shi Bao, 17 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.

(104) Shi Bao, 21 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.

(105) See the section on "Charitable Endeavors" in Chapter One.

(106) Shi Bao, 18 December 1927, p. 5.

(107) Shi Bao, 10 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(108) For details of how the Rugao Merchant Association bought, transported, and sold rice in an effort to aid the poor, see Shi Bao, 11 March 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 18 March 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 28 March 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(109) Shi Bao, 19 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 4 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 11 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 15 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 29 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(110) Shi Bao, 7 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 16 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.

- (111) Shi Bao, 27 May 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (112) See the section on "The Second Period Reform of the County Government Organization" in Chapter Four. See also the section on "Nationalist Attacks on the Local Elite" in Chapter Seven.
- (113) Shi Bao, 5 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 7 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (114) Shi Bao, 13 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (115) Shi Bao, 14 November 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (116) Shi Bao, 19 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 17 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (117) Shi Bao, 14 April 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (118) Shi Bao, 28 June 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (119) Shi Bao, 14 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.
- (120) The local elite member in question was Zhong Hansan. See pp. 379 for more details on Zhong.
- (121) Meskill, A Chinese Pioneer Family.
- (122) Kuhn, Rebellion and Its Enemies.
- (123) Alitto, "Rural Elites."
- (124) R. Keith Schoppa, "Local Self-Government in Zhejiang," Modern China 2, no. 4 (October 1976); and R. Keith Schoppa, Chinese Elites and Political Change: Zhejiang Province in the Early Twentieth Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).
- (125) Bradley K. Geisert, "Toward a Pluralist Model of KMT Rule," Chinese Republican Studies Newsletter 7, no. 2 (February 1982).
- (126) For a description of county government under the Qing, see Ch'u T'ung-tsu, Local Government in China under the Ch'ing (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962).

Chapter Seven

The Post-1927 Elite of Rugao

As the troops of the National Revolutionary Army moved north, Rugao's local elite, as they had been during the Jiangsu-Zhejiang War, were called upon to raise funds for the troops of Sun Chuanfang. Accordingly, at the end of March 1927, acting through a so-called Local Peace Preservation Committee organized by the county magistrate, county-level local elite leaders directed each wealthy household to donate money to the Committee, which it said would later be repaid through an increase in the land tax. Management of the funds was entrusted to the Public Property Management Office which was, as we have seen, a local elite institution.(1)

Subsequently, at the district level, local elite members also set up Peace Preservation Committees.(2) In addition members of the local elite were probably instrumental in raising funds used by some district Executive Committees to pay off soldiers from Sun's armies as they retreated through Rugao to the north.(3)

But after the arrival of the Nationalists, a non-violent occurrence as we have seen, the position of the local elite became problematic. The Nationalists set

up a new county government and appointed a new county magistrate.(4) The new county government quickly ordered the Local Peace Preservation Committees to wind up their affairs and turn over their excess cash to the county government.(5) What role, if any, was the local elite now to play in the running of county affairs?

We have already noted that under the influence of its Communist and left-wing members, after the arrival of the National Revolutionary Army, the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party launched attacks on many local elite members. These attacks led to the flight of some local leaders and the incarceration of many of those who stayed behind.(6) But we have also seen that the new county government, with no significant employees of its own, either chose to or was forced to rely on old local elite members (those same local elite members being attacked by the Party) in order to function.(7)

The result, as can be imagined, must have been confusing to those involved, and certainly is confusing to the outside analyst. On the one hand, there is solid evidence that some local leaders were attacked. On the other, there is equally good evidence that other local leaders continued to play important roles in local government. The remainder of this chapter will take up first those local leaders attacked by the Nationalists,

and then those local leaders who continued to serve under the Nationalists. It will attempt to determine why some local leaders survived and others did not, and the importance of those local leaders who continued to play an active part in local affairs.

Nationalist Attacks on the Local Elite

Nationalist attacks on the local elite began shortly after the National Revolutionary Army arrived in the county and quickly became widespread. Beginning in the second half of 1927 and continuing through 1928, Nationalist Party members and other individuals (who also may have been Party members, or people acting under the direction of Party members) accused local elite members in many districts of misappropriating public funds, squeezing and oppressing the people, or colluding with the forces of Sun Chuanfang.(8)

The pattern in most cases was similar. A particular individual would be labeled an "evil gentry" (tu lie), and a request sent to the county government for his arrest. If incriminating information surfaced in a government investigation, police then arrested the individual and held him for trial.

The trial procedure could be lengthy. Cases started in the county courts, but frequently were appealed to

higher levels, including the province's most important judicial body, the Jiangsu High Court. During this time, sometimes two or three years, the accused languished in county or provincial gaols. Bail appears to have been unknown.

But such waiting was often rewarded. By 1929 few new accusations were being leveled against local leaders. By 1930 virtually all of those formerly charged had had their sentences shortened or their cases dismissed, and were free to do as they pleased.

The case of He Lin, the well-known gentry member and district head from Lifa, was typical.(9) In July 1927 in front of the county government, sixty people accused He of being an "evil gentry," because, they alleged, He had given money to an officer of Sun's army. Several days later He was arrested and jailed. At the same time a county Party representative posted a notice saying that if any of the general public had any evidence against He, they should report it immediately.(10)

After at least one countercharge in which it was claimed that He Lin's main accuser had made false allegations, the case went to trial. Shortly thereafter, in July 1928, He was found guilty, sentenced to four years in prison, deprived of ten acres of his land, and stripped of his civil rights.(11)

But He opposed the verdict and appealed to the Jiangsu High Court in Suzhou. As a result, in February 1929, and again in April 1929, the Province held new trials. Finally, at the latter, He was declared "not guilty" and ordered released immediately.(12)

Another case, that of Cong Peigong, received similar treatment. Originally Cong was accused of being an "evil gentry" because he supposedly stole public funds. A lower provincial court then found him guilty, sentenced him to four years and two months in prison, and ordered one-third of his property confiscated.(13)

Cong appealed, a wise move as it turned out. In August 1929 the Jiangsu High Court handed down a verdict saying that there was no evidence of a crime, and that the defendant was therefore "not guilty."(14)

At least one other case is notable, although we know only the charges brought against the protagonist and not the ultimate resolution of the case. It involved the district head of Lugang, Lu Tianhuai. In July 1927 Lu was accused by a leader of the county Nationalist Party's left-wing faction, Ji Kai. The persons entangled in the case were apparently so well-known (and presumably so powerful) that the county government, before jailing Lu, tried to mediate the affair by holding meetings with both sides.(15)

But not all gentry members had their cases tried in court. Some were subjected to much more spontaneous, and perhaps harsher, treatment. After the arrival of the Nationalists, Deng Fujun, formerly an important person in Matang,(16) got together with a priest and organized a Buddhist Study Society. For a while the Society apparently was very successful in obtaining recruits among Matang's "shop clerks and young women," and the air was said to be "thick with their propaganda."(17)

But the success of Deng angered the area's "students" (probably a euphemism for young Nationalist Party followers). They gathered in front of Deng's gate and shouted slogans against Deng, including "Down with Deng [and others]...who kill people, set fires, and do not have good hearts."(18)

As a result of the students' action, Deng got scared. He closed his doors and refused to emerge, sending someone to negotiate with the students instead. These negotiations apparently involved the provincial party's Propaganda Department, as well as the Provincial Party Headquarters, before the case was concluded.(19)

The cases just described all share a number of characteristics that may help us to determine why it was that these particular individuals were singled out for harsh treatment. First, all the cases commenced in 1927,

when the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party was still dominated by Communists. Thus it is likely that the accusers, at least initially, had political motivations for their charges. But such political motivation cannot explain why the government, never Communist-dominated, continued the cases after February 1928, when members of the Communist Party left the Nationalist Party and went underground.

Moreover, all the accused were district-level, not county-level, leaders. To date I have not found a single example of a member of the Rugao county-level elite whom the Nationalists attacked, jailed, and tried in the courts.(20) On the contrary, as we shall see, after the spring of 1927 many county-level leaders continued to be active politically.

Even more interesting, the sentences handed out were unusually light in terms of the jail terms required, but all demanded the forfeiture of personal property to the government (not the Party). This leads one to believe that money, rather than background, may have been the real reason that Rugao's local leaders had their day in court.

This idea is reinforced if we examine several later cases in which the government, not the Party, initiated action against local elite members. One case involved a gentry leader, Liu Lianpu, from the Juzhen district along

the coast. Liu apparently did not take kindly to the arrival of the Nationalists, and in July 1928 the Nationalists, this time acting through their district head (qu xingzheng ju zhang), accused Liu of "occupying the district self-government office" (qu zi zhi gong suo) and misappropriating public funds. Subsequently, they jailed him.(21)

While Liu was confined, the district office made a list of the types and amounts of money that Liu had supposedly embezzled. The sum was substantial, totalling 22,700 yuan. Needless to say, the government felt that it was entitled to repayment, even though all of the stolen funds had been taken long before the Nationalists assumed office.(22)

Another case concerned Zhong Hansen, a local elite member in Libao. Initially the county government asked Zhong not only to stay at his post as head of Libao's public security affairs, but also to take over the duties of the public security office head in neighboring Xichang when that city's head of public security affairs was run out of office by a crowd which accused him of taking money from an officer in Sun's army.(23)

But later in the month, Zhong chaired a meeting of district representatives meeting in Rugao City to discuss whether to resist a proposed new tax on wood requested by

the Education Office. The meeting decided not to recognize the wood tax.(24) Two weeks later the Rugao magistrate removed Zhong from both of his public security posts,(25) an action which would appear to reinforce the idea that the county government's main objective in dealing with the local elite was to punish those who resisted in some way the government's efforts to collect funds.

This idea is strengthened still further if we examine at least one of the county government's dealings with the Merchant Association, a group containing many members of the local elite. Prior to 1927 the county Merchant Association managed some agricultural land, primarily sand fields (sha tian), or "newly-risen land", from which they derived an income. But in April 1929 the county government decided to appropriate the fields to themselves. In spite of the Merchant Association's pleas that one-third of the fields be left in Association hands for use in funding its School of Commerce, the county government ultimately required the Merchant Association to give up all the fields, along with 12,023 yuan in cash.(26) The leaders of the Association complied. Although there is no proof that any cause-and-effect relationship existed, it is notable that Merchant Association leaders did not land in jail.

In simple terms, then, attacks on the local elite, while perhaps motivated originally by political considerations, in the end may have been a simple way for the county government to enrich its coffers at the expense of the local population. Those elite members (or organizations composed of elite members) willing to pay off the county government were left alone; those unwilling became the subject of attacks and lawsuits. While there is no evidence on this point, it may be that because Nationalist governmental efforts were concentrated in the county seat, county-level local elite leaders were in a better position both to bargain with the new rulers and to assess either their chances for escaping without submission, or their need to proffer what was demanded. District-level leaders, on the other hand, were further from the Nationalist grasp and might have thought that distance, rather than submission, was their best protection.

Two exceptions to the above pattern might be cited. Both Liu Lanqing, the pre-1927 head of the county granary, and Zhu Guangyue, the pre-1927 head of the Merchant Association, had political trouble under the Nationalists, trouble that appeared to be of a different nature from that cited above. Unlike most of those local elite members attacked by the Nationalists, Liu's position after

the spring of 1927 in some ways became stronger rather than weaker. In June 1927 the Rugao magistrate invited Liu to take part in the selling of 250,000 yuan of government reserve notes, an offer that Liu accepted.(27) In August 1928 the county Merchant Association selected Liu as one of their five executive committee members.(28) But meanwhile, in April 1928, Liu had resigned as the manager of the Rugao granary,(29) and for the next several years was dogged by provincial government reports which claimed that he had "squandered" the granary's reserves. However, Liu never was charged with any crime, nor was he ever asked, publicly anyway, to make good the amount. Instead, the provincial government demanded that the county government repay the amount lost as a result of Liu's profligate activities.(30)

Zhu Guangyue was charged with an unspecified crime in 1928 by a lawyer named Li Kangyu.(31) But instead of Zhu going to jail, Li did. In July Li was charged with blackmail and extortion and his case was awaiting trial. Meanwhile, Zhu, apparently unencumbered, continued to head the Merchant Association.(32)

How can the above cases be explained? The case of Liu, as suggested in Chapter Four, may have been part of the government's brief (and unsuccessful) effort to remove local elite members from official positions of power. It

also may have been part of a larger continuing struggle to extract money from Liu, although we have no evidence that this was so. Zhu's situation, on the other hand, probably did not have its origins in governmental offices, but in a personal grudge, the source of many of Rugao's legal travails.

Communist Attacks on the Local Elite

But whatever the reasons for their suffering, by 1929 or 1930 the local elite appeared to be winning their battle with the Nationalist Party. After February 1928, when the Communists left the Nationalist Party organization and went underground, accusations against local elite members dropped precipitously. By mid-1930, when the county Party was again reorganized, new charges against local leaders were uncommon, and old cases were being dismissed.(33)

Briefly, however, the local elite faced a new challenge: between 1928 and 1930 bandits or Communists frequently attacked members of the local elite. Sometimes these attacks were isolated events directed at one or two individuals. For example, one morning when a gentry member from Zhenzhou, accompanied by his father, was starting out on a journey to Rugao City, the two men were suddenly ambushed. The son was killed instantly, while

his father was able to run into a nearby river and avoid harm.(34)

At other times the local elite and their lands were part of Communist battlefield objectives. For example, in 1928 when the Communist army was still young, the goal of the revolutionary troops when mounting an attack often was to burn and destroy a particular local landlord's dwelling.(35) In later, larger battles, the emphasis remained the same. For instance, when the Communists attacked Old Tiger Town, one of their main goals was to capture the fortified dwelling of local gentry member Zhang Chaohan, also the commander of the local militia.(36)

These increasingly successful forays by the Communists caused many members of the district elite to flee the countryside and seek safer havens in Rugao City, or even the cities of South Jiangsu. In July 1929 it was said that in Libao, Shuangdian, Chahe, and other places, the well-to-do families had all fled.(37) Similarly, in December 1929 it was reported that in one area of southern Rugao, "very few of the propertied are left in the district, they have all gone to other areas to hide."(38)

But the defeat of the Communists in the fall of 1930 apparently ended the threat to local leaders. Throughout the remainder of the Nanjing Decade no other organized

attacks on the local elite occurred, and although we have no record of it, many of those who had fled probably returned to their former abodes. In any case, it should be emphasized that those who left in the first place were almost all members of the district-level, not the county-level, elite, and that after 1930 many former district elite members apparently prospered and in the end regained much of their former power.

Active County-level Elite Members under the Nationalists

In contrast to what was happening to at least some district-level leaders, at the county level the life of local elite members after the arrival of the Nationalists appeared to be a great deal more peaceful. Perhaps the best example of what happened to county-level local elite members after the arrival of the Nationalists is provided by Sha Shidu, the probable relative of Sha Yuanbing and prior to 1927 the head of the county Education Office.(39) As we have seen, although the Nationalists after their arrival immediately appointed a new magistrate, they did not so quickly change the various office heads serving under the magistrate. As a result, Sha remained Education Office head until mid-July 1927.(40) During this time Sha also served as a member of the committee set up to discuss ways of carrying out the Party program in the schools.(41)

Since the Education Office ran this committee jointly with the county Party Headquarters, it is clear that even at this date Sha and the Party had at least some kind of a working relationship.

As 1927 wore on, the county government (as we saw in Chapter Four) did start to remove local elite members from official positions of power. As a result, by December 1927 Sha was no longer Education Office head. But the loss of his official position did not mean that Sha was no longer active in educational affairs. Quite the contrary, in that month Sha was appointed one of nine members of an Education Office Executive Committee (Jiaoyu Xingzheng Weiyuan Hui), a post he presumably used at least to watch over his old domain.(42)

Moreover, Sha moved quickly to expand his power in areas outside education. A year after the loss of his Education Office post, Sha, at the request of the county magistrate, agreed to set up and run a county relief organization (jiuji yuan), a traditional local elite function.(43) Eight months later, on August 1, 1929, he became head of the Public Property Management Office, that all-important traditional local elite organization which still controlled the movement of county government funds.(44)

But as if Sha's expansion of his powers outside the education realm were not enough to indicate that local elite members were holding increasingly important positions in the Nationalist administration, positions similar to those they had monopolized prior to 1927, Sha achieved still another victory. In February 1932 he regained his old job as head of the Rugao Education Office.(45) The comeback of at least one member of the Rugao local elite was now apparently complete.

Ma Jizhi, prior to 1927 the head of the Rugao City Executive Committee,(46) followed a similar, although not identical, path. In August 1927 Ma helped raise money for an emergency medical clinic. A year later he became one of the five directors of the Rugao Merchant Association and a year after that (1929) the head of the School of Commerce run by the Association. In May 1931, when the Merchant Association was reorganized, Ma still maintained his place on its Executive Committee, and in 1936, when we last have news of him, was publishing a local newspaper.(47) Although, unlike Sha, Ma did not regain his former post, it is clear that he continued to play a very important and influential role in Rugao affairs.

Moreover, Ma Jizhi's old job heading the Rugao City Executive Committee did not go to a true Nationalist Party loyalist. Instead, it went to Ma Shaozhou, another member

of the pre-1927 Rugao elite.(48) In December 1927 the county government appointed Ma to head the new Rugao City district office, the Nationalist replacement for the now disbanded district executive committee.(49)

As with Sha, after his initial assignment, Ma's power appeared to grow. In April 1928 he was one of six district heads chosen for a committee set up to audit the county government's finances.(50) In July, when the magistrate left the county temporarily, he put Ma, along with the head of the Public Security Office, in charge of protecting the county seat.(51) A year later in his capacity as a member of the Merchant Association's executive committee (it is not clear when he obtained this post), Ma was one of ten Rugao delegates dispatched to Nantong to attend a joint meeting of Rugao, Nantong, Haimen, and Qidong representatives, presumably held to discuss the depredations of bandit Pan Kaiju.(52)

A look at some of the other members of the pre-1927 county-level elite shows a similar pattern of activity. Two of those described in Chapter Six, Huang Qiwu and Guo Heng, after mid-1927 did the following:

Huang Qiwu In August 1927 a member of the preparatory committee to set up a Merchant Association. (53)

In December 1927 a member of the Education Office executive committee.(54)

Guo Heng In December 1930 an investigator for the Provincial Agriculture and Mining Department sent to assess conditions in Rugao after the suppression of the Communists. (55)

Other pre-1927 county-level elite members not mentioned earlier and their post-1927 activities include:

Huang Jiarui Prior to May 1927 a member of the Rugao County executive committee.(56)

In July 1927 one of three nominees for the post of Education Office head.(57)

In January 1929 an alternate member of the Rugao City Party Headquarter's Supervisory Committee.(58)

Guo Yongnan In December 1926, along with the county magistrate and the head of the Public Property Management Office, borrowed 25,000 uan for the county Education Office to meet a shortfall in education expenses. (59)

In May 1929 one of ten Rugao delegates to the joint meeting of Rugao, Nantong, Haimen, and Qidong representatives, probably held to discuss bandit Pan Kaiju.(60)

In 1929 head of the Public Property Management Office.(61)

In February 1930 a member of the county Committee for the Arbitration of Tenancy Rates (Dianzu zhongzai weiyuan hui). (62)

It should also be noted that there were several individuals who first appeared to become active in Rugao

County politics after mid-1927, but whose pattern of activities closely resembled those of pre-1927 local elite members. One of these was Xu Wuzhang. In November 1927 Xu was temporarily filling the post of Civil Affairs Section head (Min zhi ke zhang) in the county government.(63) Two months later he was made head of the county Road Construction Office (Lu gongcheng chu),(64) a position usually held by a member of the local elite. A few months after that he took over another traditional local elite job, the running of the public granary.(65)

But Xu's role was not restricted to old-style organizations. In October 1928 he was put in charge of the accounting department in the county government's newly-established Finance Office,(66) and two months later he was chosen to go to Nanjing to present the views of a Rugao group (presumably made up of local elite members) who wanted a branch of the Farmers' Bank set up in the county.(67) In addition, Xu was one of the ten Rugao representatives sent to Nantong in May 1929 to negotiate with delegates from Nantong, Haimen, and Qidong, presumably about bandit Pan Kaiju,(68) and in December 1929 was named by the county government as one of the six members of a newly-created Rural Pacification Advisory Committee (Qing xiang pingyi hui).(69)

Another possible local elite member about whom we know nothing prior to the spring of 1927 is Dong Taozhou. In August 1927 Dong was active in establishing a temporary clinic to treat the seasonal diseases of the poor.(70) In April 1928, along with Xu Wuzhang, he was appointed to take over the running of the county granary.(71)

However, in spite of our lack of knowledge about their pre-1927 activities, it is probable that the above two individuals (and a few others like them not mentioned here) also were members of the county local elite. Based on what we know about the availability of Nationalist government personnel, it is unlikely that anyone with Xu's or Dao's knowledge and talents would have been brought into Rugao from outside the county. It also is unlikely that anyone brought in from the outside would have been chosen by Rugao residents, as was Xu, to represent them to the provincial government. Rather, it is more likely that people like Xu and Dao were Rugao natives serving in some higher-level government post when the Nationalists started moving north, and that they subsequently returned to their place of birth and took up political positions there.

Active District-level Elite Members under the Nationalists

At the district level evidence for the continued activity of pre-1927 local elite leaders is harder to

find, although certainly not absent. The post-1927 position of Guan Guozhang, prior to 1927 the head of the Juegang Executive Committee, and person in charge of carrying out a pacification movement in Juegang for Sun Chuanfang,(72) is more typical. After 1927 Guan held the rather ambiguously titled post of "Juegang City Village Head" (Juegang shi cun zhang). But in spite of his title, Guan obviously had power and influence. In December 1928 it was he, and not the district head or district police officer, who telegraphed the county government asking for aid so that the district could defend itself against sea bandits.(73)

Similarly, in Zhanghuang Gang on the Chang Jiang a local elite member (yishen) named Huang Jiren continuously carried on with his activities. In January 1927, before the appearance of the Nationalists, Huang had initiated a plan to set up a Zhanghuang Gang lifesaving boat (jiusheng yidu).(74) The plan was interrupted by the Northern Expedition, but not for long. In July 1928 Huang succeeded in setting up the lifesaving boat and in carrying out its inauguration ceremonies.(75)

As can be seen from the above evidence, in spite of Nationalist and Communist attacks on members of the district-level elite, overall the nature of the local elite did not appear to change much after the spring of

1927. There still continued to be two distinct groups of local leaders, a county-level elite and a district-level elite; the members of these two groups continued to be characterized by the diversity rather than the narrowness or particularity of their interests; and the members of the local elite continued to be responsible for the carrying out of most government policies at the county and sub-county levels.

Activities of the Post-1927 Elite

A review of the post-1927 role the local elite played in the policy areas dominated by the local elite in the pre-1927 period reveals the similarity between the pre-1927 and post-1927 periods. Furthermore, it shows that in those areas where the Nationalist government increased its activity, such as public security, because they relied so heavily on local elite members to implement the Nationalist program, it was the power of the local elite, not the power of the Nationalist government, which in the end expanded the most. I will take up in turn the local elite role in formal political organizations, public security, tax collection, education, water conservancy, road building and maintenance, public utilities and transportation, charity and the operation of public granaries, and public health.

Formal Political Organization

Formal political organization is the one area of local government in which local elite participation dropped sharply after 1927. As we have seen, at both the county and district levels during the 1927 to 1937 period, some local elite members, such as Sha Shidu, continued to hold formal political positions. However, the number of such individuals must have been markedly fewer than during the 1911 to 1927 period.

We saw in Chapters Three and Four that during the first few months of their rule the Nationalists continued to rely on members of the local elite to staff government offices. After that date, however, these holdovers were replaced by younger, better educated Nationalist loyalists who sometimes had to pass special exams to obtain their jobs. Moreover, we saw that in late 1927 and early 1928 the Nationalists in many instances abolished the old elite-dominated institutions and replaced them with distinctly new and modern-style organizations. These new organizations more often than not also were staffed by young men and women from outside the county who had been trained in western-style schools.

The establishment of new governing institutions took place at both the county and the district levels. The county executive committee and governing committee, as

well as all the district governing committees and executive committees, ceased to exist. At the county level they were simply not replaced, and after mid-1927 all power, at least in theory, belonged to the magistrate's yamen and the new series of specialized offices, such as the Finance Office, set up subordinate to it. At the district level a similar concentration of power supposedly took place. Under the new system all district-level authority was vested in a district office head appointed by the magistrate rather than (as under the old arrangement) the chair of an executive committee chosen by local leaders.

A look at the rosters of officials appointed by the Nationalists shows, indeed, that very few old local elite leaders held formal appointments in the new government. This is most striking at the district level. The lists of district heads from between 1927 and 1929 contain the names of very few individuals whose careers can be traced back before the arrival of the Nationalists.(76)

But, as we have also seen in Chapters Three and Four, the old local elite members did not simply vanish from the scene when the Nationalists cut their official government ties. Instead, many stayed on, serving in an unofficial capacity the same functions that they had served before 1927, and often competing with their official government

counterparts for power and prestige. At the county level the most obvious example of such competition was the rivalry between the county government's Finance Office and the local elite's Public Property Management Office for control over county funds. At the district level, although less well-documented, similar contests also obviously took place. For example, we have described the dominant position maintained by Juegang local elite member Yuan Guozhang in spite of the presence of an official district head (with whom he probably competed) and Yuan's ambiguous and meaningless title. It is hard to believe that Yuan's ability to hold on to his power was atypical.

In addition, local elite members continued to play a role in negotiations both with officials in neighboring counties and with officials at higher levels of government. For example, in 1929 when bandit Pan Kaiju threatened the Jiangsu coast, ten of Rugao's most notable local elite members went to Nantong to take part in a meeting with their counterparts, a meeting at which they presumably discussed self-defense measures that could be taken to protect themselves against Pan.(77) Similarly, in 1928 Xu Wuzhang was sent to Nanjing to present a petition from those who wanted to establish a Farmers' Bank branch in Rugao.(78)

But after 1927 the efficacy of such efforts by members of the local elite was severely reduced. We have already seen that in the case of the Xujia dike, efforts by local leaders in Rugao failed to produce any results, an outcome unheard of prior to 1927.(79) A case involving a protest by members of the Merchant Association against what they felt to be excessive taxes levied by a toll station on one of Rugao's rivers produced an even more interesting outcome.

In November 1928 the head of an important transport tax collection station in northwest Rugao was replaced. After the new station head arrived the tax office was moved and the number of boat inspections increased. This resulted in additional levies and what the merchants saw as "extortionate taxes." The merchants protested and elected a representative, one Dai Jiren, to carry their case to both the provincial government and the central government's Finance Ministry.

Dai presented his case, and for many months the issue rebounded between various levels of government with no apparent resolution. Furthermore, in August 1929 a new twist was added to the case. At one point the Finance Ministry asked an official of the tax office to investigate. This official carried out his duties and produced a report saying that Dai Jiren was not a real

merchant but an "opportunist" who had conspired with "bad elements" to "oppress" the merchants. Such a report by a relatively low-ranking government official publicly attacking a leading member of a county's local elite would have been unthinkable prior to 1927. Moreover, as far as I have been able to determine, the issue of the tax was never entirely resolved.(80)

In sum, after 1927 the Nationalists neither drove the local elite completely from power nor incorporated local leaders fully into official government organizations. The resulting two-tiered power structure, one official, the other unofficial, simply could not function effectively. On the one hand, the Nationalists commanded an organizational network that they could not rely on to implement their programs. On the other hand, because the local elite were unable completely to insert themselves into the formal Nationalist political structure, their communication links with higher levels of government were broken and their effectiveness as local leaders, at least in part, curtailed. Moreover, because local leaders were increasingly isolated within their localities, and because within these localities the strength of these same local leaders continued to grow, as the Nanjing Decade progressed the potential for opposition to Nationalist rule increased.

Public Security

In direct contrast to their decreased participation in formal political organizations, after 1927 the local elite took an increasing responsibility for their areas' defense. As Chapter Eight makes clear, after the Nationalists arrived the number and size of local militia grew dramatically. In part this was due to Nationalist appeals to local elite members to organize militia to help fight Communists and bandits. In part it was due to local elite fears that as the strength of the bandits and Communists grew, the only way to protect themselves and their lands was to organize their own military forces.(81) Occasionally, the local elite when faced with a threat still used the old method of appealing to higher levels of government for aid. But increasingly the use of appeals to higher levels was restricted to special and limited circumstances; for example the late 1929 appeal by the gentry (renshi) of Zhanghuang Gang for the return of a particular warship to protect their port on the Chang Jiang.(82)

After the defeat of the Communists, the locally organized militia apparently stayed in place, and may even have increased in size. For example, in August 1931 the militia played an important role in the capture of a Communist leader still on the lam.(83) Moreover,

individual gentry members continued to have responsibility for maintaining peace in their areas. For instance, only if they had the guarantee of a prosperous gentry member (Yinshi shishen) could former Communist followers avoid being formally charged with a crime.(84)

In other words, after the arrival of the Nationalists, a dramatic and apparently permanent shift in the control over the means of coercion took place in Rugao. Prior to 1927 control over the weapons of force resided in either the provincial soldiery or the county police. If they wanted military support, local gentry had to appeal to either county or provincial officials. After 1927 the situation was completely reversed. Provincial and county officials became dependent on the militia controlled and funded by the local elite (either in the particular districts or in the county seat) to provide the central authorities with much needed military support. In the area of public security, the power of the local elite had increased dramatically indeed.

Tax Collection

Chapters Four and Five describe the important role the local elite also continued to play in tax collection and the management of tax money after it came into government hands. Moreover, they show that the local

elite were also able to resist effectively virtually all governmental efforts to levy new taxes or increase old ones.(85) In other words, the arrival of the Nationalists seems to have had little impact on the financial affairs of the county government.

However, one additional point needs to be raised. Prior to 1927 district leaders, acting through district executive and district governing committees, had the power to, and often did, levy taxes in their districts.(86) But after 1927, all taxes were supposed to be levied by the county, not by individual sub-county units.(87) This principle was applied even in areas relating to public security. For example, in December 1929, at the height of the disorders caused by the Communists' resistance movement, in order to finance his district's militia, the head of one Rugao district asked the county government for permission to collect a supplement on the land tax. The county magistrate thought this a grand idea and petitioned the provincial government asking that all Rugao districts be allowed such an assessment. But the province said no, that a tax for the militia was permissible, but only if managed by the county, not a district government.(88)

Where, then, did the newly-formed district or local militia units get their funds? We know that they did not get them from higher levels, either civilian or military,

because government regulations concerning the use of local forces to exterminate bandits and Communists said that all funding for such efforts was to come from the counties or the municipalities concerned.(89) But obviously the Rugao County government did not have the funds. (And even if they did it is unlikely that they would have passed them on to local gentry.) One must conclude then, that such funds were raised illegally in particular sub-county units.

But whether these funds represented an increased burden on the local population remains unclear. We know that the Rugao County government throughout the Nanjing Decade had difficulty collecting the taxes owed it. It is at least possible that a portion of these supposedly "uncollected" county taxes were siphoned off at the district level and used for district-level purposes. If so, the collecting of tax money at the district level would just be one more function that the district-level gentry continued to carry out after 1927, although it would now be an illegitimate, rather than a legitimate, activity.

Education

In education the role played by the local elite after 1927 was identical to that they played before 1927.

Chapters Four and Five make clear that at the county level through the Public Property Management Office, local elite members helped to raise funds for education. Similarly, at the district level individual gentry members such as Lu Ziyuan of Shuangdian took the responsibility for setting up and funding local educational institutions. Moreover, gentry members like Ma Jizhi continued to be instrumental in running some institutions, in Ma's case the Merchant Association-sponsored School of Commerce. Moreover, there is no evidence that the Nationalists changed the nature of Rugao's educational system. The curriculum apparently did not become more modern, nor did access to education become more widespread.(90) All these factors indicate continuing local elite dominance of the school system.

Water Conservancy

In water conservancy, as in education, the role of the local elite remained largely unchanged. Local elite members continued to bring water conservancy problems in their areas to the attention of the county government and to ask that the county take the necessary steps to solve them.(91) In at least one instance local elite members also took the initiative and did dredging work to clear the sand from two of Rugao's harbors on the Chang Jiang.(92)

But as one reads local reports concerning water conservancy work in Rugao after 1927, it becomes apparent that the bulk of the responsibility for water conservancy work shifted away from the local elite and onto the county government, a shift the county government was ill-equipped to bear. The result throughout the Nanjing Decade most likely was a deterioration of the streams, canals, and dikes on which so many Rugao residents depended for survival.

Moreover, the inability of Rugao's local elite after 1927 to communicate with higher-level officials, as they had so easily done during the pre-1927 period, seriously affected water conservancy in the county. Many water conservancy problems in Rugao were caused by individuals in neighboring counties. Prior to 1927, as we have seen, by appealing speedily and effectively to elite members in neighboring counties, or to higher officials, local gentry could alleviate water conservancy problems in their own districts.(93) After 1927, as the case of the Xujia Dike shows, local gentry members, lacking such higher level ties, were no longer able to perform this function. Since county-level officials were also unable or uninterested, Rugao during the Nanjing Dcade suffered from at least one disaster related to water conservancy that had been carefully avoided for centuries.(94)

Road Building and Maintenance

The disinclination of the local elite to be concerned with their areas' infrastructure is also seen when one examines Rugao County's Nanjing Decade era road building and road maintenance. Contrary to the large number of gentry-sponsored road building projects mentioned in the press prior to 1927, I have not been able to find one report from the Nanjing Decade which mentions local elite involvement in road building or maintenance. In part this may be due to the relatively large effort the Nationalist government at both the provincial and county levels made to build new roads. However, in spite of these official projects most Rugao districts, especially those along the coast, remained inaccessible by motorized transport. Prior to 1927 correcting this situation would have been a local elite responsibility. After 1927, it appeared to be no one's concern.

Public Utilities and Transportation

Before 1927 local elite members were active in bringing both electricity and improved public transportation to Rugao. After 1927 local residents continued to provide these services, but it is unlikely that these local residents were considered members of the local elite. For example, in April 1933 a new and larger

electrical plant opened outside Rugao City. The stockholders of the company were "all enterprising local young men," clearly a different group from that which had owned the old electric company and had chosen the venerable Sha Yuanbing as their chair in 1926.(95)

Similarly, in the spring of 1928 a "local person" started raising capital to buy a steamboat that would ply the canal waters between Rugao City and the coastal town of Juegang. He planned to raise 14,000 yuan by selling 140 stock certificates worth 140 yuan each. By December, although the name of the individual heading the venture appears to have changed, the cash had been raised and the service started.(96) At no point is gentry involvement with this enterprise ever mentioned.

In other words, although after 1927 public utilities and public transport remained in private hands, the nature of the people running these enterprises appears to have changed. No longer did older members of the local elite run these companies in addition to performing their other civic duties. Instead, younger individuals specifically interested in new business opportunities and only peripherally concerned with the other policy areas in which old members of the local elite had played a vital role, became their organizers and managers.

Charity and the Operation of Public Granaries

As with water conservancy, the local elite role in charity work appears to have stagnated after 1927. True, pre-1927 elite leaders continued to head Rugao's major charitable organizations,(97) and individual instances of continued local elite initiative in the interest of human welfare, such as the setting up of the lifesaving boat in Zhanghuang Gang, continued.(98) But overall, under the Nationalists the size and number of private charitable efforts appears to have declined.

The reduction of local elite efforts to help the poor and unfortunate can best be seen in the decline of public granaries. Prior to 1925 the press frequently mentions local elite-run granaries located not only in the county seat, but in the various districts as well.(99) After 1927 these granaries disappear from view, apparently one must conclude, because they ceased to exist. In their stead the county government made some efforts to set up public granaries, none of which succeeded. In 1928 Magistrate Wang wrote that county granaries had not made progress because they were not well-run.(100) Similarly the Shuangdian granary set up in 1931 by the Farmers' Bank never seems to have obtained the trust of the peasants and as a result was not able to collect or dispense a significant amount of grain.(101)

In sum then, while after 1927 the local elite continued to play a role in charitable work analogous to that they had played in the past, the scope of this role appears to have been significantly reduced. To a limited extent the government moved in to fill the remaining gap, but available evidence would seem to indicate that government efforts were minimal and not terribly successful. As a result, after 1927 the people of Rugao probably could expect less from any type of charitable agency than they could before the Nationalists came to power.

Public Health

To a large extent, as with so many things, public health efforts after 1927 also remained in local elite hands. For example, in August 1927 because seasonal diseases were rampant, Ma Jizhi and others raised money to set up a temporary clinic to serve the poor.(102) Along similar lines one old local elite leader, as we have already seen, opened and ran a dog pound which for several years reduced the incidence of rabies in the county. But after that local elite member died, the dog pound closed down, and rabies once again started on the upswing.(103) Neither the government nor another local leader moved in to fill the gap, indicating that in public health, as in

other areas, the role of the gentry declined but that nothing took its place.

Other Local Elite Activities

After 1927 the loss of gentry connections to the county government appears to have meant that they no longer could obtain personal commendations for their constituents. In addition, because of increased Nationalist government worries about public security, plays and other festivals continued to be strictly banned.(104) No new types of activity appear to have arisen to replace these or any other function performed by local leaders prior to 1927.

Summary of Post-1927 Local Elite Activities

The above discussion shows that the arguments of those who hold that the Nationalists tried to "control" members of the local elite are much too simple. True, the Nationalists did bring some local elite members to court and charge them with being "evil gentry", but the few local elite members who were brought to court are strongly overshadowed by the many local elite members who continued to prosper under Nationalist aegis. As I have suggested earlier, pecuniary gain, rather than "control" was much more likely the Nationalist goal in dealing with local

elite members during the early years of the Nanjing Decade.

Moreover, such a finding would be in line with Richard Bush's conclusions about the relationship that developed between the Nationalists and the Shanghai capitalists. In Shanghai Bush found that the Nationalists attacked only those businessmen with whom they could not work out an arrangement for funds. He states:

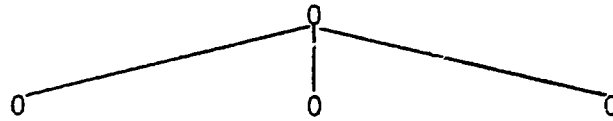
There is no denying that Chiang [Jiang] and his subordinates resorted to coercive measures [against Shanghai capitalists]. However, their significance has been greatly exaggerated, partly because the sources used were limited and biased, and partly because no one has bothered to explain why the incident occurred in the first place...Chiang needed money to meet the challenge of the Ankuochun [a warlord group], which had reached the Yangtze [Chang Jiang] in mid-April [1927], and then to resume the Northern Expedition. The Nationalists [after April 25] chose to deal with businessmen on an individual basis, and a frequent technique in dealing with resistance was to order the businessman's arrest, justified by the businessman's real or fictitious collaboration with Sun Ch'uan-fang. The Shanghai District [Nationalist Party] headquarters even created a special office to hear complaints of 'corrupt practices by the gentry and other miscreants.'(105)

In other words, what Bush found in Shanghai appears to have been true in Rugao as well, and for the same reasons. As one reads about Nanjing Decade Rugao, one is immediately struck by the court cases that were brought against Rugao gentry members. Moreover, the facts of each case were usually printed in great detail. Only much

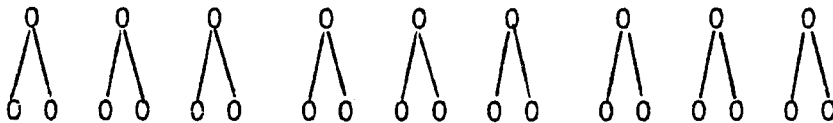
patience and diligence later reveals the large number of gentry members who were never tried in the courts and whose power, throughout the Nanjing Decade, continued to grow.

But the role played by the local elite after 1927, although similar to that it played before 1927, was not identical. Prior to 1927 we saw that the local elite played a very active role in county affairs. After 1927 the local elite continued to engage in most of the same activities they had taken part in before, but with some new and significant differences. Most important, the role of the local elite in formal political organizations, road building efforts, water conservancy, and charitable efforts, all traditional sources of local elite power, declined, while the importance assigned to the local elite effort to maintain public security, not traditionally an area of Rugao local elite strength, increased. The result was a bifurcated system of political power that in part immobilized both sides. It can best be diagrammed as follows:

Government



Local
Elite



In other words, after 1927 the Rugao government and the Rugao local elite reached a standoff. The Rugao government had strong ties with the provincial and central governments and access to the resources those two governments controlled. The Rugao local elite were isolated within their local areas, but these local areas too had their resources, as the local elites' ability to raise significant militia forces showed. By 1937, when the Japanese attacked North China, both sides were well-entrenched, and stagnation, rather than the great growth or imminent collapse of either side, appeared to be the order of the day.

Chapter Seven

Notes

(1) Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 5 April 1927, p. 3; and 10 April 1927, p. 4.

(2) Shi Bao, 27 April 1927, p. 4.

(3) Shi Bao, 12 April 1927, p. 4.

(4) See Chapter Three for details concerning the arrival of the Nationalist armies in Rugao and the establishment of the new Rugao County government.

(5) Shi Bao, 28 June 1927, p. 8.

(6) See Chapter Two.

(7) See Chapter Three.

(8) For examples of these kinds of attacks see "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang" [Conditions of party affairs in Rugao], Jiangsu Dang Sheng [Jiangsu party voice], no. 16 (11 November 1928), p. 16; and Shi Bao, 19 July 1927, p. 2; 11 August 1927, p. 5; 23 December 1927, p. 3; and 26 January 1928, p. 8.

(9) See Chapter Six for details of He's pre-1927 activities.

(10) Shi Bao, 24 July 1927, p. 3; and 8 July 1928, p. 8.

(11) Shi Bao, 31 December 1927, p. 2; and 1 August 1928, p. 4.

(12) Shi Bao, 11 March 1929, p. 4; 12 April 1929, p. 4; 2 May 1929, p. 4.

(13) Shi Bao, 22 December 1928, p. 4; and 19 August 1928, p. 4.

(14) Shi Bao, 19 August 1929, p. 4.

(15) Shi Bao, 20 July 1927, p. 10. For earlier information on Lu Tianhui see Shi Bao, 19 July 1926, sec. 1, p. 2.

(16) See Chapter Six for details of Deng's pre-1927 activities.

(17) Zhong Yang Ri Bao [The central daily news] (Shanghai), 23 February 1928, sec.3, p. 3.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Ibid.

(20) The possible exceptions are Zhu Guangyue, the head of the Merchant Association, and Liu Lanqing, the head of the Public Property Management Office. The case against Zhu came to nought, and he continued to hold his position. Liu was forced to resign, but was never tried or jailed.

(21) Shi Bao, 27 July 1928, p. 4. See Shi Bao, 14 April 1926, p. 2, for an earlier reference to Liu.

(22) Shi Bao, 14 August 1928, p. 4.

(23) Shi Bao, 8 June 1927, p. 8. See Chapter Six for a description of Zhong's pre-1927 activities in Libao.

(24) Shi Bao, 27 June 1929, p. 4.

(25) Shi Bao, 1 July 1927, p. 8.

(26) Shi Bao, 12 April 1929, p. 4; 19 May 1929, p. 4; 27 June 1929, p. 4; and 26 August 1929, p. 4.

(27) Shi Bao, 3 July 1927, p. 8.

(28) Shi Bao, 24 August 1928, p. 8.

(29) Shi Bao, 25 April 1928, p. 7.

(30) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao [Jiangsu Province government gazette], no. 466 (17 June 1930), p. 9; and no. 844 (14 September 1931), p. 4.

(31) Shi Bao, 23 February 1928, p. 3.

(32) Shi Bao, 18 July 1928, p. 8.

(33) See Chapter Two for a history of the Party during this period.

(34) Shi Bao, 18 October 1928, p. 4.

(35) See for example Liu Ruilong, Huiyi Hong Shisi Jun [Remembrances of the Fourteenth Red Army] ([Nanjing]: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), p. 41.

(36) Zhang Aiping, "Weigong Laohu Zhuang" [Siege of Old Tiger Town], in Xinghuo Liaoyuan [Sparks that started a prairie fire]; ed. Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun Sanshi Nian Zhengwen Pianqi Weiyuanhui, vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1958-1960), p. 942. For a description of the battle to take Old Tiger Town, see Chapter Eight.

(37) Shi Bao, 29 July 1929, p. 4.

(38) Shi Bao, 23 December 1929, p. 3.

(39) See Chapter Six for information on Sha's pre-1927 activities.

(40) Shi Bao, 13 June 1927, p. 6; 18 July 1927, p. 3.

(41) Shi Bao, 29 June 1927, p. 8.

(42) Shi Bao, 11 December 1927, p. 3.

(43) Shi Bao, 14 November 1928, p. 4; and 26 November 1928, p. 4.

(44) Shi Bao, 22 July 1929, p. 4; and 29 July 1929, p. 4.

(45) Jiangsu Jiaoyu Gailan [An overview of Jiangsu education] (n.p., 1933; reprint ed., Taipei, Taiwan: Chuanji Wenxue Chubanshe, 1971), sec. 1, pp. 88 and 133.

(46) See Chapter Six for a list of Ma Jizhi's pre-1927 activities.

(47) Shi Bao, 6 August 1927, p. 5; 24 August 1928, p. 8; 20 June 1929, p. 4; 16 May 1931, p. 4; and Su Heng Banyuekan [Su Heng semi-monthly], no. 17-18, p. 64.

(48) See Chapter Six for information on Ma Shaozhou's pre-1927 activities.

- (49) Shi Bao, 21 December 1927, p. 2.
- (50) Shi Bao, 8 April 1928, p. 7.
- (51) Shi Bao, 22 July 1928, p. 4.
- (52) Shi Bao, 8 May 1929, p. 4. See Chapter Four for a discussion of Pan Kaiju.
- (53) Shi Bao, 14 August 1927, p. 5.
- (54) Shi Bao, 11 December 1927, p. 3.
- (55) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 632 (30 December 1930), p. 13.
- (56) Shi Bao, 10 August 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 14 November 1927, sec. 1, p. 4; and 13 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (57) Shi Bao, 2 July 1927, p. 8.
- (58) Shi Bao, 11 January 1929, p. 4. It should be noted that this is one of the rare instances when a local elite member is mentioned as holding a Party, rather than a government, post.
- (59) Shi Bao, 16 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (60) Shi Bao, 8 May 1929, p. 4.
- (61) Shi Bao, 22 July 1929, p. 4.
- (62) Shi Bao, 6 February 1930, p. 3.
- (63) Shi Bao, 2 November 1927, p. 3. In this reference a different character is used for the "Wu" in Xu's name, but because of the pattern of Xu's later activities I believe that it is the same person.
- (64) Shi Bao, 27 January 1928, p. 8.
- (65) Shi Bao, 25 April 1928 p. 7.
- (66) Shi Bao, 12 October 1928, p. 4.
- (67) Shi Bao, 22 December 1928, p. 4.

- (68) Shi Bao, 8 May 1929, p. 4.
- (69) Shi Bao, 23 December 1929, p. 3.
- (70) Shi Bao, 6 August 1927, p. 5.
- (71) Shi bao, 25 April 1928, p. 7.
- (72) Shi Bao, 16 September 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 22 October 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; 5 December 1926, sec. 1, p. 2; and 18 February 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (73) Shi Bao, 14 December 1928, p. 4.
- (74) Shi Bao, 9 January 1927, sec. 1, p. 4.
- (75) Shi Bao, 1 August 1928, p. 4.
- (76) For lists of post-1927 Rugao district heads see Shi Bao, 21 December 1927, p. 2; 8 April 1928, p. 7; 23 December 1928, p. 4; 8 May 1929, p. 4, 13 August 1929, p. 4.
- (77) Shi Bao, 8 May 1929, p. 4.
- (78) Shi Bao, 22 December, p. 4.
- (79) See the section on "Water Conservancy" in Chapter Four.
- (80) Many articles on the tax collection dispute are available. See Shi Bao 23 November 1928, p. 4; 7 March 1929, p. 4; 15 March 1929, p. 4; 18 March 1929, p. 5; 3 April 1929, p. 4; and Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 78 (7 March 1929), p. 17; no. 94 (27 March 1929), p. 11; no. 104 (9 April 1929), pp. 5-8; no. 157 (12 June 1929), p. 13; no. 176 (4 July 1929), p. 13; no. 199 (1 August 1929), pp. 13-14; no. 211 (15 August 1929), pp. 12-13; and no. 212 (16 August 1929), p. 12.
- (81) See Chapter Eight for a detailed description of the rise of militia after 1927.
- (82) Shi Bao, 18 November 1929, p. 4.
- (83) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 851 (22 September 1931), pp. 10-12.

(84) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 450 (29 May 1930), pp. 1-3.

(85) See the sections on "Finance and Taxes" in Chapters Four and Five.

(86) For example in Juegang local leaders decided to raise the land tax to repair a dike. See the section on "Water Conservancy" in Chapter Six.

(87) Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 338 (16 January 1930), p. 7.

(88) Ibid.

(89) See for example the regulations issued in May 1930 for the Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui Three-Province Bandit Suppression Command. They appear in Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao, no. 450 (29 May 1930), pp. 1-3.

(90) See the sections on "Education" in chapters four and five.

(91) See the section on "Water Conservancy" in Chapter Four.

(92) Zhong Yang Ri Bao, 5 January 1933, sec. 2, p. 2.

(93) See the section on "Water Conservancy" in Chapter Six.

(94) See the section on "Water Conservancy" in Chapter Four.

(95) North China Herald (Shanghai), 26 April 1933, p. 134.

(96) Shi Bao, 9 April 1928, p. 7; and 29 December 1928, p. 4.

(97) See for example Shi Bao, 14 November 1928, p. 4; and 26 November 1928, p. 4.

(98) Shi Bao, 1 August 1928, p. 4. See also p. 432 of this chapter.

(99) See the section on "Charity and the Operation of Public Granaries" in Chapter Six.

(100) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian Xianzheng Gaikuang" [Conditions of Rugao County government], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 5 (11 October 1928): 65.

(101) Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang Zonghang [Jiangsu Farmers' Bank head office], ed., Disan Nian zhi Jiangsu Sheng Nongmin Yinhang [The third year of the Jiangsu Farmers' Bank] (Zhenjiang: 1930-1932), p. 208.

(102) Shi Bao, 6 August 1927, p. 5.

(103) See the section on "Health and Sanitation" in Chapter Five.

(104) See for example Shi Bao, 6 January 1928, p. 7.

(105) Richard Clarence Bush, "Industry and Politics in Kuomintang China: The Nationalist Regime and Lower Yangtze Cotton Mill Owners, 1927-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1978), pp. 104 and 106.

Chapter Eight

The Communist Movement in Rugao

In spite of its ordinariness and lack of well-known Party or government officials, between 1928 and 1930 Rugao often made the pages of the Chinese newspapers and was the subject of much discussion in Jiangsu political circles. Why? Because during these years Rugao was a hotbed of Communist activity in the lower Chang Jiang valley and along with its neighboring county to the west, Taixing, part of the only locality in all Jiangsu where the Communists posed a serious threat to Nationalist control.

In the end the Communists were defeated, but their brief appearance in Rugao and the ability of the Nationalists to overwhelm them raises some interesting questions about politics during the Nanjing Decade. First, what was the nature of the Communist movement in Rugao? How was it similar to, or different from, Communist organizational efforts going on in other parts of China at the same time, and/or later Communist efforts during the Anti-Japanese War years? Second, how did the Nationalists counter their opposition? Were Nationalist policies followed in Rugao similar to or different from later policies followed elsewhere? Three, during the 1928

to 1930 period the Communists and the Nationalists faced similar problems in the Chinese countryside. Most important, both dealt with existing local leaders, and both made decisions about whether and to what extent these local leaders were allowed to function under a new political regime. As we have seen, the Nationalists tried to break the power of local leaders and failed. What about the Communists? During the same time, at the same place, what was their relationship to local leaders and what importance, if any, did this relationship have for their eventual defeat?

The Origins of the Rugao Communists

Communism probably spread into Rugao from neighboring Nantong, the hub of early Chinese Communist Party activity in North Jiangsu. Nantong Normal School was located there and its students and teachers were early followers of the Communist movement. "Nantong Normal" as it was known, was founded by the noted reformer Zhang Jian. It did not charge anything for board so that students from poorer homes if they could scrape together thirty yuan or so could study there for a full year. "Nantong Normal" also had a large library and at an early date was influenced by the May 4th Movement. By the time of the May 30th demonstrations in 1925, the student association was almost

totally in Communist hands and was able to stage an uprising, although its scope is unclear.(1)

Later in 1925, following the death of Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen), Zhang Jian started holding memorial services for Sun at the public athletic grounds in Nantong. The Communists took advantage of these large gatherings to distribute literature describing the fundamentals of communism and interpreting the Three People's Principles of Sun from a communist perspective. Local students reportedly snapped up this literature with so much enthusiasm that often there were not enough pamphlets to meet the demand. Because youth leaders at this time also avidly discussed Marxist ideas, the Nationalist Party soon included young Marxists within its ranks, and Nantong became the Chinese Communist Party center in North Jiangsu.(2)

At least one leading member of the Rugao Communist Party, Wang Yingzhao, as well as many other lesser figures were graduates of "Nantong Normal."(3) Not much is known about Wang except that in January of 1927, along with Communist Party member Lu Jinghuai, he was also a founding member of the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party.(4) At this time most Nationalist Party county-level organizations in Jiangsu were under Communist Party control, and there is no reason to think that Rugao was an

exception.(5)

The background of Wang Yingzhao was typical. One commentator noted at the time that most of the Communists in Rugao were "intellectual elements".(6) Most appeared to be graduates of normal schools either in Rugao or Nantong, or even of normal schools in places as far away as Nanjing, Shanghai, or Beijing. The largest number of Rugao Communist Party members, like Lu Jinghuai, seemed to be graduates of Rugao's normal school.(7) Although there is no evidence to prove that there were ties among the normal schools of Rugao, Nantong, and other areas, it is likely at least that teachers and students in Rugao had contacts with their colleagues in Nantong or at least followed events in Nantong with enough interest and enthusiasm to be heavily influenced by them.

The large number of highly educated individuals among the Rugao Communists indirectly tells us something more about them, i.e. that they came from comparatively well-to-do, although not necessarily wealthy, homes. Although the amount of money needed to study at "Nantong Normal" was low, few families without some means could afford to educate a child well enough to allow him or her to attend a normal school. Few also could release their offspring from labor in the family fields, or scrape up the money necessary for a minimal existence away from

home.

The Communist-Nationalist Alliance

Like Wang and Lu many Communist Party members initially were involved heavily with the local Nationalist Party. For example Wang was not only a founding member of the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party, but he was also a member of the first, and still underground, committee which directed Rugao Nationalist Party affairs from January through May of 1927.(8) Later in July, after the National Revolutionary Army swept through Rugao and Nationalist Party affairs began to be conducted openly, he was appointed to the Rugao County Party Special Committee and made the head of its propaganda section, a post he held until that committee was disbanded in November.(9) In addition he was active in some of the mass organizations which in Rugao operated with local Party sanction throughout 1927. In June he took charge of preparing for an anti-Japanese rally in Rugao,(10) and in October he served on the Nationalist committee to make plans for the setting up of a Rugao labor organization.(11)

Wang was not alone. As mentioned earlier, Lu Jinghuai also served on the first Rugao County Nationalist Party Committee. Another Communist leader, Su Deshen, was secretary of the County Party's Peasant, Worker, and

Merchant Department and was nominated by the County Party to the various committees guiding peasants', workers', and merchants' activities, although in the case of the peasants' organization the Provincial Party prevented him from officially assuming his post.(12)

The Communists were also intertwined with the Nationalists at the sub-county level. Wang Yuwen, later an important Communist leader in Rugao, provides a good example. Wang was a twenty-five or twenty-six year old youth from the town of Lugang in southwest Rugao. He was a graduate of a Rugao elementary school and a Shanghai normal school. In 1927 when the National Revolutionary Army arrived in Rugao he was appointed head of the County Party's youth section (Xian dangbu qingnian bu ganshi). Subsequently he became a worker in the Public Security Office of his native town.(13)

Relatively good relations between the Nationalists and the Communists in Rugao were maintained until November 1927, later than in many other places. Earlier that year, in April, Jiang Jieshi carried out a bloody purge of Communists from the Nationalist Party. Only at lower levels and only within selected areas did the struggle between the two groups for control of the Party continue for a longer period of time. Rugao was one of those areas.

In November the Provincial Party ordered all county-level Party Special Committees to disband, including the Rugao Party Special Committee.(14) It then sent out representatives from Nanjing to investigate Party affairs in each county. One Huang Dansheng arrived in Rugao and on successive days Wang Yingzhao accompanied him to each of Rugao's eighteen districts so that Huang could investigate Party affairs in detail.(15) Wang was apparently not only still hanging on to his power, but increasing it.

This was not totally out of line with what was happening in other areas of the province. Many observers such as the well-known correspondent George Sokolsky, noted that after the resignation of Jiang Jieshi from his positions of Party and government leadership in August 1927, "radical" activities significantly increased in Nanjing and Shanghai, and approached the fever peaks of late 1926 and early 1927.(16)

On November 24, 1927 the Jiangsu Provincial Party approved the new members of the Rugao branch Party organizations now known as the Temporary Executive and Supervisory Committees. Two and possibly three members of the five-member Executive Committee, Wang Yingzhao, Ge Xiangong and possibly Yang Yuying, as well as the sole member of the Supervisory Committee, Su Deshen, were

Communists.(17) This was more unusual. According to Geisert, the Western Hills Clique, not the Communists, dominated the Jiangsu Party organizations set up in the late fall of 1927.(18) Rugao was now clearly out of step.

But the anomaly in Rugao did not last long. Sometime between December 20, 1927 and February 24, 1928 (when the Temporary Executive and Supervisory Committees were disbanded), Wang Yingzhao, Ge Xiangong, Yang Yuying, and Su Desheng all resigned their positions and went underground. For a while they used the Nationalist Party's mass organizations such as the Woman's Association (Funu xiehui) and the General Labor Union (Zong gong hui) to mount attacks on their enemy, the Western Hills Clique, which, as elsewhere in Jiangsu, had come to the forefront in Rugao.

But the Communists did not succeed. The Temporary Supervisory Committee issued arrest warrants for many well-known Communist leaders and it was only because the Temporary Executive and Supervisory Committee itself went out of existence that the Communist leaders were not picked up and imprisoned.(19)

In spite of these events, for a brief period it looked as though Wang and the other Communists might re-emerge. In February 1928 the Rugao Party Special Committee of 1927 was restored as were similar committees

throughout Jiangsu. Wang had been a member of the Rugao Party Special Committee, but when he tried to take up his old office he came under attack. The time for collaboration between Communists and Nationalists was over; starting in the spring of 1928 the Rugao Communists would face the Nationalists on the battlefields and in the villages but no longer in the official political meeting places and offices of the county capital.

The Communists in the Countryside

In spite of their advanced educational background and the concentration of many of their activities in the county capital where the Nationalist Party branch organization was located, Rugao's Communists were not totally removed from the Chinese peasantry, and not totally uncaring about peasant problems. In Zhenzhou, a district in southern Rugao, as well as in other places, they carried out the redistribution of land. In other areas they encouraged the peasants to take part in resist-rent movements and in the destruction, burning and looting of landlord dwellings.(20) But during 1927 the concern Rugao's Communists showed for the peasantry and the extent to which they carried out activities among them did not get as much attention - perhaps because they were not as well organized or as widespread - as similar

attempts made by Communists in eastern Taixing, immediately adjacent to the western Rugao border.

The landscape of Taixing was identical to that of Rugao: flat, open, fertile, and densely settled. Rice and cotton were the main crops, and as in Rugao banditry was not a major problem. Due to its smaller area Taixing's total population was only 800,000 or 900,000 plus, half that of its neighbor. As a result, for administrative purposes Taixing was classified as a county of the middle rank. By most accounts Taixing was a prosperous place whose peasants lived peaceably and happily.(21)

But in 1926 Mao Zedong, using the alias of Run Zhi, appeared on the Taixing horizon and raised doubts about this picture of peasant prosperity and well-being. Mao was traveling about investigating rural conditions not only in Hunan, but in Jiangsu and Zhejiang as well. One of the places he stopped was Taixing.

Mao claimed that while in the past most people assumed that the Jiangsu and Zhejiang peasants were well-to-do, a look at actual conditions revealed that exactly the opposite was true. For example, in the eastern part of Taixing (that part near the Rugao border) he found that because of drought the 1926 harvest had been small. As a result, the peasants demanded rent reduction.

The landlords were not willing, and a fierce battle between peasants and landlords ensued. One peasant who plotted to kill landlords was reported to the county government. The government then arrested thirty peasants and put them in jail.(22) While from Mao's account it is not clear whether the 1926 protests in Taixing involved the Communists, from other sources it is clear that by early 1927 in the eastern part of Taixing the Communists were organizing and encouraging the peasants to resist local landlords.

The Communists got started in Diaojiawang, a village in eastern Taixing a little more than three miles (ten li) northeast of the market town of Yellow Bridge (Huang Qiao). Their leader was Shen Yi, a native of Yellow Bridge, a Nationalist Party activist, and a member of the Taixing County Nationalist Party Headquarters Committee (Taixing Xian dangbu weiyuanhui). At Diaojiawang Shen organized a Peasant Association (Nongmin xiehui) and orchestrated a "resist taxes, resist tribute, resist rent, and resist debt" movement. (Usually a movement such as Shen's would also call for resisting "interest" and be known as a "five-resist" movement. It is not clear why "resist interest" was not a part of Shen's program.) He also encouraged his followers to become members of the local Nationalist Party branch.(23)

Shen's involvement with the Nationalists followed the same pattern as that of the Communists in Rugao, and lasted roughly the same length of time, that is up until the winter of 1928. While initially Shen appeared to wield more power than his Rugao counterparts, like those counterparts his ability to wield this power lasted only briefly.

In June 1927 either because he demanded that the local government propagandize rent reduction and it refused,(24) because of a fight between Party and government officials for control over local affairs,(25) or because of a struggle over the command of local security forces(26) (The sources do not agree, but probably all of these causes were involved), Shen Yi led a large crowd to surround the county government office. The local security forces, under the control of one of Shen's enemies, then opened fire on the crowd killing several of them. Since Shen was a Nationalist Party member in good standing this action by the security forces resulted in a public outcry. Shen thus won an important victory.(27) The magistrate was immediately replaced by a new appointee, Ding Zuoze, a man loyal to Shen, and consequently for the next eight months Shen had a free hand in Taixing county. Nationalist Party members rushed to associate with him and harmonious relations developed

between the Party and the government. Shen's organizing among the peasants also continued apace. By March or April of 1928 he had a sizeable number of followers in Taixing.(28)

The rapid expansion of Shen's power eventually led to his break with Magistrate Ding. In the winter of 1928 Ding probably saw that relationships with Communists like Shen were an increasingly severe liability, and that to save his own neck he had to do something to curtail Shen. He also might have come to fear that Shen would direct his power against the magistracy and Ding himself. But for whatever reasons, and we have no record of them, Ding turned on Shen.

On the one hand, Ding went to Yellow Bridge and by telephone called a meeting of the magistrates of Rugao, Taixing, Taixian and Jingjiang to plan for a united defense against Communists including Shen. On the other hand he sent a letter to the Nanjing government denouncing Shen. Apparently he also tried, unsuccessfully, to negotiate some sort of an agreement with Shen, because (before unexpectedly fleeing altogether from Taixing) he visited Shen in Diaojiawang.(29)

After being visited by Ding, Shen Yi apparently also saw the writing on the wall and realized that he had to act. In the middle of the night he led more than one

thousand of his followers in an uprising that devastated more than sixty villages, burned out several hundreds of families, and caused many deaths. It also led to the capture and death of Shen, himself. After his followers were suppressed by the Taixing county public security forces (led by one of Shen's old arch-enemies), combined with the Tai County public security forces and a group from the provincial water police, Shen fled north to Tai County. There he was found and executed in June 1928.(30) Co-operation between Communists and Nationalists in Taixing, as in Rugao, had come to an end.

The Rugao and Taixing Communists Unite

After being forced out of open participation in county politics by the Nationalists, Rugao's Communist leaders fled to the western section of the county and settled in the Jiangan and Lugang districts along the Taixing border. From the available information it is not clear why they chose this area. Perhaps they already had contacts with Shen Yi's forces, although evidence for ties between the two groups at this time is lacking. Perhaps it was because locusts had ravaged the area and its people were poorer than elsewhere (because they had not been able to harvest their crops), and thus more likely to be potential Communists,(31) though western Rugao was not the

only area to feel the impact of these voracious insects.(32) More likely it was because many of the Communist leaders were natives of the area and at least one, Wang Yuwen, had established himself there.

But whatever the reasons for the Communists' choice of Jiangan and Lugang, once there they did not long remain idle. In the spring of 1928 at Jiangan and Lugang they led Rugao's first major Communist uprising. Among its organizers were the same people who had been active in the Rugao Communist Party since its beginning in early 1927, that is Wang Yingzhao, Su Desheng, and Ge Xiangong. Altogether the uprising lasted three days, from May 1 through May 3, and involved several hundreds of Communists. Fierce battles were fought and extensive damage was done by burning and looting.

The Rugao government alone could not cope with the threat posed by the Communists, and it was only with the aid of troops and police from neighboring counties that the border area was secured. So many troops were taken from other areas that the county capital was endangered. A curfew was imposed on its residents, and for a while they thought they would have to flee.(33)

In the end the public security forces claimed victory, although it appeared to be a somewhat hollow one. While some sources claim that the Nationalists killed

hundreds of Communists and captured many weapons,(34) this seems unlikely in view of later events. More plausible is the report which says that the Nationalists captured only eight or nine Communist Party members, but did not try them. Instead, the Nationalists accepted bribes and set the Communists loose so that after the uprising Communist power and prestige grew and the Communists soon came to control an area of over twenty square miles (sixty square li).(35)

Between the spring and fall of 1928 neither the Rugao nor the Taixing Communists carried on much open activity. There were sporadic reports of Communist actions against large landlords and merchants, but no large-scale uprisings.(36) While curfews would periodically be imposed in the Rugao County capital it did not seem to be in any real danger.(37) On the surface the initiative seemed to lie with the county government which succeeded in apprehending several Communist leaders including Su Desheng, and executing them.(38) Moreover, the most well-known Communist leader, Wang Yingzhao, for unknown reasons left the Communist area and as one commentator put it was "scattered to the winds."(39)

Underneath the surface, however, more was taking place. In Taixing after the death of Shen Yi, his followers did not disperse but remained hidden in the

villages along the border. As time went on they "collaborated and formed an alliance" which grew more and more encompassing and finally hooked up with the Communists in western Rugao. Now Communists on both sides of the border started to act in concert.

At first much of this joint activity was carried out by small groups of three to five individuals who in the middle of the night would suddenly attack a rich merchant or other notable, and then disappear as rapidly as they had come. This led their pursuers to complain that the Communists had "no fixed whereabouts and no fixed gathering place and no special symbols."

Many confused the Communists with ordinary bandits, a similarity which was enhanced by Communist recruitment policies. According to reports, the Communists took into their ranks village youth who had nothing better to do with their time. In this regard the only difference between the Communists and their outlaw look-a-likes was that the Communists offered a salary of several yuan a month in return for services rendered.(40)

In other ways, however, the Communists differed greatly from common outlaws. Most notably Communist leadership appeared to be more educated and Communist organization more rigorously maintained. One commentator described the Communists during this period in the

following manner:

In 1928 they [the Communists] swarmed and caused chaos in the villages. Although their weapons were few, they caused destruction. The intellectual elements in the party never rested and their organization was very tight.(41)

By November-December of 1928 the Communists were united enough and strong enough to carry out a number of large-scale uprisings in both Rugao and Taixing. Under the leadership of Ge Xiangong and Xu Fangde, both veterans of previous Rugao struggles, they organized large numbers of people not only in the Rugao towns of Jiangan and Lugang, by now accustomed to such activity, but also in Shizhuang and Motou Shi to the south and east, and in many towns in Taixing. As part of these uprisings the Communists for the first time in the Jiangsu area employed the tactics of guerilla warfare.(42)

The Founding of the Fourteenth Red Army

During 1929 Communist uprisings continued. Ge Xiangong disappeared from the movement (it is unclear what happened to him.), and in January 1929 the Nationalists arrested and executed Xu Fangde. But these leaders were replaced by others, including Wang Yuren. In the winter and spring of 1929 these new leaders founded the Fourteenth Red Army (Hong Shisi Jun), which was to become the main military force in the Rugao-Taixing border area.

The precise founding date of the Fourteenth Red Army is unclear. One member of the Army says it was formed in the "winter" of 1929,(43) while other non-participants seem to imply that its origins were earlier, in 1928.(44) This confusion probably arose because during 1927 and 1928 many people did not know how to describe the Communists and simply referred to them as the "Red Army", even though no such formal entity actually existed at that time.(45) In any case, by the summer of 1929 it was indisputable that "the bandits who in the past had no fixed address, moved at night and hid during the day, and plundered and robbed, at this time became bandits who were organized into groups."(46)

Descriptions of the army's organization and leadership structure are contradictory. One source says that the army originally had three battalions (da dui). These three battalion leaders reported to a single commander-in-chief known as the zong zhihui. Later a fourth battalion was added to the original three and the title of the commander-in-chief was changed to zong dui zhang. Still later the number of battalions increased to eight although no details about the new commanders of these battalions are given.

The same source also claims that in addition to the regular battalions there was a transport unit to move

supplies, at least two secret agent battalions, a commando unit, a communications unit, and a unit to create disturbances behind enemy lines. Each of these groups also had a commander and an assistant commander responsible to the commander-in-chief. Furthermore, there was a Political Department (Zhengzhi bu) and an Economic Committee (Jingji weiyuanhui) whose subordinates followed the army and carried out political and economic programs among the peasantry.(47)

Another source says that as of March 1930 the Fourteenth Red Army consisted of thirteen "detachments" (dui), but does not further describe them.(48) Yet another observer divides that section of the army operating in Taixing alone into five battalions (da dui), apparently based on personal loyalty ties. He says that the army's overall commanders were its head (jun zhang) and the chairman of the Taixing-Rugao Military Committee.(49)

Estimates of the total number of individuals actually under the command of the Fourteenth Red Army and the number of weapons they possessed also vary widely. Some reports say that the Fourteenth Red Army placed only several hundred soldiers on the field at one time.(50) Others say that for individual battles the strength of the Army reached between 10,000 and 20,000 men.(51) Some say that the Communists' military strength was not great

because the only weapons they possessed were knives, clubs and agricultural implements. They add that the Communists were often forced to use a piece of red cloth as a flag.(52) Others disagree, concluding that each battalion had an array of guns, and several horses, in addition to spears and knives.(53)

It is also not clear why people joined the Red Army. The chances for success were slim and the odds on getting killed, even among the leadership, amazingly high. Many ordinary fighters were probably uneducated local peasants in their late teens or early twenties. They may have been recruited by Communist organizers or attracted by the salary the Communists offered. Some were probably unemployed males, or liu mang, since it is known that at this time the Communists recruited among this group. Others were certainly members of bandit gangs whose leaders had allied with the Communists. For example, Big Sword Societies were frequently incorporated into the ranks of the Fourteenth Red Army where they fought as separate units known as shen dao dui ("spirit troops") because their members believed that they were invulnerable to bullets.(54) Still others may have been the remnants of the old warlord armies willing to unite with any group that opposed the Nationalists. At least one source mentions ties between the Communists and the "northern

reactionaries", although it does not detail them.(55)

This disparate group at least in part was linked together by a set of personal loyalty ties not unlike those which cemented together various cliques and factions of the central Communist or Nationalist Party leadership. Evidence of these ties is scanty, but we do know that when a Communist was arrested he was often described not by the particular number of the unit with which he was associated, but by the leaders in whose groups he served.(56)

The Rugao-Taixing Border Region

But whether homogenous or not, whether united or not, whether well-armed or not, the commanders of the Fourteenth Red Army and their men did not have a completely free hand to roam the Rugao and Taixing countryside at will. Most sources, whatever their other disparities, seem to agree that the Fourteenth Red Army was subordinate to the Communist Party organization of the Rugao-Taixing border region, although the size and nature of that Party organization, like everything else, is not described in a uniform or consistent manner.

The date of the founding of the Communist Party in the border region remains unknown. We know that in the early part of 1927 Communist Party branches were

separately set up in both Rugao and Taixing, but when these organizations united remains unclear. Also unclear is the number of counties encompassed by the border region. Sometimes only Rugao and Taixing are mentioned. At other times Taixian, Jingjiang and even Nantong are included.

The relationship between the border region and higher levels of Communist Party organization, notably at the provincial and national levels, is also murky. In the fall of 1929 one author, Jing Song, an active member of the Jiangsu Communist Party, described the Rugao and Taixing branches of the Party as completely severed and isolated from the movement centered in Shanghai. He said that the Rugao and Taixing Parties continued to follow the policy of "burning, killing and looting", even though that policy had been refuted at the Sixth National Party Congress held in June and July of 1928.(57) However, other sources say that the Rugao and Taixing Communists were in contact with the provincial Party, and one indicates that Wang Yuren was the special representative who went back and forth between Shanghai and Rugao in order to procure funds for the military effort in the countryside.(58)

Given the information available, the extent to which the activities in Rugao and Taixing were directed from the provincial or even the national level cannot be

ascertained. What is most likely is that individuals in the Rugao-Taixing organization had ties to particular individuals higher up in the Party hierarchy, but that the higher levels of the Party were so factionalized at this time that nothing that they did or said could be taken to represent the Party as a whole. This was especially true of the Jiangsu Provincial Party organization, whose squabbles and disagreements throughout the Nanjing Decade were intense, occasionally even resulting in the death of some members at the hands of others.(59) As a result, up until the spring of 1930 the Rugao and Taixing branches of the Communist Party probably did act more or less independently, with only occasional consultations with higher ranking Party officials to whom Rugao and Taixing leaders had particular ties. In the spring of 1930 the provincial Party (or perhaps it was the national Party) tried to change this situation by asserting its control over the Rugao Party. The result was catastrophic, as we shall see.

Within the border area itself, the most powerful Communist Party organization was the nine-member executive committee (zhixing weiyuanhui). According to one source, Shen Yi headed this committee until his death in June 1928 and in March of 1930 it was steered by one Gu Sier, also from Diaojiawang and thus certainly a follower of Shen Yi.

Whether there were any leaders who occupied the position between Shen and Gu is not stated.

According to this source the eight other members of the committee in March of 1930 were Wang Yingzhao, Ge Xiangong, Wang Pengnian, Ding Suner, Gu Renwu, Zhou Kaisan, Tang Shilun, and Li Jigen (sometimes referred to as Li Jigeng, probably because of printing errors). The first two names are probably incorrect, since from other sources we know these individuals had already left the Communist movement in the Rugao area by this time. The rest might be accurate, since most of these names do appear in other accounts of Communist activity from this period.(60)

The executive committee hired and fired the zongdui zhang of the Fourteenth Red Army as well as all the battalion commanders and members of the Political Department and Economic Committee.(61) It also oversaw the running of the five branch Party offices (zhi bu) set up within the border area, known as the "East Party" (dong dang), "West Party" (xi dang), "North Party" (bei dang), "South Party" (nan dang), and "Center Party" (zhong dang). Among these Party branches the "East Party" and "West Party" were located in Rugao. The remainder were in Taixing. The "East Party" was considered the most powerful of the five with the "South Party" second. The

"West Party" was the weakest, probably because it was spread out over several disparate areas, while the "North Party" was the newest, and the one growing the most rapidly.(62)

These five party branches administered a large area. One source said that the Communist domain included everything from Shizhuang in Rugao west to Yellow Bridge in Taixing, a distance of some two hundred li (seventy miles), and although he did not say so he probably meant from the Chang Jiang and the Jingjiang County border on the south to the Tai County border on the north. Moreover, within this area he concluded that all of the cities had Communist organizations within them.(63) Another source added that north of Yellow Bridge there was not a single village that did not have Communist organizers present by early 1930.(64) A third says that in the three county area the Communists controlled not less than three hundred square li.(65) A fourth says that along the Chang Jiang for three hundred li to the east and west of Taixing with the exception of the large cities where government troops were garrisoned and where government orders could be received, the entire area was under Communist control.(66) While the latter is probably an exaggeration, and the third is probably an understatement, one can see nevertheless, that by 1930 Communist influence

had spread widely in Rugao and Taixing.

During 1929 and 1930 the number of people entering the Party also was considerable. When someone decided to join they first signed the pledgebook and the oath. Then they were assigned either to work "following the troops" (sui dui), or to some other task (bu sui dui). Those following the troops were given fifteen yuan a month to buy provisions. At any time they could be moved from one place to another. In contrast those "not following the troops" were assigned to a particular locale. There they were put in charge of carrying out tasks such as investigation, propaganda, communications, the forwarding of news, raising funds, etc. It was said that in 1930 the Communists had between two and three thousand people "following the troops" and an untold number in the other tasks. (67)

Starting in 1929 in the area under their control, the Fourteenth Red Army, along with members of the Communist Party, carried out extensive political and military activities. To aid them on the battlefield, they concentrated on stealing weapons from Nationalist soldiers and locally organized security groups. Throughout 1929 and early 1930 raids on public security offices and local militia organizations were widespread. The result was that within ten li of some villages it was said that there

was not a single gun that was not in Communist hands. The number of weapons the Communists acquired in this manner is unknown but it was probably substantial.(68)

The Communists also carried out propaganda work, pasting up announcements such as the following:

When the government is not good, the people meet
with misfortune!

Rice becomes as precious as pearls, and the cost
of cloth flies high,

Miscellaneous and excess taxes, surround one on
all sides,

Then the Communist Party rises up, triumphantly
in exaltation

Killing all the evil gentry, ruffians and
useless idlers.(69)

The threats against "evil gentry, ruffians and useless idlers" were not mere talk. In Lugang they burned the houses of the rich to the ground.(70) Elsewhere any landlord who possessed over thirty mu of land was not able to avoid their wrath.(71) "Ruffians and useless idlers" were expected either to join the Communist ranks or to be shot.(72)

Merchants were also targets for attack. Merchant travelers on any important road within the Communist district were subject to ambush. For example, more than one half mile outside of Yellow Bridge a merchant could not expect to travel safely on any road that was not protected by the military or police, or without an armed guard. In one town, after the mutiny of the county police

force stationed there, all of the town's merchants, over seventy households in all, were sacked and robbed.(73)

Land reform was also on the Communist agenda, although the degree to which it was carried out is uncertain. In theory, all rich and poor peasant land was to become part of the public domain and was to be equally distributed - with the aid of the Party - to those able to work it. Each male under sixty was to receive 2.4 mu (one source says three mu) of land to work, while each female under fourteen and every male over sixty was to receive one mu. (Females over fourteen did not receive land). After a female married, or a male died, the land again was supposed to revert to the public realm to be redistributed.(74)

In addition to land reform, the Communists also aided the peasants by forcing the rich to burn their real estate deeds and credit contracts. Those well-to-do who refused were often killed. In this manner families with over 100,000 yuan of capital were sometimes wiped out. "Eat Sparrow Societies", each consisting of at least five hundred to six hundred peasants, but not over one thousand to two thousand peasants, were also formed, although again neither the number of them nor the activities they carried out were recorded.(75) Furthermore, within the Communist area opium smoking, drinking, and excessive taxation were

all prohibited.(76)

The Communists also took steps to hinder Nationalist efforts to wage war against them. Telephone lines between Nationalist and Communist areas were all cut and letters could not be sent from Nationalist-held territory to districts behind Communist lines.(77) In addition, attempts were made further to isolate Nationalist cities located within the Communist realm by cutting off their food supplies. For example, in an attempt to isolate Yellow Bridge, shipments of food to the city were repeatedly captured causing a panic over provisions and food riots.(78)

Overall, the Communists apparently succeeded in their wooing of the border area's peasants. Although the evidence concerning the degree to which peasants appear to have become tacit if not active supporters of the Communist cause is not overwhelming in its extent, reports written at the time repeatedly stress that the local population supported and protected the Communists. For example, one author recounts how a well-known Communist living at Lugang decided to return home before Chinese New Year. Nationalist soldiers heard of his return and went to capture him. But when the soldiers appeared, the Communist escaped by climbing over a wall, running into a pastry shop, and pretending to be a shop clerk. The

troops followed him into the store but did not recognize him. They then inquired about the Communist's whereabouts. The "clerk" said that the "Communist" had gone east and surely was not far away. Neither the store owner nor any of its many patrons revealed the "clerk's" true identity.(79)

It was this kind of support from the population that enabled the Communists to carry out much of their activity and also made them so difficult to oppose. The same writer in describing Communist activities in another area said,

The Communists in Taixing congregate on Beixinjie. The common people of that area collude with them. If the officials do not appear, then the Communists are everywhere. As soon as the officials appear, the Communists become ordinary people. If the police do not go into individual homes and demand that the Communists be turned over, they cannot catch them.(80)

Attacks on the Towns

By the winter of 1930 the Communists were strong enough both politically and militarily to mount attacks on the largest Nationalist-held towns within the border area. None of these attacks succeeded in the traditional sense of enabling the Communists to fully capture the town in question and to control it for a long period of time. But they did show that Communist troops could sustain increasingly prolonged battles with the Nationalists,

inflict heavy casualties on Nationalist soldiers, and do a great deal of damage to the areas in which they fought. As a result, both the Nationalists and the population in general realized not only that the Communists possessed considerable military strength, but that unless something dramatic was done, Communist power would continue to grow rapidly and eventually overtake that of the Nationalists.

One of the first large-scale Communist attacks occurred at Banjing, a market town and district seat in western Rugao. On the night of January 12, 1930, taking advantage of the fact that the police usually stationed in the town had been transferred to Jiangan, a group of between six and seven hundred Communists surrounded the city. The ten remaining government soldiers fled. The Communists then entered the city and set fire to the District Public Security Office, the District Government Office, the Banjing elementary school, the County Police Station, and many homes (presumably the homes of the wealthy). Apparently, and perhaps not coincidentally, it was a windy night. The fires spread rapidly and ultimately burned half the town before they went out. Police from the surrounding areas responded and the Communists finally fled, but the damage they caused was considerable.(81)

Four months later the Communist assault on Old Tiger Town (Lao Hu Zhuang) was even larger. Old Tiger Town was located in the Motou District of western Rugao. Because it was surrounded on three sides by an unbridged river deeper than the height of an average person, it was a hard place to attack and an easy place to defend. But the Communists chose it as a target anyway. It stood between the Communist areas in eastern and western Rugao ("East Party" and "West Party"), and its capture would unite the two areas.

At 10 A.M. on the morning of April 16 the First Division of the Fourteenth Red Army numbering between ten and twenty thousand men if you read the Communist account, or between four or five hundred and one thousand men if you read the Nationalist accounts, carrying spears, knives, hoes, and some guns (although how many is unclear) started their assault. The plan was to feint an attack from the west but really come in from the east (the only side of the city not bordering the river) and the southeast (where they thought they could wade the river). Unfortunately for the Communists, the plan did not work. The Nationalists were prepared and opened fire on the Communists before they expected it. The river proved too deep to wade across and because they could not swim, many Communist soldiers drowned. The Communists lacked

coordination, their communications did not function well, and their leader, one He Kun, also known as Li Weilin, was killed early in the battle. Nevertheless, the Communists resisted for many hours before fleeing.(82)

Another large confrontation between the Communists and the Nationalists took place to the south in the Rugao market town of Shizhuang. On June 11 at 4 P.M. over one thousand Communists converged on the city from three sides. The police stationed in the city did not resist. In the northern and western sections of the city the Communists robbed and set fire to the establishments of over one hundred merchants. Apparently no merchant escaped unharmed, and much of the city burned. At 6 P.M. police from the town of Tiansheng Gang (located in the neighboring county of Nantong) and Changhuang Gang arrived. They opposed the Communists, and the Communists retreated toward the northwest. However, this time the Communists were not the only ones to flee. The number of merchants killed or wounded was "massive" and as a result all the "well-off" families of the area divided and in their separate groups took river launches (Shizhuang was close to the Chang Jiang) and went to hide in the counties of South Jiangsu.(83)

But the border area's largest prize and the most difficult to obtain from the Communist perspective was the

walled town of Yellow Bridge in Taixing. Yellow Bridge was Taixing's richest city, being even wealthier than the county seat itself. Moreover, it appeared impregnable. Even ordinary bandits never penetrated it. To the Communists it presented a challenge.(84)

In April the Communists planned an attack on Yellow Bridge, but the provincial police got wind of the attack before it occurred, intercepted the Communist troops north of Yellow Bridge at Shen Family Manor (Shenjiashuang), and defeated them. (85) In August the Communists tried again. On August 2 at 8 P.M. large bands of Communists suddenly appeared outside the city and surrounded it on all sides. They then poured into the city itself, through the open east, west, and north gates. In large groups of about fifty men each they scattered throughout the city carrying out attacks on wealthy merchants. At this point the provincial police and local militia appeared. Since one gate to the city remained closed the soldiers and militia were able to trap the Communists up against that gate. After two days of fierce fighting the Communists retreated "leaving corpses (presumably from both sides) scattered all over the streets of Yellow Bridge."(86)

These attacks on Banjing, Old Tiger Town, Shizhuang, and Yellow Bridge were only the more spectacular events in

a widespread Communist offensive that swept across the border region throughout the winter, spring, and summer of 1930. By most accounts the offensive was successful. Although the Communists lost particular battles, by virtually all accounts they seemed to be winning the larger war. One writer put it this way,

In general as for affairs concerning the Communists, the Communists repeatedly suffer losses. But for the last nine months [since December 1929], they not only have not been able to be exterminated, on the contrary, after every encounter, their number of men and weapons increases. Their leadership and deployment gets increasingly fierce with every battle.(87)

The author then went on to say that although Nationalist troops repeatedly went to carry out eradication of the Communists they did not succeed. "Today [August 1930]," he ominously concluded, "the Communist tide is increasing. Local power is not increasing in the least. From the past until now, from now until the future, the end result is not hard to imagine."(88) In the late summer of 1930 the Nationalists faced a formidable enemy, indeed, or so it appeared.

The Initial Nationalist Response

To counter Communist forces in the Rugao-Taixing area the Nationalists had neither well-trained troops nor an impressive arsenal. While the central government was

spending a very high percentage of its budget on arms, virtually none of this expenditure found its way down to the counties. Instead, the strength of central government armies was hurled against the Northern Warlords in Shandong and elsewhere, while underequipped, poorly organized, and ill-trained county-level officers and police bore the full burden of putting down local "bandits".

By the fall of 1928, a little more than a year after the Rugao government was firmly established, it possessed two kinds of public security forces: a large unit which was organized like a troop of soldiers and which could be assigned wherever there was trouble, and smaller groups which were usually headquartered in particular districts and which were responsible for the peace and security of the district in which they were located. The first, known as the County Public Security Troop (Xian gongan da dui), contained about four hundred men. The men were organized into one battalion (da dui). They possessed three hundred guns of "original" equipment, presumably that equipment on hand when the Nationalists took over in 1927, and one hundred "captured" guns taken from the retreating armies of the northern warlords. Although their plans for the future included the purchase of additional weapons (as well as the purchase of ten bicycles for a bicycle force

to be used to improve their ability to patrol), it is not clear whether these plans were ever carried out.

The second type of public security forces, called the County Police (Xian gongan jingcha dui), numbered 780 men including both those located in the Public Security Office of the county seat and those located in outlying districts. Unfortunately, these men only had a total of 250 guns, and this lack of weapons was not easy to correct. Branch public security offices, as the district-level offices were known, had no official source of funds, and thus no money to buy additional equipment.(89)

A year later in the fall of 1929 when Communist strength had begun to grow rapidly, the Nationalists in Rugao were still weak. The number of battalions in the County Public Security Troop had been increased to four, but "its armaments were [still] old and its bullets few." Moreover, the force was described as being "so weak they could not suppress the Communists who were getting stronger day by day."(90)

By 1930 things were worse yet, especially outside the county seat. In the sixth district, which included the Communist-held area, the people in charge of the public security forces all fled. The county government then admitted that the power of the Public Security Office was

non-existent and made plans to abolish it.(91) Generally, said one observer at this time, Rugao district public security offices were so weak that they had either "no weapons at all, weapons from the nineteenth century, or weapons that were 'borrowed' for the occasion."(92)

Conditions in Taixing, according to the limited information that is available, were not any better. Before 1927 county-level police in Taixing had very little equipment. After 1927 things remained unchanged. For example, in 1928 the security forces of Yellow Bridge were described as "twenty-odd armed but untrained servant-like police." Besides these "police" it was said Yellow Bridge had "no [police] strength to talk about."(93)

The county government's lack of men and munitions was further complicated by the often counter-productive actions of the few forces they did possess. On the one hand police officers often mistreated the men under their command. For example, in June of 1930 the Jiangsu Daily (Jiangsu Ribao) ran a story about the head of a Rugao district public security officer who stole the money for his men's rations instead of using it for its intended purpose. His men were furious, went on strike, and locked up their commander. Peace returned only when one of the commander's subordinates snuck in over the office wall and secretly replaced the stolen funds.(94)

In addition, local police at all levels frequently, if not constantly, oppressed and robbed the very population they were supposed to protect. For example, the public security offices were given the responsibility to stop opium use, gambling and prostitution. In June of 1930, however, the head of the Jiangsu Civil Affairs Department concluded that the main effect of these laws had been to enrich public security office employees (who were able to extract bribes), while the proscribed activities continued on as they always had.(95)

Orders for the arrest of Communists only added to the potential sources of wealth that the public security officers could exploit. Many documents record examples of police going to homes, accusing a resident of being a Communist, and then demanding a large bribe so that the resident could escape punishment for the supposed "crime". Especially hard hit were students, teachers, and local businessmen, some of the very classes upon whom the Nationalists hoped to depend to carry out their plans for China's modernization.

Moreover, these depredations by Nationalist-controlled police pushed people directly into the hands of the opposition. Many joined the ranks of the Big Sword Society led by Li Baozhang. Still others turned to the Communists who were able to play upon local fears

of official soldiers and police. In Rugao and Taixing members of the Red Army often arrived in an area and recruited by saying that if several tens of families would support the Communists, the Communists would then protect the entire area from the Nationalists.

The tactic worked. Apparently, as far as many local residents could see, money turned over to the Communists, unlike that paid out to the Nationalists, did indeed go to buy guns that were used to provide greater peace and security. In other words, in the Rugao-Taixing border area initial steps taken by the Nationalist government to eradicate the Communists only provided fuel which the Communists used to stoke their rapidly expanding fires.(96)

But this was not all. A certain number of Nationalist police actually defected to the Communists. For example on April 25, 1930 in the Taixing town of Lijiashi all of the local police and their fifty-eight rifles and mausers went over to the Communist side. Furthermore, says the author who described the above incident, "you often hear of police in other areas who individually take their weapons and sneak away [to join the Communists]."(97)

Initially then, the forces the Communists faced on the Rugao-Taixing battlefield were very weak. Moreover,

they got weaker as time went on. Communist attacks reduced the amount of arms and ammunition the Nationalists possessed and Communist burning of local public security offices caused Nationalist troops to flee from more remote areas.(98). Attempts by Nationalist officers to cheat their men and attempts by troops to "squeeze" the population resulted in reduced levels of support for the Nationalists and the defection of some of their forces to the opposing side. In the spring of 1930 time appeared to be on the Communists' side.

Intensified Nationalist Efforts

As it became apparent that county police forces alone were not going to defeat the Communists, Nationalist officials started directing their efforts into other channels. Rugao and Taixing magistrates and public security officers with increasing frequency met with their counterparts from neighboring areas. Together they planned coordinated attacks on the Communists and set up cooperative arrangements for mutual defense. More important, at the county level and below, the responsibility for eradicating the Communists increasingly shifted out of the hands of official security forces and into the grip of locally organized militias, the number and size of which grew with amazing rapidity. Moreover,

in the winter of 1930 provincial-level politicians recognized the seriousness of the situation along the Rugao-Taixing border and sent provincial officers and troops into the area for the express purpose of getting rid of the Communists.

For mutual defense purposes, the most common arrangement was for the Rugao, Taixing, Jingjiang, and sometimes Nantong or Dongtai county heads, and perhaps other important county personages such as the heads of the Merchant Associations or the public security chiefs, to meet and discuss their common security problems. Such meetings took place in December 1928, September 1929, February 1930, November 1930, and probably many times in between. In at least one of these meetings, that held in September 1929, preparations were made to set up a joint defense force. Rugao was to contribute two squads (ban) and Taixing, Taixian, and Chingjiang were to contribute one squad apiece. They all were to be under the command of the Taixing public security head. The monthly six hundred yuan expenses of the force were to be met as follows: Rugao, 300 yuan; Taixing, 200 yuan; Jingjiang, 100 yuan; and Taixian, nothing. That the force was ever established in quite this manner seems doubtful. (Why was the command to reside in Taixing while the bulk of the resources were to come from Rugao?) But as

time progressed more troops did seem to be willing to cross a county border to fight in defense of their neighbors.(99)

But mutual cooperation was not enough. Even the mutually cooperating troops lacked sufficient arms, munitions, and men to vanquish the Communists. Moreover, government troops were usually assigned to a few particular towns, while the population lived scattered over the land. Often, by the time the police and soldiers got word of a Communist attack and responded, the Communists had long gone. Only if each town and village had its own locally controlled forces, or so many Nationalist writers argued, could local disturbances be properly handled.(100)

As early as the fall of 1928 the Jiangsu provincial government ordered Rugao to set up special militia for self-protection against bandits and Communists. According to the order, responsibility for the forces was to lie at the district (qu) level. Each district was to organize and fund one militia group. Since Rugao had eighteen districts, there were to be eighteen district-level militia organizations in the county.

Unlike many Nationalist government orders, the order to set up militia was actually put into effect. By October 1928 eight of Rugao's eighteen districts,

including some of those with large numbers of Communists, notably Lugang, had set up militia. Moreover, it was reported that the other ten districts were in the process of organizing them.(101)

But districts were not the only units to set up militia, nor were militia set up only as a result of government orders. In response to the Communists, or sometimes other threats, leaders of individual towns and villages often took the initiative to organize a protective force. For example outside of Zhanghuang Gang in the Shizhuang district, the same Shizhuang that in June 1930 was attacked by Communists, there was a newly arisen sandbar called the Ever Peaceful Sandbar. It stood alone in the middle of the river and in November 1928 its residents felt they did not possess sufficient strength to protect themselves against "bandit groups", presumably Communists. Therefore they asked the county government for permission to set up a militia specifically to protect the sandbar. The county government granted the request, and the militia was organized.(102)

In other areas of Shizhuang district the same process was repeated. In March 1929 residents of the new harbor area of Shizhuang held discussion meetings at which they decided to set up local militia. Again the approval of the county government was requested, the approval was

granted and the force established.(103)

In those areas where the county government abolished public security bureaus, local militia were doubly important and often were treated as though they were official government troops. In southwestern Rugao's sixth district, the heart of the Communist area, funds supposedly appropriated for official troops were given to local militia forces instead.(104) In the eighteenth district the militia were actually called the District Police Force (Qu Jingcha Dui) and given official responsibility for the district's defense.(105)

Conditions in Taixing were no different than in Rugao. The rapid rise of locally funded and controlled militia paralleled the rise of the Communists. Yellow Bridge was not atypical in this regard. In 1927, before the rise of the Communists, Yellow Bridge had a few inept police. Then in 1928 Communist uprisings occurred in a nearby village. Yellow Bridge responded by raising a small local militia numbering about eighty. That number was sufficient until the summer and fall of 1929, when Communist activity picked up. At this point the county magistrate personally visited Yellow Bridge and urged the organization of a larger militia force. As a result, the number of men in the militia was increased to 420, and then to 720. Surrounding villages also started to set up

their own forces. By May of 1930 it was said that the gentry of Yellow Bridge maintained and controlled a force with a cache numbering between two thousand and three thousand weapons.(106)

Primarily responsible for the organization of the Yellow Bridge force was a member of the Yellow Bridge gentry, Huang Picheng, one of the most powerful men in the city and long an activist in societal affairs. Even before the Communist uprisings Huang advocated that the "people" should have the power of self-protection and personally organized a protective force of "several tens of braves". After the uprisings started many of the rich gentry fled the city, but not Huang. He stayed to battle the Communists and as a result became known as the "savior of Taixing".(107) Needless to say he also significantly increased his own power.

Huang was not the only local leader in Taixing to personally organize local forces. The Zhang brothers from Guanglu Zhen also attracted attention. They set up a militia force in their home town with one of the Zhang brothers as its head. These men quickly gained a reputation for their fearlessness. It was even reported that they would go in disguise to Communist camps and in this manner capture the Communists.(108)

The above examples illustrate that from 1928 to mid-1930 throughout both Rugao and Taixing, but especially in those areas along their common border threatened by Communists, the power of local militia forces and also of the local elite members who controlled these forces grew dramatically. From one point of view this was a positive development. Without expending as many men or resources as otherwise would have been necessary, the Nationalists were able to raise a force to suppress the Communists.

But from another point of view this rapid growth of local armed power posed new problems and had harmful consequences. For example, when the gentry were given local self-defense powers they often used these powers not only to fight Communists, but also to take revenge on particular individuals who previously had aroused their ire. This caused increased burning and looting throughout the countryside, and great damage.(109) Still other gentry members used their increasingly strong monopoly over the means of coercion to raise taxes without really providing any additional protection for the population. They thus enriched their personal coffers at the expense of the general inhabitants, some of whom as a result became increasingly alienated from the Nationalists and more favorably disposed toward the Communists.(110)

But even more significant in light of consequent events was the fact that the Nationalists created powerful military units that fought in the name of the Nationalists but over which the Nationalists had only minimal or no control. In the future when these forces and/or their leaders decided to oppose Nationalist programs and policies either in whole or in part, the Nationalist government had no way to secure their compliance, and no forces of its own with which it could overcome their opposition. In other words, after 1928 as a direct result of the growth of local militia to meet the Communist threat, power over the Chinese countryside passed permanently and irrevocably from the hands of the Nationalists who claimed to govern it to the hands of the local leaders who in reality garrisoned it. Although more numerous and better armed than the county police, the militia had all of the same liabilities and in addition posed a new, although not immediately apparent, danger.

Fortunately for the Nationalists, they had yet another military force upon which they could call: the provincial police. During the first couple of years of Communist growth these provincial police were busy elsewhere, fighting the bandits around Lake Tai in South Jiangsu, opposing bandits along the Grand Canal, etc. They had no time or manpower for what was perceived as a

local problem in a not terribly important area of the province. But starting in the winter of 1930, in order to oppose and capture the Communists who were becoming more powerful every day, the Jiangsu government relied increasingly upon the stationing of provincial troops at strategic points in the Rugao-Taixing area.(111)

In February 1930, newspapers contain one of the first references to the use of large numbers of provincial troops in Rugao and Taixing. At that time the Provincial Governing Committee, the most powerful political body in the province, set up a temporary command for the five-county Nantong-Rugao-Taixian-Taixing-Jingjiang area, and said that the provincial police would be used for the defense of that five-county area.(112)

At the end of April the province appointed Li Mingyang commander of a nine-county "bandit" suppression area in North Jiangsu which included Rugao and Taixing. At that time Li was both the head of the Jiangsu Public Security Office (Jiangsu Sheng baoan qu zhang) and the head of Jiangsu's bandit suppression force (Jiangsu Sheng jiao fei zong zhihui). His appointment to the Rugao-Taixing area showed how important the provincial government thought the Communist problem was.(113)

Starting with Li's appointment events in the Rugao-Taixing area escalated rapidly. In May four

battalions of troops under the command of Li arrived in Nantong. These provincial troops were instructed to work together with the county police and the militia forces to eradicate the Communists, a task they initially were to complete in one month.(114)

Throughout the summer, the provincial troops fought the Communists, participating in battles like those fought at Shizhuang and Yellow Bridge described previously. The results were mixed, and the one-month deadline for the elimination of the Communists passed without notice, or the extermination of the enemy. In August Ye Qucang, governor of Jiangsu, spoke at a Sun Zhongshan commemorative meeting and said that the Communists still were very active in the Rugao and Taixing area and had yet to be eliminated.(115)

But in September the entire situation changed. Li Mingyang himself, "according to plan" crossed the Chang Jiang to take part in the battle against the Communists. Shortly thereafter he claimed total victory. Suddenly and unexpectedly, or so it appeared, several important Communist leaders surrendered and the rest were defeated, largely as a result of intelligence supplied by their turncoat colleagues. By October all that remained to be done was the wiping up of a few small, scattered, fleeing, and disorganized Communist bands.(116)

The Communist Defeat

How did it happen? How were the Communists so suddenly and successfully brought to their knees at the very time it looked as though their chances for victory were increasingly bright? The answer at least in part can be found within the Communist movement itself.

In the spring of 1930 the "Shanghai" Party (it is unclear whether this refers to the provincial or to the national Communist Party headquarters since both were located in Shanghai at this time) tried to assert its hegemony over the previously independent Communist organization in Rugao and Taixing. They did this by appointing Yu Naicheng, a powerful Red Army commander, to the Rugao Party Executive Committee. As a result of this appointment Yu was able to use his strength to become the most powerful Communist in the Rugao-Taixing area. In fact, so powerful did Yu become that after his arrival in Rugao it was said that no one dared oppose him and that all of the local officials in the Communist area were under his control.(117)

But the appearance of Yu in the Rugao area had another effect that the Party probably had not intended - it split the Rugao-Taixing leadership into two roughly equal opposing factions: a "native" faction (tuchan) led by Li Jigen, and a "foreign" faction (kechan) led by Yu.

For a short while during the summer of 1930 the tensions between these two groups must have simmered. In September it broke out into the open. At that time the Nationalists asked Li if he would be willing to surrender in return for being appointed commander of the Nationalists' guerilla forces in the Rugao-Taixing area (Ru-Tai youji celing) in charge of eradicating the Communists. It was a masterful stroke. What better way was there for Li to wreak vengeance on his enemies within the Communist Party than by leading the Nationalist attack upon them? Li accepted the Nationalists' offer and led over one thousand Communist Party members and their weapons into the Nationalist fold. Furthermore, he turned over to the Nationalists the names and locations of other Communist leaders and their forces, thus enabling the Nationalists to speedily round them up.(118)

Who was Li Jigen and what does his defection tell us about the nature of the Rugao-Taixing Communist movement in the late 1920's and early 1930's? We noted earlier that many Communist leaders were young intellectuals who had some knowledge of Marxism. Not so Li. In 1930 Li was a man in his sixties. It was said that "his eyes were not clear and his thoughts were old-fashioned" and that under his leadership "the Party lacked a consciousness". Furthermore, he apparently had ties to bandits. Thus it

would appear that Li was not a revolutionary but a powerful member of Rugao and Taixing's local society, probably bandit society, who perceived that his personal interests would be served best by joining up with the Communists(119)

As with the growth of local militia forces under the Nationalists, this arrangement for a while worked to the mutual advantage of both sides. Li could use the Communists to maintain if not increase his status and position within the local community. The Communists could make use of the men and munitions that Li controlled to fight the Nationalists. But again, as with the Nationalist-local leader alliance, the Communist alliance with local notables could last only as long as individual "Communists" possessed a high degree of autonomy as well as freedom from central control, and were not required to be personally loyal to, or true believers in the Communist cause.

Unfortunately for local leaders like Li who chose to side with the Communists, by 1930 the Communist leadership at higher levels, unlike their Nationalist counterparts, began to realize that just such control and loyalty were needed, and that individuals not willing to submit to central direction had to be brought to heel. In some areas, such as the parts of Jiangxi studied by Stephen

Averill, the Communist were able to make the transition from a loosely united band which included within its ranks many local and bandit leaders, to a highly centralized organization which excluded those with competing loyalties.(120) In Jiangsu during the same time period this was not the case. As it turned out, the Communists were too dependent on local and bandit leaders like Li to successfully expunge them from their party and army and still survive. Instead, the Communists' attempts to purge their ranks led to the destruction of the Communist movement itself.

The Importance of the Rugao Case

Why bother to study a failed movement in an unimportant section of China? What, if anything, can a study of such a movement tell us about larger issues concerning both the growth of the Communist movement or the Nationalists' ability to deal with it?

First, the Communists failed in the Rugao-Taixing area because they initially relied too heavily on disparate local elements to provide both manpower and munitions in the fight with the Nationalists, and later were unable to eradicate these elements from their movement. True, union with already established local leaders probably gave the Communists much of their early

momentum and probably allowed them to achieve many of their early successes. But it was a success purchased at the price of later ruin.

In this regard the Communist movement in Rugao and Taixing differed sharply from the more successful Communist movement in Jiangxi, and the later Communist effort throughout China. In Jiangxi, as mentioned earlier, the Communists were able to make the transition from alliance with local elements to dependence on their own centrally-controlled organization. Later on during the 1940's the Communists clearly realized the danger of working together with bandit and other entrenched locals and concluded that such leaders were often their most powerful enemies in the Chinese countryside. This study of the Communist experience in the Rugao-Taixing border area would seem to indicate that later Communist perceptions were correct, but that these perceptions were achieved only after much trial and error and some often painful experiences. In general it also would seem to suggest that a revolutionary movement cannot succeed in the long run, although it may achieve some short-term successes, by cooperating with a previously well-established local leadership group.

Second, the Nationalists were able to defeat the Communists in the Rugao-Taixing area because of (a)

defections from Communist ranks, (b) the rapid growth of locally controlled militia to replace government-controlled police, and (c) reliance on military forces brought in from outside the area where the Communist uprisings were taking place, in this case provincial troops. But these reasons for Nationalist success in the early 1930's carried within them the seeds of Nationalist destruction in the late 1940's.

By the late 1940's the Communists had improved their own organization to the point where defections such as that of Li Jigen were rare. This improvement in Communist organization and training rendered useless an important part of Nationalist strategy first perfected during the Northern Expedition: getting important enemy leaders to defect, thereby demoralizing or incapacitating large numbers of enemy troops. Furthermore, the Nationalists came up with no new equally effective tactics as a replacement.

Increasing reliance on local militia also ensured future difficulties for the Nationalists. How were the Nationalists going to control these militia and their increasingly powerful leaders? How were the Nationalists going to ensure that these militia worked for the national interest as opposed to particular local or personal concerns? Like the Communists in Rugao and Taixing, the

Nationalists one day would find that what they thought was a hierarchical power relationship with themselves at the top had turned on its head.

The last tactic used by the Nationalists in the Rugao-Taixing area would in the long run prove no more effective. As the Communist areas expanded, the Nationalist use of outside force to contain them would grow more and more costly. Provincial troops could be used with success in Rugao and Taixing. National-level troops could be called in with good effect in the larger area of Jiangxi. But what would happen when the Communists were present in all areas of China? Where would the troops come from then? Perhaps they should have come from the United States, as some suggested, but later events in Vietnam would seem to indicate that there would have been limits to what such outside forces could have achieved.

Third, a study of Rugao during the late 1920's and early 1930's shows us that in the set of relationships that evolved between the Nationalists and local leaders, and Communists and local leaders, there is a certain irony. Early in their development, as shown by the Rugao and Taixing case, the Communists frequently relied heavily on local leaders for support. Only later, after defeats in areas like Rugao and Taixing, did they change their

policies.

In contrast, the Nationalists followed precisely a reverse course. In many areas during 1927 and 1928 the Nationalists carried out attacks on the same sorts of local leaders with whom the Communists were collaborating, i.e. those leaders who possessed weapons and personal armies. But gradually the Nationalists reversed this policy. Several years later local strongmen were the backbone of the Nationalist force in the countryside. But these militia heads were no more loyal to the Nationalists than Li Jigen had been to the Communists, and the result, from the Nationalist perspective, equally devastating.

In short then, a study of the Communists in late 1920's and early 1930's Rugao enables us to see just how much Communist policies and practices evolved and changed, the limits already evident in Nationalist policies for dealing with the Communists, and the ironies present in both sides' relationships with local leaders. It shows us how evolution and change enabled the Communists to eventually succeed; in contrast it suggests that it was Nationalist inability to realize the limitations of their policies and to formulate new ones that resulted in their ultimate defeat. Moreover, it highlights the risks taken by any group that tried to utilize the men and firepower commanded by local leaders.

Lastly, a study of the Rugao area shows just how disparate, disorganized, but widespread the early Communist movement really was, and how important this disparity, disorganization, and diffuseness probably was for the eventual success of the Communist movement as a whole. A movement which is small, centralized, and concentrated is easy to wipe out, just as the Bolivians wiped out Che Guevara and with him an entire revolution. Only a revolutionary movement such as the Chinese revolutionary movement, which springs from widespread geographical roots has room for experimentation, can suffer great losses and yet survive. In its own small way then, through the lesson it taught, the Rugao Communist movement constituted one of the roots from which the larger Communist movement drew nourishment. It is for this reason that it, along with other Communist base areas outside the well-known regions of Jiangxi and Hunan, is worth our attention.

Chapter Eight

Notes

(1) Wei Duo, "Jiang Bei de Difang Zi Zhi Gaiguan" [Survey of local self-government in North Jiangsu], Shehui Xinwen ["Society Mercury"] 6 (15 February 1934): 234.

(2) Ibid.

(3) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang" [Conditions of party affairs in Rugao], Jiangsu Dang Sheng [Jiangsu party voice] 16 (November 11, 1928): 14; and Shi Bao ["The Eastern Times"] (Shanghai), 13 June 1927, p. 6.

(4) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 14.

(5) Jiangsu Sheng Dang Bu Dang Shi [History of the Party Headquarters in Jiangsu Province], (Huapailou Shudian, 1924, 1926): p. 3.

(6) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu Rugao Taixing Taixian San Xian Gongfeizhe" [A contribution to the elimination of Communists in the three-county area of Rugao, Taixing, and Taixian], Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan no. 13 (April 12, 1930), p. 32.

(7) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 14.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Shi Bao, 24 July 1927, p. 3.

(10) Shi Bao, 22 June 1927, p. 8.

(11) Shi Bao, 13 October 1927, p. 3.

(12) "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 16, and Shi Bao, 3 August 1927, p. 3; 14 August 1927, p. 5; and 13 October 1927, p. 3.

(13) Shi Bao, 10 September 1930, p. 4.

(14) Gu Ziyang, Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Yange [Evolution of Party affairs in Jiangsu Province] (no publisher, no date), p. 13.

- (15) Shi Bao, 28 November 1927, p. 3.
- (16) Grover Clark, "China in 1927: A Summary of the Main Events and Tendencies," Peking Leader Reprints No. 37. (Peking: Peking Leader Press, 1928) p. 34; and George Sokolsky, "Nationalist Outlook on the Situation," North China Herald, 8 October 1927, p. 82.
- (17) Shi Bao, 29 November 1927, p. 2.
- (18) Geisert, "Power and Society," p. 74.
- (19) "Rugao E. gwu Gaikuang," . 16.
- (20) Wei Duo . antong Qingnian Sixiang de Jin Xi" [The present and the past of youthful thought in Nantong], Shehui Xinwen 4: (August 15, 1933): 234.
- (21) "Taixing Feihuan zhi Shizai Qingkuang yu Jin Hou de Jiaomie Banfa" [Conditions of the Communist disaster in Taixing and methods for exterminating it in the future], Su Zheng Banyuekan (Jiangsu politics semi-monthly) 7 (August 1, 1930): 33; and Yin Weihe, Jiangsu Liushiyi Xian Zhi, pp. 128-130.
- (22) Mao Zedong [Run Zhi], "Jiang Zhe Nongmin de Tongku ji Chi Kangjun Dong" [The misery of the peasants and their resistance activities in Jiangsu and Zhejiang], Xiangdao [The guide] 179 (25 October 1926): 1869.
- (23) "Jiangsu Jiangbei Feigong Raoluan Shikuang zhi Diaocha" [Investigation of the Communist disturbances in North Jiangsu], Chan Gong Banyuekan 5-6 (10 January 1931): 82.
- (24) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 33.
- (25) Geisert, "Power and Society," p. 141.
- (26) Geisert, "Power and Society," p. 140. It should be noted that while Geisert mentions that "there are strong grounds for suspecting that Shen Yi was a member of the CCP", he does not tie this event to the larger Communist movement in Taixing.
- (27) Geisert, "Power and Society," pp. 139-141.
- (28) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 33; and "Jiangsu Jiang Bei Feigong," p. 82.

- (29) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 34.
- (30) Ibid.
- (31) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," pp. 34-35.
- (32) For a description of locust damage at various times in eastern Rugao, see Shi Bao, 27 May 1929, p. 4; 30 May 1929, p. 4; 7 June 1929, p. 4; 8 June 1930, p. 3; and 20 June 1930, p. 4.
- (33) "Ru Tai Gongchangdang Huodong de Jingguo" [Activities of the Communist Party in Rugao and Taixing], Chan Gong Banyuekan 5-6 (January 10, 1931): 101; "Rugao Dangwu Gaikuang," p. 17; and Shi Bao, 5 May 1928, p. 2, and 7 May 1928, p. 2.
- (34) Shi Bao, 7 May 1928, p. 2 and 13 May 1928, p. 3.
- (35) "Ru Tai Gongchandang huodong," p. 101.
- (36) See, for example Shi Bao, 28 August 1928, p. 4; 31 August 1928, p. 4; 12 September 1928, p. 4; 13 September 1928, p. 4; 28 September 1928, p. 8; and 15 October 1928, p. 8.
- (37) Shi Bao, 4 June 1928, p. 3; and 21 June 1928, p. 3.
- (38) Shi Bao, 18 June 1928, p. 4; 20 June 1928, p. 3; and 4 July 1928, p. 8.
- (39) Shi Bao, 10 September 1930, p. 4.
- (40) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 34.
- (41) He Zhuang, "Pumie Rugao Taixing Taixian Gonghuo de Genben Banfa" [Basic methods for eradicating the Communist disaster in Rugao, Taixing, and Taixian], Jiangsu Dangwu Zhoukan [Jiangsu party affairs weekly] 13 (12 April 1930): 39.
- (42) Ni Bi, "Jiangsu Sheng Dangwu Qingkuang" [The condition of Jiangsu party affairs], Jiangsu Xunkan [Jiangsu tri-monthly] 12-13 (January 1, 1929): 10; Zhang Aiping, "Weigong Laohu Zhuang" [Siege of Old Tiger Villages] in Xing Huo Liao Yuan [Sparks that started a Prairie Fire], vol 2, ed. Zhonggui Renmin Jiefang Jun

Sanshinian Zhengwen Pianqi Weiyuanhui (Beijing, 1958-1960), p. 941; "Jiangsu Jiangbei Feigong," p. 82; and "Taixing Feihuan," p. 34.

(43) Zhang Aiping, "Weigong Laohu Zhuang," p. 941.

(44) Wei Duo, "Nantong Qingnian," p. 234.

(45) Hen Sheng, pseud., "Gongjun zai Rugao de Qian Hou" [The story of Communist troops in Rugao County] in Subei Gongdang Jiefangqu Zhengxiang [A true account of Communist liberated areas in northern Jiangsu], ed. Subei Liurang Nanmin Tongxunchu (Subei Liurang Nanmin Tongxunchu, 1946), p. 73.

(46) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 35.

(47) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 36.

(48) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," pp. 34-35.

(49) Shi Bao, 17 June 1930, p. 3.

(50) For example, Shi Bao rarely states that the Communists ever amassed over 1,000 fighters at any one place.

(51) Zhang Aiping, "Weigong Laohu Zhuang," p. 942.

(52) Hen Sheng, "Gongjun zai Rugao," p. 73.

(53) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 36.

(54) Shi Bao, 6 October 1930, p. 2.

(55) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 37.

(56) See, for example Shi Bao, 16 July 1929, p. 4; and 18 June 1929, p. 4.

(57) Jing Song, Jiangsu Zhengzhi Zhuangkuang yu Dang de Renwu he Celue [Political conditions in Jiangsu and the Party's mission and strategy] (no publisher, 1929), pp. 105 and 113.

(58) Shi Bao, 10 September 1930, p. 4, and "Taixing Feihuan," p. 37.

(59) On the disputes which characterized the Jiangsu Communist Party at this time see Wu Huai, "Qingdangshi de Shanghai Gong Dang" [The Shanghai Communist Party at the time of the Party Purge] Shehui Xinwen 3 (18 April 1933): 87; (2 April 1933): 102-103; and (24 April 1933): 118-119.

(60) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," pp. 34-35.

(61) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 37.

(62) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," pp. 34-35.

(63) Shi Bao, 17 June 1930, p. 3.

(64) He Zhuang, "Pumie," p. 39.

(65) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," p. 32.

(66) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 41.

(67) Ibid., p. 36.

(68) Ibid., p. 33.

(69) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," pp. 34-35.

(70) He Zhuang, "Pumie," p. 39.

(71) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 37.

(72) Shi Bao, 17 June 1930, p. 3.

(73) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 37. See also the "local reports" section of Shi Bao for countless examples of such activity.

(74) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 38; and Shi Bao, 17 June 1930, p. 3.

(75) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 38.

(76) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," pp. 34-35.

(77) Shi Bao, 6 October 1930, p. 2.

(78) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 37.

- (79) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," pp. 33-34.
- (80) Ibid.
- (81) Shi Bao, 18 January 1930, p. 3, and Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," p. 33.
- (82) Zhang Aiping, "Weigong Laohu Zhuang," p. 941, and Shi Bao, 21 April 1930, p. 3.
- (83) Shi Bao, 14 June 1930, p. 2; 16 June 1930, p. 4; and 17 June 1930, p. 3.
- (84) "Jiangsu Jiangbei Feigong," p. 94.
- (85) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 39.
- (86) Shi Bao, 8 August 1930, p. 2.
- (87) Taixing Feihuan," p. 39.
- (88) Ibid.
- (89) Wang Haoran, "Rugao Xian Xian Zheng," p. 66.
- (90) Hen Sheng, "Gongjun zai Rugao," p. 74.
- (91) Shi Bao, 30 June 1930, p. 3.
- (92) "Xian Zheng Shuping" [Commentary on County politics] Su Zheng [Jiangsu politics] 6 (16 July 1930): 35.
- (93) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 40.
- (94) "Xian Zheng Shuping," p. 35.
- (95) Ibid.
- (96) Wei Duo, "Jiangbei de Difang Zi Zhi," p. 226; and He Zhuang, "Pumie," p. 39.
- (97) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 40.
- (98) For examples of this kind of attack, see Shi Bao, 19 September 1929, p. 4, and 24 January 1930, p. 4.
- (99) Shi Bao, 13 December 1928, p. 4; 20 September 1929, p. 3; 11 November 1930, p. 2; and Ai Pin,

"Gongxian Gei Chanchu," p. 38.

(100) Wang Haoren, "Rugao Xian Xian Zheng," pp. 71-72.

(101) Ibid., p. 65.

(102) Shi Bao, 23 November 1928, p. 4.

(103) Shi Bao, 11 March 1929, p. 4.

(104) Shi Bao, 30 June 1930, p. 3

(105) Shi Bao, 7 February 1930, p. 4.

(106) "Taixing Feihuan," p. 40; He Zhuang, "Pumie," p. 39; Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," p. 33; "Jiangsu Jiangbei Feigong," p. 93; and Xiong Yi, "Banli Taixing Xian Gongfei Chuyi" [My humble opinion on how to handle the Communists in Taixing County], Su Zheng 1 (1 May 1930): 12.

(107) "Jiangsu Jiangbei Feigong," p. 94.

(108) Ibid.

(109) Heng Sheng, "Gongjun zai Rugao," p. 74.

(110) Wei Duo, "Jiangbei Difang Zi Zhi," p. 227.

(111) Ai Pin, "Gongxian Gei Chanchu," p. 32; and Shi Bao, 22 February 1930, p. 2.

(112) Shi Bao, 22 February 1930, p. 2.

(113) Shi Bao, 29 April 1930, p. 4, and 26 June 1930, p. 4.

(114) Shi Bao, 16 May 1930, p. 4.

(115) Shi Bao, 20 August 1930, p. 3; and 6 October 1930, p. 2.

(116) Shi Bao, 6 October 1930, p. 2.

(117) "Rugao Gongchangdang Huodong," p. 102.

(118) "Rugao Gongchangdang Huodong," p. 102; and Shi Bao, 4 September 1930, p. 4; 8 September 1930, p.

4; and 10 September 1930, p. 4.

(119) "Rugao Gongchandang Huodong," pp. 102-103;
and "Jiangsu Jiangbei Feigong," p. 95.

(120) Stephen C. Averill, "Revolution in the
Highlands: The Rise of the Communist Movement in Jiangxi
Province." (Ph.D dissertation, Cornell University, 1982).

Conclusion

During the initial years of their rule, 1927 to 1937, did the Nationalists transform the politics of rural China? As a result of our study of Rugao County it is now possible to answer this question, at least in part. First, during the Nanjing Decade Rugao County politics was not static or unchanging. Rather, it went through three distinct periods or phases, during each of which a different political group held sway in the county.

The first period of Rugao's Nanjing Decade political life lasted from May 1927 until October 1927. During that time members of the Communist and leftist-dominated Rugao Nationalist Party branch office held real power in the county. In contrast, the government was headed by an appointee of He Yingqin, the commander of the Nationalist armies and a Jiang Jieshi loyalist. While the government opposed the Party on many issues, in the end it was the more liberal if not radical policies of the Party, not the more conservative and right-wing programs of the government, that came closest to being carried out. As a result, many members of the pre-1927 indigenous elite opposed by the Party were arrested and jailed. Others, fearing for their safety, fled the county.

The second period extended from October 1927 to October of 1930. During this phase the government reached the high point of its power. Led by several apparently reform-minded magistrates, it compelled the province to allow it to eliminate, at least in name, some of the sub-county governmental structures, such as the dibao or local headman, upon which the local elite depended for its strength. Even more impressive, the government launched a final attack on the strong, well-armed, and almost county-wide Communist resistance movement. But while the local government office rose in power, the Nationalist Party declined in importance. In February 1928 the Nationalists lost their most effective spokesmen when they forced Communists to give up their Nationalist Party memberships. Because they were left-wing, many remaining Nationalist Party leaders also were subjected to attacks, arrested, and jailed.

During the subsequent third period, which stretched from October 1930 to the Japanese invasion in 1937, the power of the Rugao government also declined and real power reverted to the members of the pre-1927 local elite. On paper, government programs such as cooperatives and granaries appeared to blossom. In fact, encouraged by the provincial and county governments, which used them as agents to carry out government policies, non-governmental

members of local society gained control over most public programs and turned them to private ends. In 1937 when the Japanese invaded Rugao, the Rugao county government was an organizational shell. Real power lay in the towns and villages, whose leaders had a monopoly over the raising of funds as well as over the instruments of force. The three periods or phases of Nationalist rule in Rugao are summed up in the following table.

Table 9. Phases of Nationalist Rule in Rugao

	Nationalist Party	Nationalist Government	Indigenous Local Elite	Communists
pre-1927	Underground. Controlled by Communists.	Not yet established.	All powerful.	Underground. Individual members belonged to the Nationalist Party which they controlled.
May 1927 to Oct. 1927	Controlled by Communists. Most powerful group in Rugao at this time.	Had little power. Did little to reform existing government.	Many arrested and jailed. Many in flight.	Acted through the Nationalist Party.
Oct. 1927 to Oct. 1930	Severely weakened by departure of Communists and arrests of many of its other leaders.	Headed by reform-minded magistrates who reorganized government. Eliminated Communists. Most powerful group in Rugao at this time.	Under continued pressure by Party and government. Later called on for assistance in fighting Communists.	Forced underground. Waged resistance war for three years and ultimately defeated.
Oct. 1930 to 1937(end)	An ineffective organization. Members more interested in internal feuds than reform.	Ended reforms. Worked almost entirely through indigenous elite.	Called back into government. All cases against them dropped. Most powerful group in Rugao at this time.	Ceased to exist as an organized force in Rugao.

Second, during the Nanjing Decade the Rugao Nationalist Party and government were neither independent entities free of all local associations, the firm and consistent allies of a particular group, nor the innocent victims of a specific class' malevolent machinations. Instead, for most of their existence the Rugao Party and government were caught between, on the one hand, central Party and government policy-makers who accorded the building up of county parties and governments a less important role than the banishing of external and internal foes, and, on the other hand, local political actors of differing stripes who recognized the benign neglect of the central authorities and tried to realize personal advantage from it.

When the central Party and government were occupied with perceived threats to their existence, be it from warlords in the north (as during the spring and summer of 1927) or Communists in the west (as in the period following 1930), they were not willing to commit financial or personnel resources to the counties. Under these conditions the Rugao Party and government were urged and even forced by higher-level authorities to unite with and in many ways become subordinate to whomever controlled the county's resources. Most often this was the conservative membership of the non-governmental local elite.

Only from 1928 to 1930 did this situation look as though it might be reversed. During these years the central government temporarily reduced in scale its battles with external enemies and turned its attention to strengthening county-level governments. In response the Rugao government made an effort to build up and improve its own organization, as well as to continue attacks on competitors such as the Communists and the members of the local elite.

However, any improvements were shortlived. When they felt the least bit threatened both central and county governments abandoned their reform efforts and fell back on existing resources, which throughout the Decade meant the local elite. For example, instead of training its own forces to attack the local Communists the Rugao government, with central and provincial encouragement, relied heavily on militia raised and funded by the local elite. After the Communists were defeated these militia remained in place, an ever-present threat to Nationalist sovereignty and a constant reminder that it was now local militia leaders, not the central government, who controlled the Chinese countryside. The following table depicts the changes in power relationships that occurred in Rugao County during the Nanjing Decade.

Table 10. Power Relationships within Rugao County during the Nanjing Decade

Date	Pre-1927	May 1927- Oct. 1927	Oct. 1927- Oct. 1930	Oct. 1930- 1937(end)
Most powerful local actor	E	P	G	E
Local actor struggling for position		E	PE	G
Insignificant local actor	P	G		P

E = Indigenous local elite

P = Rugao County Nationalist Party

G = Rugao county government

Third, during the Nanjing Decade the Rugao Party and government never operated according to any long-term "goal" or "plan" such as that of "control" over the local elite, as postulated by Kuhn.(1) Quite the contrary. County-level government in Rugao can best be described as punctuated crisis government, that is, as an unplanned, unrelated, and unco-ordinated series of patchwork responses to urgent situations. The most important crises were threats to the existence of the Nationalists

themselves, such as those posed by the Communist movement of 1928 to 1930 or the bandit disorders along the coast during the same period. Second in importance were natural disasters such as locusts, droughts, and floods.

Moreover, as might be expected, the most common Nationalist solutions to the problems they faced were quick fixes designed momentarily to stem the tide of disaster so that Party and government attention could be turned elsewhere. For example, if a Communist or bandit disturbance occurred, troops were sent out. If the "bandits" fled, the troops, perhaps after a short pursuit, returned to their assigned district and nothing more was said or done until the next outbreak of violence occurred and the process was repeated.

Fourth, the Nationalist Party and government organization in Rugao were surprisingly small in relation to the size of the population it had to govern. During most of the period in question, the Rugao branch of the Nationalist Party had only two hundred members, the majority of whom were clustered in the county seat. As we have seen, the county government was not much larger. How could such a small group of people have hoped to maintain order among one and a half million people, let alone to carry out an innovative program of reform? In the end it was probably this lack of a sufficiently large Party and

government network that prevented the Nationalists from penetrating the Rugao countryside.

Overall, although some such as Tien Hung-mao(2) have compared the Nationalist political organization to "machine" or "corporatist" models of government, the Nationalist political structure as it existed in Rugao cannot be made to fit into either schema. As we have seen, unlike a political machine, neither the Rugao Party nor the Rugao government had a strong lower-level organization which tied it to the individual citizen. (For a schematic representation of the political machine model see the top-level diagram in Figure 1.) Moreover, unlike a corporatist body, neither the Rugao Party nor the Rugao government effectively allied itself with, and thus coopted, corporate groups such as the merchants, students, teachers, and peasants. (For a schematic representation of the "corporate" model see the middle-level diagram in Figure 1.) The only attempt to forge links with such corporate entities came in 1927. At that time the Nationalist Party (under Communist leadership) briefly tried to set up mass organizations of students, workers, peasants, and women. But when the Nationalist Party removed the Communists from their ranks, these mass organizations were disbanded. Subsequently, instead of trying to include individual members of potential

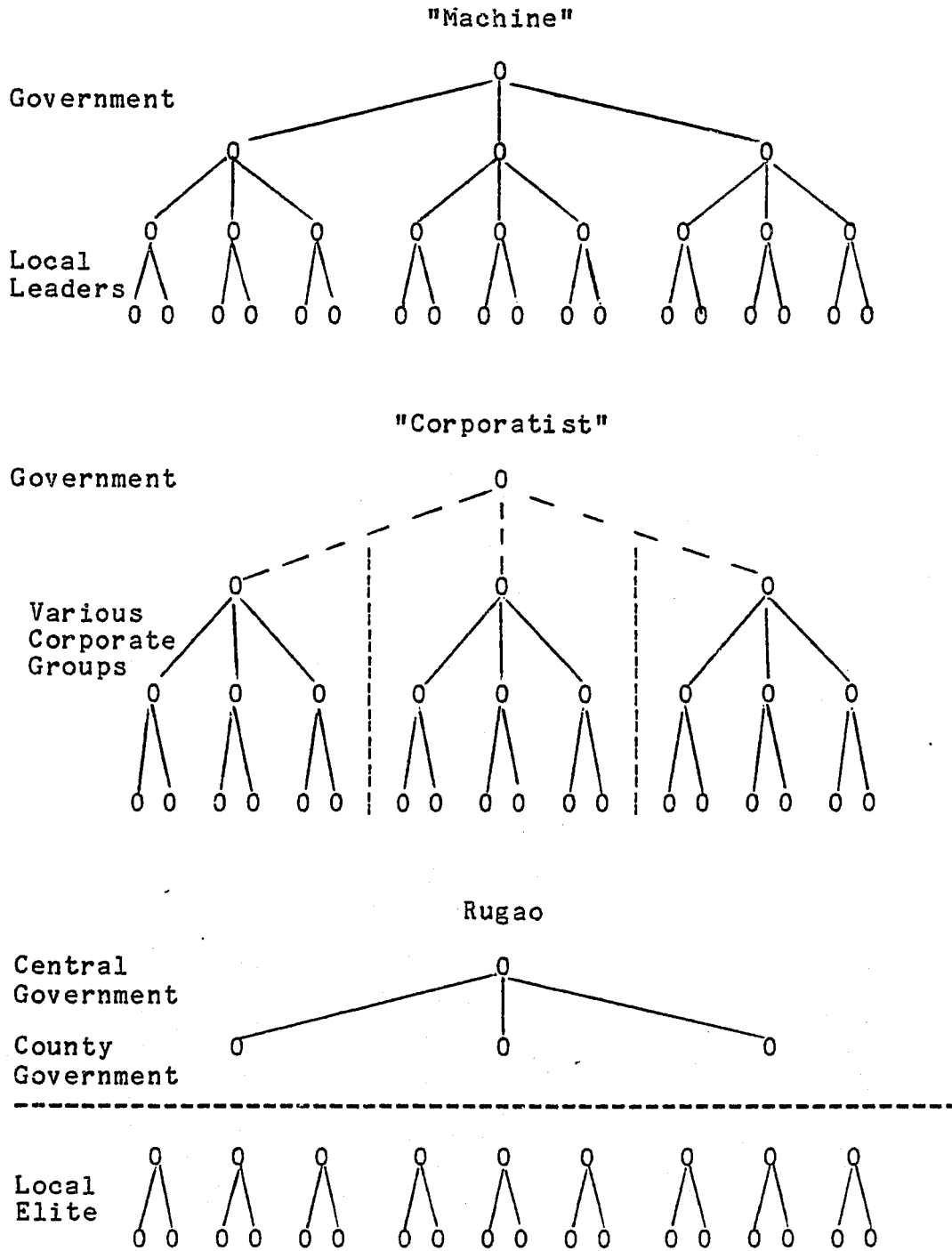
corporate groups, such as teachers and students, within their ranks, the Nationalists periodically attacked them, alienating all such possible supporters from both the Nationalist Party and the Nationalist government, and preventing the creation of a strong, unified, "corporate" structure which either the Party or government could use to implement their policies.

In the end the only groups the Nationalists encouraged or even allowed to function in Rugao were local leadership groups with few regional or national ties. The result was a diffuse random system of organization in which all sub-county leaders were left alone in their particular political cells, but were discouraged from uniting or acting cohesively with each other. Within each cell patron-client ties or other hierarchical forms existed, and occasionally the leaders of two or more cells worked together to accomplish a specific task, but such alliances were always short-lived.

At no time were sub-county political units ever linked together into an integrated, multi-level, hierarchical, county-wide system controlled from the top, as a machine or corporatist model would suggest. Instead, two distinct clusters of organizational ties appeared, one at the county level between, on the one side, the members of the county Party and county government and, on the

other side, higher-level officials, and the other at the sub-county level between members of the local elite and their underlings. Between the two clusters interchanges took place, but they were informal, unstructured, and from the Nationalist point of view often unproductive. (For a schematic representation of the situation in Rugao see the bottom-level diagram in Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Comparison of "Machine", "Corporatist" and Rugao Political Structures



In theory the system which the Nationalists used in the Chinese countryside could have increased the Nationalists' leverage over local leaders by isolating them from one another. In fact it reinforced the strength of each member of the opposition, and left the Nationalists without a dependable organization which they could use to implement their programs. As a result, one of the most striking features of the Nationalist political organization in Rugao is that to the average individual it probably was invisible.

In other words, during the Nanjing Decade the Nationalists did not succeed in transforming the politics of Rugao County, or if Rugao is typical, the rest of rural China. After ten years of Nationalist rule, real power over the Rugao countryside still lay in the hands of the local elite, in many cases (such as that of Sha Shidu) in the grasp of the very same individuals who held sway there prior to 1927. Moreover, the political organization set up by the Nationalists was too small, and by 1937 too enfeebled by attacks upon it from above, to carry out effectively the Nationalists' political program. As a result few Nationalist policies were carried out, and those that were implemented depended heavily upon local elite cooperation to achieve success. The result was that virtually no Nationalist programs penetrated the Chinese

countryside or reached the Rugao peasants.

Moreover, the Communists, during the same time period and in the same place, were not notably more successful than their Nationalist counterparts. They too relied heavily on indigenous local elite leaders and failed to build a loyal, well-disciplined political organization of their own upon which they could depend to carry out their programs. Consequently, after mid-1930 they were a negligible factor in Rugao County politics.

The Overall Significance of the Rugao Case

Because they suggest several criteria by which newly-established governments may be judged, the failures of both the Nationalist and Communist movements in Rugao County during the 1927 to 1937 period, have greater significance than is initially apparent. First, they show that in order for a newly-established government to rule effectively in a predominantly rural country such as China, it must initially remove from power those individuals who previously controlled that nation's local politics. If this is not done, previous power holders may initially flee a new government's rule, but will probably return to oppose and/or co-opt any new policies that this government tries to implement.

Second, they make it clear that only a government which builds a large, loyal, and well-disciplined organization of its own can hope to carry its message to the people it hopes to govern and ultimately implement its policies. Without such an organization, even a strong central government either will have no hope of beginning to effect its policies, or will have to rely on outsiders, such as the members of an indigenous local elite. In the end, these outsiders will either divert the programs of the government to their own private ends, or should the situation become drastic enough, turn on their benefactors outright. In Rugao prior to 1937 both these situations occurred, making it impossible for either the Nationalists or the Communists to govern effectively.

Thus, during the Nanjing Decade both the Nationalists and the Communists, for very similar reasons, tried and failed to build viable political organizations in Rugao. The result was that as of 1937 power in the Rugao countryside was fragmented, with no group effectively able to govern. After 1937 the Japanese invasion temporarily diverted attention away from the local political scene. But starting in the early 1940's the Communists once again entered Rugao County and the struggle for the hearts and minds of Rugao's peasants resumed.

Unlike the 1920's and 1930's, many have suggested that the outcome of that later struggle was determined by the extent to which one group - the Communists - was able to overcome local elite opposition to their rule and to create simultaneously a new political organization capable of reaching the average peasant with its message. The Nationalists apparently did not learn their lesson as well. However, although its dimensions and details are no less, and perhaps even more, fascinating, the telling of this later tale is for another time and another place when a question similar to the one I have posed for the Nanjing Decade can be asked and answered, that is, in contrast to their Nationalist predecessors, did the Communists transform the politics of rural China?

Conclusion

Notes

(1) Philip A. Kuhn, "Local Self-Government under the Republic: Problems of Control, Autonomy, and Mobilization," in Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

(2) Tien Hung-mao, Government and Politics in Kuomintang China (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 3.

Glossary

bai hua	白話
Baipu Shi	白蒲市
ban	班
Banjing	搬經
bao (unit of the baojia system)	保
bao (measure of opium)	包
bao zhang	保長
bao zheng	保正
baoan dui	保安隊
baoguan yuan	保管員
Baoying Xian	寶應縣
Bei dang	北堂
Beijing	北京
Beijing Pingmin Daxue	北京平民大學
bianji gu	編輯股
Bingcha	拼茶
bu sui dui	不隨隊
Cai zheng ke	財政科
Cai zheng ting	財政廳
canshi hui	參事會
cao ce	草冊

Cao Hongci	曹鴻慈
cao tu	草圖
Chahe	岔河
Chaiwan	柴灣
Chang Jiang	長江
Chemahu	車麻湖
Chen Gongbo	陳公博
Chen Guofu	陳果夫
Chen Qicai	陳其材
Chen Tianwu	陳天五
Cheng Changwu	成昌吾
Cheng Yue shi min da hui	懲樂市民大會
Chengxiang dianhua jiaohuan suo	城鄉電話交換所
choubei chu	籌備處
chuna	出納
Chuanchang He	串場河
chuji xiao xue	初級小學
Cong Peigong	叢佩功
Cong Xiaohou	叢曠侯
cui zheng li	催征吏
cun fu	村副
cun zhi	村制
cun zhi choubei chu	村制籌備處
da dui	大隊

Da Yu Gongsì	大豫公司
Dadao Xi Shan Huiyi Pai	打倒西山會議派
Dai Jiren	戴吉人
dan	担
dang bu	黨部
Dang xiao pai	黨校派
dang xiao xuesheng	黨校學生
dang zheng lianxi huiyi	黨政聯席會議
Dangwu zhengli weiyuanhui	黨務整理委員會
Dantu Xian	丹徒縣
Danyang Xian	丹陽縣
Daoguang	道光
Deng Pujun	鄧樸君
Di zheng ju	地政局
Dianzu zhongcai weiyuanhui	佃租仲裁委員會
Diaojiawang	刁家網
dibao	地保
Dier jie zhijian weiyuanhui weiyuan	第二屆執監事員會 員
difang fulao	地方父老
difang jingbei dui	地方警備隊
Difang kuanchan baoguan weiyuanhui	地方款產保管委員會
difang renshi	地方人士
Difang zheng fei jinsuo weiyuanhui	地方政費緊縮委員會

Difang zhian weichihui	地方治安維持會
Difang zhian weichihui fen hui	地方治安維持會分會
Ding Suner	丁孫兒
Ding Zuoze	丁作則
Dingjiasuo	丁家所
Dingyan Zhen	丁堰鎮
Diyi qu dang bu	第一區黨部
Dong dang	東黨
dong hui	董會
Dong Jin	東晉
Dong Taozhou	董弼周
Dong Xiaosu	董肖蘇
Dongchen	東陳
Donghai Xian	東海縣
dongshi	董事
Dongtai Xian	東台縣
Du shu hui	讀書會
duan zhang	段長
dui	隊
Dui Ri jingji juejiao weiyuanhui	對日經濟絕交委員會
dui zhang	隊長
Fan Ri hui jiancha yuan	反日會檢查員
Fan Ri jiu guo yundong hui	反日救國運動會

Fandui Riben chu bing Shandong hui	反對日本出兵山東會
Fang Jiazhen	方家珍
Fangong Di	范公堤
fen	分
fen gui	分櫃
fen hang	分行
Fengli	豐利
fu jie zhang	副街長
Fu xie zhengli weiyuanhui	婦協整理委員會
Funu bu	婦女部
Funu xiehui	婦女協會
Fushe minzhong xuexiao	附設民衆學校
fuze daibiao	負責代表
<u>Gao Bao</u>	皋報
ge qu shenfu	各區紳室
Ge tuanti yu Yue Qian xian zhang qingli yanmu weiyuanhui	各團體與樂前縣長清 理賬目委員會
Ge Xiangong	葛顯功
gong hui	公會
Gong lu ju	公路局
gongan dui jiaodao tuan junshi ke xueyuan	公安隊教導團軍事科 警員
Gongan fen ju zhang	公安分局長
Gongan ju	公安局
gongan ju zhang	公安局長

Gongkuan gongchan guanli chu	公款公產管理處
gongmin	公民
gongzheng renshi	公正人士
Gu Renwu	顧仁五
Gu Rongjing	顧蓉鏡
Gu Sier	顧四兒
Gu Zhangwu	顧章五
Guan Guozhang	管國璋
Guanglu Zhen	廣陸鎮
gui	貴
Guo Heng	郭衡
Guo Yongnan	郭雍南
Guomin jiuguo hui	國民救國會
Guomindang	國民黨
Haian	海安
Haian Xian	海安縣
Haifang weichi hui	海防維持會
Haimen Xian	海門縣
Han Guojun	韓國鈞
he	河
He Kun (Li Weilin)	何坤(李維霖)
He Lin	何霖
He Yingqin	何應欽
Hezuoshe zhidao suo	合作設指導所

Hezuoshe zhidao yuan	合作設指導員
Hong Fuji	宏福記
Hong shisi jun	紅十四軍
Hu Hanmin	胡漢民
Huai He	淮河
Huaiyin Xian	淮陰縣
Huang Chiwu	黃七五
Huang Dansheng	黃旦聲
Huang Jiarui	黃家瑞
Huang Jiren	黃哲人
Huang Picheng	黃關城
Huang Qiao	黃橋
Huangang	環港
Huangpu Jiang	黃浦江
huji ke zhuren	戶籍課主任
Huling qiuce	戶領坵冊
Huoxing Miao	火星廟
Ji Kai	季愷
ji kuan cang	積款倉
Ji Yun	季雲
Ji Zhanbei	季瞻北
Ji Zhongzhuo	季忠琢
jia	甲
jia zhang	甲辰

Jiading Xian	嘉定縣
jiancha weiyuanhui	監察委員會
Jiang Fuqin	江輔勤
Jiang Jieshi	蔣介石
Jiangan	江安
Jiangbei zhaofushi quanquan weiyuanhui	江北督察使全權委員
Jiangning hui guan	江寧會館
Jiangsu de baojia yundong	江蘇的保甲運動
<u>Jiangsu Ribao</u>	江蘇日報
Jiangsu Sheng	江蘇省
Jiangsu Sheng baoan qu zhang	江蘇省保安隊長
Jiangsu Sheng dangwu zhengli weiyuanhui	江蘇省黨務整理委員
Jiangsu Sheng jiao fei zongzhi hui	江蘇省剿匪總指揮
Jiangsu Sheng li yi shi ben ke	江蘇省立一師本科
Jiangsu Sheng linshi zhixing weiyuanhui	江蘇省臨時執行委員
Jiangsu Sheng qing dang weiyuanhui	江蘇省清黨委員會
Jiangsu Sheng yihui yizhang	江蘇省議會議長
<u>Jiangsu Sheng Zhengfu Gongbao</u>	江蘇省政府公報
Jiangxi	江西
Jianshe ju	建設局
Jianshe ke	建設科
Jianshe ting	建設廳

jiaoyu shuyu	監獄署獄
jiao	角
Jiaoyu ju	教育局
Jiaoyu ting	教育廳
jiaoyu xiehui	教育協會
Jiaoyu xingzheng weiyuanhui	教育行政委員會
Jiaoyu weiyuanhui	教育委員會
Jiaqing	嘉慶
jie zhang	街長
jiakuan lianhe hui	借款聯合會
Jing Song	金鏡松
jingcha suo	警察所
jingcha suo zhang	警察所長
jingguan yuan	經管員
Jingji weiyuanhui	經濟委員會
Jingjiang Xian	靖江縣
jingli	經理
Jin yan fen suo	禁煙分所
jiuji yuan	救濟院
jiusheng yidu	救生義渡
Jiushijiu Wan	九十九灣
ju	局
Ju Zhen	莒鎮
Juegang	掘港

Juegang Shi cun zhang	掘溝市村長
jun zhang	軍長
ke	科
kechan	客產
kekao zhi baozheng	可靠之保證
kuaiji	會計
kui	潰
Lao Hu Zhuang	老虎莊
laoshen	老紳
li	里
Li Baozhang	李寶章
Li Jigen (Li Jigeng)	李吉根(李吉庚)
Li Kangyu	李康宇
Li Mingyang	李明揚
Lian fang shiwu suo	聯防事務所
lianhe baoan tuan	聯合保安團
Libao	李堡
lieshen	坊紳
Lifa	立發
Lijia Shi	李家市
lijin	釐金
Linshi weichi zhian hui	臨時維持治安會
Liu Changyan	劉昌言
Liu Lanqing (Liu Baolin)	劉蘭卿(劉寶琳)

Liu Lianpu	劉廉浦
Liu qu zaizhen weiyuanhui	六區災振委員會
liumang	流氓
Liyang Xian	滎陽縣
Lizheng baoliu Xujia Di weiyuanhui	力爭保留徐家堤委員會
Longyou He	龍遊河
Longyou Lu	龍游路
Lu gongcheng chu	路工程處
Lu Jinghuai	陸景槐
lu ke	蘆課
Lu Shiquan	陸士鈺
Lu Tianhuai	盧殿槐
Lu Xisan	盧錫三
Lu zheng weiyuanhui	路政委員會
Lu Ziyuan	陸子元
Lugang Shi	盧港市
Lusi Chang	呂四場
Ma Jianbo	馬健伯
Ma Jizhi	馬繼之
Ma Shaozhou	馬紹周
mang cao	忙漕
Mao Jie	昌傑
Mao Zedong	毛澤東
Matang	馬塘

Mianzuo nong chang	棉作農場
Miao Bin	繆文武
mimi shiqi	密密時期
Min xuan hui	民訓會
Min zheng ke	民政科
Min zheng ting	民政廳
Min zhi ke	民治科
Min zhi ke zhang	民治科長
Min Zhizhong	閔之中
Mincheng xiao	敏成校
Ming	明
minzhong jiaoyu guan	民衆教育館
Motou Shi	磨頭市
mu	畝
Nan dang	南黨
Nan Tang	南唐
Nantong fayuan	南通法院
Nantong Xian	南通縣
Nantong Zhou	南通州
Ni Bi	倪弼
Niu Yongjian	鈕永建
Nong gong shang ke	農工商科
Nong xie zhengli weiyuanhui	農協整理委員會
Nongmin jian gong shang bu	農民兼工商部

Nongmin jiaoyu guan	農民教育館
Nongmin tuiguang zhongxin	農民推廣中心
nongmin xiehui	農民協會
pai	牌
Pan Kaiju	潘開渠
Ping Rang	馮讓
Pochu mixin yundong hui	破除迷信運動會
Qian Zuoyi	錢佐伊
qian zhuang	錢莊
Qidong	啟東
Qing	清
qing hui	請會
Qing xiang pingyi hui	清鄉評議會
Qingli cai weiyuanhui	清理財政局
Qingnian bu	青年部
Qingnian lianhui zhengli weiyuanhui	青年聯合會整理委員會
Qingpu Xian	青浦縣
Qingzhang Ju	清丈局
Qiu Xijue	邱錫爵
Qiu Youqing	邱又青
qiuling huce	區領戶冊
qu	區
qu dang bu	區黨部
qu dang bu lianhe banshi chu	區黨部聯合辦事處

qu fen bu	區分部
qu jingcha dui	區警察隊
qu nong hui	區農會
qu shang hui	區商會
qu xingzheng ju	區行政局
qu xingzheng ju zhang	區行政局長
qu yishi hui	區議事會
qu yishi hui yuan	區議事會員
qu zhang	區長
qu zizhi gong suo	區自治公所
Quan xian daibiao da hui	全縣代表大會
Quan xian zhi huang huiyi	全縣治蝗會議
Ru-Tai youji siling	如泰游擊司令
Rudong Xian	如東縣
Rugao Chengshi shangmin xiehui daibiao	如皋城市商民協會代 表
<u>Rugao Dang Bao</u>	如皋黨報
Rugao qu junjing jicha fen chu zhang	如皋區軍警稽查分處
Rugao shuiwu suo	如皋稅務所
Rugao Xian	如皋縣
Rugao Xian dang bu	如皋縣黨部
Rugao Xian dang bu linshi weiyuanhui	如皋縣黨部臨時委員
Rugao Xian dang bu linshi zhixing weiyuanhui	如皋縣黨部臨時執行 委員

Rugao Xian dang bu tebie weiyuanhui	如皋縣黨部特別委員
Rugao Xian dang bu tebie weiyuanhui qingdang weiyuanhui	如皋縣黨部特別委員 清黨特別委員
Rugao Xian li linchang	如皋縣立林場
Rugao Xian li tongsu jiaoyu guan	如皋縣立通俗教育館
Rugao Xian xian li nongchang	如皋縣立農場
Rugao Xian zhengli weiyuanhui	如皋縣整理委員會
Rugao Xian zhidao weiyuan	如皋縣指導委員會
Rugao Xian zhidao weiyuanhui	如皋縣指導委員會
Rugao Xian zhishi	如皋縣知事
Rugao Xian zhong miao chang	如皋縣種苗場
Rui Jiarui	芮家瑞
Rui Yangwu	芮揚武
Run Zhi	潤之
Sang Haishan	桑海珊
Sha Shidu (Sha Yuanju)	沙士度(沙元渠)
Sha Yuanbing	沙元炳
Shandong	山東
shang hui	商會
Shang hui si li shangye xuexiao	商會私立商業學校
shang tuan	商團
shang wang	商王
Shang xie zhengli weiyuanhui	商協整理委員會
Shanghai	上海

Shanghai Xian	上海縣
shangmin xiehui	商民協會
Shanxi	山西
Shen Chu	沈礎
shen dao dui	神道隊
Shen Jinghua	沈靖華
Shen Mingxuan	申明軒
Shen Yi	沈毅
shencha weiyuanhui	審查委員會
Sheng dang bu changwu weiyuanhui	省黨部常務委員會
sheng du xue	省督學
Sheng li diyi nong xiao nong ke	省立第一農校農科
Sheng li mianzuo shiyan chang	省立棉作試驗場
Sheng tepai yuan banshi chu	省特派員辦事處
Shenjiashuang	申家莊
shi	石
shishen	士紳
shixiang cun zhang	市鄉村長
shixiang xingzheng ju	市鄉行政局
Shiye ju	事業局
shiyi	使役
Shizhuang	石莊
Shou Nengmu	壽能模
Shuangdian	雙甸

shuchai	書差
Shui mu zuogong hui	水木作工會
Shuili shiwu suo	水利事務所
shuji	書記
si shu	私塾
Sichuan	四川
Sifa ting	司法廳
Song	宋
Su Dexin	蘇德馨
<u>Su Zheng</u>	蘇政
sui	歲
sui dui	隨隊
Sun Chuanfang	孫傳芳
Sun Zhongshan	孫中山
Suqian Xian	宿遷
Suzhou	蘇州
Tai Xian	泰縣
Taixing Xian	泰興縣
Taixing Xian dang bu weiyuanhui	泰興縣黨部委員會
Taizhou	泰州
Tang	唐
Tang Kezuo	湯克祚
Tang Shilun	湯士倫
te wu dui	特務隊

tepai yuan	特派員
tianmu te shui	田畝特稅
Tianshenggang Zhen	天生港鎮
ting	廳
tiyu chang	體育場
tong hui	同會
Tong-Ru juanyan te shui ju	通如捲煙特稅局
Tong-Ru shuiwu suo	通如稅務所
tong yuan	銅元
Tongshan Xian	銅山縣
Tongzhou	通州
tuchan	土產
Tudi ju	土地局
tuhao lieshen	土豪劣紳
tu lie	土劣
Tuzai shuiwu ju	屠宰稅政局
Wang Haoran	王浩然
Wang Jingwei	汪精衛
Wang Pengnian	王彭年
Wang Taihui	王泰達
Wang Yingzhao	王盈朝
Wang Yuwen	王玉文
Wang Zhezai	汪哲哉
weishu silingbu	衛戍司令部

wen	文
Wen Qinming	文欽明
wenshu	文書
Wu Wenkui	吳文奎
Wu Wenyuan	伍文淵
Wu xian lianfang hui	五縣聯防會
Wu Zongren	伍崇仁
Wujin Xian	武進縣
Wuxi Huabian Gonghui	無錫花邊公會
Wuxi Xian	無錫縣
Xi dang	西黨
Xia Guangyu	夏廣宇
Xia Jiying	夏繼盈
Xian canshi hui	縣參事會
xian dang bu	縣黨部
xian dang bu qingnian bu ganshi	縣黨部青年部幹事
xian gongan da dui	縣公安大隊
xian gongan jingcha dui	縣公安警察隊
xian gongshu	縣公署
Xian hezuoshe zhidao suo	縣合作社指導所
xian li chuji zhong xiao	縣立初級中校
Xian li minzhong jiaoyu guan	縣立民衆教育館
xian nong hui	縣農會
xian shu	縣署

xian shu da tang	縣署大堂
xian yishi hui	縣議事會
xian zhang	縣長
xian zhengfu	縣政府
xian zhengli weiyuanhui	縣整理委員會
xian zhishi	縣知事
xiang	鄉
xiang nong hui	鄉農會
xiang zhang	鄉長
xiang zhen gong suo	鄉鎮公所
xiangdao dui	鄉導隊
Xiao Hei Yang	小黑洋
Xiaoxi He	小溪河
Xiaoxue jiaoyu weichi hui	小學教育維持會
Xiaoxue jiaoyuan lianhe hui	小學教員聯合會
Xichang	西場
Xinshenggang	新生港
Xu Fangde	徐芳德
Xu Jiajin	徐家瑾
Xu Wuzhang	許五章
Xu Xianji	許憲基
Xuanchuan bu	宣傳部
Xue lian hui	學聯會
xuesheng hui	學生會

Xujia Ba (Xujia Di)	徐家壩(徐家堤)
xun guan	巡官
xunyue shi	巡閱使
Yancheng Xian	鹽城縣
Yang Jiechen	楊介臣
Yang Xingqin	楊興勤
Yang Yuying	楊玉英
Yao Ru Dianqi Gongsi	耀如電氣公司
Ye Canzhang	葉燦章
Ye Chucang	葉楚儉
Ye Xiufeng	葉秀峯
yewu	業務
yin jiao	銀角
yinshi shishen	殷實士紳
Yinshua ye gong hui	印刷業工會
yishen	邑紳
Yu Naicheng	余乃成
Yu Zhaocai	余兆才
Yuan (Dynasty)	元
yuan (unit of currency)	元
Yue Jian	樂濟安
Yun He gongcheng ju	運河工程局
Yunnan	雲南
Yunyan He	運鹽河

zhang	丈
Zhang Gongren	張公任
Zhang Jian	張鑒
Zhang Jizhi	張季直
Zhang Jun	章駁
Zhang Lie	章烈
Zhang Xiang (Zhang Shaobin)	張相(張少賓)
Zhang Yi	張燁
Zhang Yuanyang	張淵揚
Zhang Zhaohan	張朝漢
Zhang Zhongli	張中立
Zhang Zunshi	章蓮時
Zhanghuang Gang	張黃港
Zhao Guang	趙光
Zhejiang	浙江
zhen	鎮
zhen shang hui	鎮商會
zhen shen	鎮紳
Zheng gang liu tiao	政綱六條
zheng liang ce	徵糧冊
zhengli weiyuanhui	整理委員會
zhengshen	正紳
zhengwu huiyi	政務會議
Zhengzhi bu	政治部

Zhenjiang Xian	鎮江縣
zhentan dui	偵探隊
Zhenzhou (Zhentao)	鎮濤(鎮濤)
zhi bu	支部
zhi hang	支行
zhidao suo	指導所
zhixing weiyuanhui	執行委員會
Zhong Hansan	仲漢三
Zhong Minxin	仲民新
zhong tian	中田
Zhong Tongqi	仲統耆
Zhong Xingchuan	仲星般
Zhongshan tang	中山堂
Zhongyang tebie weiyuanhui	中央特別委員會
Zhou Kaisan	周開三
Zhou Shizhong	周時中
Zhong dang	中堂
Zhong Shouqing	仲綬卿
Zhou Yinren	周蔭人
Zhu Guangyue	祝光樾
zhuang ding	壯丁
zhuxi tuan	主席團
Zhuzhong baoyu shiyan qu	豬種保育實驗區
ziyou zhiye tuanti	自由職業團員會

zong dong	總董
zong dui zhang	總隊長
Zong gong hui	總工會
Zong gong hui choubei chu	總工會籌備處
Zong siling bu	總司令部
zong zhihui	總指揮
Zongwu ke	總務科
zu zhang	組長
Zuzhi bu	組織部
Zuzhi gu	組織股

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