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## Henan - the model: from hegemonism to fragmentism: portrait of the political culture of China's most populated province

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**Henan - The Model:  
From Hegemonism to Fragmentism**

**Portrait of the Political Culture  
of China's Most Populated Province**

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***Abstract/Zusammenfassung:***

Henan is China's most populous province. It has long played a strategic role in Chinese history and in more recent decades has played a prominent part in the country's politics. In this paper we explore aspects of the history and political culture of Henan, particularly the collective memory or consciousness of its people, and trends in its recent political history. We focus in particular on specific cultural features and local patterns of socioeconomic development, both to highlight important features of provincial life and also to provide an interpretive strategy for approaching recent developments in the province. In identifying specific cultural features, we focus heavily on the egalitarian heritage of the province - in some cases bordering on communitarianism - and how this heritage relates to a deeply-rooted sense that Henan has lost its central role in China's national life. These two patterns converge, today, to produce a phenomenon of 'modelism' in Henan - a tendency to identify and promote apparently unique local social and political structures as though these provided models for the rest of the country to emulate.

*Keywords/Schlagwörter:*

China's provincial development, political culture, communitarianism, modelism

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# HENAN - THE MODEL: FROM HEGEMONISM TO FRAGMENTISM

## Portrait of the Political Culture of China's Most Populated Province

Thomas Heberer/Sabine Jakobi<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Introduction

In this paper we will address characteristics of Henan's political culture, the collective memory or consciousness of its people and its process of political development in recent history. The four dimensions we will focus on are: (a) geographic, (b) historical/cultural, (c) social-rebellious, and (d) political.

Arguing on a historical basis we will first develop two patterns of interpretation which are not only relevant for Henan's specific culture and for its socioeconomic development, but seem to have special explanatory powers. The two patterns of interpretation are first an awareness of Henan's rich cultural history and political tradition and second a widespread phenomenon of egalitarianism related to communitarism. These two patterns of interpretation are strongly interconnected, since egalitarianism might be understood as a subset or a feature of the general cultural heritage. However, for analytic purpose we want to differentiate between a deep-rooted sense of loss of Henan's central role in China and a single prominent feature of this heritage, egalitarianism related to communitarism, that we believe to be most influential even in modern times. In addition, we will demonstrate these two patterns together spurred an historic development of "modelism" in Henan, primarily with the objective regaining a prominent place in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> In this context we, nevertheless, do not argue for *one* traditional culture, since this term implicates a homogeneity and unambiguity that never existed in reality. Instead, we develop a concept of a pluralistic culture and refer to a culture with *different* traditions. We conceive of egalitarianism as both an attitude and a way of living deeply rooted in an emphasis on community life and in the idea of mutual survival. As the essence of historical experience, egalitarianism can still be traced in contemporary Henan.

Next we address on to the modern-day era of Communist China and explicate different development strategies applied by the provincial leadership in an effort to catch up with more developed regions in China, especially with the booming coastal areas. These strategies, whose nature can clearly be understood as a continuation on the historical processes described in this paper, are directed to returning Henan to its traditional place of prominence within modern China. From 1949 on Henan was a model province in every political campaign and produced numerous model units with national importance. Since the beginning of the reform process Henan is no longer a "model", but seems to accept that it is one of the less-developed provinces that requires economic development. However Henan-derived models still exist.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised and enlarged version of a paper presented at the "International Conference on China's Provinces in Reform", held in Kunming/China, October 4-7 1998. The paper is based both on a literature review and extensive fieldwork undertaken in summer 1996 in Henan province by Thomas Heberer and several long-term research visits of Sabine Jakobi in 1991, 1995/96 and summer 1996. While both authors cooperated in constituting and editing this paper, Thomas Heberer is solely responsible for the chapter on Nanjie.

<sup>2</sup> The authors are aware that their political culture-argument regarding the Henanese disposition towards egalitarianism and the inhabitants' special cultural awareness requires more systematic empirical research. The reader therefore should regard our argument as an scientific hypothesis deriving from fieldwork in that area.



Employing Nanjie, one of the present-day "models" as a case study, we will conclude our paper by arguing that Henan is still producing models. However there is no longer a unique type, but a range that extends from models in terms of collective structures to those of private economic patterns. Henan is thus evolving from a hegemonic or one-dimensional political model to a fragmented one.

We do not claim that the picture we paint in this paper is complete or free of inconsistencies. On the contrary, we deeply encourage review and further empirical examination. Due to the limited availability of data below the provincial level, intra-provincial differences are by-and-large not considered. Furthermore, rather than presenting a thorough analysis of contemporary economic factors, we elected an historical approach to the province's political culture in order to trace the origins of contemporary Henan.

Because Henan is the most populous Chinese province, and therefore plays a strategic role in Chinese politics, a careful examination of this region and its prospects for future development is important.<sup>3</sup> However, we do not claim that Henan is unique, since several of the features we address also exist in other provinces in Central China such as Shaanxi or Anhui. Rather it is the special combination of features that brings about the particular Henanese pattern of hegemonic and fragmented "modelism".

## **2 The Geographical Dimension: Yellow River, Loess and Natural Calamities**

The history of the province is full of natural calamities, although Henan possesses a multitude of natural resources and was a major granary. For the last 2100 years the Chinese annals identify 982 such events involving Henan.<sup>4</sup> There is no year without droughts and/or disastrous floods. The frequency of natural catastrophes is connected to the geographical and climatic conditions: a period of heavy cloudbursts in June and July is followed by a rainless period of eight months. Every year droughts strike the province. On average, one tenth of its cultivable land is affected. Locust, sand and other storms also plague the province. Everything depends on the water. The fertile loess ground requires an sophisticated and intact irrigation system. However, the biggest source of running water, the Yellow River, often called "China's sorrow", has changed its course many times and with it also the agricultural conditions.<sup>5</sup> This happened 21 times in the course of written history in its lower reaches. Thus the map of China's North changed 21 times. The lability of the course of the lower reaches of the river was due to tremendous loading with loess and sediments (1.6 bill. tons per year, of which 400 mio tons are deposited in the lower reaches). Consequently, the bed of the river raises about 10 cm per year. The lower reaches, which are no longer able to absorb flow from tributaries, are protected by a connecting-dike of 1,356 km length. Every tidal wave poses danger. Floods and droughts in this highly populated area regularly led to terrible famines.

These calamities had not always been caused by nature. During the peasant uprisings of the late Ming dynasty, a rebel army under the leadership of Li Zicheng laid siege to the city of

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<sup>3</sup> Until recently Henan was outranked by Sichuan province in size of population. However, Henan's top position in the actual population ranking is not due to a dramatic increase in fertility productivity, but to the administrative device of excluding the area of Chongqing city from Sichuan province.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Luc Domenach, *The Origins of the Great Leap Forward. The Case of One Chinese Province*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford (Westview Press) 1995: p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Inhabitants of this area conceive of the Yellow River both as the "sorrow" and the nourishing "mother" of China. We will come back later to the prominent role of the river in the formation of an attitude oriented towards egalitarianism.

Kaifeng in 1642. After several attempts to break through the defense lines, they opened the dikes of the nearby Yellow River to flood the city. As a result, 900,000 people were killed.<sup>6</sup> During the Taiping-uprising in 1853 a breach in the dikes occurred because maintenance was neglected. The Daqin River, the course of which had already been used by the Yellow River in former centuries, absorbed the Yellow River. Since then it once again leads into the Bohai-Gulf. Millions of people were victims of raging natural forces, and the consequences of these disasters to the economy of and traffic in the Northern Chinese plain were devastating. In 1938 Chiang Kai-shek gave orders to the Sector Commander to blow up a dike near Huayuankou to stop the Japanese advance. The resulting torrents destroyed 11 cities and 4,000 villages, including the homes of 12 mio people, ruined the harvest of three provinces, and rendered arable land unarable by covering it with spreading sand and mud. Approximately 890,000 people died.

The human casualties from famines are legendary. In North China, in the provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi, Hebei, Henan and Shandong, 9-13 mio people died from 1876-79 during the great droughts and the following famines, and from 1892-94 another one million people lost their lives. In 1942-43 two to three million people died of starvation in Henan alone.<sup>7</sup>

### **3 The Historical and Cultural Dimension: Henan as the Cradle of Chinese Culture and as an Ancient Power Center**

Henan stands out as the origin of Chinese culture, the birthplace of the Chinese nation and Chinese script as well as the place of origin of Chinese family names. The Henanese are perceived as descendants of the Yellow Emperor (*Huangdi*), the fictive founder of the Chinese culture. It was called "Henan" because most of the Henan province is situated south of the Yellow River. Two thousand years ago its name was *Zhongzhou*, i. e. the prefecture in the middle of the nine prefectures which made up China at that time, then *Zhongguo*, Middle Kingdom, a label that was later used to name all of China.<sup>8</sup> As already explained, Henan's topography afforded its inhabitants strategically favourable conditions. To the south, west and northwest several mountain ranges and rivers form a natural boundary, while the plain in the east could be employed to produce two or three harvests of grain a year. These conditions may explain why Henan was the residence of 19 dynasties in Chinese history. Henanese culture is also composed by Shaolin monastery and Kongfu martial arts, as well as by "Yugong yi shan" - the story of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains.

One of the earliest and most densely populated areas in Neolithic times, Henan is considered to be the ancient political, economic and cultural center of China. The Neolithic cultures of Yangshao and Longshan were located in today's Henan. At Anyang the remains of the last capital of the Shang dynasty (16-11 century B.C.) were excavated. The Eastern Zhou dynasty (770-221 B.C.) was founded in Luoyang which was also for some time capital of that dynasty.

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<sup>6</sup> The city wall, which has been rebuilt in the 12th century under the Jin dynasty, proved to be strong enough to resist any attack. Thus, after several futile attempts to enter Kaifeng, the rebels resorted to this last means. For an account of this event, see James Bunyan Parsons, *The Peasant Rebellion of the late Ming Dynasty*, Tuscon, Arizona (The University of Arizona Press) 1970: pp. 96-104. Other sources speak of 300,000 victims and assert that it was the defenders themselves who opened the dikes hoping desperately to both be safe behind the city wall, and to surprise the attackers with the flood. See for example Qu Chunshan, ed., *Kaifeng lüyou zhinan* (Travelguide Kaifeng), Beijing (Zhongguo lüyou chubanshe) 1988: pp. 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Comp. Jacques Gernet, *Die chinesische Welt*, Frankfurt/M (Insel) 1979: pp. 515-517.; Israel Epstein, *China*. Von Sun Jat-Sen zu Mao Tse-Tung, Berlin (Volk und Welt) 1950: pp. 300-301.

<sup>8</sup> Comp. Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen, *China. Ergebnisse eigener Reisen*, vol. 2, Berlin (Dietrich Reimer) 1882: p. 509.

The early states of the Spring and Autumn period (770-481 B.C.) were situated in that region, as well as some of the Warring States (475-221 B.C.). The Han Emperors in 25 A.D. moved their capital from Xi'an to Luoyang, and under the Wei (200-265), Jin (265-420) and Sui (581-618) dynasties it continued to be the capital. Under the Tang emperors (618-907) it was second capital only, but remained a cultural and scientific center. Luoyang was important for every dynasty, because it was near the principal grain growing area of that time.

Kaifeng, another city in Henan province, was capital of the Wei dynasty during the Warring States, of the Five dynasties (907-960), of the later Liang (as Eastern Capital = *dongdu*, 555-587) and the Northern Song (960-1127) dynasties. Various accounts in particular from the Song era, suggest Kaifeng enjoyed a high standard of living including a thriving fine arts scene. The famous painting "At Qingming festival on the riverside" (*qingming shanghe tu*) gives a vivid impression of a bustling and flourishing capital city of Kaifeng (named Dongjing at that time). The cosmopolitan tradition of Henan is also reflected in the longtime existence of a Jewish community in Kaifeng, which existed there until the last century. It is also in the ancient metropolitan city of Kaifeng that the Henanese tradition of urbanity and education survived. The Russian sinologist Alekseev who travelled in 1907 together with the French sinologist and archaeologist Chavannes throughout China, thus noted on his arrival in Kaifeng:

"Passing through the city, we discover that it is covering a huge area and has a lot of shops. The buildings are big, like in Peking, they are even more beautiful."<sup>9</sup>

and

"At the time we return to our hotel it's already dark outside. Only the center of Kaifeng where we are staying is illuminated bright as day und bursting with life. It reminds me of London City."<sup>10</sup>

At the time Alekseev visited Kaifeng, all traces of the Jewish community had already vanished. However, he gave testimony of a still vivid and rich cultural and religious life expressed in Muslim, Daoist, Buddhist, Confucian and diverse idiosyncratic rites and festivals. He also mentions a Catholic mission station with an Italian priest.<sup>11</sup>

Various emperors and many historical personalities were born in this province: famous philosophers, including Laozi, Zhuangzi, Han Fei, Lü Buwei and Cheng Yi; politicians such as Shang Yang and Li Si, military leaders including Yue Fei and Si Mayi; leaders of peasant movements, for example Cheng Sheng, Wu Guang, Wang Xianzhi and Shen Buhai; poets such as Li He, Du Fu and Bai Juyi; writers and painters such as, respectively, Han Yu and Wu Daozi as well as the astronomer Zhang Heng and the medician Zhang Zhongjing, to mention only a few.

However, with the invasion of the Nuzhen armies (*Jürched*) and the sacking and destruction of Kaifeng in 1126, the political power center was moved to the North, and Henan thus lost its

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<sup>9</sup> V. M. Alekseev, *China im Jahre 1907. Ein Reisetagebuch*, Leipzig et al. (Müller und Kiepenheuer) 1989: p.188. Original published in Russian language in 1958 in Moscow (Izdatel' stvo vostocnoj Literatury). This and all following quotations are translated into English by the authors.

<sup>10</sup> Alekseev: p. 200.

<sup>11</sup> Alekseev: pp. 192-204.

central position politically and economically. Thereafter, the north became the dominant center of the empire, with Peking as its capital since the Yuan dynasty (1271).<sup>12</sup>

As it was the transit point from north to south China, there was continuous, heavy fighting over the control of Henan; this occurred from ancient times, for instance during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States (the story of the "Three Kingdoms" gives concrete examples) to recent history, for example during the warlord era, the Northern Expedition, the war against the Japanese during World War II and the civil war against the Guomindang. The province was therefore called the "strategic heart" of China.

In this century, the railroad tracks from north to south and from east to west, which meet in the provincial capital of Zhengzhou, were and continue to be strategically important. During the war against Japan the Guomindang requisitioned more grain and recruited more soldiers from Henan than from any other province.

#### **4 The Rebellious Dimension: Secret Societies and Banditry**

Different religious and philosophical trends have a long tradition and are still vivid to various degrees in contemporary Henan. In this part of our paper we will discuss the history of ideas that often took on an autonomous, even rebellious dimension. It is this specific tradition of heretical-folk religious and chiliastic-rebellious movements which still wield influence, in particular in the countryside, and have caused the modern-day central leadership in Beijing to look upon Henan with suspicion. The geneses of these movements were primarily natural disasters such as droughts and floods as well as economic and social impoverishment. Their popularity can also be traced to the century-old orthodox religious practices, which took on local forms. Because the central Chinese province of Henan was, - as previously mentioned, - one of the provinces which was very frequently affected by natural disasters and resulting famines, sects promising relief and a better future have always flourished here.

Contemporary intellectuals and cadres often criticize the underlying Confucian orientation (*rujia*) of the inhabitants of Henan, and argue that their adherence to this old belief system is responsible for Henan's socioeconomic "backwardness". The cadres point to practices of folk Confucianism sharply opposed by Communist government authorities such as the erection or restoration of ancestral temples and the common villagers practice of using arable land for burial plots. Confucian values including female chastity and subordination and filial piety to elders (*xiao*) present an obstacle to the smooth and quick modernization of society in the view of the cadres.<sup>13</sup> However, as outlined above in our introduction, traditional Chinese culture has different and various roots that include but certainly are not limited to Confucianism. We conceive of this plurality of traditions on the whole to constitute a *mentality* (or *habitus* in a Bourdieuan terminology). In the following, we therefore examine four additional religious or chiliastic folk traditions, in general referred to in Chinese official discourse as "superstition":

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<sup>12</sup> Wang Guangpeng, ed., *Fenjin de Henan (Vigorous Henan)*, Zhengzhou (Henan sheng tongjiju) 1994: pp. 7f.; Huang Liangyi/Sun Baoding/Chen Dang, *Henan shengqing gailun (Outline of Henan's provincial situation)*, Peking (Zhongguo tongji chubanshe) 1995.

<sup>13</sup> This argument was often heard in talks with rural and urban cadres in 1995/96. Note in this respect also that the novels of the classical compilation "Twenty-four historical examples of filial piety" are very popular in Henanese countryside. For example, in 1996 Sabine Jakobi visited two villages near Luoyang which both claimed to be the historical setting of the novel of Wang Xiang.

1. Various Daoistic practices relating mainly to agricultural production and health care.
2. Buddhist religious practices such as prayers and sacrifices. For example, the Buddhist caves of Longmen near Luoyang are not only a famous tourist destination, but are also once again increasingly visited by peasant believers.
3. The Christian House movement with various intra and inter-villages groups.
4. Heterodox religious and social organizations forming "counter-societies".

Believers of the above-mentioned religions sometimes organized themselves in groups. These sub-groups were not officially sanctioned and thus constituted in the view of the authorities an heretic way of practicing religion. Some of these very different unorthodox religious groups (*xiejiao*) in Henan had an impressive ability to mobilize their members. They were able to organize groups of several hundreds to thousands of people for pilgrimages that lasted from 1-3 months and even crossed provincial borders. As early as in 1793 this phenomenon aroused attention up through the level of the imperial court, which noted, in part:

"This [long pilgrimages, the authors] holds true in general for Chihli, Shantung, Shansi, Shensi, and particularly Honan."<sup>14</sup>

Because the above-mentioned two primary religious traditions are widespread in rural China in general, we will direct our attention to two other forms which are more Henan specific. Henan has a strong reputation as the principal base (besides Anhui Province) of the Christian House Church movement.<sup>15</sup> Within these groups we note a tendency towards idiosyncratic features, characterized by the mixture of Christian with various Daoist and Buddhist practices. These sects, which were sometimes isolated small communities and sometimes part of a network in a bigger movement, are regarded by the Communist government as another strong indication of the "backwardness" of this province and the responsible authorities are therefore vigorously trying to control them and contain their influence. These sects were forced underground during the Cultural Revolution and then reemerged as the result of the more liberal policies of the Deng era. As early as the early 80s of this century, however, followers of Christian groups were once again persecuted. An oft-cited example is the arrest of members of the "Shouters" sect, a movement existing in several provinces of China, in Henan Province in 1983, and the ban on all group activities that public security officials instituted immediately thereafter.<sup>16</sup> The case of the Jesus Family (*Yesu jiating*) reveals the popularity and long-standing autonomy of some of these Christian communities.<sup>17</sup> This sect was founded

<sup>14</sup> Sheng-hsün, Kao-tsung, 261/17a-18a; Shih-li (1908), 399/2a, cit. in Kung-Chuan Hsiao, *Rural China. Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century*, Seattle (University of Washington Press) 1960: p. 230. The Qing government suspected these pilgrimages might present the possibility to organize social and/or political unrest and thus, soon banned this sort of activity. This custom, however, could not be uprooted. There are reports of pilgrims from Henan being arrested in Peking between 1824-1834 (Hsiao: p. 231).

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the history of the Christian House Church movement in China see Barbara Nield, *China's House Churches*, in: *Renewal Journal*, No. 3/ 1994: p. 4860.\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The ban was justified under the law prohibiting "disturbing public order". See Amnesty International. 1994b. *China: Protestants and Catholics detained since 1993*. AI Index: ASA 17/06/94. \*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The members of the Jesus Family lead a communitarian life without central authority structures. They practice their religion not in church buildings, but reserve an area in their houses for worshipping. Since they also propagate economic self-sufficiency, they were partly beyond governmental control. They claim to have reached high productivity in agriculture: Throughout the famine in 1942, they are said to have given 90% of their harvest away for relief, while still being able to feed themselves. This is not the place to argue whether we are here confronted with an episode in a long tradition of miracles or if this event really occurred in the described dimension. For a detailed account on the communitarian life of the founding community in Shandong Province and a description of the measures adopted by the state, see also a report by Amnesty International. 1994a. *China. The imprisonment and harassment of Jesus Family members in Shandong Province*. AI Index: ASA 17/31/94.\*<sup>3</sup> Note also in this respect that public security agents usually blame members for leading a "collective" life and, consequently, even prohibit common meals (Human Rights in

by Jing Dianying in 1929 (other sources speak of 1920) in Shandong province, but soon spread to Henan, where it has an unknown number of followers today. Lately, the arrest of Xu Yongze and other leaders of his New Birth Church near the provincial capital of Zhengzhou aroused international attention.<sup>18</sup> Because Henan is also a base of operations for in particular American missionaries, some of whom are in close contact with these Chinese sects, the Chinese government has another reason to keep an eye on their activities.<sup>19</sup>

The last tradition we want to introduce leads us into the arena of organized "counter-societies", whose means of operation and objectives are often illegal. In this category we group all forms of religious-oriented secret societies and banditry.<sup>20</sup> Early examples include the "Yellow Turbans" (*huangjin*), a messianist movement of Daoist inspiration in the 2nd century, and the "Red Turbans" (*hongjin*), a chiliastic movement awaiting the appearance of the Buddha Maitreya (*Milefo*) in the 14th century. In recent centuries this province was a major focal point of the "Sect of Heavenly Order" (*tianlijiao*), the White Lotus-sect<sup>21</sup>, (*bailianhui*), the *Nian*-movement<sup>22</sup>, the "Heavenly Bamboo-movement" (*tianzhujiao*), the "Society of Elder Brothers" (*gelaohui*), the "Green and Red Guild" (*qinghongbang*), the "Persistent Way" (*yiguandao*)-movement, the sect "Great King of Red Heaven" and the "Society of the Great Sword" (*dadaohui*), just to mention the most important ones.

In general, these groups consisted of impoverished and uprooted peasants and emerged in times of crisis. They were joined by demobilised soldiers and in modern times by transportation workers. With the construction of two railway lines through Henan, quite a few people in the transportation sector lost their jobs.<sup>23</sup> Most of these secret societies promised their members a heavenly state of happiness and tried to establish an egalitarian society built on the principles of morality and higher justice.<sup>24</sup> Often, they awaited the end of the world or a sort of apocalypse as a prelude to a heavenly order.<sup>25</sup> However, they also resorted to illegal

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China. From China Rights Forum, Religion in China. Regulating the Opium of the People (New York), Spring 1995.\*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The New Birth Church which was founded in the early 80s of this century, teaches that followers have to cry for three days before being reborn as Christians. For more information see also the following newspaper articles:

Cary Huang, Christian's Arrest 'not Suppression', in: Hong Kong Standard, 24.06.1997\*<sup>5</sup>; Daniel Kwan, Church Leader 'to be released', in: SCMP, 09.06.1997\*<sup>6</sup>; Daniel Kwan, Christian accused of Heresy, in: SCMP, 24.06.1997.\*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Kwan, Security Agents stepping up to fight against Foreign Religious Activists, in: SCMP, 17.06.1997.\*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>20</sup> We do realize that in general there are differences between these two groups in objectives and in organizational aspects. However, we refrain from elaborating on these differentiations due to space considerations. Furthermore, reports and studies reveal that these two groups often intermingled and that the line between them is not easy to draw.

<sup>21</sup> For a long time the White Lotus sect threatened imperial control of rural Henan. As a result, 39 illegally built temples were destroyed by government troops in 1893 alone (Hsiao: p. 233).

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth J. Perry, Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945, Stanford (Stanford University Press) 1980: pp. 100-151.

<sup>23</sup> In 1907 Alekseev (p. 209) also noted on his journey that the railroad from Kaifeng to Luoyang was being built by a French-Belgian company. Furthermore, all staff in the train and in the trainstations were either French or Belgian.

<sup>24</sup> Lin Qing and Li Wencheng, two rebellion leaders of the beginning of the 19th century, provide a good example of the rationale behind movements of this type: They introduced a system of graded membership fees according to which land would later be assigned to group members should the rebellion succeed in taking over control in a certain area (Hsiao: p. 471). Note in this respect also that, despite scarcity of land in densely populated Henan, landownership in the western part of the province was distributed widely among peasants (Hsiao: p. 407).

<sup>25</sup> Jean Chesneaux, Weisser Lotus, Rote Bärte. Geheimgesellschaften in China. Zur Vorgeschichte der Revolution, Berlin (Rotbuch) 1976; C. K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society, Taipei (SMC Publishing

or violent measures such as confiscating grain or land from wealthy families and assaulting public granaries. They referred to these actions as "food equalization" (*jun liang*).<sup>26</sup>

Robber bands also have a longstanding tradition in Henan. The province is still regarded as "bandit-ridden".<sup>27</sup> In particular, the tradition of the *lǚlin*, the so-called "Heroes of the Green Forest" bands<sup>28</sup>, developed in Henan's poor western and southern areas. Robber bands were often an expression of protest against suppression and injustice, and thus grew in number and in size due to the impoverishment of the peasants and workers. Robber bands and secret societies often got mixed up or the latter were controlled by bandits. The transition from bandit to rebel was fluid, too, because rebels were officially branded as "bandits". This holds particularly true during the period of peasant uprisings, which took place regularly in famine- and-poverty stricken Henan. Henan was, to provide an example, the single focal area of the uprisings in the late Ming dynasty of the 17th century. The primary reason for the rebellion was the doubling of the land tax rate in the period from 1618-1636. Although the rebellion started in 1627 in the neighbouring province of Shaanxi and the leaders all originated from that province, the main activities shifted to Henan in 1633. Henan therefore played a central role until the end of the rebellion in 1646.<sup>29</sup> Peasant rebellions in the period between 1861-1863 inflicted great damage to different parts of Henan. Consequently, as late as 1866 vast areas of Henan remained devastated and depopulated.<sup>30</sup> One of the latest prominent large-scale peasant rebellions in Henan, however, occurred during the Sino-Japanese war in 1944, when desperate starving peasants attacked Chinese troops and disarmed approximately 50,000 soldiers.<sup>31</sup>

The disposition towards autonomy and rebellion outlined above continued even after the foundation of the People's Republic. In the early 50s Red Spears groups organized anti-Communist activities. Between 1955-60 a movement based on the notion that an 18-year old emperor had appeared who would save China from the Communists<sup>32</sup> was obviously a reaction of the peasantry to the enforced collectivization campaign and the Communist Party's grip on the villages. As we already have demonstrated, Henan still belongs to the provinces where secret societies and a variety of folk religious elements have the strongest impetus.<sup>33</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that a report of the security authorities made in the early 90s also concludes that Henan is one of the provinces where sects and secret societies are very active,

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Inc.)1994: pp. 220-222.; Jean Chesneau, ed., *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China, 1840-1950*, Stanford (Stanford University Press) 1972.

<sup>26</sup> This term is cited in an imperial edict from 1835, regarding the activities of groups of "religious bandits" (*jiaofei*) in Henan and other provinces (Hsiao: pp. 200, 447).

<sup>27</sup> Travelling through Henan in 1907 Alekseev (pp. 224-242), for example, noted in his diary that the magistrates ordered soldiers to escort him and his travel companion to ensure a safe passage from one county seat to another. He especially emphasized the poverty and the poor equipment of the soldiers who were actually peasants and recruited only in times of unrest. Comp. as well Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*: pp. 62-64.

<sup>28</sup> Odoric Y. K. Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses. Building Revolution in Henan*, Stanford (Stanford University Press) 1994: p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> See Parsons: pp. 36, 244 and the introduction.

<sup>30</sup> Hsiao: pp. 482.

<sup>31</sup> The rebellion occurred during a long period of terrible famine when the Chinese troops started requisition of the peasants' property (Theodore E. White/Annalee Jacoby, *Donner aus China*, Hamburg et al. (Rowohlt) 1949: pp. 196-210.

<sup>32</sup> Comp. Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rural Violence in Socialist China*, in: *The China Quarterly*, 103/1985: pp. 422-424.

<sup>33</sup> cf. eg. *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), 5-8-95 und 6-7-96.

because they are "deeply rooted" and nourished by continuous conditions such as poverty and superstition.<sup>34</sup>

## 5 The Political Dimension: History of a Revolutionary Model

### 5.1 The Collective Tradition

Henan's history of natural calamities and economic, social and political unrest led to the development of extensive community-based security systems and fostered the collective organization of hydraulic engineering and flood control. Although such forms of cooperation are by no means confined to Henan, they nevertheless pervade community life in that area to a special degree. As these actions take place in the public sphere, we consider them as "political" in a broad sense. We do not consider here, however, measures undertaken by the imperial administration such as large-scale canal building or the establishment of rural granaries. Below, we discuss the existence of regular cooperation a) on the intra-village level and b) the inter-village level: On the intra-village level peasants organized crop-watching groups, which guarded crops before and during harvest times.<sup>35</sup> To protect villages against attacks of bandit groups, uprooted peasants and soldiers, local self-defence-groups, the "village braves" (*xiang yong*), were organized. This holds true in particular for the mid-19th century when the Nian rebellion ravaged the province. The "village braves" were also responsible for surrounding villages with earth and brick walls, thus giving Henanese settlements their martial appearance.<sup>36</sup> These groups later developed into a para-military organizations which crossed village and even county borders. One of the numerous names used for these groups was "Red spears" (*hongqiang*), to which their activities were later often attributed. In section 5.3 of our paper we will come back to this topic, because the Red Spear movement was still an important force during the Communist revolution. In addition, cooperation between villages included flood control and irrigation projects because this was vital to survival in that agrarian area.<sup>37</sup>

This pattern of collective organization proved all the more necessary as a result of the decay of imperial order during the late Qing dynasty in the countryside. It thus substituted for central administration, whose main function broadly was reduced to collecting taxes.<sup>38</sup>

Another crucial factor in the development of collectivism, was the transfer of central government responsibilities to the provinces in 1891. In that year the Qing government decided to place responsibility for the maintenance of the Yellow River water control in the hands of localities. At the same time water control budgets were cut sharply in favour of railroad funding construction, indemnity payments and the development of a modern army.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Comp. special issue of *Shengming Yu Zaihuo* (Life and Disaster) on *huidaomen* (superstitious sects and secret societies), December 1993: pp. 1-3.; 51-56.

<sup>35</sup> Hsiao: p. 288.

<sup>36</sup> Hsiao: 1960, pp. 296, 302.

<sup>37</sup> Hsiao (p. 307) reports as a common example for that form of cooperation the dredging of a river by several villages in the county of Henei in 1848.

<sup>38</sup> In general the Qing government was aware of its responsibility for the well-being of the peasants and, for example, regarded famine relief of one of its major tasks. However, it depended on the ability and efficiency of its agents, the magistrates. In the 19th century rural granaries (*shecang*) in Henan were by-and-large neglected.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Making of a Hinterland. State, Society, and Economy in Inland North China, 1853-1937*, Berkeley et al. (University of California Press) 1993: pp. 154-160.



Though the central government neglected the Henan Yellow River, the provincial government maintained up a relatively large budget for river-related work. The river ran and runs very close to the provincial capital of Kaifeng, which was continually threatened by it, and through the economic heart of the province. In addition, the railroad from North to South China passed through a flood-prone area.<sup>40</sup> The Yellow river water control was thus a permanent burden for the mainly poor province. Referring to this situation, Henan's governor Chen Kuilong complained in 1905 that the central authorities' sharp cut in funds for Yellow River control made inland provinces victims of a development strategy which emphasized the coastal areas.<sup>41</sup> This reproach continues to be made.

## 5.2 From Imperial China to the Republic of China

During the anti-imperial movements, when Chinese society was buffeted by fierce debates about the political future and the course of development, Henan remained relatively untouched by radical notions of modernity. Due to its relative seclusion in the hinterland it was not similarly directly confronted with Western hegemonic challenges as for example the coastal areas.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, it did not develop such strong anti-foreign movements. Von Richthofen notes on one of his journeys at that time:

"nowhere on earth does there exist a more good-natured race than inhabits the province of Honan".<sup>43</sup>

Concerning Henan and Shaanxi von Richthofen also noticed the economic and social decay in the last decades in the 19th century. To explain this situation he identified a combination of factors, some of which are still relevant today: a) the Nian rebellion, b) periods of extreme droughts, c) overpopulation, combined with a high unemployment rate and c) the widespread consumption of opium.<sup>44</sup>

Henan's political elites were either co-opted by the Qing government or promoted moderate political reforms. At that time other provinces including Hunan and Fujian and cities such as Beijing and Shanghai were focal points for political activity and the birthplaces of prominent reformers and vigorous revolutionaries. In contrast, Henan was the native province and power base of Yuan Shikai, a high-ranking conservative military official in the imperial administration, who became president of the new Chinese Republic, but later tried in vain to promote himself as emperor.<sup>45</sup> Yuan, who came from a great family of official-scholars and

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<sup>40</sup> Pomeranz: p. 205.

<sup>41</sup> Cit. in Pomeranz: p. 162.

<sup>42</sup> This is not intended to suggest that Western capitalist interventions did not affect Henan. Indeed, the import of Western industrial products destroyed home-based production in parts of rural Henan and in the cities of Luoyang and Kaifeng and thus contributed to further impoverishment of the inhabitants (Oskar Weggel, *Geschichte Chinas im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart (Kröner) 1989: p. 14).

<sup>43</sup> Von Richthofen: p. 26; cit. in Hsiao: p. 491.

<sup>44</sup> Von Richthofen: p. 54, cit. in Hsiao: p. 399. In 1907 Alekseev on his visit to the grottes of Luoyang also mentions that nearly half of them were used as gambling and opium dens. A stone-carved edict in front of the area revealed the helplessness of the local magistrate. It criticized this habit and provided notice of the removal of the old abbot in favor of a 'new virtuous' one. Alekseev concludes his report with the remark, that obviously nothing had changed. The 'new virtuous' abbot was also a drug addict and seemed even to be involved in trading (Alekseev: p. 227).

<sup>45</sup> Yuan's second power base was the neighbouring province of Zhili, where he served as governor-general in the first decade of the 20th century (Chuzo Ichiko, *The Role of the Gentry. An Hypothesis*, in: *China in*

military leaders, returned frequently throughout his life to his hometown for long visits. The last three years before the founding of the Chinese Republic he lived in official retirement in his home province, but still maintained contact with the court in Peking.<sup>46</sup> Not surprisingly, the Provincial Assembly of Henan was dominated by representatives of the old scholar-elite and did not produce any outstanding speaker at the National Assembly.<sup>47</sup>

Chinese elites in Henan, however, made efforts to modernize the old-fashioned education system, although not to the same extent as other provinces. As early as 1907 Luoyang, which at that time was named Henanfu, had a modern school with a Western curriculum.<sup>48</sup> In 1912 Zhongzhou University, later named Henan University, was established in Kaifeng immediately after the government announced educational reforms. The choice of the old metropolis as the location for the first modern higher education institution in the province, provides another indication of the prominent place this city held until recently.<sup>49</sup> During the May-Fourth Movement on May 31, 1919, Kaifeng witnessed student demonstrations like other cities in China. Although two representatives from Henan were also among the 11 delegates who constituted the Student Union of Republican China on July 16th, 1919 in Shanghai, they did not play a prominent role in this movement as student leaders rather emerged from Beijing, Shanghai and Hunan province.<sup>50</sup>

On the whole, Henan stayed at the periphery of the revolutionary processes that occurred in China. When the Wuchang uprising in 1911 finally put an end to the imperial era, Henan was among the last provinces in China to declare itself independent from the former imperial government.<sup>51</sup> There was only one episode during this period in which Henan's tradition of peasant rebellion acted with the modern political revolutionaries around Sun Yat-sen. In 1913-14 during the restoration under the presidency of Yuan Shikai, a rebel named Bai Lang organized a revolt against Yuan Shikai in Henan and neighbouring provinces.<sup>52</sup>

### 5.3 The Pre-Revolutionary Development in Henan

During the warlord period Henan experienced more unrest and instability. By the mid-1930s, however, Henan was primarily controlled by the nationalist government. Though an extensive land reform was not the intention of the central government, a few experiments with a more rational administration were launched. For example, in Northern Henan each county (*xian*) was divided into districts (*qu*) which were led by a district head (*quzhang*). Certain features

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Revolution. The First Phase 1900-1913, ed. by Mary Claubagh Wright, New Haven et al. (Yale University Press) 1968: p. 303).

<sup>46</sup> See Arthur W. Hummel ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, Taipei (Ch'eng Wen Publishing) 1970 (orig. publ. in 1843): pp. 949-953.

<sup>47</sup> The representatives from the Provincial Assembly of Henan in the National Assembly demonstrated a strong affiliation to the high-ranking gentry. As against the other provinces, Henan held the highest proportion in metropolitan degree holders (*jinshi*), and did not send any non-gentry representative. (P'eng-yüan Chang, *The Constitutionalists*, in: *China in Revolution. The First Phase 1900-1913*, ed. by Mary Claubagh Wright, New Haven et al. (Yale University Press) 1968: p. 152. In the National Assembly, however, the most prominent and eloquent leaders all came from the lower gentry and had studied abroad (Chang: pp. 153-155). Alekseev: p. 222.

<sup>48</sup> Alekseev: p. 222.

<sup>49</sup> Qu: p. 22; Tse-tsung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement. Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, Stanford (Stanford University Press) 1960: p. 48.

<sup>50</sup> Chow: pp. 131, 144, 164.

<sup>51</sup> See for a detailed account Ichiko: pp. 304-307. Henan joined in the revolution late, primarily because of the strong position of the Manchu governor. Assemblymen also attempted to make contact with the Revolutionary Government in Wuchang (Chang: p. 179).

<sup>52</sup> Chesneaux 1976: pp. 155-156.

were required for the post of the district head. These officials were required to a) be at least thirty years old, b) have a middle school degree and c) graduate from a school of administration in the provincial capital. This was intended to establish the foundation for an effective and responsible administration.<sup>53</sup> The nationalist government also encouraged the organization of peasants in different types of co-operatives, which the government claimed were widely accepted in the provinces of Central China.<sup>54</sup>

One ambitious goal of the nationalist government was the rapid modernization of the whole country. Employing electrification as measured by the number of registered power companies to assess the degree of development, in 1934 Henan was tied with Suiyan for 14th place in the field of 16 provinces. Because most modern technologies were concentrated in a few urban and industrial centers, the vast countryside was still untouched by the modernization drive.<sup>55</sup>

However, within the urban-industrial areas the processes of change were clearly having an effect. In the 20s a strong trade union movement developed, in which Communists gained certain influence, particularly among railway workers.<sup>56</sup> This movement peaked with the large strike of the Peking-Hankou railway workers in 1923. During this strike the workers tried to force the establishment of a central trade union federation. The immediate cause of the strike was the forcible dissolution of the railway workers' congress by local military forces in the city of Zhengzhou, today's capital of Henan. The dissolved congress had intended to establish such a central trade union federation. Instead, the local military succeeded in crushing the strike movement with armed force and prevented the foundation of the federation. The existing trade unions were driven underground.<sup>57</sup> At that time the Communists in general played still a marginal role in the trade union movement.

Much more important for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were the developments in the rural areas. The large-scale land-holding structures in the eastern part of the province with their corresponding forms of exploitation stimulated the peasants' movement during this period. In the mid-20s, 270,000 peasants were said to be organized in peasants' organizations as well as 100,000 in self-organized peasants' militias. Peasant movements existed in 20 counties. Henan was said to have had the second largest peasant movement of all provinces. As previously mentioned, the peasants' movement from 1920-30 was represented by the society of the "Red Spears" (*hongqianghui*), a movement which combined religious and military elements. Originating from a rural self-defence force against bandits, it evolved, in reaction to rural impoverishment resulting from natural disasters and constantly increasing taxes and duties to the warlords (so-called "military-rates"), into a resistance movement against the warlords and their subordinated district chiefs.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Reconstruction in China. A Record of Progress and Achievement in Facts and Figures, with Illustrations and Maps (China Today Series, 3), ed. by Tang Leang-Li, Shanghai (China United Press) 1935: p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Reconstruction in China: p. 295. These co-operatives are not to be mistaken with the ones created in Communist China. Instead, they are confined to a functional cooperation in a certain functional area, e.g. credit co-operatives.

<sup>55</sup> Reconstruction in China: p.66.

<sup>56</sup> Odoric Y. K. Wou, The Chinese Communist Party and the Labor Movement: The May 30th Movement in Henan, in: Chinese Studies in History, Fall 1989.

<sup>57</sup> Comp. Deng Zhongxia, Anfänge der chinesischen Arbeiterbewegung 1919-1926, Reinbek (Rowohlt) 1975: pp. 67-69.

<sup>58</sup> The Red Spears, named after a small red flag on their spears, were organized in groups of 10 to 40 members, which merged into detachments and principal detachments. Every region had a *tongling* (chief) and above him a commander-in-chief (*zong tongling*). This system facilitated assembling large fighting units in a very short time. New recruits had to complete a training course of 120 days. This course combined religious rituals with physical training and a code of honour, which included among other things secrecy towards outsiders, a ban on opium and gambling, respect towards women and a ban on waste were laid down. The

The Communists used these associations and their organizational structures to gain influence in Henan. In 1926-27 the CCP sent cadres from Henan back to their hometowns to organize the Red Spear Society into peasants' associations and at the same time to win their support for the intended Northern Expedition. This was indeed successful so that on the arrival of the military units of the Northern Expedition thousands of peasants rose against the warlords in Henan among other places. Thus the Party gained important, positive, practical experience in organizing the peasantry.

Wou points out that the conversion of millenarian movements into revolutionary forces is very difficult, because ideology, rituals and organizational structures differ considerably. It should also be noted that the Red Spears as part of the traditional defense system in East Henan largely relied on kinship and community relationships. Thus, they were led by members of the local gentry, were based on patron-client relationships and represented broad local interests.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, in many places the Communists succeeded in infiltrating the Red Spears and in converting them into peasant associations. Where Red Spear associations were led by members of the gentry, the conversion process was much more difficult. In response to the initiation of social reforms by the peasant associations, the leaders of the Guomindang ordered the cessation of all mass movements and the arrest of 300 Communists in Henan in 1927. The peasant movement disintegrated and the remaining Communists retreated into rural areas or into the mountains. The extent to which the Communists and chiefs of the Red Spears were connected is reflected in the following example:

"Before they finally dispersed, twenty Communist cadres and Red Spears chiefs went through a solemn ritual ceremony in a Christian church, a practice common among Red Spears in times of crisis, in which they swore to uphold the cause and to remain faithful as brothers till death."<sup>60</sup>

It is not possible to establish direct continuity provable from the Red Spears to the Communist movement. However, the cooperation between the movements left its mark on the Henan communists as well as on the local peasantry involved. In 1926 some students from Henan and the Red Spear leaders took part in courses at the Peasant Training Institute in Guangzhou and later formed the core of cadres in the anti-Japanese resistance in Henan. Parts of the self-defense corps founded in the twenties operated from the communist bases in Henan and later were integrated into the New Fourth Army. Some of the networks were also still operational and were put to good use during the anti-Japanese war. Wou argues that continuity existed in terms of both leadership and mobilization capabilities.<sup>61</sup>

Revolutionary bases were established in the course of the retreat of the Henan communists into rural areas. In Henan there were six such areas, mainly crossing provincial borders: Yu-E (Henan/Hubei), Eyuwan (Hubei/Henan/Anhui), Yuwansu (Henan/Anhui/Jiangsu), Sui-Qi-Tai (Suixian, Qixian, Taikang counties in eastern Henan), Yuxi (West Henan) and in the Taihang Mountains.<sup>62</sup> The most important and best documented one was the Eyuwan Soviet Area.

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members of this association considered themselves to be invulnerable. See Roman Slawinski, *The Red Spears in the Late 1920's*, in: Jean Chesneaux, ed., *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China*: pp. 201-211; Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*: pp. 152-207.

<sup>59</sup> Wou: pp. 51-53.

<sup>60</sup> Wou: p. 90.

<sup>61</sup> Wou: p. 97.

<sup>62</sup> Huang/Sun/Chen: pp. 29-30.

Apart from Jinggangshan, Eyuwan was the largest Soviet base between 1927-1934 and it was of central importance as it was strategically well-situated. The competition between Jinggangshan in Jiangxi and Eyuwan resulted in the conflict between Mao Zedong and Zhang Guotao, the leader of Eyuwan.<sup>63</sup>

Eyuwan had 3.5 mio inhabitants who were either killed or lost to the movement in the course of Chiang Kai-shek's "surrounding and destruction campaigns". In 1932 the leadership of that area was forced to evacuate the base of Eyuwan. A small group of experienced cadres led by Xu Haidong remained at Eyuwan to continue Communist propaganda and organizational work in the underground. Only during the anti-Japanese resistance movement did the Communist guerilla forces become stronger, particularly in the mountains of Henan. The Japanese intention to transform Henan into a center for cotton production for their own use helped to mobilize the peasants' support for the CCP.<sup>64</sup> Thus in 1944 the local units of the Red Army in Henan included about 100,000 people as well as some 200,000 peasant militamen.<sup>65</sup>

#### **5.4 The Development After the Founding of the PRC**

The Communist government in the early fifties moved the provincial capital from Kaifeng to Zhengzhou, which soon developed from a railroad juncture and a small city to a major industrial hub. By establishing Zhengzhou as the capital of the province in 1954, the leadership emphasized its objectives for the province. They chose a new, socialist city, dominated by the modern industrial sector to undermine the orientation to the old historical-cultural centers and embody the spirit of the new age. As the result of construction of colleges, universities and research institutes in the new provincial capital, Kaifeng lost its old position as the cultural center of the province, though Henan University remained there. Luoyang and Anyang also were patterned after the Communist notion of development and built up as industrial production bases. This development, however, did not lead to a comprehensive modernization, but produced great intra-provincial socioeconomic disparities, which still exist.

In the countryside several attempts were made to reshape rural life from the ground up. Below we address the major campaigns that occurred in the Maoist era. We will demonstrate how the historical disposition towards egalitarianism and communitarianism facilitated the introduction of certain radical agrarian policies before we turn to the rural policies adopted in the Deng era.

Originally, the land reform in Henan was intended to proceed at a moderate pace. Party documents warned against revolutionary impetuousness, and Deng Zihui, the propaganda chief of the army, declared shortly before the foundation of the People's Republic, that not land reform but, "bandit suppression, equitable taxes, and a settling of accounts with the bullies" were the main tasks of Party work in Henan. Only a small minority of people should be committed to class struggle.<sup>66</sup> This cautionary note reflected that the CCP in Henan at that time had not yet consolidated its power. The earlier support of Party organizations by reformist gentry and liberal rich peasants may also have played a role. As early as in the thirties, the relationship between the Party and the gentry had required a specific policy and

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<sup>63</sup> See e. g. the description of Zhang Guotao in: Chang Kuo-t'ao, *The Rise of the Communist Party 1928-1938*, Lawrence, Manhattan, Wichita (The University Press of Kansas) 1972: pp. 174-294.

<sup>64</sup> On the development in the Soviet base of Eyuwan comp. Robert W. McColl, *The Oyüwan Soviet Area, 1927-1932*, in: *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 27, Nov. 1967: pp. 41-60 und Wou: pp. 98-131.

<sup>65</sup> *Henan shengqing gailun*: p. 30.

<sup>66</sup> Wou: p. 383.

had made the implementation of a land reform program quite difficult.<sup>67</sup> This moderate position, however, was criticized later and the land reform in Henan became extremely violent. Wu Zhipu, later Party Secretary of Henan, was responsible for its implementation.<sup>68</sup> Not only landlords, but also rich- and middle-class peasants were stripped of all their property, to include movable property. Beatings and murders were widespread. The term "rich peasants" was interpreted so broadly that many middle-class peasants were included in the category.<sup>69</sup>

The First Five-Year Plan and massive central support led to considerable industrial growth relative to agricultural improvements.<sup>70</sup> Although the agrarian sector was to be stabilized by large-scale irrigation projects, planning encouraged the industrial sector at the expense of agriculture. With the increase of collectivization, the role of Henan as a grain base and the control over the rural areas and the peasantry were intended to be strengthened, particularly as, despite the transformation of the villages into co-operatives, the gross output value of agriculture was not much higher than in the first year of the Five-Year Plan (1953: 3.154 billion Yuan, 1957: 3.57 billion Yuan).<sup>71</sup>

In each of the collectivization movements Henan was more or less a revolutionary model. As in other parts of the country, lower-level co-operatives were established in 1955 and higher-level ones in 1956. By the end of 1956 99.4 percent of the peasant households in the province were organized in co-operatives, 98.7 percent of them in higher-level ones at the behest of the provincial Party leadership.

1956 was a year of heavy losses in the agrarian sector. Collectivization destroyed the peasants' initiative and undermined their ability and authority to make necessary decisions regarding cultivation and tilling. Party meddling in agrarian practices had lasting consequences. Harvest yields and the number of cattle decreased or stagnated almost everywhere. The reduction in the number of permitted private activities and trade that occurred in the course of the collectivization made it impossible for the peasants to switch to non-agrarian sectors. There were bottlenecks and supply problems in many fields. The incomes of the peasants decreased dramatically. These difficulties were increased by extremely bad weather conditions and flooding. Tens of thousands of people migrated from the starvation areas of Henan to Northwest China and other central Chinese provinces.

The chaos in agriculture and the beginning of the Hundred-Flower-Movement required a liberalization of the rural policy in Henan. Large numbers of peasants withdrew from the co-operatives.<sup>72</sup> Henan's Party Secretary Pan Fusheng understood the difficulties caused by over-large co-operatives and understood why the peasants chose to leave them. He criticized cadres for forcing the peasants into higher and higher forms of collective organization. Pan was reported to have expressed that the main contradiction in the countryside were not the

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<sup>67</sup> Wou: pp. 123-125.

<sup>68</sup> Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts. China's Secret Famine*, London (John Murray) 1997: p. 120

<sup>69</sup> Jack Grey, *Rebellions and Revolutions. China from the 1800s to the 1980s*, Oxford et al. (Oxford University Press) 1990: p. 290.

<sup>70</sup> Comp. Manfred Kies, *Entwicklung und regionale Disparitäten in China. Der Einfluß der Entwicklung von Industrie und Landwirtschaft auf die wirtschaftsräumliche Differenzierung in der Provinz Henan (VR China)*, Bochum (Studienverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer) 1981: pp. 21-23.

<sup>71</sup> Comp. *Henan tongji nianjian (Statistical Yearbook of Henan) 1996*, Peking (Zhongguo tongji chubanshe) 1996: p. 290.

<sup>72</sup> In 1956 about 20 % of the peasant households were said to have asked for approval to withdraw from the co-operatives. Comp. Dali L. Yang, *Calamity and Reform in China. State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change Since the Great Leap Famine*, Stanford (Stanford University Press) 1996: p. 32.

contradictions between capitalist and socialist tendencies, but rather "between willingness and unwillingness of the peasants to produce". He believed Henan differed from Peking and Shanghai and would have to adopt a suitable policy to reflect these differences. The on-going call for class struggle in Pan's view was directed against the wrong people, for example the middle-class peasants. In addition he opposed the country-wide movement against the "rural rightists" in 1957. For voicing these opinions he was later criticized and dismissed during the Great Leap Forward. He was accused of exaggerating the difficulties of the co-operatives, of attempting to turn back the process of collectivization and of denying the superiority of collective farming.<sup>73</sup>

In the political campaigns Henan was also in the forefront. The Anti-Hu-Feng-Movement of 1955, which was primarily directed against intellectuals, was carried out very rigorously in Henan and led to the replacement of all the chairmen of the local writers unions. During the *Sufan*-Movement for the eradication of hidden counterrevolutionaries in 1955-56, "only" 5,770 persons were arrested according to official statements. The number of people who were questioned and criticized was nevertheless considerable: 600,000 people were affected by the movement, 200,000 letters of denunciation were received, and 80,000 people had to admit their mistakes.<sup>74</sup> Because mainly urban intellectuals and "democratic personalities" were targeted, although the urban population at that time stood between 3.7 and 4.4 mio people, the rate of people involved was extremely high.

During the Anti-Rightist-Campaign, Henan was again one of the most active provinces. Here the fight against the "Rightists" lasted longest, until June, 1958, and the number of 60,000 Rightists "discovered" there was, in proportion to the total population, higher than in all the other provinces. Although, according to official statements, only 5,115 persons were finally declared "Rightists", 200,000 were targeted in this movement. Once more the victims were primarily intellectuals and other urban inhabitants. Domenach reports that at least 15,000 people were punished in one way or the other.<sup>75</sup>

Henan's radical character persisted in the movements to establish People's Communes and during the "Great Leap Forward" (1958-60). In January, 1958, the provincial Party Committee decided to irrigate and drain all the cultivable land, a step which required enormous mobilization of collective labour; to completely root out the "Four Basic Evils", consisting of flies, mosquitos, mice and sparrows; and to double or even triple the per-*mu* grain output. As against 1957, the last year of the First Five-Year Plan, it was planned that the gross industrial output of local industry at the end of the Second Five-Year Plan (1962) would increase by 22 times and gross agricultural output by 45 times. It was also planned that steel output would increase from 4,000 tons to 5 mio tons (!) and grain yields from 11.8 mio tons to 100 mio tons. These projected figures were increased again at the beginning of 1959. The ownership of the people's communes were to be transferred into state property within that period.<sup>76</sup>

The various production units outdid each other with false and exaggerated "success" announcements. The Statistical Bureau of the province was put under the propaganda department of the provincial Party Committee. Not surprisingly, the success-reports

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<sup>73</sup> Comp. Frederick C. Teiwes, *The Purge of Provincial Leaders 1957-58*, in: *The China Quarterly*, 27/1966: pp. 17-19.

<sup>74</sup> All data from Domenach: pp. 37-39.

<sup>75</sup> Domenach: p. 129

<sup>76</sup> Comp. e. g. Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol II: *The Great Leap Forward 1958-60*, Oxford (Oxford University Press) 1983: pp. 42; 351-352.; Becker: pp. 123-125.

continued. The Henan Daily reported in September, 1958 that daily production of steel in Henan amounted to 28,000 tons. This would have required an increase from 4,000 tons in 1957 to 10.22 mio tons in 1958. In October, 1958, the prefecture of Xinxiang alone was said to have produced 1.2 mio tons of steel per day. This amount was equivalent to 438 mio tons yearly. The Heping people's commune in Xiping county reported a per-*mu* wheat output of 7,320 *Jin* in July, 1958.<sup>77</sup>

In August, 1958, Mao visited the Qiliying people's commune in Xinxiang county, where the first collective farm had already been founded, and is reported to have made his famous remark "people's communes are good". A few months before, the first people's commune, Weixing or "Sputnik" in English, had been established in Henan's Suiping prefecture. Henan was the first province to implement Mao's concept of rapid socialization, thus showing the practicality of this concept and advancing to the "Holy Land of the People's Commune Movement".<sup>78</sup>

After Mao openly approved of the establishment of people's communes combining industry, agriculture, trade, education and defense functions, Henan was the first province to begin establishing such communes on a province-wide basis in August, 1958. At the same time an egalitarian remuneration for all commune members was introduced. At the end of only one month (September, 1958), all peasant households in Henan were organized in communes.

The establishment of people's communes here first, was at that time attributed to Henan's particular need for collective services, including the development of a functioning irrigation system in the catchment area of the Yellow River both for irrigation and for drainage, as well as provisions of common protection measures against natural disasters.<sup>79</sup> The problem these two sets of collective services were intended to address were especially important in providing impetus to the establishment of communes because several times between 1956-1958, Henan barely managed to escape from flood disasters only by collective large-scale operations. In addition, the provincial leadership believed a large and well organized irrigation system would result in a significant increase in grain yields and thus improve the status of the province. Though Henan was China's leading grain producer, it only reached self-sufficiency. The Party Committee argued accordingly: "If we got the problem of water conservancy straightened out, we could expect a wheat production increase of 1,000 percent". But the implementation would require extensive efforts on county and town level.<sup>80</sup> At the same time people's communes facilitated control of the rural population and thus the consolidation of Party power.

Henan was on the forefront not only in establishing rural, but also in founding urban communes. The first urban commune in China was developed in Zhengzhou.<sup>81</sup> Salaff argues, that this city had just been industrialized and that the workers therefore still had a strong agrarian background. The labor-force consisted mainly of worker-peasant migrants who had tried to superimpose their traditional rural ideas of collectivism on the city.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Renmin Ribao, 7-23-58.

<sup>78</sup> Domenach: p. 144.

<sup>79</sup> cf. e.g. Lin Min, *Der Rote-Fahne-Kanal*, Peking (Foreign Language Press) 1974: pp. 13-14.

<sup>80</sup> Roy Hofheinz, *Rural Administration in Communist China*, in: *The China Quarterly*, 11/1962: pp. 151-153.

<sup>81</sup> Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. II: pp. 43-44.

<sup>82</sup> Janet Salaff, *The Urban Communes and Anti-City Experiment in Communist China*, in: *The China Quarterly*, 29/1967: pp. 89-91.



In August, 1958, 173 urban communes existed in Henan and the province was the principal center of experiment. The majority of the urban population was quickly organized in such communes. Due to inefficiency and the lack of requisite physical materials they were abolished after a short period.<sup>83</sup>

Henan was among the last provinces to restrict the "Communist wind" of the Great Leap, to give up the canteens in which the peasants had been forced to have common meals<sup>84</sup> and, at the beginning of the sixties, to reduce the scope of the people's communes. This was certainly supported by the climate of fear which arose after Wu Zhipu became 1st Party Secretary of the province.

As early as 1958 Henan had experimented with paying wages according to work performed and free distribution of goods.<sup>85</sup> In the September 16, 1958 issue of *Hongqi* (*Red Flag*), the theoretical organ of the CCP, the Party Secretary of Henan described the practices of his province with respect to the free distribution of goods. Some communes provided their members with, for example, free rice and meals, others had provided, apart from free food, free clothes and lodgings as well as free services such as medical care, education etc. In still others, members were provided with free fuel, haircuts, and cultural events.<sup>86</sup>

The campaign against the critics of the "Great-Leap-policy" went a lot further in Henan than in other provinces. However, Henan paid acting as a model with the highest starvation rate in the country. Henan continued to report fantastic new economic successes to Peking, even after hundreds of thousands had starved and although in some cases entire villages were depopulated. In Suiping county, nearly 30% of the population in Chayashan people's commune, one of the first communes, starved by the end of 1960.<sup>87</sup> Official figures reflect the population in Henan declined by 1.2 mio in 1960<sup>88</sup>. Chen Yizi, former adviser of Zhao Ziyang, mentions a decline of 7.8 mio.<sup>89</sup>

A real holocaust occurred in Xinxiang prefecture, where the local leadership declared war on the peasants. A regime of terror held sway. House-to-house searches were conducted in order to confiscate all the peasants foodstuffs to the end of reporting record outputs. Any hint of criticism or dissent and any suspicion of hiding food or of holding "Rightist" views was penalized by severe beating, killing or torture. In that prefecture alone hundreds of thousand people are presumed to have either starved, to have been executed or to have died from torture. Cannibalism was widespread. Aid relief from central authorities was rejected by the local leadership because the prefecture was still reporting record harvests. The situation was so critical that in 1961 30,000 PLA-soldiers occupied the prefecture and brought an end to the

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<sup>83</sup> D. E. T. Luard, *The Urban Communes*, in: *The China Quarterly*, 3/1960: pp. 75-77; Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles (University of California Press) 1966: pp. 387-389.

<sup>84</sup> In his speech at the Lushan-Conference in July, 1959, Mao praised Henan, because there, unlike other provinces, 90% of the public canteens were still in operation, cf. Mao Tse-tung *Unrehearsed. Talks and Letters: 1956-71*, ed. by Stuart Schram, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1974: p. 140.

<sup>85</sup> cf. the model regulations of the Weixing people's commune, in: *People's Communes in China*, Peking (Foreign Language Press) 1958: pp. 61-77.

<sup>86</sup> *Hongqi* 16-9-58, in: Gilbert Etienne, *Chinas Weg zum Kommunismus*, Wien, Köln et al. (Europa Verlag) 1963: p. 157.

<sup>87</sup> Dali L. Yang, *Calamity and Reform in China*: pp. 76-77.

<sup>88</sup> Mo Qi, *Zhongguo renkou: Henan fence* (*China's Population: Henan Volume*), Peking (Zhongguo caizheng jingji chubanshe) 1989: p. 32.

<sup>89</sup> Comp. Becker: pp. 272 and 128.

terror and starvation. 130,000 local cadres were investigated and ordered "to reform their work-style". Only a few of them were punished.<sup>90</sup>

In 1959 many of the hungry peasants spontaneously returned to family cultivation. This development was often tolerated or even had to be tolerated by local Party officials. However, in the very same year those peasants were criticized by the provincial Party leadership as "Right-Opportunists".<sup>91</sup> As a result of the famine, criminality and activities directed against the Party increased noticeably. In 1960, the local press reported that guerilla forces organized by peasants numbered up to 10,000 people. They stormed grain stores and distributed grain to the hungry peasants.<sup>92</sup>

In, 1961 Wu Zhipu was degraded to 2nd Party Secretary. He was accused of having cheated the Party Center by falsifying reports with fictitious successes. Wu's successor as provincial Party Secretary, Liu Jianxun, harshly criticized Wu for having ruthlessly and brutally persecuted all sceptics and opponents of the Great Leap Forward and for accusing them of being "Right-Opportunists". Nobody was out of constant danger and "fathers and mothers, husbands and wives had not dared to talk to each other".<sup>93</sup> Liu Jianxun tried to oriente agriculture more to cash-crops such as peanuts and to provide the peasants and the province with new opportunities to raise their income. Consequently, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, he was accused of having neglected the cultivation of grain and thus the welfare of the whole country in favor of profit.<sup>94</sup>

To invigorate Henan's economy, a conference of Henan's provincial secretaries, led by Tao Zhu, the 1st Secretary of the Central-South Bureau, was conducted at Zhengzhou in April, 1962. The conference issued a "Six-Year Plan for Recovering and Developing Agriculture in Henan". Among other things it contemplated the introduction of household output quotas, the distribution of land by contract and the lease of collective land. Under this plan, private use of up to 20 % of the arable land was possible. For a short time Henan became a sort of experimental province for the *sanzi yi bao*. Under this policy more plots for private use, more free markets and more enterprises with sole responsibility for their own profit or loss were planned. In addition, output quotas on a household basis were fixed. *Sanzi yi bao* was later criticized as "revisionist".<sup>95</sup>

Yet quite soon the provincial leadership was again praised for its revolutionary eagerness. During the "Socialist Education Movement" in 1964-65 the province attracted positive attention for having successfully overcome capitalism and feudalism and for having raised the class consciousness of the peasantry.<sup>96</sup> Henan had especially well-mastered the "struggle between the two roads" and had given "all the power to the poor and lower-middle peasants".

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<sup>90</sup> Becker: pp. 112-115.

<sup>91</sup> Dali L. Yang: pp. 39, 58.

<sup>92</sup> Peter P. Moody, *Opposition and Dissent in Contemporary China*, Stanford (Hoover Institution Press) 1977: p. 89.

<sup>93</sup> MacFarquhar: p. 303.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Frederick C. Teiwes, *Provincial Politics in China: Theses and Variations*, in: John M. H. Lindbeck, ed., *China: Management of a Revolutionary Society*, Ruskin House (George Allen and Unwin) 1972: p. 116, who comments that "the allocation of scarce resources can be a major cause of conflict in provincial politics" (p. 127).

<sup>95</sup> Bjung-joon Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution. Dynamics of Policy Processes*, Seattle. London (University of Washington Press) 1976: pp. 57, 83.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Draft Resoulution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Some Problems in Current Rural Work (the "First Ten Points") reprinted in: Richard Baum/Frederick C. Teiwes, *Ssu-ch'ing. The Socialist Education Movement of 1962-1966*, Berkeley (University of California Press) 1968, Appendix B: pp. 58-71.

The local cadres opposition to the "leftist" line of the provincial leadership must have been considerable. In the latter half of 1964 at least 23% of all basic-level cadres in Henan were reported to have been attacked and about 10% were reported to have been dismissed, expelled from the Party, or similarly punished.<sup>97</sup>

The Cultural Revolution was initiated with the first big-character poster campaign at Peking University, Zhengzhou University and other universities in Henan in June, 1966. As in earlier campaigns, Henan carried out the Cultural Revolution and its different campaigns relatively violently. Mao had many times commended Henan and said in October, 1966: "Only Henan has the character 'boldness' in mind, the majority have the character 'fear' in mind".<sup>98</sup> Some of the most active critics of the "top Party leaders in authority" came from Henan. This criticism, among many others, resulted, for example, in the arrest and probably also the subsequent death of Liu Shaoqi in prison in Kaifeng.

Bloody armed clashes occurred shortly after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. A January, 1968 issue of the *Henan Ribao* reported that "local chieftains" had organized their own guerilla forces, which were "gathering recruits, reoccupying mountainous areas, using mountain caves as headquarters, and sallying forth to make armed raids." These forces were reported to have kidnapped soldiers and stolen military equipment as well as to have provoked armed clashes with members of the military forces. These activities presumably were directed against representatives of the Cultural Revolution and led to a state of "armed anarchism" in the province.<sup>99</sup> As early as February, 1967, Zhou Enlai ordered the military forces to stamp out the bloody clashes involving guerilla forces in Henan. In May, the fighting flared up again, mainly in Kaifeng and Luoyang where it took on the appearance of a civil war.

After the Revolutionary Committee of Henan province was established in 1968 and after the Red Guards had been driven from political life, the situation obviously reversed itself. Thus the Red Guards were reported to have retreated to the mountains for "armed struggle".<sup>100</sup>

Between October, 1973 and April, 1974 180,000 Cultural-Revolutionary activists were admitted to the Party and 66,000 Cultural-Revolutionary cadres were promoted. In both categories Henan had higher numbers than the other provinces. This may have been an important reason why the campaign against the "evil wind" (*sha yaofeng*) developed here most violently and lasted longest. For example, in 1975 ultra-leftist forces in the Party center and in the provincial leadership started a new country-wide campaign against "revisionist tendencies" by citing the 1973 suicide of a middle school pupil in Tanghe county. This pupil had been criticised by her teacher for expressing opposition to foreign language courses on an English exam sheet. The explanation given for the first broadcast of an English language course by Radio Zhengzhou also demonstrated the political thinking of that time. The new language program was introduced as a means to "arm the listeners with an international proletarian and patriotic spirit, and to help them master foreign languages in order to propagate Marxism-Leninism and Maozedong-Thought and to anchor the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao in diplomacy."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. Richard Baum, *Prelude to the Revolution. Mao, the Party, and the Peasant Question, 1962-66*, New York, London (Columbia University Press) 1975: pp. 139, 194, footnote 2.

<sup>98</sup> Mao Zedong, *Texte*, vol. VI, Part 1, München, Wien (Carl Hanser Verlag) 1982: p. 223.

<sup>99</sup> Robert S. Elegant, *Mao's Great Revolution*, London (Weidenfeld and Nicolson) 1971: pp. 374, 409-410.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*: p. 435.

<sup>101</sup> Summary of World Broadcasts, Part III, The Far East (Reading), ed. by BBC, 4-6-76.

Like other provinces, Henan faced in 1975-76 a serious economic crisis. Official statements reflect that agricultural output, industrial output and financial income were 7.1%, 19.5% and 32.7% lower in 1976, respectively, than in 1975.<sup>102</sup> Many enterprises were no longer able to pay wages and salaries to their employees. Discontent expressed itself for instance in the unrest of April, 1976, which spread from Peking to Zhengzhou. Like in other provinces, peasants spontaneously returned to family cultivation. Rural poverty and supply problems left the population with little choice. Return of the peasants to family cultivation began first in Anhui, Sichuan and Henan, although the provincial Party leadership in Henan at first opposed this development.<sup>103</sup>

In Henan the purge of supporters of the Gang of Four and the implementation of the centrally agreed upon reform policy was very difficult. It was regarded as one of the most heavily-disputed provinces during the Cultural Revolution and one of the Cultural Revolutionary strongholds. Henan's connections to the Gang of Four were very strong. During a meeting Henan's Party Secretary once promised "mutual support" to Jiang Qing. Each key position in the province had been filled with adherents to the Cultural Revolution. After his second dismissal in the spring of 1976, Deng and his followers were attacked here extremely heavily.<sup>104</sup> The most famous propaganda film of the Gang of Four "Counterattack" was produced here and shown to the public. Some reports indicate that it had an "extremely bad influence" on Henan, and caused "great harm" to the population.<sup>105</sup> In the course of the Cultural Revolution the Party organizations had been purged of old members and been occupied by young "Cultural Revolutionaries". Thus a clientelist relationship had developed, which made basic changes in the province more difficult. As the *Renmin Ribao* reported at the beginning of 1979, "several rounds of intense struggle" were necessary to crush the power of the extensive clientelist alliances.<sup>106</sup> Resistance against vigorous actions in Henan existed even in Peking. Two members of the "Little Gang of Four", who had been dismissed at the beginning of the 80s, had started their careers in Henan. Wu De had been Party Secretary of Pingyuan (a new created province that included part of Northern Henan) which was an independent province from 1950-52 and then reunited with Henan. Ji Dengkui had been Party Secretary of Xuchang<sup>107</sup> and Luoyang prefectures in the 50s. From 1966-71 Ji was a member of the secretariat of the provincial Party Committee. In 1968, he became Vice-Chairman of the provincial Revolutionary Committee. From 1971-73 Ji was Secretary of the Party Committee in addition to his position in the Center as an alternate from 1969-73. From 1973-80 he was a full member of the Politburo of the CCP.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Henan tongji nianjian: pp. 93, 96 and 491.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Wang Guichen/Lu Xueyi, eds., *Nongcun jingji biange de xitong kaocha* (Reform structure examination of rural economy), Peking (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe) 1984: pp. 34/35.; Dali L. Yang: p. 159. Local cadres, though, often secretly gave way to the peasants' drive for decollectivization. A good example occurred in the spring of 1978 in the village of Yangsancai. Here peasants proposed to the party secretary of the brigade the division of the village's date trees among the peasant households. They promised to deliver 60% of the annual harvest to the brigade and keep only 40 % for themselves. The Party secretary of the brigade consulted the secretary of the commune, who finally agreed with the words: 'O.K. Do it your way. But do not tell others'. Cit. in Kate Xiao Zhou, *How the Farmers changed Communist China*, Princeton, N.J. (Princeton University) Diss., 1994: pp. 170 (copy by UMI, Ann Arbor, Mich.).

<sup>104</sup> Alan P. L. Liu, *The Politics of Corruption in the People's Republic of China*, in: *American Political Science Review*, vol. 77 (1983): pp. 614-615.

<sup>105</sup> *China aktuell*, December 1976: pp. 670-671.

<sup>106</sup> Liu: pp. 614-615.

<sup>107</sup> Xuchang was well-known for its radical land reform at the end of the 40s and was used as a model demonstrating optimal implementation of Maoist agrarian policy in the 50s. Comp. Domenach: pp. 32-34.

<sup>108</sup> Wolfgang Bartke, *Biographical Dictionary and Analysis of China's Party Leadership 1922-1988*, München, London, New York, Paris (K. G. Saur) 1990: p. 74.

These factors made it impossible to conduct thorough purges in Henan at that time. In 1978 the Party leadership of Henan was finally replaced, first, because no careful purges had been carried out, second, because reforms were implemented only half-heartedly, and finally, because no measures against the most urgent problems of the people had been taken. For example, the effects of the flood of 1975 had not been solved by the end of 1978. Additionally the provincial leadership had failed to provide the inhabitants of the disaster areas with a minimum of food. Therefore at the end of 1978 Radio Henan criticized: "Not much has been done for those people living in great poverty, therefore the masses are extremely discontent".<sup>109</sup> At the same time it was reported that the Party Committee of a prefecture, which was very much affected by flood disasters, was accused to have embezzled 103 mio \$ from the flood relief funds.<sup>110</sup>

Liu Jianxun, who was Party Secretary from 1961-66 and from 1971-78, was dismissed from the provincial People's Congress in 1980 for "grave errors and crimes". In 1983 Geng Qicheng, Secretary of the Party Committee from 1971-77, was sentenced to jail for three years for "concealing crime" during his period of office<sup>111</sup> and in 1978 vice-Party Secretary Wang Weichu was arrested for illegal activities.<sup>112</sup>

In October, 1978, complaints were still heard regarding the considerable difficulties of eradicating the followers of the Gang of Four in Henan.<sup>113</sup> In July, 1979, *Henan Ribao* reported that supporters of the Gang of Four retained their positions in one quarter of all Party and administration units at the provincial level.<sup>114</sup> Only in August, 1981, according to *Renmin Ribao*, had the Cultural Revolution in Henan been overcome and brought to an end.<sup>115</sup> Apparently the *Renmin Ribao* spoke too soon as in March, 1982, Radio Henan again reported the dismissal of Cultural Revolutionary officials, who had not changed their point of view.<sup>116</sup> Thereafter, criticism of "leftist" tendencies continued.<sup>117</sup> For example during the IVth Party conference of the CCP of Henan in August, 1984, it was reported that many units neglected the purge of Cultural Revolutionary climbers.<sup>118</sup> Current reports still note opposition by cadres against far-reaching economic reforms in the province.

This opposition is also reflected in the attitude adopted towards decollectivization and the land question. In general, rural reforms in Henan relied on an egalitarian modus vivendi. Our own observations in that respect are further confirmed by empirical data gathered in a study undertaken in 1994 in 80 villages in the provinces of Zhejiang, Henan, Jilin and Jiangxi. This modus vivendi usually comprises a distribution of land on an equal basis regardless of gender, age and number of work points in the former collective system and provided for regular terms of redistribution of land to adjust for demographical changes. The authors of the study also point out that land transfer rights were most tightly controlled in Jiangxi and Henan and that in both provinces governments retain the strongest grip on the land in general. They argue that

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<sup>109</sup> Op. cit. in Jürgen Domes, *Politische Soziologie der VR China*, Wiesbaden (Adademische Verlagsgesellschaft) 1980: p. 66.

<sup>110</sup> Liu: p. 615.

<sup>111</sup> Bartke, *Biographical Dictionary*: pp. 47, 128.

<sup>112</sup> Alan P. L. Liu, *The Politics of Corruption*: p. 615.

<sup>113</sup> Wolfgang Bartke, *Das Schicksal der Kader aus der Zeit vor der Kulturrevolution*, in: *China aktuell*, October 1978: p. 643.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Renmin Ribao*, 7-23-79.

<sup>115</sup> *Renmin Ribao*, 8-26-81.

<sup>116</sup> *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 3-19-82.

<sup>117</sup> *China aktuell*, June 1984: p. 306.

<sup>118</sup> *China aktuell*, August 1984: p. 431.

scarcity of land and low productivity are the main reasons for the egalitarian policies.<sup>119</sup> However, we would also like to direct the reader's attention to the long tradition of egalitarianism prevailing in Henan which also explains these land policies. Henan also still widely practices the system of "township cadres being responsible for villages" (*xianggan bao cun zhi*), which implies that villages are still under the control of higher authorities despite the central government's promises to give them greater autonomy.

A change for the better occurred only at the beginning of the nineties when Hou Zongbin, who had been sent by the Party center in Peking, became Party Secretary. We therefore argue that during this period Henan finally ceased to be the conservative communist hegemonic model. Hou had extensive experiences in various provinces. He appointed a younger and more professional staff of cadres. He was quite successful in Henan as Party Secretary, one reason why he might have been promoted to Deputy Secretary of the CCP Central Discipline Inspection Commission in October, 1992. In December, 1992, his deputy, Governor Li Changchun, assumed the Party Secretary position in Henan. Henanese intellectuals, however, are said to be suspicious of the Central Government's good intentions towards their province. They covertly accuse the Central authorities of hindering the provincial development and preventing Henanese politicians from building strong leadership positions in the provincial government.<sup>120</sup>

However, even today the despotism and arbitrariness of the cadres in Henan is extremely marked. In 1988 the *Nongmin Ribao* reported that the relationship between the cadres and the masses was very tense, and that there was little chance of defending oneself against the cadres misuse of their positions. The local implementation of edicts from the central government afforded the cadres the opportunity to exert dictatorial-like power. On one occasion, for example, a document from Peking ordered the cadres to convince the peasants of the necessity of selling higher grain quotas to the state. According to the newspaper, village cadres in turn posted a sign at the office of the village's Party committee that read: "The children of peasants who are not able to raise the grain buying quota are not allowed to go to school. Those peasants will get no permission for births and the land they got by contract will be withdrawn".<sup>121</sup> Poverty, the despotism of the cadres and corruption increased the potential for protest, which had, as has been mentioned above, always been very strong. In a 1991 report of the State Council, Henan was classified as a province which is politically and socially unstable and in which protest actions could be expected from time to time.<sup>122</sup> Henan is also among the provinces where the rate of organized crime was highest in the first half of the nineties.<sup>123</sup>

## 5.5 Outlining Henan's economic development

Although Henan follows the general path of reform, implementation of some reform steps seems to be more difficult than in many other provinces. Certainly this holds also true for the

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<sup>119</sup> Shouying Liu/ Michael R. Carter/ Yang Yao, Dimensions and Diversity of Property Rights in Rural China. Dilemmas on the Road to further Reform. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Agricultural Economics, Staff Paper No. 395, May 1996: pp. 15, 16, 27.

<sup>120</sup> Die Zeit (Time), 8 April, 1998: p.13.

<sup>121</sup> Nongmin Ribao (Peasant Daily), 9 December, 1988, according to China aktuell, October 1988: pp. 758-759.

<sup>122</sup> Luo Bing, Juemi wenjian zhong de bu wen diqu (Unstable regions according to a secret document), in: Zhengming, 1/1992: pp. 8-9.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Sebastian Heilmann, Das Potential für soziale und politische Unruhen in der VR China, in: China aktuell, May 1994: p. 479.

whole of Central China. As late as 1998 China Daily cited Chinese economists who argued that "Central China must still break free of the shackles of the old economic structure", in this context referring to the centrally planned economy.<sup>124</sup> That is true for example of the reform of the ownership system. Like the state-owned sector all over China, enterprises in Henan entered a period of crisis at the beginning of the 80s. Due to technological backwardness and low quality standards most of Henan's enterprises could not compete with enterprises of the coastal areas. Therefore the crisis in Henan was particularly strong. In 1995 alone, 57 out of 177 state enterprises were closed or partly closed in Kaifeng, one of the provinces major industrial centers. In the textile sector 12 out of 14 enterprises were shut down. The factories were unable to pay wages and guarantee social welfare for the majority of the workers. This erosion of the state sector was decisive for the rapid growth of the non-state sector. In 1995 alone the latter already produced 68 % of the province's gross industrial output.<sup>125</sup> Private sector development in Henan was above the national average: Between 1992 and 1997 the entire nation's private sector (individual and private enterprises) increased approximately 84.2 % (enterprises) and 151.6 % (labourers), but only about 132.2 and 168.5 %, respectively, in Henan.<sup>126</sup> In the latter the number of individual enterprises (*getihu*, with less than 8 employees) increased from 420,000 with 570,000 workers and staff (1983) to 1.80 mio with 3.232 mio workers and staff (1997), that of private enterprises (*siying qiye*, with more than 7 employees) from 3,467 with 58,000 persons (1987) to 34,203 with 484,840 persons (1997).<sup>127</sup>

The impetus for official support of private sector development was labour-force pressure, especially from rural areas (as a result of the return to family farming and the related surplus of labour in agriculture). This factor is particularly strong in Henan, where a larger share of the labour force is engaged in the agricultural sector than in many other provinces. In 1996 one third of all counties were regarded as "poor counties". The provincial government, lacking the necessary investment capital, is not able to establish a large-scale government-funded anti-poverty program. The private sector is also expected to contribute to the reduction of provincial poverty. Moreover, unemployment due to the erosion of state-owned sector and lack of capital for restructuring the existing enterprises convinced the provincial leadership to support the private economy. As the number of large enterprises in Henan is rather small and state-owned enterprises are mainly labor-intensive small and medium-sized, the provincial government opted to privatize most of those enterprises. Thus, the provincial government followed the lead of the central government. by the summer 1998, 1,496 out of 2,157 small and medium-sized state enterprises were privatized both through outright sale and renting-out. Others were closed or merged with larger operations.<sup>128</sup> Privatization and shutting down state run enterprises led to a significant increase in unemployment.<sup>129</sup> According to the People's Daily in May 1997 the state-owned sector had only about 4 mio employees, out of which 800,000 were counted as "surplus labourers" and 350,000 were already "set free".<sup>130</sup> Due to labour pressure in 1992 the provincial government established a program for promoting the "bottom-up" development of the private sector in order to support the establishment of

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<sup>124</sup> China Daily, 19 February, 1998 (Internet version).

<sup>125</sup> Jiang Li/Zhang Jing, eds., *Henan jingji fazhan lun* (On the development of Henan's economy), Beijing (Zhongguo jingji chubanshe) 1996: pp. 163-166.

<sup>126</sup> Own calculations according to *Gongshang xingzheng guanli tongji huibian* (Collection of Statistics of the Administration for Industry and Commerce) 1992, Beijing (Guojia gongshang xingzheng guanliju jingji xinxi zhongxin) 1993, pp. 52, 53, 68 and 69 and *Gongshang xingzheng guanli tongji huibian* 1997, Beijing (Guojia gongshang xingzheng guanliju bangongshi) 1998, pp. 68 and 75.

<sup>127</sup> Data given by Henan Administration of Industry and Commerce, 3 October 1996 and *Gongshang xingzheng guanli tongji huibian* 1997, pp. 68 and 75.

<sup>128</sup> According to *Renmin Ribao*, 19 July, 1998.

<sup>129</sup> *Renmin Ribao*, 12 June, 1998.

<sup>130</sup> *Renmin Ribao*, 4 May, 1997.

enterprises by citizens. Areas of business were extended, administrative procedures simplified and distinctive measures to promote that sector were decided. The provincial document containing these resolutions also sought to support the development of the private economy in poor counties, where in 1996 roughly a quarter of the private sector was already concentrated.<sup>131</sup>

However, the resistance from within the bureaucracy was remarkably strong. The different positions and attitudes resulted in political ups and downs. On one occasion a pronouncement was made that the private sector was too big and should be restricted. On another occasion it was pronounced it was too small and should be developed and enhanced. In 1996 officials continued to declare that private enterprises in Henan should proceed towards "mixed-ownership enterprises" (*hunhe suoyouzh*), i. e. towards enterprises with mixed private and non-private ownership shares.<sup>132</sup> Such uncertainties had the effect of inhibiting entrepreneurial reinvestment choosing instead to consume their profit.<sup>133</sup>

As the breakdown of many state-owned enterprises and the resulting increase in unemployment caused social conflict, local governments within Henan attempted to develop the private economy by all means, even with the help of patterns of a planned economy. Our research findings from Luohe city in 1996, for example, demonstrate that the local authorities ordered a 20 % development of the private sector each year. Under a special program, 100 private enterprises with a turnover of at least 1 mio Yuan would be established or developed every year. The responsible officials were assigned fixed quotas in order to attain that objective. Payment of boni was correlated to fulfillment of these quotas. To receive boni payment officials eagerly convinced or forced smaller entrepreneurs to establish larger enterprises. Not a few of these "new establishments" failed due to lack of know-how, capital, technology or market information. Even if the enterprises went bankrupt the responsible officials had fulfilled their quotas. Meanwhile, the provincial government had been establishing four industrial belts cutting across the province from east to west and north to south with Zhengzhou at the center. This strategy is likely to further deepen already existing intra-provincial disparities.<sup>134</sup>

A new campaign called "Have deep love for Henan, add splendour to the Central Plains" (*reai Henan, zenghui Zhongyuan*), established by the provincial leadership in 1999<sup>135</sup>, is intended to integrate Henan's population by strengthening provincial identity and sentiments and focussing their efforts on provincial development. This, too, might be considered an expression of regionalism. It stands in contrast to central efforts to concentrate everything at the national level. The core of this campaign is "Henan first", thus implying that Henan's conditions are unique and that it has to develop regional policies appropriate to its characteristics that may differ from the policies of the Center. Finally, there is another development which seems to bring Henan to the forefront. An article in *Renmin Ribao*

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<sup>131</sup> The document is included in the volume *Zhongguo siying jingji nianjian* (Yearbook of Chinese private economy), ed. by Zhang Xuwu/Li Ding and Xie Minggan, Beijing (Zhonghua gongshang lianhe chubanshe) 1996, pp. 25-26.

<sup>132</sup> JiangLi/Zhang Jing: pp. 194-196.

<sup>133</sup> JiangLi/Zhang Jing: pp. 191-194.

<sup>134</sup> Chinese News Service (CNS), 9 December, 1995.

<sup>135</sup> Comp. *Zhongguo Gongshang Bao* (China's Industry and Commerce), 6 April 1999; *Henan Ribao* (Henan Daily), 31 March and 4 April, 1999 (Internet version).



revealed that Henan belongs to that provinces in which the development of Internet access is developing most rapidly!<sup>136</sup>

In summary, the following factors have influenced public perceptions in Henan: (1) historico-cultural facts: Henan is the cradle and historical center of China, which lost its central function in the 13th century to the North. This fact is always emphasized in Henan and has deeply impressed upon its inhabitants. In addition, Henan was continually the scene of military conflicts as the result of its strategic location. These conflicts undermined the security of and imperiled the people living there; (2) geographical facts: Henan as a region was constantly threatened by natural disasters. Life-threatening conditions and social uncertainty were part of the everyday life of the people. Consequently there was a concentration of (3) socio-rebellious facts: Millenarist movements, secret religious societies and robber bands developed as a result of impoverishment, social uncertainty and exploitation. Collective organizations to defend or gain social rights or for social protection were more developed here than in many other provinces. It is conceivable that these factors made it easier to implement collectivistic and egalitarian models such as the people's communes.

What were the reasons that Henan became a Maoist model province? We don't accept Domenach's argument that the Center in Peking pulled the strings and that Zhengzhou was politically "only a suburb of Beijing".<sup>137</sup> Domenach's argument does not explain why it was exactly Henan that became a Maoist model. Provinces in fact had the opportunity to implement centrally agreed upon policies in a relatively independent way. These policies could be carried out extremely radically. On the other hand, the provinces could choose to carry out these policies in a moderate manner. The provinces could modify these policies. They could also, for example, hasten or delay implementation of these policies. In short, the provinces had considerable policy control and were not merely the puppets of the Center. To the contrary, Henan forced its policy on the Center by means of establishing the first people's communes, by popularizing these communes, by highly exaggerated output quotas, which suggested these quantities had actually been produced by employing the Henan model during the Great Leap Forward and by the strong "Communist wind". Thus Henan directly influenced Mao's policy and contributed to the radicalization of the concepts, particularly regarding collectivism, that Mao and his supporters held.

There is no doubt that the provincial leadership played an important role in creating the "Henan model". The main supporter of the "Maoist" model during the fifties and early sixties was Wu Zhipu. He came from Henan, had joined the Communists as a student in Kaifeng in the twenties and was sent to the Peasant Movement Training Institute at Guangzhou for Party training in 1926. While training there, Wu met Mao, who lectured at the institute and thus came into contact with Mao's ideas concerning revolution and the peasantry. After his return, Wu and other party members from Henan were instructed by the Party to infiltrate the "Red Spears" and to win them over to the CCP. Wu was so successful that he became a regional leader and commander of the Red Spears. When the Central Committee, under the influence of the Comintern in 1927 became highly critical of the Red Spears and their activities and also criticized Party members who were cooperating with this organization, Wu was suspended from the CCP.<sup>138</sup> This criticism was directed towards Mao and resulted in Wu becoming a

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<sup>136</sup> Liu Kai/Wei Jing, Hulanwang, ai ni you jifen? You guan Henan shangwang qingkuang de diaocha (Internet, how many love you? Investigation on the situation of Internet access in Henan), in: Renmin Ribao, 10 April 2000.

<sup>137</sup> Domenach: p. 158.

<sup>138</sup> On this discussion among the party leadership see Stuart R. Schram, Mao Tse-tung and Secret Societies, in: The China Quarterly, 27/1966: pp. 1-3.

closer adherent to Mao's politics. Wu's suspension was a crucial experience in his life and after his membership was restored he was confirmed in his former political opinions. After the Guomindang had ceased cooperating with the CCP in 1927, Wu joined other cadres in the mountain areas of Henan and participated in the establishment of the base at Eyuwan. Before setting off for the mountains, Wu and other members of the Red Spears had sworn blood brotherhood oath in Kaifeng. Wu used his contacts to members of the Red Spears in order to strengthen the base in Eyuwan. When he became Governor of Henan in the fifties, he could count on a large and strong network. This network goes back to the Red Spears as well as to his contacts in Eyuwan and to his fellow students from Kaifeng. Wu used these relationships to enforce his "Maoist" conception. At the same time he was in an on-going struggle with Party Secretary Pan Fusheng. Pan did not come from Henan but instead from Shandong. He had been Vice-Party Secretary of the newly created province of Pingyuan from 1950-52. Thus he had no network in Henan and therefore only limited power. During the Great Leap Forward, Pan was dismissed and Wu became Party Secretary. Because of the above-mentioned excesses that occurred during the Great Leap Forward and his "ultra-left" policies, Wu was, as mentioned above, lowered to the level of a 2nd Party Secretary in 1961. Nevertheless, he adhered to his position and was again criticized as "Leftist" in 1964. In 1967 he lost his life in Guangzhou, possibly at the hands of the Red Guards. Wu's standing in the province and his relations made it easier for him to carry through his political ideas and helped those ideas survive via the networks he had created, even after he had been forced from the political scene. Thus the particulars of this man's career may help to explain why and how Henan became a model province.<sup>139</sup>

On the other hand political measures such as the establishment of people's communes and the implementation of the "Communist wind" could not have been brought about without a certain measure of support from functionaries and from the people. Even at that time, China was not so completely and successfully totalitarian that it was not prepared for opposition from the peasantry and this opposition, particularly in the countryside, could not very easily be suppressed or ignored. Collectivist traditions and the peasants' hope that social uncertainty could be minimized by collectivization may have made it to some extent easier to carry out such measures. Moreover Henan, which had been relatively isolated since the end of the Song dynasty and had not been touched by foreign influence up to the current century, has remained conservative and a model for egalitarian peasant imagination up to the present time. R. H. Tawney's description of Henan in the thirties may still be true:

"economically primitive, a population of agriculturalists engaged in a desperate struggle with nature, and taking refuge, when the strain becomes intolerable, in banditry, war or migration to Manchuria, with neither the surplus resources nor the mentality required to support a modern state".<sup>140</sup>

Finally it should not be overlooked that the Communist movement had not been very strong in Henan before the foundation of the People's Republic. All Communist bases were located at the frontiers of the province and most of the leading officials had been sent in from outside. Therefore the Party's power base in Henan was at first rather weak. The traditional rebellious element of Henan's peasantry, which had vented itself continuously in self-organization and collective action, needed, as the leadership of the province might have put it, a stronger political control. Such control was easier to achieve by adopting collective forms such as higher-level co-operatives or people's communes.

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<sup>139</sup> Those informations were quoted from Bartke, *Biographical Dictionary*: pp. 242/243; Domenach, *MacFauhar*, vol. 2, Wou.

<sup>140</sup> R. H. Tawney, *Land and Labour in China*, London (Allen & Unwin) 1937: p. 170.

Finally, Hofheinz argues that the fact that Henan has a huge population and varied terrain as well as the notion that Henan could gain more from collectivism than from individual activities may have encouraged collective concepts.<sup>141</sup>

## 6 Henan: Model of Fragmentated Authoritarianism - A Case-Study

The history of Henan models has not ended. Indeed the pattern of a single hegemonic development model has been superseded by political fragmentation. New "model villages" have emerged in the rural areas recently. They are not characterized by a return to the responsibility system (family economy) of the late 70s, but by a continuation of or return to collective forms. The better known villages include Liuzhuang in Qiliying township<sup>142</sup> (the former People's Commune in Xinxiang county, visited by Mao in 1958), Zhulin (Gongxian county)<sup>143</sup> and Nanjie in Linying county. In these villages, private economic activities are either forbidden (Liuzhuang, Nanjie) or restricted (Zhulin). A number of social benefits are provided free of cost by the collective. This raises the question of whether or not the tradition of Henan models is continuing in these models. Using Nanjie<sup>144</sup>, which became a national model village in 1997, as an example, we will demonstrate the specific features of present-day Henan model villages.

Nanjie (South Street Village) is located at the national highway No. 107 (Peking-Shenzhen). Per information provided by the village leadership, in 1996 the village possessed 26 modern enterprises that in 1995 had an gross industrial value of 1.16 billion Yuan. 75 % of the industrial equipment was computer-controlled. The average per-capita income in 1994, excluding free benefits provided by the village, was 1,800 Yuan. This compares well with the 1,221 Yuan average per-capita income in 1994 in rural areas for China as a whole and the 910 Yuan average per-capita income in Henan. At present China has numerous villages, though mainly in coastal areas, which were success-stories in the headlines. But Nanjie seems to offer more. The vice-Party Secretary explained, "We are the only Communist village in the world. Everything is collectively owned. We are a model village that develops according to the Maozedong-Thought".<sup>145</sup>

In 1996 the village had 800 households with 3,130 inhabitants. The main income was derived from the 26 enterprises. The primary field of production was food processing and included operations for processing dairy products, instant noodles and frozen food as well as facilities for brewing beer. By-and-large, the products that were processed here were made from local agrarian raw materials. 1,300 of the 12,000 employees were people from Nanjie, the rest were non-locals from eight provinces and 36 counties.

A clear division of labour exists. In general, the local people assumed the white collar-jobs while the non-locals performed manual labour and carried out other jobs that are considered to be socially inferior such as ordinary services. Piecework dominated the organization of labour and dismissals were quite frequent as the non-locals could often not bear the pressure of work and ideology.

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<sup>141</sup> Hofheinz: p. 154.

<sup>142</sup> Zheng Yangxi über Liuzhuang, in: Lu Xueyi, ed., *Gaige zhong de nongcun yu nongmin* (Villages and Peasants in Reform), Peking (Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe): pp. 196-222.

<sup>143</sup> Zhang Linnan/Sun Baoding über Zhulin, in: Lu Xueyi: pp. 272-310.

<sup>144</sup> The following chapter is based on a visit in Nanjie in October 1996.

<sup>145</sup> Vice-Party Secretary Yao Tonglin in a talk on October 6, 1996.

Before 1985 Nanjie qualified as a "poor village". It did not even receive electricity. The agricultural reform in 1981 and the return to contracted family farming did not solve the problem of poverty in the village. The vice-Party Secretary reports that many families continued to live below the subsistence level. The revenues from agriculture did not improve the living conditions of the majority of the villagers because increasing fees and costs of production led to decreasing net incomes. Consequently, more and more people switched from agriculture to individual economy or migrated into the cities. Their land was leased to non-local people who instead of investing in it, concerned themselves only with immediate output. As a result, according to data provided by the party secretary of Nanjie, in 1985 the village reached the lowest level of grain output in decades: 500 Jin per Mu (against 1,000 Jin/Mu in 1978).<sup>146</sup> Social disintegration and agrarian decline were accompanied by growing stratification in the village. Some people became rich through private economic activities while others, who relied mainly on farming, remained poor. Those who migrated to the cities were primarily the younger and most capable people. Those who stayed behind were the women, children and the elderly. The migration of the young villagers, overaging of the village, disintegration of families and the control of the farm land by non-locals were perceived by the villagers as symptoms of a massive social and economic crisis in the village.

Due to these phenomena, the village leadership changed its policy in the 80s. In 1986 the leasing of land to non-local people and allowing land to lie fallow were forbidden. Everybody who was unable to use the land allocated to him had to return it to the village for redistribution. In turn, he was provided with free grain by the village. With increasing income from the non-agricultural sector, more and more households returned their land to the village collective. In addition, village enterprises leased to private persons had to be returned to the village. In the future all available resources were to be used only in the interest of the village community.<sup>147</sup>

The founding of new enterprises failed, as the banks were not willing to provide loans to the village. Therefore the Party Committee collected altogether 3,000 Yuan from its members. Eventually the committee convinced the villagers to contribute money as well. This, remarked the vice-Party Secretary, was the basis for the large modern enterprises of today. The question of how a small, poor village like Nanjie could manage to invest umpteen million Yuan, which was the real basis for these enterprises, was not answered by the deputy Secretary but will be addressed further below.

## **6.1 The "Communism" of Nanjie: Patterns of Distribution**

There is an assortment of free collective benefits and wage payments that was instituted in 1986. The range of items that are distributed gratis is expanded by one or two per year. In 1996 the following goods and services were provided free of cost: flats of about 90 square meters including standardized furnishing, colour TV, refrigerator and other electrical appliances as well as heating; hot water twice a week; very recently also air-conditioning; a standardized set of clothing; a porcelain statue of Mao; medical care and retirement insurance; bathing in the public bathing-house; haircuts; electricity, gas, water and coal; 31 foodstuffs as

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<sup>146</sup> We doubt the correctness of this data, as 500 Jin per Mu in 1985 would have been quite high. The average in 1995 was 765 Jin per Mu for the whole province.

<sup>147</sup> Comp. for this development: Deng Yingtao/Miao Zhuang/Cui Zhiyuan, Nanjie jingyan de sikao (Considerations on the Experiences of Nanjie), Canyue Wengao (Manuscripts for Reading), 1/1996: pp. 10-12. The *secret history* of Nanjie, i. e. its informal history is not known to us.

well as food in the public canteen; kindergarten and other education through university; cultural activities; life insurance; agricultural fees and taxes. The village pays for these items in full. In 1995 the village leadership provided altogether 2.8 mio Yuan for these benefits.

The wage payment component of this distribution system is kept intentionally low. Thus in 1996 manual workers received a monthly average wage of 180 Yuan, with a maximum of 250 Yuan. The vice-Party Secretary reports wages are graded, but with fixed upper limits. This is true for the village cadres as well. Only the salaries of scientific and technical professionals were higher (between 500 and 4,000 Yuan), because urban professionals would refuse to work in village enterprises without high salaries. The wages of non-local workers are 20 to 30% higher than those of local workers because they receive less than the full complement of the goods and services that are provided gratis to the villagers. There are no bonuses or overtime allowances.

This mixed system of free goods and services and wages is justified by China's current stage of development. On a national scale, observes the vice-Party Secretary, a socialist system of a lower stage exists that still demands distribution according to work. The "advanced Communist spirit" of Nanjie, however, afforded the opportunity to partially adopt a system of supplying good and services free of cost according to one's needs. The objective of communism was the elimination of private ownership. This had actually not yet been achieved. But Nanjie wants to lead the way and take the appropriate steps today. This was the reason public services and goods were provided free of cost. Thus Nanjie would demonstrate that "project communism" had hope and was attainable.

This "communism" is directly linked with the name of Mao. On the occasion of Mao's 100th birthday in December, 1993, the village expended 260,000 Yuan to erect a huge marble statue of him in the central square. This statue is intended to help "carve" the merits of Mao into the memory of every inhabitant. Members of the uniformed village militia form a guard of honour around the clock. At fixed hours revolutionary songs from the 60s and early 70s praising Mao are broadcast from loudspeakers all over the village. The village leadership declares, that "Maozedong-Thought" was the guideline for success and for all activities in the village.<sup>148</sup>

## 6.2 Material and Symbolic Support

The leadership of Nanjie remains silent regarding the source of the investment capital that was used to industrialize it. Officials from the administrative city of Luohe unofficially told us that the financing (credits of about 420 mio Yuan) was provided by banks on instruction from conservative forces within the political elite of Peking. Nanjie thus ought to be built up as a "counter-model" to the Special Economic Zone of Shenzhen. To this end, a place in a less-developed area far away from the coastal areas would have been chosen. Certainly the proximity to markets and sales areas as well as favourable railroad and highway links may have played an important part in the selection of Nanjie.

The long list of visitors indicates a more conservative touch: Party and military veterans including Song Ping, Li Desheng, Yang Rudai, Zhang Aiping, Wang Enmao and Xiao Ke, but also current Party and state leaders such as Qiao Shi, Zhu Rongji, Li Lanqing, Luo Gan and

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<sup>148</sup> Lixiang zhiguang (The brightness of an ideal), vol. 1: Nanjie ren tan gongchanzhuyi xiao shequ jianshe (People from Nanjie on the building of a Communist, small community), Luohe (Linying xian Nanjie cun bianxie zubian) 1996.

Song Jian have visited Nanjie. Qiao Shi, Chairman of the National People's Congress, declared: "You're doing well, the way is alright!". After his visit, the former Minister of Defence Zhang Aiping appealed for the propagation of the Nanjie model throughout the country. Song Ping, a former member of the Politburo of the CCP, said the village was "China's Yan'an of today."; the veteran general Li Desheng stated that in Nanjie he had seen communism. Among the visitors we find two with direct links to Henan. Luo Gan, Secretary of the State Council, was vice-Gouverneur from 1981-83 and Secretary of the provincial Party Committee in 1983. Hou Zongbin, deputy Secretary of the Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Central Committee, was Party Secretary of Henan in the early 90s. It is possible that Luo Gan, with his key position in the State Council, set the agenda and arranged for Nanjie to be visited by important Party and state leaders. Luo and Hou thus may be the link between Nanjie and the Center and may be responsible for setting the village on its financial foundation.

Visits by important leaders and positive remarks resulted not only in material benefits such as the opening of markets and the provision of credits, but also to symbolic benefits including acceptance of structures and policies deviating from the course of the Center and toleration of indebtedness.

### 6.3 Objectives and Mechanisms of Enforcement

The following points are the declared objectives of the village: developing a collective economy, eradicating the private economy, development of a materially prosperous community, maintenance of a highly-civilized culture, creation of a community that loves the Party and the nation as well as insuring liberty, equality and happiness for everybody. The village motto is: "Inside the village collective economy, outside market economy".<sup>149</sup>

To pursue these objectives in the face of the completely different objectives set by the Center in Peking requires severe discipline and control measures. Behaviour is therefore assessed according to a ten-point-system with 10 stars denoting optimal behaviour. The requirements e. g. refer to: ideology and morality (*sixiang pinde*), respect towards teachers and high esteem for education (*zun shi, zhong jiao*), attitude towards labour, the moral-ethical behaviour of one's family, relationships between neighbours, complying with birth planning, behaviour towards the environment and hygiene, commitment to the well-being of the village community. If a family loses one point or star the supply of one benefit free of cost, such as the gratis provision of coal, electricity, gas, water or food, is cancelled. In this case those goods or services have to be bought from the collective at high prices. Anyone who violates the rules regarding labour discipline or the village community is subjected to one of the following "education methods": (a) criticism and self-criticism, (b) "film show" (*yan dianying*) or (c) assignment to a "study course for spiritual civilization". "Film show" means the offender must stand on a platform in front of the village audience and loudly utter the circumstances of his wrong-doing. Even the village cadres admit that this effects a tremendous psychical pressure on the persons affected: "Even your own children won't look at you for days". The inhabitants of Nanjie seem to fear this punishment most of all, because it implies a direct loss of face in public. In order to avoid such a punishment, the villagers will eagerly study the works of Chairman Mao, because, the village cadres assert, "They want to avoid mistakes".<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Lixiang zhi guang, vol. 1: p. 3 and talk to the vice-Party Secretary on October 6, 1996.

<sup>150</sup> Lixiang zhi guang, vol 1: p. 45.

Moreover, according to the specific situation, special measures for maintaining social order are undertaken. For example should a man repeatedly beat his wife, he may not only have to practice self-criticism, but also be placed under the obligation to get the relationship with his wife in order. Two neighbors who quarrel frequently may have to pull down the wall between their flats to force them to harmonize their mutual relations. Women who often squabble over their children may be ordered to perform several "film shows".<sup>151</sup>

Such a law, explains the Party Secretary, corresponds with rustic concepts of law.<sup>152</sup> Indeed the village community in Nanjie refers to the violation of village law, not to the violation of State law. The latter is openly and with approval of the higher authorities subordinated to the village law and thus provides a demonstration of the lack of consciousness of legality that exists not only on the local level. Accordingly, the vice-Party Secretary answered, when questioned regarding what would happen should someone transgress not the state law, but Maozedong-Thought, "I don't know anything about the state law. But here he will be punished".

Not only the state's law, but also official policy is openly circumvented here. For example, although the Chinese constitution explicitly guarantees the right of private economic activities, the question of what would happen if someone wished to establish a private enterprise was answered thusly: "Nobody has such an intention here", and if someone has, he has to leave the village.

The village law is intended to secure social discipline. The public objectives of education have the same purpose: to educate to (a) "the ideal of socialism and communism", that is "to love the collective" and to "sacrifice oneself in the interest of the community"; (b) obey the village discipline; (c) obey Maozedong-Thought as interpreted by the village leadership; (d) create "civilization".<sup>153</sup> In the final analysis, obeying Maozedong-Thought as interpreted by the village leadership (c) and creating "civilization", are directed to inculcating "the ideal of socialism and communism" (a) and obedience to village discipline (b). Education thus serves the maintenance of order in the village community and the subordination of all interests to the interest of that community. These are in principle traditional values of village life. As the village Party Secretary put it: "Without rigorousness there exists no order. Order in the state starts at the villages. If you want to have order in the state, you have at first to enforce it in the villages."

The village leadership proudly declares Nanjie to be free of criminality. For five years no criminal offence has occurred. "Decadent phenomena" such as discos, karaoke-clubs, bars and saunas do not exist. There is to be no market for decadent urban culture. The thinking of Mao is to dominate here, and Nanjie had, still, the "dictatorship of the proletariat".<sup>154</sup>

This Law and Order-thinking was rewarded in 1997: Nanjie became one of the villages that were honoured as "model village in terms of civilization" by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CCP.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Here it has to be considered that not every form of deviance is punished, but only acts that due to their severity and continuity have a major impact on the stability of the village community.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.: p. 44.

<sup>153</sup> Talk with the vice-Party Secretary on October 6, 1996.

<sup>154</sup> Talk with the vice-Party Secretary on October 6, 1996.

<sup>155</sup> Renmin Ribao, 26 March, 1997.

## 6.4 Mao-Cult as a Substitute for Religion

Since 1984 there have been "three great activities" (*san da huodong*) for the village inhabitants: "great" studying of the works of Mao Zedong, "great" singing of revolutionary songs and "great" learning from Lei Feng. The village-owned printing factory publishes works of Mao, which must be read and discussed by the villagers as well as by workers coming from outside the village in special study groups. Such study groups are organized and supervised by the management of the enterprises. Every worker and employee is obliged to submit "written reports of experience" at fixed intervals, to learn at least one revolutionary song per month and to carry out at least two good deeds. It is argued that in the process of economic development people need a "faith" as well.

A precondition for getting a job in Nanjie is the ability to, "recite some quotations of Chairman Mao". It is made clear that memorization is expected.<sup>156</sup> Maozedong-Thought as well as the Mao monument are both called the "Red Sun that enlightens Nanjie". Village Party Secretary Wang Hongbin proclaimed on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of the statue of Mao, "Through the illumination of his ideas the people are led from darkness to the light, from poverty to wealth." The thoughts of Mao have enlightened every step of the inhabitants of Nanjie in the last years. Every villager was to pass the monument at least once a day in order to be "enlightened".<sup>157</sup>

It is openly declared that the people of Nanjie perceive Mao as a god for the protection of the village (*baohu shen*). If Mao were not present, the people would feel "uneasy in their hearts". Therefore many people carry an amulet with a picture of Mao around their neck.

## 6.5 Nanjie: A Model Directed from Above?

Nanjie's development process was without doubt promoted by influential conservative forces in the Party elite on both the central and provincial levels. This is illustrated through the visits by many leading officials as well as by the huge amount of investment. From the standpoint of conservative forces Nanjie is indeed a counter-model against the Special Economic Zones in the coastal areas where foreign economic influences dominate and against models like Wenzhou that primarily foster the private economic sector. As a counter-model it is intended to prove that economic development without social erosion on a collective basis is possible as well. The Mao cult is at the same time the ethical-moral foundation of social order.

But it would be wrong to reduce the development of the village to initiatives from higher authorities alone. The support from above contributed to the break-up of the traditional village, to the elimination of obstacles to the modernization process and to the commercialization of the village economy. Processes of commercialization may negatively impact the peasants, for example through the collapse of the subsistence economy, migration, disintegration of the village community and decay of the traditional social structures and values.

The rigid system of village order seems to be quite accepted by the majority of the villagers. Its legitimacy is based on social benefits such as social security, which hardly exists in other rural areas; material security through relatively high wages and including welfare provisions;

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<sup>156</sup> Lixiang zhiguang, vol 1: p. 19.

<sup>157</sup> Lixiang zhiguang, vol 1: pp. 15-17.



access to professional positions with social prestige and access to education as well as on the enforcement of common concepts of order.<sup>158</sup>

At the same time our analysis has to include factors that originated in the village itself. These factors include:

- The desire to adjust to modernization by using its advantages without destroying the social integration of the village community and its values. The "Nanjie model" represents therefore the achievement of social prosperity without the polarization, urbanization and industrialization of the village. Additionally, the transformation of the peasants into non-agricultural workers has been achieved within the framework of the "Nanjie model" without disintegration of the village community.
- A protest against growing income disparities and the hegemony of urban culture that is perceived as decadent and corrupt and related to karaoke, discos, bars, pornography, prostitution and individualism. Nanjie therefore also represents a rejection of city dwellers discrimination against the peasants. In addition there exists the sense that private entrepreneurship benefits individual interests, but not the interests of the community.
- A "symbolic opposition"<sup>159</sup> to the dominance of the urban areas and their culture which is perceived as unbearable. Thus the predominant political line which is connected with the name of Deng Xiaoping and that favors the cities and urban dwellers and gives priority to individualistic tendencies at the expense of the sense of community is rejected.
- A reaction to the village leadership's authority crisis which resulted when the local cadres lost a large part of their control of the community and the village's resources during the implementation of the responsibility system in the countryside.
- The policy of creating the preconditions for upward mobility of its peasant residents with economic and educational opportunities without which the chance for personal qualification and social advancement is normally extremely difficult to achieve.
- In addition, Nanjie symbolizes resistance against state socialism that favours state-owned enterprises and the socialist cities at the expense of the villages. The peasants are not served by the network of social welfare benefits that supplies the employees in state-owned enterprises with social security, secure jobs, a regular income, and subsidized consumer goods. The peasants are not subsidized by the state. Therefore the development of Nanjie is as well an expression of rural protest against a system of economic exploitation in which cheap agrarian resources and products flow into the cities, but in which the rural population frequently cannot afford to buy the expensive goods manufactured from the resources. Nanjie takes an alternative route: It uses its resources for its own purpose and sells the final products to the urban and rural population.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> One may ask oneself what will happen to the "model", if the social welfare could not be uphold, e. g. due to an economic crisis.

<sup>159</sup> So James C. Scott, Protest and Profanation. Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition, Part I, in: Theory and Society, 4 (1977): p. 17.

<sup>160</sup> See: Thomas Heberer, The Power of the Fait Accompli: The Peasantry as the Motive Force of Change in the People's Republic of China, Occasional Papers No. 3, Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies, Trier University, Trier 1996.

All these measures in Nanjie are in the interest of its economic development: the rigid discipline and the system of sanctions in case of deviant behaviour; the Mao cult and the studying of Mao-Zedong-Thought in order to focus all the energies of the labor-force on the interests of the collective; the free supply with goods for daily needs in order to foster the idea of a community interest and to minimize that what socialist theory called contradiction between wage labor and capital.

The Mao cult is related to the tradition of local deities and chiliastic movements which were particularly popular in Henan. They always surfaced in times of erosion of traditional norms and relationships. An eschatological, egalitarian ideal was created, as counterpoint to the symptoms of decay and social disintegration of that period. At the same time the Mao cult presents an alternative to the present rampant religious revitalization movements in the province.

Finally, we come to the question of why this model is not more widely adopted. A popularization would as a rule require two conditions: First, such a success story is impossible without massive support from higher authorities. The resources for such support are limited and are to be employed in individual cases only, that is for particular "models" and their political instrumentalization. Second, the vast majority of peasants oppose collective economy due to negative experiences with that economy since the 50s. Instead, the peasants prefer family economy. However the large number of visitors who tour Nanjie every year, including 246,000 in 1995 and 180,000 from January-September in 1996, demonstrates that this model has captured some portion of the public's attention in, primarily, the rural areas. The basis for this public relations success lies in the very fact that it is not only economically successful but also technologically highly-developed and at the same time a model for a secure material life in the countryside, including social security and order. At the same time it seems to be a model for successfully maintaining a community spirit that is characterized by indigeneousness, collectivism, egalitarianism and intense Chineseness represented by Mao. It appears to prove that economic development must not necessarily lead to instability, inequality and social insecurity. Therefore it is not a pure economic model, but rather a moral one: for discipline, order, "clean" social morality and social cleanliness, egalitarianism, economic-technological modernization, a reaction to the impact of social change on the village community and a reaction to the authority crisis in the village.

## **7 Conclusions**

Nanjie demonstrates that China cannot be understood as an homogeneous entity. Locally there exist instead different models of development side by side. In Luohe there is not only the Nanjie model but also another model in which all economic activities are privatized. The simultaneous existence of two models that seem to be incompatible with each other is not only an indication of China's pluralization, but also indicates the existence of a spectrum of various development models with different objectives. This illustrates the fragmentation of politics ("fragmented authoritarianism") and is a vivid example of the realization of "one country, two systems" inside China.

Villages like Nanjie are not simply a continuation of the history of the Henan models, because

- there is no longer only a single model to be emulated by everybody. At present Nanjie is only one model among others in the province and must compete with different models. Thus Henan evolved from a Maoist-unitary model to a kind of model pluralism.

- In contrast to former models Nanjie acts in a market economic manner, while within it is organized in a collectiv-egalitarian way.
- Nanjie is built on prosperity rather than on poverty.
- The idea underlying Nanjie is a reaction to social changes as opposed to an initiation of social change.

The province no longer claims to be a general model, but promotes variety. The fragmented authoritarianism manifests itself in the fragmentation of models.

The case of Henan shows that provincial leaders are not merely agents of the Center. Provincial leaders frequently opposed policies from Peking. Pan Fusheng for example opposed the policy of socialization which was far too rapid. Wu Zhipu implemented a "Leftist" policy, however his spreading of false information and data had a larger impact on Mao and the central policy. After the Cultural Revolution the Henan leadership opposed for many years the reform policy adopted by the Center.

Central policy may be opposed on the provincial, the prefecture, the city/county or the village level. Nanjie's policies, for example, could be interpreted as opposing the policy of Deng Xiaoping on the village level. The example of Henan demonstrates that the relationship between the Center and the provinces is not only a hierarchical superordinate-subordinate one, but has to be understood as an interactive process, in which both sides endeavour to achieve their respective goals. The Center determines the framework, but the provinces react by putting pressure on the Center, in the event the policy of the latter is not appropriate for local conditions. Provinces possess power because they are in a intermediary position between the Center and the subprovincial administration units (prefectures, cities/counties, townships, villages). In order to govern the society, the Center must rely on the support of the provincial leadership and make compromises.<sup>161</sup> Finally, as shown above, an analysis of a province has to consider a combination of factors:

- the historical-cultural dimension that manifests itself in the collective consciousness of the population and in the local political culture;
- geographic-economic factors;
- the recent political history, including the political behaviour of provincial leaders and their response to pressure from above (Center) and below (subordinated administrative units, cadres, local population).

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<sup>161</sup> This is demonstrated by Linda Chelan Li, *Towards a Non-zero-sum Interactive Framework of Spatial Politics: the Case of Centre-Province in Contemporary China*, in: *Political Studies*, vol. XLV (1997): pp. 49-65.

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