***Revolutionary Guerilla Warfare* – Geoffrey Fairburne –** Ch 3 China

**Early 1920s**

USSR under Lenin – Comintern backed Sun Yat-Sen + Nationalists – targeted cities + coasts

* Fledgling Communist Party ignored....

Wanting to take advantage of anti- West sentiment + ripped up un= Tsarist trade treaties

Even by 1925, UK gunships sent 900 miles up the Yangtze to bomb a boycotting city – such behaviour had for 80 years created high levels of xenophobia amongst Chinese population

Sun committed to military solution without requisite organisation

USSR sent advisors and generals to aid this process

Chinese Communists invited to join Nationalists – only as individuals

Still continued to recruit students and organise strike action (Peking Hankow railway 1923)

Chiang Kai-Shek succeeded Sun – trained in USSR and receptive to their assistance

BUT increasingly alarmed with this influence – USSR advisors behaviour, CC success

**1927 – 34 – Shanghai Purge + Jiangxi Soviet – 1st Chinese Civil War**

White Terror that followed the 1st United Front important to CCs important because it helped push them towards revolutionary guerrilla warfare, even if it was as a last resort

* WT looked to have worked – destroyed CCs, warlords, China looked to be reunified

Nationalists brought in currency reform; launched irrigation schemes; claimed roads, postal routes, other lines of communication + staying away from the railways which were Western

* Land reform not attempted because of peasant-land ratio

Mao Tse-Tung had left Shanghai for Hunan – Autumn Harvest Rising – realised peasants should be the vanguard of the revolution (Report on the Peasant Movement of Hunan 1927)

* **“soon, 100s of millions of peasants will rise like a hurricane…”**
* not because of widespread peasant unrest, but mainly because of WT in cities

Established Red Army in mountains of Hunan – deserters, POWs, workers, peasants, mercs

* a force that needed direction – impt how they were treated - =ty, fair treatment..
* **“RA is like a furnace in which all captured soldiers are melted down + transformed”**
* Indoctrination however still key to RA organisation – 1 commissar for every 4 men

Mao saw they needed guerrilla trained small units alongside regular battalions with artillery

* by 1928, peasant unrest subsiding + RA had to be prepared to fight alone
* moreover, needed to ‘**agitate the masses, organize them, arm them…’**

1931 – RA 300 000+ and ruling area containing 50 mill people

* Nationalist Encirclement Campaigns begin end of 1930 –
* 3rd EC July-Sept 1931 v threatening BUT had to retreat after J invasion of Manchuria
* 5th EC October1933 saw G designed blockhouses + barbed wire vs RA guerrillas

**1934 – 36 – The Long March to Yenan**

Mao convinced of necessity of army, rural bases + lengthy struggle for eventual victory

* BUT by 1934, had to recognise need for retreat vs certain destruction
* what saved Mao’s aim was this survival, which allowed them to join the fight v Japan

CSK steadily ignored calls by Comms to unite v Japan post 31 – internal pacification a priority

* didn’t want to provoke the Japanese in Manchuria when Germany helping him
* convinced of LT threat posed by Comms to Nat rule of China
* convinced USA would eventually join the fight v Japan – didn’t need Comms

CSK appreciated Communist tactics – indoctrination, propaganda, guerrilla tactics…

MTT saw conflict also as a life and death struggle between revolution + counter revolution

BUT CSK’s appreciation of world politics at this time far more accurate than MMTs

CSK’s kidnap at end of 1936 allowed for respite for Comms from another EC planned for ‘37

* Sian Incident allowed for temporary truce with compromises from both sides
* Comms est a rep that they were a party willing to sacrifice their interests for China
* this certainly a key reason why so many young educated Chinese went to Yenan later

**1937 – 45 – Second Sino-Japanese War**

Nature of J occ of key importance in terms of creating mass support for Comms

* advanced far inland, seizing only key cities + comm lines
* sought out Nationalist armies, ignored the Comm guerrilla bands
* acted with great brutality – Rape of Nanking; uni attacks, mass slaughter of POWs

**“Communist Party was not only willing but eager to lead the Chinese *maquis*”**

* Chalmers A Johnson; *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power*

**“..the administrative bureaucracy collapsed. In the cities, it was replaced by the Japanese and puppets; but a political vacuum existed in the hinterland….into that temporary vacuum moved the former Red Army of China – with arms, with teachers, and with faith in the people”** – Edgar Snow; *Red Star over China,* pro-Mao political correspondent

Japanese continued to advance quickly + brutally:

* Nationalists, damaged initially, continued to retreat hoping for US involvement;
* Comms started to counter-attack, increase their support + become people’s reps

How? MTT had learnt from Jiangxi in order to fight vs the Japanese

* Jiangxi lost because of Comms **“fear of losing territory” (**J occ China = no terr to lose)
* Focus on lengthy war of attrition wrong – J Army too well armed
* Needed war of annihilation w/mobile concentration of forces 10/1
* Needed to avoid 2 extremes, both evident in Jiangxi, for this to happen
* Guerillarism on 1 hand; ‘every single gun must go to the Red Army’ on the other

Mao’s revolutionary guerrilla war formed as a result

* 8 rules (doors, mats, politeness, returning, replacing, honesty, payment, sanitation)
* **“people are the water,8th Route Army are the fish: without water the fish will die”**
* **“all problems concerning living conditions of the masses should be placed on our agenda - discussions held, decisions reached, actions taken, results checked”**

Japanese conduct still however key – hatred of occupiers fundamental for Mao’s tactics

Japanese continued to create that hatred all by themselves

* **“could have conquered N China by shooting a few hundred of their own officers”**
* **“in Hopei, speeches were made saying the Japanese were only fighting Communism…but at the end several hundred people were taken and tortured”**
* **“continual demands for money + supplies – 1st few weeks of Japanese occupation cost them 4 to 5x as much as a year’s taxes under Chinese rule”**
* Times newspaper, November 1943

Comms benefitted hugely from being singled out as J Army’s targets, as well as the est in March 1940 of a puppet regime called the Guomindang headed by a GMD traitor

* Comm-backed peasant guerrilla self-defence units motivated by nationalist apolitical propaganda vs puppet Peace Preservation Committees fought for control in c/side

Powerful RA built + Comm control over huge areas in c/side established through tactics

* **“the enemy has adopted a policy of living off the land…we must break this link”**
* “**we must isolate the enemy politically + blockade him economically + militarily”**
* Communist Party training manual, 2nd Sino-Japanese war

Communist cadres of RA came to possess quasi-religious faith in MTT + Communism

* **“aim was to shake, to arouse, the millions of rural China to their responsibilities in society, to awaken them to a belief in human rights…+ to coerce them to fight”**
* Edgar Snow “Red Star over China” (1937)

BUT important successes in gaining support not ideological – at least not to start with…

* Communist propaganda focused on creating nationalist fronts throughout c/side
* Targeted ex-GMD or non-Comm soldiers cut off by J advance + peasantry en masse
* Continuation of RA recruitment of deserters, mutineers established in Jiangxi pre LM
* Extended to orgs to women; teachers; traders; peasant youth.. – v Leninist concept
* Once organised + literate THEN exposed to only literary matter available – Party pub

Reflected Comm distrust of peasantry’s conservative nature – when entering new area

* always sought out “**handicraft workers, middle school students, small businessmen, + ‘self-respecting’ bureaucrats and landlords”** before peasantry (CA Johnson)

V easy for self-defence guerrilla units/traitor extermination squads to target puppet officials

* likewise, much easier for Comms + RA to smear + discredit puppet regime

One Third system in operation in base areas, liberated from Japanese

* Govt divided into 3 between Party, sympathisers + others (Comm control ensured)
* ‘New Democratic’ programme implemented – close coop of all anti-J elements

Some doubt in the West that ideology had any role in Communist success

* **“liberation from Japan came first, and any attempt to destroy any class by force would be to drive it into the hands of the enemy”** – Israel Epstein, war journalist
* **“the Chinese are hard**-**headed materialists with an agricultural society…and lack in their national character that strain of emotion or imagination which breeds Communistic fervour”** – Sir Erich Teichmann, British diplomat

Indeed, some of Mao’s comments at the time also suggest Comms themselves aware of this

* **“we are not striving for the social + political communism of Soviet Russia…we are doing something that Lincoln fought for in your civil war: the liberation of slaves shackled by feudalism” (MTT in interview with Harrison Forman 1944)**

Organisation of RA fundamental to political mobilisation of peasantry + organisation

* key role in creating armed propaganda which mobilised peasants into guerrillas

RA grew in size and stature throughout WW2 – **1938** 180 000; **1942** 400 000; **1945** 800 000

* **1939** - Traditional guerrilla harrying of communications affected J army
* **1940** – J responded by using blockhouse + barriers of GMD’s 5th EC of 1933
* **1940** – RA counterattacked with only great offensive – 400 000 troops; 3 months in duration – MTT learnt lessons from Jiangxi + ensured continued peasant support
* J reprisals (‘three-all’ pacification drives ‘kill all, burn all, destroy all’) just consol sup
* **“Political power grows out of the barrel of the gun. Our principle is that the Party commands the gun: the gun should never be allowed to control the Party…We can also rear cadres, build schools, culture and mass movements. Everything in Yenan has been built up by means of the gun” -** MTT 1945

Grain production certainly did grow out of the barrel of the gun for the Comms

* men, women, children org to cut down harvest time from 6 weeks to 10 days
* RA defended population as this happened – ‘Defend the harvests’ a key slogan
* Fed the Comms and denied the Japanese the supplies they needed
* **“Guerilla warfare means, first of all that the armed forces fight the enemy, + the people take the consequences. The people may be willing to do this out of abstract patriotism, or because the army is considerate, treats them well…helps them to live and produce in the zone of warfare their food supply, and protects them from reprisals”** – Edgar Snow

GMD however incr authoritarian by comparison and their support was declining sharply

* new Life movement devoted to regeneration of Confucianism
* rigidly disciplined Youth Corps est with party purging facilities + purges increasing
* extraordinary powers granted to CSK - National Congress decided on not voted in

GMD had moved from Leninist to an ec-mil-pol coalition of both reformers + reactionaries

* lacked ideology of the Comms + any form of self-correcting mechanism w/CSK RTP
* in economic difficulties with 80% taxes lost with J occ – printed money = inflation
* this meant in GMD areas, peasants were taxed far more than in Comm areas…
* **1945 – 50 – 2nd Chinese Civil War**

By end of WWII, RA counted 800 000 + ruled over area with 10 million Chinese

* fighting 50% J Army in China + 200 000 Chinese puppet troops
* still outnumbered 4 to I by GMD troops however…
* BUT in a geographically favourable position to replace retreating Japanese

Outcome of events in the hands of superpowers – USSR + USA

* USA continued to arm and back GMD
* USSR negotiated with GMD BUT allowed Comms access to J arms + Manchuria

GMD in response drove north, overextending supply lines using US transport, comms

* BUT not unquestioning – support for GMD subject to fierce debate back in USA
* GMD attempted negs w/Comms as a result – Comms exploited this situation
* MTT wrote ***On Coalition*** explaining exactly why he saw this as acceptable

GMD however faced increasing difficulties regardless of US debate over their backing

* Isolated in cities and garrisons with communications under attack
* Beset by economic diffs – **1946** 700% price increase; 50% loss of gold reserves
* Surrounded by mobilized peasantry, especially in the North
* Lacking any political alternative to the Communists – GMD troops themselves:
* **“…undisciplined, poorly trained, completely lacking in morale, and ready, from corporal on up to general, to change sides whenever circumstances beckoned.”**
* Lionel Max Chassin - *‘ The Communist Critique of China’* (1966)

These differences in ideology, troops, location, backing, morale eventually = Comm advance

* 1948 GMD lost 300 000 troops; 230 000 rifles (of which 100 000 USA issue)
* By now, guerrilla warfare had given way to large scale, mobile engagements
* 1949 Comms swept all before them; GMD collapsed
* **“by the end of the campaign, over half the Communist army consisted of deserters from the enemy…the Chinese army + people preferred the Communists”** – Chassin

Would this victory have been achieved without the Japanese invasion? Probably not…

* manner of pacification and brutality of J directly played into Comm hands
* J came close to breaking the Comms + c/side BUT didn’t…
* Those survivors turned to Comms…

This was because of how the Comms had deliberately modelled themselves

* **“For 18 years, the development + consolidation of our party have been undertaken in the midst of revolutionary wars + have been inseparable from guerrilla warfare. Without armed struggle, without guerrilla warfare, there would not have been such a Communist Party as we have today”** - MTT

As soon as power was clearly theirs, the long-promised land reform was implemented

* initially a redistribution of the land to the tillers
* 700 million *mou* (1/6 acre) redistributed amongst 300 million peasants

However, what came after cleared the way for unrivalled Party rule of the countryside

* People’s tribunals; public trials of l/lords; screaming mobs; estimated 1 mill deaths..
* People’s Army helped establish a regime that stripped the people of any decisions
* Comm RTP est by “**nationalism, guerrilla warfare, + agrarian revolution” (Schram)**
* Totalitarian yet with unprecedented levels of popular support as a result
* Incessant indoctrination + moulding of thinking can be seen as massively influential

So how important was guerrilla warfare in winning the war + establishing Mao’s regime?

* Use of guerrilla warfare one of the basis for the success of Communism in China
* Helped create ideology in an economically developing nation
* As a result, Maoism became the template for the dev world + not Russia…
* Helps explain the later split between the two Communist superpowers

**“Maoism is committed much less to a doctrine or ideology than to a method or a tactic”**

* Schapiro ‘Problems of Communism’ (1966)

**“The October Revolution began with armed uprisings in the cities and then spread to the countryside, while the Chinese revolution won nationwide victory through the encirclement of the cities from the countryside..”**

* Lin Biao, vice-President of CCP (1966)