

A Study on the Number of Resistance Bases during the War of Resistance against Japan

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Abstract

Regarding the exact number of resistance bases during the War of Resistance against Japan, the academic community has long held the view that there were nineteen resistance bases. This assessment does not apply a uniform set of criteria to define each resistance base, resulting in unclear boundaries and overlaps between them. Based on the criterion of whether meetings of the base-level government were held, the number of resistance bases should be seventeen, namely Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia, Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei, Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan, Shanxi-Suiyuan, Shandong, Southern Huai, Northern Huai, Wanjia, Jiangsu-Zhejiang, Central Jiangsu, Northern Jiangsu, Eastern Zhejiang, Hubei-Henan-Anhui-Hunan-Jiangxi, Western Henan, Dongjiang, Qiongya, and Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base. Recalculating the number of resistance bases not only helps clarify historical facts, but also provides a foundation for the development of theories related to the governments of these bases.

Keywords

Resistance Base, Quantitative Verification, Government Meeting

1. Introduction

In the study of resistance bases during the War of Resistance against Japan, Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Resistance Base holds significant value as a research case. This is because, although the geographical divisions within the Chinese communist movement led to notable differences, overall, the unity in the CPC's governance process has always been the dominant trend. This greatly highlights the exemplary significance of Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Resistance Base, which served as the headquarters of CPC Central Committee and the general rear base for the other resistance bases. However, while fully acknowledging the landmark and exemplary nature of

Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Resistance Base, it is necessary to clearly recognize a certain cognitive risk, namely eliding its wartime experience into the Yan'an narrative and closing off other periods for discussion (Mitter & Moore, 2011). This suggests that researchers' exploration of the CPC's shared experiences during the War cannot be based on the premise of obscuring the differences among the various resistance bases (Mackinnon et al., 2007). To arrive at a unified understanding based on divergent historical facts, researchers must accurately grasp the full picture of the resistance bases, and the first step in this process is to determine the exact number of such bases. While the question about the number of resistance bases may seem straightforward, it presents certain challenges in practice. The main challenge stems from the high degree of fluidity in these bases, which manifests as "little cohesion" and "little clear identify". It is evident that to determine the exact number of resistance bases, it is necessary to clearly define the concept's connotation and denotation. Generally speaking, resistance bases refer to the strategic anti-aggression bases established by CPC during the War of Resistance against Japan. Within these bases, CPC provided the leadership core and development strategy, the armed forces ensured security, and the government provided the institutional framework (Zheng, 2024). In other words, resistance bases can be viewed as a composite of three entities—the political party, the military, and the government—and the establishment of government institutions served as the explicit marker of the formal establishment of a resistance base (Wang, 2021). Based on the above definition, determining the number of resistance bases means applying a uniform standard—namely, whether a governing body has been established—to classify each base as having the same nature, thereby clarifying their number. In order to achieve the goal of quantitative verification, it is necessary to meticulously examine the developmental history of each resistance base, establish a comprehensive timeline of their establishment and evolution, and define the status of each base based on landmark events in the establishment of government (such as the convening of administrative and public representative assemblies at the base-level), thereby clarifying the exact number of resistance bases.

2. A Classic Discussion on the Number of Resistance Bases

Regarding the exact number of resistance bases, most current research—both in China and abroad—adopts the term "nineteen bases" (Donovan et al., 1976). This assessment is based on Mao Zedong's discussion in *On the United Government*: "The Chinese Liberated Areas, led by CPC, now have a population of 95.5 million. Their territory stretches from Inner Mongolia in the north to Hainan Island in the south, and in most areas where the enemy is present, the Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army or other people's armies are active. This vast Chinese Liberated Area comprises nineteen major liberated areas, covering most or parts of the following provinces: Liaoning, Rehe, Chahar, Suiyuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hu-

nan, Guangdong, and Fujian. Yan'an serves as the guiding center for all the liberated areas" (Mao, 1945). Zhu De also confirmed this figure in his *Memorandum from Zhu De, Commander-in-Chief of the Anti-Japanese Forces in China's Liberated Areas, to the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union*: "As the War of Resistance against Japan draws to a victorious conclusion, we ask you to take note of the following facts regarding the current situation on the Chinese battlefield: in the vast occupied territories seized by the enemy and its puppet forces-and abandoned by the Kuomintang government-we have, after eight years of arduous struggle, recaptured nearly one million square kilometers of land, liberated more than 100 million people, and organized more than one million regular troops and over 2.2 million militia members. In Liaoning, Rehe, Chahar, Suiyuan, Hebei, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Henan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong, we have established nineteen large liberated areas. With the exception of a few regions, these areas have largely encircled the towns, major transportation routes, and coastal ports that have been occupied by the enemy and their puppet forces since the Lugou Bridge Incident in 1937" (Zhu, 1945).

Mao Zedong and Zhu De specified the exact number of resistance bases but did not list them individually; therefore, the specific locations of the nineteen bases remain to be verified by scholars in future research. The definition provided in the book *Strategic Bases on the Enemy-Occupied Front: A Chronicle of the Anti-Japanese Democratic Base Areas Led by CPC*, published by the CPC History Press in 2015, essentially represents the mainstream view in the academic community today, namely that the nineteen resistance bases should be Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia, Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei, Hebei-Rehe-Liaoning, Shanxi-Suiyuan, Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan, Hebei-Shan-Henan, Shandong, Southern Huai, Northern Huai, Wanjia, Su-Zhe (Southern Jiangsu and Western Zhejiang), Central Jiangsu, Northern Jiangsu, Eastern Zhejiang, Western Zhejiang, Hubei-Henan-Anhui, Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi, Henan (Western Henan), Dongjiang, and Qiongya Resistance Base (Shi, 2015).

The classic analyses by Mao Zedong and Zhu De are based on the overall development trends of the various resistance bases under the leadership of CPC before and after the victory in the War of Resistance, and they demonstrate a broad perspective and historical accuracy. However, given the academic requirement for homogeneity in case studies, the practice of treating the aforementioned nineteen resistance bases as equivalent leaves room for further refinement, primarily because complex relationships-such as subordination, mergers and evolution-exist among some of these bases. Han and Cao (2006) have pointed out that there are three debatable aspects regarding the definition of the nineteen resistance bases:

- 1) Hebei-Rehe-Liaoning Resistance Base was a third-tier administrative unit of Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Resistance Base. At the end of the War of Resistance, the military, Party, and government systems of Hebei-Rehe-Liaoning Resistance Base remained under the jurisdiction of Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Military District, Shanxi-

Chahar-Hebei Branch Bureau, and Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region Administrative Committee respectively. Therefore, Hebei-Rehe-Liaoning Resistance should be regarded as part of Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Resistance Base and should not be included among the nineteen bases.

2) Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Resistance Base consists of three parts: Taihang Region, Taiyue Region and Hebei-Shandong-Henan Region; therefore, it is inaccurate to list Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan and Hebei-Shandong-Henan Resistance Base as equivalent terms.

3) The process of establishing Hubei-Henan-Anhui Resistance Base began in 1941 with the formation of Henan-Anhui Border Region Administrative Office. In 1944, Wang Zhen and Wang Shoudao led the Southward Detachment to join forces with the troops of Hubei-Henan-Anhui Border Region, expanding the scale of the region's Party, government, and military organizations. And the Party Committee, Administrative Office, and Military District of Hubei-Henan-Anhui Border Region were consequently renamed the Party Committee, Administrative Office, and Military District of Hubei-Henan-Anhui-Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region. Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Region was established by the Southward Detachment in conjunction with the 40th Regiment of the 5th Division of the New Fourth Army. In May 1945, with the approval of the Central Committee, the Provisional Party Committee, Administrative Office, and Military District of Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Region were established. That same month, the Party Committee was renamed the South Hubei Regional Party Committee, the Military District was renamed the Southern Hubei Military Sub-district, and the Administrative Office was renamed the Seventh Public Office. All were placed under the jurisdiction of Hubei-Henan-Anhui-Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region. Therefore, Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Resistance Base was part of Hubei-Henan-Anhui-Hunan-Jiangxi Resistance Base, and it is inappropriate to list the two as equals.

Based on this, Han and Cao have concluded that the exact number of resistance bases is sixteen, namely Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia, Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei, Shanxi-Suiyuan, Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan, Shandong, Jiangsu-Zhejiang (Southern Jiangsu and Western Zhejiang), Eastern Zhejiang, Central Jiangsu, Northern Jiangsu, Northern Huai, Southern Huai, Wanjiang, Henan (Western Henan), Hubei-Henan-Anhui-Hunan-Jiangxi, Dongjiang, and Qiongya Resistance Base. However, it should be noted that the above definition of the number of resistance bases is primarily based on the relationships among them, excluding overlaps or discrepancies in hierarchical levels. This definition is mainly an adjustment and refinement of existing accounts rather than a new construction; therefore, the exact number of resistance bases still needs to be further clarified under a unified standard.

3. Seventeen Resistance Bases Defined by Landmark Events in the Establishment of Government

In research on the resistance bases, confirming the exact number of such bases

requires a unified set of criteria. Given that the establishment of government constituted the core political infrastructure of the resistance bases and played a fundamental role in their overall operation, using landmark events related to the establishment of government—such as the convening of popular assemblies and administrative meetings at the base-level, and the formation of a government—as criteria for defining the creation and existence of a resistance base is a viable approach.

The reason why governmental institutions serve as the criterion for determining whether a resistance base has been formally established is that these bases functioned as the strategic foundation for CPC's protracted struggle (Sang, 2025). As mentioned earlier, the three most important factors constituting a resistance base are the political party, military, and government. Among these, CPC, as a political party, serves as the foundation and holds decisive significance for both the politics of the War and the modern and contemporary politics of China as a whole. Meanwhile, the military is the primary force in establishing the bases (Guo, 2022a); however, in terms of providing strategic support and sustaining the bases' existence, the government holds irreplaceable value. Only with a government in place can more in-depth and refined work—particularly in areas such as finance—be carried out, and only then can the functions of the bases be fully realized and developed (Wei, 2023; Li, 2023). This does not imply that the government holds a higher status than the political party or military; rather, it indicates that within the context of the resistance bases, the political party, military, and government are in a state of continuous interaction, and this interaction ultimately leads to the establishment and refinement of government institutions. In this sense, the government serves as the hallmark of formal establishment and refinement of resistance bases.

Having confirmed that the formation of a government serves as the hallmark for determining the formal establishment of a resistance base, we must further identify the specific indicators used to confirm the establishment of such a government. This paper proposes using landmark events related to the establishment of government as specific indicators, but three points require clarification: First, due to the fragmentation caused by the war environment, the specific forms of landmark events in various bases are different. They may have taken the form of popular assemblies based on full elections, representative assemblies based on certain regions, or even government meetings based on top-level design; however, they all signify the formal establishment of government and thus possess internal homogeneity; Second, the various meetings constituting these landmark events all operate at the same hierarchical level, ensuring consistency among the bases and allowing them to be treated as equals, in other words, the mutual independence of the various bases was based precisely on the fact that they are on the same level; Third, given that mobility was the norm for the vast majority of resistance bases—with fluctuations in their jurisdictions and states of existence, and some (such as Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base) even experiencing complete loss or trans-

formation—the mere existence of a landmark event marking the establishment of government is sufficient to demonstrate the establishment and existence of that base. This paper regards such cases as possessing equal case value.

Based on the criterion mentioned above, the number of resistance bases should be seventeen:

- Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Resistance Base: In September 1937, the Border Region Government was established (this government evolved from the Northwest Office of the Central Government of Chinese Soviet Republic, which had been established in November 1935); from January to February 1939, the First Session of the Border Region Council was convened; in November 1941, the First Session of the Second Border Region Council was convened; in December 1944, the Second Session of the Second Border Region Council was convened; in April 1946, the Third Session of the Border Region Council was convened (*Compilation Leading Group for the Five Provinces and Regions in Northwest China, & Central Archives, 1990*).
- Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Resistance Base: In September 1937, the 115th Division of the Eighth Route Army entered the Wutai Mountain region in northeastern Shanxi and began establishing a resistance base; in November 1937, Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Military District and Provincial Party Committee were formally established, and the base area took initial shape; in January 1938, the Border Region Military, Political and Civil Representatives' Congress was convened, and the Border Region Provisional Administrative Committee (i.e., the Border Region Government) was elected; in January 1943, the First Border Region Consultative Assembly was convened, and a new Border Region Administrative Committee was elected (*Editorial and Review Committee for the Historical Materials Series on the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Resistance Base, & Central Archives, 1988*).
- Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Resistance Base: In October 1937, the Eighth Route Army's 129th Division entered southeastern Shanxi and began establishing resistance base; in August 1940, Taihang-Taiyue-Southern Hebei Joint Administrative Office was established; in July 1941, the First Session of the Border Region Provisional Consultative Assembly was convened; in September 1941, the Border Region Government was established; in September 1942, the Taihang-Taiyue District session of the Second Plenary Session of the Border Region Provisional Consultative Assembly was held. The Second Plenary Session was conducted on a district-by-district basis: while the Taihang and Taiyue Districts held a joint session in the Taihang District, the members from Southern Hebei and Hebei-Shandong-Henan Districts convened separately in their respective locations; between March and April 1945, the First Session of the Border Region Council was convened, again in a regional format, with meetings held separately in Taihang, Taiyue, and Hebei-Shandong-Henan regions (*Shanxi University Research Group on the History of Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Border Region, 1980*).

- Shanxi-Suiyuan Resistance Base: On January 15, 1940, the Northwestern Shanxi Military and Civilian Representatives' Congress was convened. The meeting resolved to establish an anti-Japanese democratic government and elected a new administrative leadership. Xu Fan Ting, a Kuomintang elder and leader of the Shanxi New Army, was unanimously elected the Director of the Northwestern Shanxi Administrative Office (i.e., the Administrative Office of the Second Guerrilla Zone of Shanxi Province), with Niu Yinguan serving as Deputy Director. The new government retained the existing administrative divisions; on January 24, 1940, the first administrative meeting of the Northwestern Shanxi Administrative Office was held, formally announcing the establishment of the Administrative Office of the Second Guerrilla Zone of Shanxi Province. The Northwestern Shanxi Joint Military, Political and Civilian Committee was also established on the same day; in August 1942, the Administrative Office of the Second Guerrilla Zone of Shanxi Province was renamed the Northwestern Shanxi Administrative Office; in October 1942, the Northwestern Shanxi (Shanxi-Suiyuan Border Region) Provisional Consultative Assembly was convened; in November 1943, the Northwestern Shanxi Administrative Office was renamed the Shanxi-Suiyuan Border Region Administrative Office; in February 1945, Shanxi-Suiyuan Border Region began holding village elections and decided to convene the Border Region Consultative Assembly as well as county-level consultative assemblies; in early 1946, the counties of Xing, Jingle, Qingyuan, Baode, Hequ, Lin, Wuzhai, and Gou successively convened their respective consultative assemblies; however, the border region-level consultative assembly was never convened on schedule due to the Liberation War and other factors (*Office for the Collection of Party History Materials from Lüliang Prefectural Committee of CPC, 1983*).
- Shandong Resistance Base: From July to August 1940, the Provisional Consultative Assembly of the Border Region was convened and elected the Shandong Provincial Wartime Work Implementation Committee; in August 1943, the Second Session of the First Term of the Provisional Consultative Assembly was held, and the Wartime Work Implementation Committee was renamed the Wartime Administrative Committee; in August 1945, the 20th Joint Meeting of the Shandong Provincial Provisional Consultative Assembly and the Wartime Administrative Committee passed a resolution to rename the Wartime Administrative Committee as the Shandong Provincial Government (*Committee for the Collection and Research of Party History Materials from Shandong Provincial Committee of CPC, 1989*).
- Southern Huai Resistance Base: In April 1940, the Office of the Joint Defense Committee against the Enemy for the counties east of the Jinpu Railway was established; in August 1940, the Office of the Joint Defense Committee against the Enemy for the counties west of the Jinpu Railway was established; in January 1941, the First Provisional Consultative Assembly for the counties east of the Jinpu Railway was convened; in September of the same year, the First Pro-

visional Consultative Assembly for the counties west of the Jinpu Railway was convened; from December 1941 to January 1942, the Second Session of the Consultative Assembly for the counties east of the Jinpu Railway was held; in January 1942, the Office of the Anti-Enemy Joint Defense Committee for the counties east of the Jinpu Railway was renamed the Southern Huai-Jiangsu-Anhui Border Region Administrative Office; in May 1942, the Second Session of the First Provisional Consultative Assembly for the counties west of the Jinpu Railway was convened; in February 1943, the Southern Huai-Jiangsu-Anhui Border Region Administrative Office was established. The former Jinpu East Jiangsu-Anhui Border Region Administrative Office and the Joint Defense Offices of the counties in the Jinpu West region were dissolved and reorganized into the Jinpu East and Jinpu West Commissioner's Offices, respectively, which were placed under the leadership of the newly established Southern Huai-Jiangsu-Anhui Border Region Administrative Office (*Editorial and Review Committee for Southern Huai Resistance Base, 1987*).

- Northern Huai Resistance Base: In March 1940, the First Congress of Representatives from All Sectors of Northeastern Anhui was convened, announcing the establishment of the Northeastern Anhui Anti-Japanese Democratic Government, which retained the name "Administrative Inspectorate of Anhui's Sixth District"; in March 1941, the Northeastern Anhui Consultative Assembly was established, and in August it was renamed the Northern Huai-Jiangsu-Anhui Border Region Consultative Assembly; in September 1941, the Northern Huai Administrative Office was established, and the Administrative Inspectorate of Anhui's Sixth District was abolished; in October 1942, the Second Session of the Border Region Council of Representatives was convened (*Party History Office of Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu-Shandong Border Region, & Anhui Provincial Archives, 1985*).
- Wanjiang Resistance Base: In July 1942, the Central Anhui Consultative Assembly was convened, and the Central Anhui Administrative Office was established; in July 1943, the first session of the Central Anhui Consultative Assembly was convened; in September 1944, the second session of the Central Anhui Consultative Assembly was convened; in January 1945, Central Anhui Resistance Base was renamed Wanjiang Resistance Base, the Central Anhui Administrative Office was renamed the Wanjiang Administrative Office, and the Central Anhui Consultative Assembly was renamed the Wanjiang Consultative Assembly (*Editorial Board of Wanjiang Resistance Base, 1990*).
- Jiangsu-Zhejiang (Southern Jiangsu and Western Zhejiang) Resistance Base: In April 1941, the Jiangnan Administrative Committee was established; in November 1941, the Fifth and Sixth Special Administrative Offices of Jiangnan were merged to form the Special Administrative Inspectorate of Southern Jiangsu; in March 1943, a joint conference of county magistrates from Southern Jiangsu was convened, at which the Southern Jiangsu Administrative Committee and the Southern Jiangsu Administrative Office were elected, and the

former Special Administrative Inspectorate of Southern Jiangsu was dissolved (Committee for the Collection and Research of Party History Materials from Zhejiang Provincial Committee of CPC, & Zhejiang Provincial Archives, 1987).

- Central Jiangsu Resistance Base: In November 1940, the Provisional Political Consultative Conference of Northern Jiangsu was convened, and the Provisional Administrative Committee of Northern Jiangsu was established; in March 1941, the Administrative Committee of Northern Jiangsu was formally established; in May 1942, the Administrative Committee of Northern Jiangsu was reorganized into the Administrative Office of Central Jiangsu; in August 1945, the People's Congress of Central Jiangsu was convened, and the Administrative Committee of Central Jiangsu was elected (Party History Work Committee from Jiangsu Provincial Committee of CPC, & Jiangsu Provincial Archives, 1989a).
- Northern Jiangsu Resistance Base: In September 1940, the Huaihai District Special Commissioner's Office was established; in December of the same year, the Huaihai District Provisional Consultative Assembly was established; in September 1941, the Yanfu District Administrative Office was established; in March 1942, the Huaihai District Administrative Office was established; in May 1942, the Second Huaihai District Consultative Assembly was convened; in October 1942, the First Provisional Assembly of the Yanfu Administrative District was convened; in November 1942, the Northern Jiangsu Administrative Region (comprising the Huaihai and Yanfu Administrative Offices) was established; in July 1945, the Provisional Committee of the Northern Jiangsu Administrative Region was established; in August 1945, the Northern Jiangsu People's Representatives Conference was convened (Party History Work Committee from Jiangsu Provincial Committee of CPC, & Jiangsu Provincial Archives, 1989b).
- Eastern Zhejiang Resistance Base: In August 1942, the Sanbei General Office was established; in January 1944, the Eastern Zhejiang Provisional Administrative Committee Behind Enemy Lines was established; in January 1945, the Eastern Zhejiang Provisional People's Representatives Conference of All Sectors Behind Enemy Lines was convened, formally electing the Eastern Zhejiang Administrative Committee and the Eastern Zhejiang Consultative Assembly (Party History Work Committee from Jiangsu Provincial Committee of CPC, & Jiangsu Provincial Archives, 1987).
- Hubei-Henan-Anhui-Hunan-Jiangxi Resistance Base: In March 1940, the Border Region Constitutional Government Promotion Association was established; in September 1940, the First Military and Political Congress of the Border Region was convened, at which the Hubei-Henan Border Region Joint Military and Political Office was established as a transitional governing body; in April 1941, the Second Military and Political Congress of the Border Region was convened, resulting in the establishment of the Hubei-Henan Border Region Administrative Office; in March 1942, the First Anti-Japanese People's Congress

of the Border Region was convened (Editorial Department for the Revolutionary History of Hubei-Henan Border Region, 1984).

- Western Henan Resistance Base: No people's congresses or administrative meetings were held at the border region-level, nor was a border region-level government established; within the base area, a total of six special administrative offices, twenty-eight county governments and two county-level offices were established (Party History Work Committee from Henan Provincial Committee of CPC, 1988).
- Dongjiang Resistance Base: No border region-level public assembly or administrative conference was convened, nor was a border region-level government established; however, a total of six county-level governments were established within the base area, including the Dongbao Administrative Supervision Office and the Ludong Administrative Committee (Tian, 1995).
- Qiongya Resistance Base: In November 1941, the People's Congress of the Northeastern Qiongya District was convened, at which the Northeastern Qiongya District Anti-Japanese Democratic Government was established; in 1945, county-level governments were established in all fourteen counties on the island, with the exception of Baoting and Ledong (Li, 2008).
- Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base: In November 1939, the Congress of Representatives from All Sectors of Henan, Anhui, and Jiangsu was convened. At the congress, the Border Region Consultative Assembly and the Supreme Governing Body-the Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Joint Defense Committee-were established (Committee for the Collection and Compilation of Historical Materials from Henan Provincial Committee of CPC, 1985).

4. Three Points regarding the Seventeen Resistance Bases

4.1. The Relationship between Southern Jiangsu and Western Zhejiang Resistance Base (The Evolution of Jiangsu-Zhejiang Resistance Base)

Around May 1945, the Western Zhejiang District Party Committee, the Western Zhejiang Administrative Office, and the Western Zhejiang Military Sub-district were established, marking the formation of Western Zhejiang Resistance Base. However, whether Western Zhejiang Resistance Base can be considered on par with other bases requires further analysis, primarily because its establishment and development were closely intertwined with the overall development of Southern Jiangsu Resistance Base. Specifically, in military terms, the establishment of anti-Japanese strongholds in Western Zhejiang region stemmed from the New Fourth Army's southward advance into the border areas of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui in late 1943. The New Fourth Army's 16th Brigade, tasked with opening up Western Zhejiang, set out from Southern Jiangsu Resistance Base and advanced toward the border regions of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui; thus, the opening up of Western Zhejiang region can be regarded as the result of the activities of armed forces in Southern Jiangsu region. Furthermore, the West Zhejiang Military Sub-district

was subordinate to the Jiangsu-Zhejiang Military District, established in January 1945. The Jiangsu-Zhejiang Military District was responsible for the unified leadership of military operations in Southern Jiangsu, Western Zhejiang, Eastern Zhejiang, and Southern Anhui. This indicates that Western Zhejiang Resistance Base and Southern Jiangsu Resistance Base were under the same military command system.

With regard to the Party organizations, the establishment of the Western Zhejiang Regional Party Committee stemmed from the Central China Bureau's reorganization of the party organizations in Jiangsu-Zhejiang-Anhui region in 1945. The core of this reorganization was the establishment of separate regional Party committees in Southern Jiangsu and Western Zhejiang: the former Jiangsu-Anhui Regional Party Committee was renamed the Southern Jiangsu Regional Party Committee, and the Western Zhejiang Regional Party Committee was newly established in Western Zhejiang. The Jiangsu-Anhui Regional Party Committee was established in 1939. In April 1941, it merged with the Southern Jiangsu Eastern Route Special Committee to form the Jiangnan District Committee, which was renamed the Jiangsu-Anhui District Committee in September of the same year. The Jiangsu-Anhui District Committee was responsible for leading the Party organizations in Jiangsu-Zhejiang-Anhui region, which naturally included those in Western Zhejiang. Based on this, it can be inferred that the Western Zhejiang Regional Party Committee was originally part of the Jiangsu-Anhui District Committee.

Given the close ties between Western Zhejiang Resistance Base and Southern Jiangsu Resistance Base, as well as the short duration of the former's existence (in September 1945, the Party, government and military personnel in Western Zhejiang were ordered to withdraw northward), Western Zhejiang Resistance Base was, to a very large extent, de facto part of Southern Jiangsu Resistance Base (or Jiangsu-Zhejiang Resistance Base) and did not constitute a relatively independent entity in terms of the Party, government, and military affairs that could be considered on par with other bases.

4.2. The Value of Case Studies from Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base

In the fall of 1938, the New Fourth Army Guerrilla Detachment led by Peng Xuefeng began establishing Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base. By the winter of 1939, five county governments had been established within the area controlled by the New Fourth Army Guerrilla Detachment. In November, a congress of representatives from all sectors of Henan, Anhui, and Jiangsu was convened, leading to the formation of the Border Region Consultative Assembly and the Supreme Governing Body—the Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Joint Defense Committee. The base had begun to take shape. By July 1940, a total of five county governments, the Upper Huai River Region Office and five county offices had been established within Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base. The base had reached its peak.

In late 1940, the situation in the base began to deteriorate due to a mutiny by the former local armed forces. Following the “South Anhui Incident” in 1941, the base areas came under direct attack by anti-Communist forces. Consequently, on April 25, 1941, the Central China Bureau and the New Fourth Army Headquarters issued instructions requiring the 4th Division (the troops then stationed in Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base had been reorganized into the New Fourth Army’s 4th Division) to leave a portion of its main force and local armed units behind to hold the line, while the remainder of the main force was to be redeployed to northeastern Anhui region. The main force of the 4th Division withdrew to northeastern Anhui in May; by this point, Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base had been entirely lost, with the exception of parts of Sui, Qi, Tai, and Xiao counties—where the Party organizations and armed forces continued to carry out open activities—and counties such as Yongcheng, where the Party organizations had gone underground.

In late July 1944, higher authorities issued an order to restore Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base. On August 15, Peng Xuefeng led the main force of the 4th Division westward. After several battles, they had largely restored Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base by mid-November and established the Second Northern Huai Special Commissioner’s Office and eight county governments in the reclaimed areas. At that time, the territories that had originally constituted Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base had become secondary units subordinate to Northern Huai Resistance Base, and the base no longer held the status it had previously enjoyed as an equal among other resistance bases (Guo, 2022b).

The following conclusions can be drawn from the establishment, development, suspension, and restoration of Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base: although it became a secondary administrative unit subordinate to other bases after its restoration in 1944, from the fall of 1938 to May 1941, Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base, as an independent administrative unit on par with other bases, underwent a complete process of political development. It therefore holds significant case study value. Moreover, because Henan-Anhui-Jiangsu Resistance Base experienced a complete “life cycle” of political development—a characteristic not found in other bases—it can provide particularly valuable insights for relevant research.

4.3. The Representativeness of Dongjiang, Qiongya, and Western Henan Resistance Base

Compared with other resistance bases, the scale of government establishment in Dongjiang, Qiongya and Western Henan resistance base was relatively limited; however, the reasons why their government-building activities were not sufficiently in-depth differed. The reason Dongjiang and Qiongya resistance base failed to establish relatively comprehensive and well-developed governmental systems was primarily because both were located far from CPC’s centers of activity, faced extremely harsh external conditions, and hovered on the brink of survival for extended periods, resulting in limited progress in government-building efforts.

The isolated location of Dongjiang and Qiongya resistance base also gave them a rather unique character. Murray (2017) has described this uniqueness, noting that because they had lost contact with the Central Committee located in northern China, the CPC organizations on Hainan Island could only broadly follow the united front strategy of cooperating with Kuomintang; however, in practice, the behavior of local CPC organizations was characterized by pragmatism, improvisation, and acting on their own initiative.

This rights-based approach was also reflected in the efforts to build governments in the bases, which makes Qiongya and Dongjiang Resistance Base particularly representative case studies. Rather than posing a challenge to CPC's mainstream model of state-building, they provide a valuable supplement to the construction of a comprehensive theoretical framework for the Party's state-building efforts, as both demonstrate the possible forms that base governments could take when operating under extreme conditions, thereby completing the full picture of CPC's government-building activities during the War of Resistance.

Unlike Dongjiang and Qiongya Resistance Base, which were characterized by harsh external conditions, the main reason for the limited depth of government-building efforts in Western Henan Resistance Base was its relatively short duration (about one year) and the fact that military operations dominated its development process (Geng, 2025). This resulted in Western Henan Resistance Base clearly demonstrating the dominant influence of military operations (or the military) on government-building, making it a case of unique historical significance.

In summary, while Dongjiang, Qiongya and Western Henan Resistance Base are not considered classic cases in the study of Resistance Base, they all demonstrate classic characteristics in specific aspects of CPC's activities aimed at establishing a government. This not only helps to outline the theoretical panorama of the Resistance Base, but also provides a foundation for further theoretical development.

5. Conclusion

In short, the definition of the seventeen resistance bases is based on a single standard of measurement and provides an overall assessment for the development of the resistance bases, which holds significant value for related research. On the one hand, clarifying the total number provides a foundational perspective and resources for analyzing the interactions and evolutionary relationships among the various resistance bases, establishing a typology of the bases, and conducting comparative studies among them; on the other hand, the approach of determining the number of resistance bases through the lens of state-building activities also reveals the significant value of the state to these bases, suggesting research themes such as exploring the political implications of the bases from the perspective of the state and analyzing the logical interactions among actors within the bases—including the state, political party, and military. For research on the resistance bases, clarifying their number not only facilitates an accurate historical reconstruction, but

also provides a fundamental framework and a solid starting point for theoretical development.

Finally, it should be noted that the definition of the resistance bases' number is neither absolute nor fixed; rather, it depends on different criteria, which in turn are based on different perspectives and yield different theoretical insights. While classic estimates of the resistance bases' number are grounded in a meticulous grasp of historical facts and the state of resistance—focusing on the reconstruction of historical events and assessments of the situation—the figure of seventeen bases proposed in this paper leans more toward the construction of a political theory. Identifying the unified patterns of state formation and evolution amid the fluid nature of the resistance bases not only provides a comprehensive understanding of these bases, but also signifies a return to the roots, delving deeply into the exploration of modern and contemporary Chinese politics.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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