

“Contributing to the Nation”: A Study on the Participation of Three Chinese Occupational Groups During the Second Sino-Japanese War

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Abstract: Nowadays, when we are reviewing the success reasons of the Second Sino-Japanese War, we are naturally focused on the strategic enemy-occupied areas' guerrilla warfare or the bloodiest frontline. Because most people think warfare is always warfare, we should focus on it rather than other parts. However, the frontline battlefield must be a part of it, and the warfare is essentially the rivalry of two sides' comprehensive strengths. In this case, we had to think about the contribution of common people during the war. Through the research, it is shown that there has been no massive research on the non-governmental organisation's contribution during the war. In this case, this paper would use the historiography of micro history to analyse the contribution of non-governmental organizations which detailed to entrepreneurs, educated people, and the monk class in Chongqing. And the result shows their contribution are more voluntary, which came from their patriotism, than their forced engagement. They were actively to react with the warfare and tried their best to contribute to the warfare.

Keywords: Second Sino-Japanese War, Chongqing, Kuomintang(KMT) period, non-governmental organisation

1. Introduction

In the history of human beings, World War II was the first total war (in terms of total mobilisation of manpower and resources for war), which brought all occupational groups to engage in the war. In other words, people whose occupations, which were normally believed to be distanced from wars before, were involved in the anti-invasion war willingly. In fact, the industry didn't have a predominant influence in that era; the education field was not mature after imitating the westerners; and the religious groups were always considered separate from the secular world. However, it's surprising that they all had a significant contribution during the second Sino-Japanese War.

The Second Sino-Japanese War was a crucial event in modern world history. This war continued for more than eight years, from 1937 to 1945. It brought terrible losses toward both sides. The number of Chinese people who were killed or injured reached more than 35,000,000 [1]. The Japanese Empire also suffered more than 3,000,000 casualties during the eight years. In this research, it would try to show out the contribution of non-governmental organisations and prove the necessary mutual assistance between the front-line and these logistic help during the Second Sino-Japanese War,

through the introduction and analysis of three different occupations: Entrepreneur, Educated Class, and the monk organisations.

2. Contributions of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Second Sino-Japanese War

2.1. Entrepreneurs

Before 1937, the difference in strength between China and Japan was absolutely tremendous. The total industrial output value in Japan was 6 billion, and there were only 1.36 billion in China, which had 5 times more people than Japan [2]. The most important and influential factor was their weapon production: Japan could produce 744 artilleries, 330 tanks, 9500 cars, and 1580 planes per year [3]. However, China lacked the capacity to produce these vital weapons at all. It must cause a significant disparity between their military force. Moreover, most of the Chinese industrial centers were Chinese coastal cities, which would pose a significant threat as long as the war with Japan broke out. It must be a vital hidden problem for the Chinese industry.

The geographical distribution of Chinese factories was uneven before the Sino-Japanese War. There were 3,849 registered factories at that time, and more than 3,300 factories were located in coastal cities [4]. To protect Chinese factory production, the government formed the “general mobilisation commission of the Nationalist Party” on Jul 22nd, 1937. One of the main purposes of forming a commission was to help private enterprises continue to operate in southwestern China. However, there was a severe contradiction about whether civilian-run enterprises should move into inland China.

On the issue of relocation, the Nationalist government took a coercive attitude. The commission gave orders that if factories didn't move before a specific date, their factories would be demolished by the Chinese army. It seems like the “scorched earth tactics” in the Sino-Japanese War, which means they would not leave anything for the invaders. At the same time, the government offered subsidies for the faculties that decided to move into Southwest China. The government has provided more than 1 million grants for private enterprises and 1.95 million yuan in low-interest loans for private enterprises [4]. Furthermore, the Sichuan government promised to undertake 79% of the material insurance premiums of factories that relocated to Sichuan Province [5].

From Aug 22nd, 1937, the first wave of relocation began with many difficulties, such as the airstrike of the Japanese army and the transpiration along with the Yangtze River. Their destination was initially Wuhan; however, with the strong forces of the Japanese army pushing fast along the Yangtze River, many entrepreneurs decided to move further into Sichuan Province through the waterway, especially the temporary capital of the Nationalist Party government: Chongqing. During the process of relocation, they had to endure a Japanese airstrike. Sometimes, they put massive tree branches, hay and armor plates to camouflage and protect their types of equipment and cargo. The relocation was also hindered by the lack of ships. In that serious circumstance, the government declared 80% of ships would be used for military, 17% for the government departments, and only 3% for a civil company [6]. In that case, many companies found it difficult to find enough ships to carry their pieces of equipment, so they had to discard many heavy machines. One of another factor about the difficulty of relocation was the coordination between government and civil companies. To avoiding Japanese spy, the government had to inspect ships so that the efficiency of relocation was low. Until Dec 6th, 1944, there were 95 relocating faculties and equipment that were more than 7873 tons. Because of several reasons, there were only 201 tons of equipment relocated to the destinations, and the loss is extremely heavy.

After factories were relocated to inland cities, they continued to produce for the war. It was no doubt that they contributed a vital force to the Sino-Japanese War. Shanghai Longzhang Paper Mill was the biggest paper mill in the country. After it relocated to the Chongqing, a Wartime capital of

the Nationalist Party, it approximately produced three or four tons of newspapers per day. In November 1941, the central bank invested in the purchase of the machine, renamed the Central Paper Mill, with a capital of 20 million yuan, a monthly output of 129 tons, and more than 200 employees, becoming the largest machine paper mill in the rear [5].

There was a grievous conflict between the government and civil companies. In fact, it was hard to reopen the factory after the relocation, not to mention worked it efficiently. In that severe atmosphere, factory managers had to borrow funding from the government. As the remuneration, the government was able to employ government-man to control these civil companies, seized the stocks and became the company's proprietor finally.

In conclusion, the factory's relocation should be considered an expression of patriotism. Even though there were some conflicts with the government, factories were still a strong force during the Sino-Japanese War. Their feat was indelible in modern Chinese history.

2.2. Educated Class

Higher education is a crucial component in Chinese society, which supplied numerous great people in the first half of the 20th century. These people won lots of honors in their professional fields and made a huge contribution during the second Sino-Japanese War. After the Qing Dynasty ended the imperial examination in 1905, the Chinese government officially started to imitate the Western educational model, including the founding of western-style universities [7]. Until the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out, there were 108 universities around the country and only 41,922 registered college students in total, rather than China having a total population of approximately 450 million people [5]. More than 90 universities continually relocated to the inner territories after the war began.

Among these universities, the most famous comprehensive university created in Kunming (the capital city of Yunnan Province in southwestern China) was the National Southwestern Associated University. Many other universities also relocated from Beijing or Shanghai to Kunming, such as Peking University, Tsinghua University, etc. During the war, this comprehensive university offered significant support for Chinese educational development. According to statistics, the university had approximately 8,000 undergraduates and graduates, with 3,807 students finally graduating [4]. The school assembled many famous professors in the education field to teach students, many of whom later got a lot of honorable international prizes and made contributions to their fields, like architect Liang Sicheng, litterateur Shen Congwen, and mathematician Loo-Keng Hua, etc. These people hold the foundation of Chinese education, keeping it even though the invades of the Japanese existed.

In fact, these teachers and students did not only study school; they also supported the war effort in a number of ways. They published a series of writings to seek international help by appealing the unfairness of the Japanese invasion and disseminating much evil and terrible actions did through the Japanese invaders in China. At the same time, they published the writings for congregating people's patriotism. Moreover, students were not only supporting War on the backside, but 1,129 students gave up studying in the school for joining the army during the War. Amongst this list, Meizuyan, the son of Tsinghua University's president, joined the army stoutly. Meizuyan said in his memoir: "Because I was in the second year of college. At that time, the school had to recruit a fourth-year university student, so he(my father) said, 'I can go slowly and slowly'. However, some of our classmates encouraged each other and they were willing to go, so he agreed" [4].

College students in Free China also contributed to China's war efforts by serving as translators between the Chinese army and the U.S. ally. After the Pacific War broke out, the United States provided massive aid to the Chinese National Party. Claire Lee Chennault, a retired American air force soldier, recruited many American people to create a volunteer air force to help China. To solve the communication problems between these courageous soldiers and the Chinese army, many

students at the National Southwestern Associated University volunteered to help translate for the soldiers. In that case, the students had to engage in the war, and fight together [8].

Many universities in Free China advocated freedom of thought among students and professors. However, the Chinese National Party tightened its control over people's thinking, especially among educated people. In this case, there was an extensive conflict between them. Many professors wrote fiction novels to criticize the Chinese government's nonfeasance because they considered the National Party reserved the force to fight with Chinese Communists. Moreover, drama sometimes also represented the people's attitude toward the government, like the one popular drama in the Sichuan province: forced draft. It expressed that, in the name of the Anti-Japanese War, the Kuomintang recruited people and collected people's money. Through these dramas, these educated people wanted to express their disagreement with governmental actions. Even though they would encounter the persecution of the governmental army, they still kept their own beliefs and did something that they considered was right.

2.3. Monk Organisation

After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, during the warlord era, Buddhists had long been suffering from prosecutions by local warlords. In fact, Buddhism's influence had been restricted since the Chinese feudal dynasty was overwhelmed. Under these circumstances, given the decline of Buddhism's influence, some of the leading members of the Buddhist community resolved to revive Buddhism's influence by participating in the War effort when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out. Actually, most of the religious leaders were patriots, they were willing to ignore the conflicts between them and the government. They published lots of writings to accuse the unfairness of the Japanese invasion. In fact, they made massive contributions during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

However, there was an extremely serious controversy about whether monks should join the army and fight with Japanese invaders at the beginning of the war. Some traditional monks considered that monks should follow Buddhist doctrines that don't kill anyone, so they refused to engage in the war. On the contrary, some people supported the idea that monks still need to finish their secular obligations, including protecting their country from invaders. For proving the validity of their statements, monks always published some writings to support their ideas. The Yuguang monk, a famous monk during wartime China, claimed in the "protecting religion, protecting family, and protecting country: "It is impossible for monks to defend their country with guns and violate the Buddhist doctrines. However, monks can stand on the people's front and do the work of protecting the country, such as helping with money-raising funds; and food or helping to treat injuries. Such a work of protecting the country not only did not go beyond the scope of Buddhism but also conformed to the Buddha's intention to protect the country" [9]. In this condition, the government and monks reached an agreement. The government would practice militarily with the monks who are willing to fight with the invaders. At the same time, the government communicated with the monastery about establishing a food depot and temporary hospitals.

Chongqing Ciyun Temple's monk rescue aid team was a good example. This team was created formally on Sep 6th, 1940 after the government approval. The team only had 60 people initially [9]. With the expansion of this team, they recruited many monks from enemy-occupied areas. Although their main work was to rescue people after the Japanese invaders' air force strikes, they were still required to take classes every day. The classes included military knowledge, medical help, and political education. They should have special skills for rescuing injured people and had to become patriots. Even though they made a significant contribution to helping injured people who were bombarded in the airstrikes, their work was still not efficient. They didn't have enough medicines to rescue people since Japanese invaders occupied Burma. In these conditions, this team's working efficiency was hugely reduced. With the enthusiasm of domestic monks increases rapidly, the monks

expanded their works to other places, such as they took people to Burma with the Chinese Expeditionary Force since 1943. For coordinating with the counterattack of the American and British army in Southeast Asia, the Chinese government decided to take the New 38 division to Burma [10]. There were 14 volunteer monks from the Ciyun temple monk rescue aid team [9]. They were willing to undertake medical care and transport ammunition with the army into Burma. Their efforts were praised by the public, the government, and many other social forces. All of them gave a significantly appreciated judgment to the Ciyun temple monk rescue aid team. People all considered that their contribution was represented at the mercy of Buddhist doctrines and the participation of the secular world. Moreover, they undertook their social obligations by helping injured people and maintaining the transportation of military ammunition.

3. Conclusion

For winning one time-consume war, we do not only need soldiers fighting on the battlefield but also need thousands of people to support on the back. Entrepreneurs, scholars, students, and religious people that were not linked to the war all engaged in it and made significant efforts. Even though there were many difficulties and conflicts with the government, the Chinese people still pulled together to bravely encounter terrible invaders. Next generations wouldn't forget this period of heartbreaking history as time goes by, also, it suggested that the union of all Chinese people could deal with all the things no matter how strong the enemy is. This paper is limited in its extension to the different classes of society; it is difficult to express the contribution of all the Chinese people during the war, and then the descriptions of these three occupations probably are not comprehensive. In the future, it is worthy to continue and expand the research on the non-governmental contribution during the War which are as equally important as the contribution of the soldiers on the frontline.

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