

Zhunguo Nungcun under the Influence of Left-Wing Academic Thought and Social Investigation Boom

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Abstract: As a progressive periodical published in the Kuomintang-controlled areas, “Zhunguo Nungcun” became an important platform for the China Rural Economic Research Association during the “social nature debate” and “rural investigation boom” in the 1930s, and give important public opinion support to “Chinese Rural Faction” which is build by Chen Hansheng. The influence of “Zhunguo Nungcun” increased in social investment area, made an excellent opportunity for the progressive ideas like Marxist social concepts spread in the academic, and also supported the public opinion work of the Communist Party of China in the Kuomintang-controlled areas.

1. Introduction

Thomas Kuhn once proposed in his book *Scientific Revolution* that when the mainstream paradigm encounters a crisis, a new paradigm will emerge to adapt to the current situation, thereby achieving a paradigm shift. The failure of the Agrarian Revolutionary War in 1928 made intellectuals begin to rethink the underlying issues in Chinese society, and launched heated discussions on underlying issues such as the nature of Chinese society. To solve the problems at the bottom of Chinese society, we must focus on the bottom of Chinese society, that is, China's rural problems.

“Zhunguo Nungcun” was founded in 1934 and was forced to cease publication in 1943. Before the Anti-Japanese War, it was edited and published in Shanghai. After the Anti-Japanese War, it was published in Nanchang, Changsha, Hankou and Guilin. It is an official publication founded by the China Rural Economic Research Association. “Zhunguo Nungcun”, as the journal of the China Rural Economic Research Association, is the main public opinion position of the China Rural Economic Research Association. The journal's main purpose is to study rural issues. This journal is deeply influenced by the Chen Hansheng faction. The main person in charge of the magazine is Xue Muqiao, Zhang Xichang, Qian Junrui and others are all members of the China Communist Party. Most of the editors of the magazine have similar views on China's rural society to those of the China Rural Economic Research Association. Although “Zhunguo Nungcun” was compiled by left-wing intellectuals, its main purpose was to explore rural issues, hoping to provide “opportunities for exchange of knowledge, mutual discussion and criticism with sympathizers in the national research community.” Therefore, in the initial issue, the editor stated that regardless of whether they are members of the association or not, they still “sincerely hope that they can do their best to maintain

and expand this opportunity to complete our above-mentioned tasks."

Although "Zhunguo Nungcun" has a certain influence in the intellectual community, it is still a journal for the general public. Starting from the second volume, the magazine established the editorial policy of "realization", "popularization" and "profoundness" so that the journal can be accepted by a wider public. Judging from the actual published content, the published content is rigorous and theoretically detailed. It not only focuses on practical issues in rural work, but also contains theoretical articles from economic, social, cultural and other aspects. In addition, there are many translations and introductions of foreign rural-related articles, as well as discussions of domestic agricultural works. It can be said that "Zhunguo Nungcun" has played an important role in enriching and disseminating many cutting-edge rural economic knowledge. Several debates have also made "Zhunguo Nungcun" magazine an important platform for discussing rural issues in China.

In recent years, academic research on the "Zhunguo Nungcun" has mostly focused on discussions of the author group, editorial philosophy, "Zhunguo Nungcun" with rural mobilization, the construction of rural academic discourse, cover images, etc., neglecting the role of "Zhunguo Nungcun" as an The significance and role of this progressive periodical published in the Kuomintang-controlled areas in rural social investigation. At the same time, the magazine editing process is also a process in which editors screen and check information, which can reflect changes in the social environment and social concepts. Therefore, this article starts from the China Rural Social Investigation published by "Zhunguo Nungcun" magazine, and analyzes the presentation and transformation of the rural social Investigation content of "Zhunguo Nungcun" in the approaching 10 years time.

2. The social investigation boom in China between the 1920s and 1930s

Social investigation in the modern sense is the product of the rise of modern social science. Social investigation originated in China in the late Qing Dynasty and flourished rapidly during the Republic of China. It became a social investigation movement in which various government agencies, universities and even individuals actively participated. Li Jinghan, an important researcher during the Republic of China, once called social survey a "real revolution", "a scientific procedure to transform the future society, and an important tool for building a new China" ^[1].

Social investigation in the modern sense of China began with Tao Meng's investigation of rickshaw pullers in Beijing. Since then, northern China has been represented by Yenching University and Tsinghua University, and southern China has been represented by Ge Xuepu of University of Shanghai's investigation of Fenghuang Village in Chaozhou, Guangzhou. In the social investigation during this period, the main targets of most surveys were the people at the bottom of society. They paid attention to the bottom workers in the cities and China's rural society, took this as the focus of the investigation. In 1923, the China International Famine Relief Commission invited professors such as C.B. Malone and J.B. Tayler to guide 61 students from 9 Universities to investigate. There are 240 villages in Shandong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang and other provinces. In the 11th year of the Republic of China, students from Private University of Nanking under the guidance of professors investigated the conditions of 102 farms near Wuhu, Anhui. The same survey was also conducted in Yanshan County, Zhili Province ^[1]. Most of these contents are published in English, and the subjects of social surveys are mostly foreign professors plus Chinese professors or students.

In 1926, the Preparatory Committee for the Institute of Social Research was established. The establishment of this committee was to systematically integrate, communicate with each other and exchange knowledge among various social groups, thus establishing a social investigation organization in China ^[2]. In addition, the institution was later engaged in editing books such as *social survey methods* and *labor yearbooks* to guide college students in researching social conditions. He

also opened a social investigation class at Yenching University to guide students in conducting social investigations. However, social investigators during this period were often conducted by professors, students and other people with main occupations who used their spare time to conduct investigations, so it was difficult to conduct large-scale and refined investigations. It is difficult to compare with foreign investigative agencies during the same period.

After Mukden Incident, the government hasty response further intensified the intellectual circles' reflection on the country and society. It also makes many intellectuals believe that the key to the failure of many reforms in our country is that many reforms blindly copy foreign theories without understanding the domestic reality. This result can only be cutting off one foot to fit the other. How to find a way out for national self-rescue and national construction, the fundamental is we "must start with social investigation"^[1]. During this period, China already had some local social surveys, but most of these surveys were the results of foreign countries, published in foreign languages, and the research was only small-scale. There are no accurate figures for population and land nationwide. Li Jinghan once sighed in an article, "The population of the United States is only 11 million, but the difference between the survey figures of our country's population is more than 20 million! What a great nation."^[1]. In addition to assisting in the formulation of policies, social surveys are also an important way to improve people's civic awareness. Through social surveys, simple text, icons, publicity exhibitions, etc. can be used to enable people in various places to understand the local situation. In turn, it can improve the public spirit of the people, increase cooperation efficiency, and play a role in educating and uniting the people.

Under such circumstances, the Chinese Association for the Promotion of Commoner Education conducted a civilian education experiment in Dingxian County in 1926. The entire experiment lasted for ten years until the War in 1937. The commoner education work promoted by this experiment had a wide-ranging impact at that time. "Ding County Social Survey" written by Li Jinghan is known as the landmark work of social survey in the Republic of China. Sociologists believe that the survey is "comparable to the American Pittsburgh Survey or the Springfield Survey"^[3].

The important role played by social surveys was not only noticed by academic intellectuals represented by Li Jinghan. During the same period, the Kuomintang and the Communist Party also conducted rural social surveys based on their own political needs. Among them, the Kuomintang is represented by surveys conducted by various ministries and local agencies, such as the six-province survey of the Rural Rehabilitation Committee, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Construction Association Committee and other rural social surveys. The most representative social surveys of the Communist Party are undoubtedly Mao Zedong's "Inspection Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan", "Xingguo Survey", "Mu Cunkou Survey" and other survey reports, as well as the social surveys chaired by Chen Hansheng. In addition to social surveys organized by individuals, the CCP also has organizational surveys represented by the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the Central Soviet Area.

Some scholars believe that the debate over doctrines, ideas, and theories since the mid-19th century turned to the distinction between social investigation and practice during this period, which directly triggered the "rural investigation craze" and the "rural construction craze." Not only that, due to the semi-colonial and semi-feudal social attributes of modern China, rural problems have become more prominent. In the process of such colonial panic and the continuous development of the Chinese revolution, the China Rural Economic Research Association was founded. Its founding goal was "to explore the future of Chinese national independence in this crisis." However, the research situation on China's rural economy at that time was not optimistic. In the initial issue, editor Xue Muqiao once stated that the number of researchers on China's rural economy was too small and their capabilities were weak. It was necessary to exchange knowledge and criticism with sympathizers in the national research community. In order to create such opportunities, the official publication of the China Rural

Economic Research Association, "Zhunguo Nungcun", was founded.

3. The content of the rural economic survey in "Zhunguo Nungcun"

"Zhunguo Nungcun" is the journal of the China Rural Economic Research Association. The association was founded in Shanghai with the support of the famous left-wing scholar Chen Hansheng. After the failure of the Great Revolution, a debate arose within the Comintern about the nature of Chinese society. It denied the nature of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and believed that China's rural areas had entered the capitalist era. At the same time, the Nanjing National Government authorities also advocated that "China's democratic revolution has been victorious", "China is already a capitalist country". Faced with such a controversy, Chen Hansheng, who was working at the Peasant Movement Research Institute organized by the Communist International at that time, had differences with his colleague Lajos Magyar on this issue. Theoretical issues ultimately need to be verified by practice. After Chen Hansheng returned to China, he conducted a practical social investigation on China's rural economic problems to solve the fundamental issue of the nature of Chinese society. The rural economic survey published in "China Rural Areas" served this debate as an important social survey basis before the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War. After the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, it mainly served to guide wartime rural social surveys and rural reports in enemy-occupied areas.

3.1. Debates that served society before the Anti-Japanese War

When "Zhunguo Nungcun" was founded, it launched a debate on the nature of Chinese society. The basis of this debate was the economic survey of China's rural society. Therefore, social survey occupies a very important position in the first volume of "Zhunguo Nungcun" magazine. In the first volume, there is even a "Rural Survey" column to publish articles related to rural surveys.

Take the "Economic Survey of Village in Henan Province" published in the second issue of Volume 1 as an example. This article is the author Zhang Xichang's more detailed explanation of the production relations in the entire rural area of Henan Province beyond the limitations of the original report format.

But the publication of a large number of articles in the service of polemics aroused the resentment of readers. In a letter from a reader published in the twelfth issue of Volume 1, some readers clearly stated that they want to "end the debate on the 'economic nature' as soon as possible. Let's discuss more current issues!"^[4]. This opinion also received feedback from the editors in the second and third volumes of "Zhunguo Nungcun". It is reflected in the selection of survey content that there is less evaluation of other social surveys, and in contrast, more about the content of "how to" social surveys.

The unfolding of the debate also allowed more people to see the results of social surveys and opinions of the "Chinese Rural Sect" on other social surveys. As the debate continues to escalate, "Zhunguo Nungcun" has attracted more and more attention in the academic world.

3.2. Serving rural social mobilization after the Anti-Japanese War

With the further deepening of Japan's war of aggression against China, social turmoil caused the stable social environment, an important factor in the development of social investigation, to disappear. According to some scholars' statistics, the number of social investigation contents in the full-text database of periodicals of the Republic of China dropped sharply after 1936^[5]. This decline in numbers is also reflected in "Zhunguo Nungcun".

After the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, Shanghai's cultural ties with the mainland were almost severed. Bookstores closed down and the post office stopped sending printed goods, making

the editorial work of "Zhunguo Nungcun" increasingly difficult. This magazine is a national rural work guidance publication. During this extraordinary period, the responsibilities on the people which want to rebuild rural have increasingly important, therefore, their need for cultural food will become more urgent. Therefore, the magazine decided to move to Nanchang and other Chinese mainland for publication during this period, hope strengthen the connection with the vast number of readers in the mainland.

However, after leaving Shanghai, the distribution of newspapers and periodicals encountered difficulties, and the source of income was almost cut off. To adapt to this situation, the editorial work of wartime magazines also changed. Since the Anti-Japanese War, it has been difficult to see publications published in Shanghai in the mainland. Therefore, starting from the second issue of the wartime special issue, the "Boyin" column has been added to reprint important papers on rural salvation work in various Shanghai publications.

In addition, the distribution problem has not yet been solved, need readers to introduce the magazine to others. They hope that readers who sympathize with this magazine will shoulder the responsibility on this cultural frontal front. In the price, they offered to reduce the price to 2 fen for ten or more if they were willing to market the periodicals. The magazine with postage sent out at the magazine's expense. The price of the book could also be replaced by a stamp. Starting from the third issue, the distribution work was handled by Li Ming Cultural Enterprise Co., Ltd. However, due to the shift of war line, when they published the fourth and fifth issues, Shanghai had become an isolated island surrounded by enemy forces. Therefore, in fact, Li Ming Cultural Enterprise Co., Ltd had no way to continue to bear the general distribution responsibility. Starting from the fourth issue, Hankou Sheng Huo Shu Dian was asked to be responsible for the general distribution, so the distribution problem was temporarily solved.

In the first issue of the wartime special issue, the editor once wrote, "At that time, there was no choice in Nanchang that could publish for us. We relied on members of the China Rural Economic Research Association from various places to promote it for us." At that time, Shanghai's progressive publications were moved to the mainland for distribution. There is only "Zhunguo Nungcun", so young people from all over the country find it a treasure after buying "Zhunguo Nungcun", many salesmen complained that the number of copies we sent was too few. But they don't have enough money for print the magazine, if they print more, the risk of bad debt will also increase.

As the war situation changed, the editorial work of "Zhunguo Nungcun" also began to engage in guerrilla warfare. On December 16, the sixth issue of "Zhunguo Nungcun Wartime Special Issue" was published. In the "Postscript", he stated that he would go to Changsha together with Xin zhi Shu Dian, and then prepare to restore the original distribution method, that is, publish by Xin zhi Shu Dian, and let Sheng Huo Shu Dian in Hankou, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Xi'an and other places assume the responsibility of general distribution. On January 16, the seventh issue of "Zhunguo Nungcun Wartime Special Issue" was published in Hankou. Because the problems of printing and distribution could not be solved, the editor had to run from Nanchang to Changsha to solve the editing and printing problems. But after arriving in Changsha, they still encountered many difficulties in printing and distribution issues, so they had to go from Changsha to Hankou again. Due to two trips, the publication date of this issue was delayed by half a month. Moreover, since the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, paper prices have soared threefold, at the same time, printing plant are saturated with printing capacity, leading to increased costs. In that time, many publications have raised their prices, in order to reduce losses and maintain the life of the publication, "Zhunguo Nungcun" have to raise the price of each issue from three cents to four cents. On March 20, the "Zhunguo Nungcun Wartime Special Issue" No. 11 was published in Changsha. The editor said "It is really a guerrilla style editor. Starting from this period, we moved our publishing work to Changsha, Due to unexpected transportation and printing difficulties, the publication of this issue had to be delayed for another five

days; thereafter, it was planned to be published every 20th and 5th."

In the wartime special issue and the fifth volume after the third volume of "Zhunguo Nungcun" magazine, there is no relevant content about China's rural survey. Volume six begins with two articles on wartime rural surveys. During this period, the magazine "China Rural Areas" had been distributed relatively stably in Guilin. In the first issue of the sixth volume, the magazine's publication cycle was changed from semi-monthly to monthly. By the time "Zhunguo Nungcun" magazine was forced to cease publication in 1943, only one article on the rural economic survey of Pingshan County, Hebei Province was published in the seventh volume, and no other articles were published. In general, after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, the China Rural Economic Survey also lost its active soil. More content in the magazine began to focus on how to mobilize rural society to support the Anti-Japanese War, and the content of the rural economic survey began to cool down.

4. Conclusions

Rural social surveys are an important cornerstone that supports the development of rural theory and the formulation of rural policies, and also play an important role in educating the public. As a means of discovering local society's cognition and knowledge, social surveys in rural China had important social significance during this period. The magazine "Zhunguo Nungcun", as the "Chinese Rural School" represented by Chen Hansheng, an important school of Chinese rural surveys, has provided it with considerable public opinion support. Moreover, as a progressive newspaper, "Zhunguo Nungcun" magazine's ever-increasing discourse status in the social survey community has also made important efforts to spread progressive ideas and Marxist social concepts, has also supported the public opinion of the Communist Party of China in Kuomintang-controlled areas. As the Anti-Japanese War continued to deepen, China's rural social survey movement was forced to slow down, and "Zhunguo Nungcun" magazine also focused its attention on the anti-Japanese mobilization of rural society.

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