

The Policy of Local Government in the Civil War:  
the Case of Shanxi Province (1945-1949)

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# Abstract

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background: The Economic Reason of CPC's Victory in the Civil War

After the three-year civil war, the Communist Party of China (CPC) eventually defeated the Kuomintang (KMT) government and won the war in 1949. This was an epoch-making event which determined the historical direction of China throughout the whole 20th century, also known as the basic clue and the theoretical foundation of research on the development of Modern Chinese history. This also encompasses the question why Chinese revolution ultimately chose Marxism. An immense number of essays and books focused on this subject, and most of them discussed the theme of “why the CPC won the war, and KMT lost China”.

In the late period of anti-Japanese war, compared to CPC, KMT government had a significant advantage. Notably, the KMT had a huge military advantage, with more than 4.3 million armed forces, including 2.06 million regular army, more than one million irregular army, and more than one million people of military organs and all kinds of schools. It dominated the region of 300 million people and controlled almost all big cities and most railway lines in China. Meanwhile, “as of in November of 1944, the military strength of CPC had 0.65 million regular army, more than 2 million militia, and dominated the region of 90 million people.” The proportion of the military forces between KMT and CPC in the end of 1945 was nearly 3.5:1.

After the end of anti-Japanese war, as the only legitimate government at that time, KMT took over the governance of Japan and its puppet regime in China, also got strong support from international powers. “In North China, American military assistance was particularly beneficial to KMT government, while the Soviet Union helped KMT increase its influence in Manchuria.” Therefore, KMT had many advantages in professionals, military equipment, and supplies, “KMT owned the troops a lot more than CPC, especially had more trained staffs who could use modern equipment”, and in general the troop of KMT “could win a single battle with CPC, and maybe occupy any single stronghold of CPC.”)

Why was the overwhelming Kuomintang army completely defeated in just four years? Such historical destination seemed to be beyond most parties' expectation, and especially confused Chiang Kai-shek. When Chiang left for Taiwan, he delivered at least 30 public speeches from many aspects, including military, institution, organization, strategy, party affairs and education. Chiang's introspection formed the foundation of the later studies on the fateful failure of KMT in later years. Just as Gao

Hua said, “the common answer was, that the failure of KMT was ‘the historical integration’, including military, cultural, idealistic, and educational factors which were interacted.” However, he argued that “the military reason was the most important. If restoring the basis history, the military failure was the most important failure, and other reasons was derived from it.”

CPC normally explained this civil war from a broader perspective, presenting it as a great historical victory for the Chinese people since 1840 and a more theoretical victory for modern Chinese revolutionaries as a whole. Some scholar summarized it as “historical law” or “the people’s choice”. In the official explanation of CPC, “the reason why CPC could lead China revolution to victory, was that it stuck to the right direction, which was the combination of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and concrete practice of the Chinese revolution.” Under the guidance of this principle, “a self-disciplined, armed with Marxism-Leninism theory, full of self-criticism, and contacting with the people Party, an army led by this party, and an united front of all kinds of revolutionary classes and factions led by this party, all these three things were the main weapon which defeated the enemy.”

In addition to this, the Confucian concept of war, “the hearts and minds of the people (public support)”, has been used for the explanation of the victory of CPC, which was that CPC normally benefited from its efficient advocating and organizing works and its strong mobilization ability, so as to win the broad public support. However, the reason why the masses supported CPC and against KMT was explained as being completely the strength of institution and belief, rather than their rational choice. Nevertheless, limited by many factors of the Cold War home and abroad, the struggle of ideology between KMT and CPC, was over amplified, and in some degree ignored their contest outside the battlefield.

As mentioned above, studies of the civil war between KMT and CPC have always placed greater emphasis on military and political factors, as well as the analysis of the reason why CPC won the war. But more and more research on the modern warfare history indicate that the economic factors play a critical role in the modern war, only as the cause but also as the result of the war. Therefore, the importance of the studies on economic policies of both sides was not less than that of military and political factors.

The economic policies of the KMT during the Civil War were considered a failure, and the disintegration of the economy was a causal factor in the overall political and military collapse. Hyperinflation during this period, on the other hand, is considered to be the direct cause of the collapse of the KMT government. Domestic Chinese studies have consistently viewed hyperinflation under the KMT as a complication of political collapse rather than as a separate economic event that can be interpreted by Western monetary and economic theory. Yet the underlying economic conditions behind inflation were also an important cause of the Kuomintang's defeat. *The Economist* on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1959, reviewed, “the breakdown of China’s economy led to the complete collapse of political and military system, while the inflation at that time was the direct reason of the downfall of KMT government.”

As to the economic policy of CPC, as early as the anti-Japan war period, CPC had realized the importance of economic development: “if we do not develop the public

economy and private economy, we would become a sitting duck.....the well-balanced economy is the premise of the government survival. If we do wish to solve our financial difficulties, we must develop the economy efficiently.” Thus, CPC put forward the economic strategy, which enhanced economic development and ensued supplies. Certainly, the economic policies in the wartime were different from those in normal times, it needed large-scale investment, not to protect the rights and normal life of the general public. So even though the burden of the people was a little heavy, when overcoming the difficulties of the government and the troops, and defeating the enemy, the people would welcome the good days, which was the revolutionary benevolent policy. CPC also emphasized that, it did not think only of its own government and troops as KMT did “draining the pond to catch all the fish”, means making endless demands on the people in order to meet their own needs. Such policy posed a great challenge to CPC government, which was at a disadvantage in all aspects. At that time, CPC had controlled very few cities, but mostly the rural bases of individual economy, dividing by enemy and only with the guerrilla war. In consideration of the decentralization of manpower and resources in rural areas, CPC put forward the economic policy of “unified leadership and decentralized operation” for the production and supply, which was different from the economic administration mode in the cities.

What was the actual effect of these economic policies? How to implement these economic policies for the local government? What kind of impact these policies had on the civil war? For a long time, both domestic and foreign scholars always emphasized the revolutionary factors of CPC, and the key role of land revolution which changed the relations of production, but also in some degree neglected its great achievements in production development and administrative capacity. In fact, the basic level governments of CPC played a very important role in the preparedness and participation in the war, also exerted more influence on CPC and its governments in the local community. These constituted the main content of the thesis.

## 1.2 Previous Research

After the World War II, in the realistic background of the confrontation of culture and politics, the research on the civil war apparently had been affected by the mentality of the Cold War. In 1950s and 1960s, the research tendency was that “both CPC and KMT was deemed as the dialectical opposite each other”. In United States, the failure of KMT was regarded as the failure of American diplomacy in East Asia. In 1950s, the conservative managed to purge those people who made the mistake of “losing China to CPC”. In 1960s, the liberalist insisted that China was not lost by them. Hence, at this time the research theme on civil war in China mainly focused on the international relations, just as American financial aid to KMT, and so on.

In 1970s, American scholars began to rethink the complexity of revolutionary discourse over the whole world and examine the rationality of CPC’s final victory from its own source of strength. Suzanne Pepper’s research was a typical among them. From the aspect of political struggle, she analyzed the reason of CPC’s victory and KMT’s failure. Drawing on the political theory of “politics being defined as an intercourse or

exchange process,” her study did not focus on the military struggle between CPC and KMT, but defined both parties in the war as "power contenders", and defined the war as another way of politics. She examined their policies and practices, and the relationship with the society which they ruled

Since 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, American scholars proposed to reconsider the revolutionary. Elizabeth J. Perry criticized that most western scholars had severe path dependence to interpret overly the violence in revolution. She argued that this kind of research was excessively arbitrary and simplified. Through the field survey of Anyuan revolutionary tradition, she insisted to find out and retrieve the revolutionary tradition. Joseph Esherick admitted the importance of the revolution in modern Chinese history, but he argued that the revolution was not necessary to occupy a central position covering everything in modern Chinese history.

Qi Jianmin 祁建民, professor of Nagasaki Prefectural University, introduced the research of Japanese scholars. After the World War II, Ishikawa Tadao's *Research on the History of the Communist Party of China* was a comprehensive book. He devoted to seeking the transformation of the guidelines and policies of CPC and the development of Mao Zedong Way, from the influence of the Communist International and the evolution of revolutionary situation.

In the period of the Cold War, Japanese historians “tried to understand new China after 1949 from the history of the revolutionary base of CPC”, so most of them took a sympathetic attitude toward Chinese revolution. They thought highly of the great importance of land reform in the war. Through the land reform, the land was transferred from landlord to peasant, which broke down the landownership system along two thousand years and realized the ideal of equal rights to land which the peasant was seeking, so the grassroots government acquired wide support from peasant.

After the Cold War, Japanese Scholars also did the work of rethinking Chinese revolution, and their perspective turned to “what on earth happened” from “why the revolution successful”. Tanaka Yukiko argued that the land reform in the civil war period was not only land redistribution, but also the redistribution of property and power. She found out that it was insufficient to interpret the motive of the peasants who supported CPC by material benefits, and the real primary motivation was from their high political consciousness through land reform. At the first time the rural villages were completely reinvented by CPC, and the peasants was involved in the political movement led by CPC through land reform. The peasants were highly politicized and strengthened their class consciousness. Tomoyuki Uchida noted that the movement of purging traitors in North China base area was closely related to the campaign of rent and interest reduction, the former as the essential condition for the latter, while the latter as the inevitable result of the former.

In China, the civil war was named the Third Revolutionary Civil War, or the War of Liberation, which is one of the main themes in modern Chinese history. There are a substantial number of books and papers in this field, and here gave some typical examples related to this thesis.

Qi Wu' book, *The Development of one Revolutionary Base: Jinji Luyu Border Region in the periods of Anti-Japanese War and the War of Liberation*, is the first book

to study the history of Jinji Luyu Border Region after the establishment of P.R.C. According to the time clue, this book described the process of Jinji Luyu Base's establishment, development, and growth. The author pointed out that Jinji Luyu Border Region played a key role in the anti-Japanese war: "it was the headquarter of Eighth Route Army and the seat of North Bureau of CPC Central Committee, also the heart region of guerrilla warfare in north China." In the period of the civil war, this region was one of the main battle fields, and when entering into the stage of counter-offensive, it was the main supply base of supporting the armies." Jin Chongji examined the whole historical process of the civil war and answered the fundamental question of winning this civil war from the internal perspective of CPC. As we know, the civil war broke out in 1946, and the financial and economic management of KMT had almost collapsed in 1948. Jin chose the year of 1947 as his research unit, and analyzed "In the past 20 years, KMT, which has been dominant in China, has changed its position from superiority to inferiority, from offensive to passive, from the strong to the weak in the battle fields." The great changes in this year decided the result of the civil war and future historical trend in China.

### 1.3 Research Data

The local archives of primary county government had always been the critical source of historic data. In the Qing studies, the archives of Ba County and Nanbu County in Sichuan Province and its relevant research had proved their great value. However, in the period of Republic China, the research based on the systematical local archives of county government was still rare.

In the late anti-Japanese war period, Shanxi became one of the earliest provinces to establish the primary government of CPC. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Jincheng County government was established, under the administration of the Fourth Administrative Office, Taiyue Border Regional Government. Jinsui Border Regional Government was established in the period of anti-Japanese war. For a long time, many scholars attributed the reason of CPC winning the civil war to the revolutionary institutional innovation. For economic development, many scholars from the perspective of political economy, focused on the adjustment of relations of production, namely, regarding land revolution as the most critical factor. In addition to institutional rigidity, another important factor was the ability of local CPC's grassroots governments to obey the overall picture of preparation for war and effectively use policy leverage to carry out the orders of the central government. This is involved the important proposition of the early practice of the ruling ability of CPC. The Jincheng archive museum had complete collection of Jincheng County government archives in the civil war. From them we found that, after the period of anti-Japanese war, all work of Jincheng County government was very arduous and urgent, one side actively preparing the war to provide the supply to the front, on the other hand strengthening economic development and adjustment to consolidate the base of the new regime. No doubt, the taxes and financial expenditure of Jincheng County government was increasing, instead of decreasing.

## Chapter 2 The Management and Formulation of Time by CPC:

### A Study of The Agricultural Calendar in 1948

#### 2.1 Content and Structure of the Agricultural Calendar

The calendar was a part of daily time management of Chinese people. However, in the civil war period, this calendar became an effective tool of CPC local government carrying on policy propaganda and social mobilization.

A color edition of *Agricultural Calendar in 1948*<sup>1)</sup> laid quietly in Xing County archives museum, Shanxi province. It was issued by a CPC local government, Jizhong administrate office in 1948. The calendar was stereotype printing, sexto decimo, with 48 pages, and published by the Jizhong Xinhua bookstore. The calendar cover was overprinted by two colors, red and blue, with two pictures, a facade portrait of a soldier with a gun, and a dorsal silhouette of a farmer with a pickaxe. Such cover reflected the peculiarities of rural life and wartime. The cover marked two calendar ways, the solar calendar of 1948, and the lunar calendar of the 37 years of the Republic China. The whole calendar used double calendar ways, which continued the calendar since late Qing Dynasty, and also with the weeks and the Twenty-Four Solar Terms related to agricultural production. The main content of the calendar included leaders' portraits, the map of Jizhong region, the introduction of the Twenty-Four Solar Terms, anniversaries, propaganda poetry poems with cartoons, couplets, the knowledge of agricultural technology and daily life, and so on.

#### 2.2 Popularizing Science Knowledge and Agricultural Technique

Chinese traditional 24 solar terms 24 节气<sup>1)</sup> were very important for the agricultural activities and production. These solar terms were clearly marked in this calendar, reminding the peasants following the natural rules to work. To understand them better, a song of 24 solar terms was in the calendar. This song was in chronological order, and very easily to remember and sing.

The calendar also introduced the therapeutic methods of forty-two common diseases, including malaria, dysentery, cholera, toothache, tetanus, stroke, and chicken pox, children hexagon disease, and so on.<sup>1)</sup> For the poor medical condition in the rural region, these diseases became easily prevalent, the peasants could not receive timely treatment, and these methods in the calendar got satisfactory acception from peasants. For example, the remedial method of malaria was, dichroic root, dark plum, areca-nut, liquor ice, 15 grams each, with sugar and brown sugar, both 50 grams, decoction. The treatment method of cough was boiled radish with fritillaria cirrhosis. <sup>1)</sup>These prescriptions mostly adopted daily medical materials or food for the peasants, simple

and convenient, which the peasants could often use to improve their living level practically, and in some degree popularize modern science and techniques. Notably, that as a way of policy propaganda of CPC local government, the agriculture calendar effectively strengthened the time management of agricultural production and provided more for the war.

### 2.3 The Political Propaganda in the Agriculture Calendar

In China, the calendar was not only a daily life apparatus, but also a political tool. In ancient times, the calendar signified the reflection of heaven, which was connected to the emperor, the son of heaven.<sup>1)</sup> It was also an excellent propaganda tool of modern politics. The CPC local government took full advantage of this calendar to advocate their own political ideas and policies, for educating the peasants.

Firstly, the policy of CPC and its army was greatly propagandized in the calendar. The basic principles of Chinese People's Liberation Army were printed in a prominent place in the front page of the calendar, namely, combining all the oppressed class, including workers, farmers, soldiers, students, and merchants, all of democratic parties, all minor ethnic groups, all aliens, and other patriots, organized national united front, and overthrew Chiang Kai-shek's autocratic government, and set up a democratic coalition government.

Secondly, the anti-war sentiments were propagandized in the calendar. CPC emphasized the truth that it was KMT that fought a civil war, regardless of the people's peaceful willing. Just like "arresting, judging and punishing the civil war criminals headed by Chiang Kai-shek"; "Abolishing the corrupt system of Chiang Kai-shek, eliminating malfeasant officers, and setting up a clean government."<sup>1)</sup> The propaganda of anti-Chiang Kai-shek was seen everywhere in the calendar.

Thirdly, the calendar advocated the will for peace and democratic consciousness, and mobilized the public on its side, together against KMT government.

Fourthly, it disclosed the betrayal behavior of KMT and criticized the nature of aggression of American diplomatic policy to "help KMT" in the calendar. Many memorial days of national shame caused by KMT were listed in the calendar.

Fifthly, it propagandized the political ideology of "only CPC could save China". Being targeted and predictable, the political propaganda of CPC played a great role. "According to the development of the circumstance, CPC clearly clarified its own political ideas and mobilized effectively most people to take part in or support the civil war. These activities isolated and destroyed the KMT government."<sup>1)</sup> The differences of political attitude and political choice between CPC and KMT resulted in their different historical destiny.

### 2.4 The Social Mobilization in the Agriculture Calendar

In 1946, the troop of KMT attacked the liberation region in Central Plain 中原解放区. The civil war broke out. In the beginning of the civil war, because of the disparity

of power between two sides, CPC was at a disadvantage. Since 1947, KMT's all-out attack became the focus attack, while CPC began to counterattack. In the critical moment in the war, CPC needed to mobilize a great number of manpower and material resources for the war. However, since the end of anti-Japanese war, all the people desired peace, full of war weariness. Especially in vast rural areas, the limitation of the thought of small farmers led to the incomplete revolutionary character. Deeply aware of the urgency and necessity of social mobilization, this reflected in the calendar of CPC.

Firstly, the war mobilization was in the calendar. To arouse people's war consciousness, the calendar encouraged the youth to join the army actively. Not only CPC called on the youth to join the army actively, but also called on the public to cooperate. Thus, the unity between the army and the people was also the important content of the propaganda.

Secondly, it emphasized the gender equality in the calendar, which mobilized family and women to prepare for the civil war. Because many youths were drafted into the army for the war, there was lack of male labor force in the village. There are also contents about childbirth and baby rearing, which were aimed at rural women to change their outdated ideas, improve their health awareness and health level, and ensure their normal life.

Thirdly, in order to meet the demands for the resources in the war, it carried out plenty of number of production mobilization in the calendar. CPC made great efforts to tap the potential of agricultural production for promoting production and increasing output.

Besides the establishment of the land distribution system, CPC mobilized the peasants for hardworking in the field and scientifically farming. When each solar term was coming, there were cartoons and propaganda poems in the corresponding page in the calendar.

In addition to the farming, the calendar also provided many treatments for poultry and livestock diseases and tree planting experiences, from all aspects to help farmers. In the calendar, it actively promoted and advocated sideline production, and insisted the combination of agriculture and sideline. In the agricultural leisure period, the peasants should develop the sideline, and add the family income.<sup>1)</sup>

## 2.5 The Propaganda Characteristics of the Agriculture Calendar

In the beginning of the civil war, "CPC had not become the governing party, and its political theories, ideology and culture had not been the mainstream yet. Facing the national situation of the stronger enemy and complex international environment, how to defeat the stronger enemy with weaker forces, how to make the mass accept the political thought of CPC, these were real problems that must be faced.<sup>1)</sup> Through all kinds of ways the people were delighted to hear and see, CPC carried out the advocacy and mobilization, while the calendar was the typical example of them.

Meantime, KMT also used the calendar as a tool of political propaganda, and promoted *Life Calendar* 生活历. "The original intention of *Life Calendar* was to advise

the public the way of daily life and their spiritual world, by the arrangement of the seasons and festivals.”<sup>1)</sup> But this attempt ultimately came to nothing and did not play the role of propaganda and mobilization. In contrast, CPC also depended on the characteristics and function of the calendar, *Agriculture Calendar in 1948* has achieved good propaganda effect. There were three reasons.

Firstly, during the war, the main object of CPC’s propaganda and mobilization was many of the peasants, and the calendar was their daily need, also the best entry for propaganda work. Most of the peasants were not well educated, and it was difficult for them to understand the subtle meaning of each document of CPC, so the complicated propaganda means were not easy to understand and accept. The agricultural calendar used simple and plain language and vivid cartoons to reduce the difficulties for the peasants to understand as much as possible, so that the peasants could recognize and digest the political motives behind the calendar. The calendar used many colloquial expressions and face-to-face talks. Its content was simple but effective, conveying the ideas and policies of CPC to the massive peasants. Although the calendar was very small, CPC attached great importance to its propaganda and mobilizing function, the combination of the firmness of the principle and the flexibility of the policy, promoting the conscription of grain and the development of production work.

Secondly, CPC took the calendar as an effective way of political propaganda and mobilization, which reflected the political view of “from the masses, to the masses”, also an important reason for CPC to win the revolutionary war. This was the mass-road policy of CPC, which refers to be close to the masses, and be mass-oriented, thus addressing the basic needs of the masses in production and life.

Thirdly, the calendar was limited in short content, and could not thoroughly publicize various policies and ideas. Therefore, editors of the calendar combined land reform, war mobilization and anti-Chiang movement to propagandize repeatedly, and expanded its publicity effect.

## Chapter 3 The Main Enemy of CPC in Shanxi Province—

### National Revolutionary Society

*National Revolutionary Society* 民族革命同志会 was the most important political organization of KMT government in Shanxi Province in the period of anti-Japanese war and the civil war. The former studies on National Revolutionary Society had three perspectives.

The first perspective was from the development and expansion of CPC in Shanxi province, it emphasized the depressive and destructive effect on revolutionary forces, especially League of sacrifice for national salvation in Shanxi, and argued that, depending on this organization, Yan Xishan carried out all kinds of reactionary intrigues to maintain his autocracy rule like a local tyrant. This is the mainstream perspective, based on the reminiscences and oral data of the witness, and they all pointed out that, after 1945, the main task of National Revolutionary Society was to defend and attack CPC organizations and impeach the political suspects and disguisers.

The second perspective was from political organization itself, and it emphasized that National Revolutionary Society was the most crucial political party in Shanxi. For example, National Revolutionary Society is “a political organization led by Yan Xishan, with the characteristics of political party”; “it namely a society, really an organizational and creed political group.” This perspective emphasized the characters of political party of National Revolutionary Society, which actually reflected the limitation of KMT’s influence in Shanxi. “At that time, the activity of KMT in Shanxi was very limited, and the people only knew the society, not KMT. In some places, there were the regional branches or county branches of KMT, but they only had a sign for the vanity, not any effect at all.”

The third perspective emphasized the characters of non-legitimacy and non-politics of National Revolutionary Society, and regarded it as an illegal organization, even the spy organization or gang organization. Because the name of revolutionary society sometimes was not a matter open for use, taking the opportunity of the establishment of the mobilizing organization of KMT in Shanxi, Yan Xishan build up the committee of spiritual construction in Shanxi, which was actually still National Revolutionary Society itself. This activity in the guise of another name reflected Yan Xishan’s prevention and precaution to KMT, also creating confusion on both sides of the society and the committee. It is easy to see that as a local political organization, National Revolutionary Society had generated dispute with two main political forces, CPC and KMT, in the period of the civil war. The scholars always viewed it as the opposition, which blunted the understanding and the thinking of the relationship between national and local.

I will discuss this society from three parts, namely, the establishment, the organizational construction, and the struggle in its internal and external aspects, in order to examine the reinforcement processes of Yan’s local political authority and the intercourse with KMT and state power in the period of the civil war.

### 3.1 The Organization and Theoretical Foundation of National Revolutionary Society

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Japanese troops entered into Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province. In the middle of November, KMT government in Nanjing was transferred to Chongqing, and Yan Xishan was obliged to leave Taiyuan for Linfen, entering into the south region in Shanxi. On February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1938, Yan Xishan held a meeting of anti-Japanese War on No. 2 War Zone in Spring Village on the southwest of Linfen, and established National Revolutionary Society. In March, Linfen fell into Japanese troops, and Yan retreated to Ji County. In May, Ji County was fallen, and Yan retreated to the west side of the Yellow River, in the Sa Bo Village in Shanxi Province. From the development of National Revolutionary Society, it was an organization construction by Yan's well-design. Before its establishment, it had a solid foundation of organization and theory.

After the July 7 Incident 1937, Yan Xishan was appointed by KMT government as the commander of the Second War Zone, controlling all of the military powers in Shanxi and Suiyuan 绥远 province. In late July, Yan Xishan built up the committee of battlefield general mobilization in every administrative unit. At the same time, Yan reformed the police and militia to the militia of mass armed self-defense forces and emphasized national revolution and the anti-Japanese war of the whole nation. The committee of battlefield general mobilization definitely brought forward the slogan of national revolution. This slogan was the concrete embodiment of united front against Japanese aggression, transcending different political ideas, interests and demands of all kinds of the military and political organizations, and mass groups. The slogan of national revolution was prepared for the establishment of National Revolutionary Society.

We had to say, the external reason of promoting the establishment of National Revolutionary Society by Yan Xishan, was the effective organizing work of CPC, led by Bo Yibo 薄一波. In October 1936, The Central Committee of CPC asked Bo to return to Shanxi from Beijing. Depending on the name of workers committee and the committee of military and political training, Bo trained a number of young cadres and students. Bo yibo proposed that, "the people would not be as a conquered slave, no matter male or female, the party, occupation, should be gathered and actively take part in the movement of nation salvation." He built up four dare-to-die corps, one armed worker defense team, and one political defense team, altogether tens of thousands of the people, and enhanced the strength of CPC in Shanxi. Yan Xishan felt heavy pressure about this situation, but did not dare to destroy the unite front, so he decided to build up a new institution integrated with the leadership of military, politics, and administration. At that time, *Ten Creeds of National Revolution* 民族革命十大纲领 was published, and the National Revolution University also was built up, "just as Yan said, I am the governor of the government, the commander of war zone, also the

president of National Revolutionary Society and National Revolution University, so all of you belonged to me!”

### 3.2 The Establishment of National Revolutionary Society and its Branches

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1938, National Revolutionary Society was established. “In order to prevent booming of Japanese aircrafts, in the same day, the establishment of such organization was a secret thing, only a few people were on the spot.” The number of participants were 108. The name list almost covered most of important persons in politics in Shanxi, including Yan Xishan and his colleagues, the upper echelons of Reasonable Group, the chairman of war committee, General Xu Fanting of KMT, the leaders of League of Sacrifice for National Salvation, Bo Yibo, Niu Yinguan and Niu Peicong.

### 3.3 the Relationship between National Revolutionary Society and United Front

National Revolutionary Society seemed superficially an anti-Japanese power. However, the real aim of the establishment of the society by Yan Xishan was to strengthen his dominant status, while weakened two threatening powers, CPC and KMT. Soon after the establishment, Yan retreated to Ji County, and was back to Shannxi. In April 1940, Yan left Shannxi for the village named Nanpo. When Yan Xishan came back to Shanxi province, he “immediately set out to strengthen the power of National Revolutionary Society, and made it become the most important political organization.”

In Shanxi, there were two threatening forces from national level, League of Sacrifice for National Salvation led by CPC, and the branch of KMT in Shanxi. By National Revolutionary Society, Yan Xishan limited and defended the expansion of above two forces. As we know, Reasonable Group and League of Sacrifice for National Salvation were opposite groups. Even though the member of National Revolutionary Society declared that the society represented the broadest interests in Shanxi, but it adopted double standards for them. According to the memory of a staff of National Revolutionary Society, “this organization was the core leadership of the army and had 10 levels. When you joined it in, you might attain the position what you wanted.” Even though so many members, all of literature materials pointed out that the serious problems existing in the name list, and many people joined it unwittingly. Depending on such organization to control rural society, its effect was naturally unsatisfactory.

## Chapter 4 The Elementary Education of CPC and its Practice in

### Jinsui Border Area

The Jinsui border area 晋绥边区 had an important strategic position, which was the only vital communication line to the bases in north, middle and south China, also “the barrier of defending Central government of CPC and Shannxi-Gansu-Ningxia border area 陕甘宁边区”. ) In 1940, Jinsui area was largely under the control of CPC, and it established the governments in the northwest Shanxi province and Daqing mountain 大青山 area. However, in these vast rural regions, irreparably damaged by the war and economic backward, how to eliminate the influences of old education and Japanese puppet education administration, and to carry out new education productively, became the urgent key work of CPC and the border area government.

#### 4.1 The Policy of Elementary Education of CPC

The elementary education was the important content of the construction of CPC political power in border areas. It was highly valued by Central Committee of CPC. When the establishment of the government of northwest Shanxi, on February 8th, 1940, The CPC Secretariat published the Instruction of Actively Participation of Elementary Education and Social Education in KMT Territory. ) This paper had important theoretical and literature value, which was the framework document of CPC’s elementary education policy before 1949, elaborating the educational ideas and school principle, and also providing the theoretical direction and practical basis of elementary school to Jinsui government of border area.

Firstly, the Instruction analyzed the basic content of education policy of KMT after the establishment of the union front, contraposing the new trend of KMT strengthening the education policy. It mainly included: 1), the highest principle of education was one party and one idea; 2), applying the state-building policy to education, which included the ethical education of Confucius, the education of productive labor and production technology, and the military education, all in all the education policy of despotism in semi-colonial and semi-feudal society; 3), its practical meaning included: the unified school system, curriculums and textbooks, personnel and military administration systems, budget constraint, tutor system, and so on.

Secondly, the Instruction enumerate the concrete method of the elementary education of KMT. 1), the elementary schools adopted the united textbooks edited by Central Ministry of Education, which emphasized on local education and the Scout system; 2), elementary school with politics and religion were combined, one elementary school in each village (保), the village head (保长) as the headmaster, one central primary school in each town (乡), the township head (乡长) as the principle; 3), the teacher in elementary school must be the membership of KMT or be forced to join KMT, trained and inspected by KMT; 4), the primary school centered on the elementary

education, which was closely connected in the social education and the family education.

Thirdly, the Instruction analyzed the shortcomings and disadvantages. 1), lack of low-level organization, KMT did not completely controlled the low-level administrative organization (保甲); 2), the life of primary school teachers was very hard in wartime, and “the faithful disciple of KMT was reluctant to be a teacher,” so the primary school teachers were impossible to be uniformly loyal membership of KMT; 3), under the influence of CPC and its army, the primary school teachers strengthened their ideological consciousness, and were discontented with the rule of KMT forcing them to join KMT and accept training; 4), KMT did not control many progressive youth, who engaged in cultural and educational activities in rural areas; 5), the masses were unwilling to accept the education of KMT; 6), KMT government was unable to completely reject many important and advanced educational organizations, such as Life Education Association(生活教育社), China Vocational Education Society(中华职业教育社), Rural Education Organization(乡村教育派), and the teachers in these organizations still worked. Above conditions made the education policy of KMT were not easily to realize.

Fourthly, the Instruction clearly put forward the education policy and the school principles of CPC. 1), to attach importance to the elementary education, which was the key factor of closely consolidating the connection with the masses; 2), to pay high attention to the group construction of primary school teachers, because they played an important role in of the elementary education, social education, and family education; for this purpose, it might choose some suitable CPC members as the primary school teachers, who stuck to the education front, and approached the activists of primary school teachers; 3), to help young students back to rural areas to work as the teacher; 4), to build a united front with the progressive members of KMT, the gentlemen in the sense of justice, and educational organizations of non-KMT, and struggled with the bullheads in educational circles; 5), the part organization must help the members and activists of CPC to engage in the education work for a long time from all sides, and they must be devoted to their duty, and be good at getting in touch with local elites and coping with the village headmen, and build a close relationship with masses and student families; 6), by the party branches and mass groups under the leadership and influence of CPC, the county committee of CPC encouraged the masses and gentleman to develop the elementary education; 7), to mobilize the party member to become more knowledgeable.

Finally, the Instruction required that, “the CPC organizations at all levels should always research the education policy of KMT and its implementation, and provide its own countermeasure timely, and through all kinds of publications, criticized the education policy of KMT, and gave its own educational opinions”, and gradually developed its own policy of elementary education.

## 4.2 Multiple Primary School Forms and Textbook Publication

In the wartime, the political situation was overly complicated in Jinsui border area,

both the direct fight between the government of border area and Japanese and its puppet troops, and the indirect fraction between the government of border area and Yan Xishan or KMT power. The foundation of cultural and education in border area was various, including home school with a private tutor controlled by puppet regime, old style school in federal education, modified schools based on the old private school, the school transformed from Slack Winter Learning, the school established by labor-exchange teams, new schools modified or established by the government of border area, and so on.

Mobile primary school, Guerrilla primary school and Circuit primary school were special types in wartime. In the regions behind the enemy lines, the mobile primary school was a new creation of educational activity, also an educational organization form adapted to the war situation. In marginal area of Ningwu county, in order to adapt to guerrilla surrounding, teacher Wangju firstly improved the sentry to settle down the mass, and next developed mobile primary school.

In the separate rural region, which was absent of teachers, the circuit primary school was built up.

### 4.3 The Characteristic of Textbook

#### (1). Highlighting Social and Cultural Knowledge

The early textbook in Jinsui border area always emphasized war propaganda and led to bad educational effect which was not for all-round development of children. Under the guidance of the policy of Central Committee of CPC, the Education Bureau of Jinsui border government adjusted the strategy of education and transformed to the national education. More science and cultural knowledge were added in the textbook, including calculate, nature, health, and cultural literacy. Its educational aim was also transformed to the New Citizen who had cultural scientific literacy. It mainly included the following four aspects. 1) Measurement Knowledge. 2) Natural knowledge. 3) Health knowledge. 4) Cultural Knowledge.

In the textbook, the contents of scientific and cultural knowledge were simple and easy to understand. With vivid and intuitive illustrations, it was easy for students to understand. Written in flexible and diverse forms, or written in parallel form, read catchy; or wrote philosophical stories to arouse students' thinking. The textbooks played an important role in improving primary school students' scientific and cultural literacy and effectively guaranteed the educational goal of cultivating "new citizens".

There were some limited factors in the development of education in Jinsui Border Region. Firstly, the educational foundation was weak, where lies in the mountain of Lvliang, lack of convenient geographic and traffic environment. Secondly, the educational level of the population generally lowed, including lots of illiteracy. According to the statistics in 1940, "the illiteracy was more than 90% in the total population.") Thirdly, the educational achievements was lost in the war time.

## 4.4 From School to Society

The ideological and political education was the key content in the textbook. It helped the students set up correct worldview and outlook. The students also should accept the revolutionary, military, and patriotic education. The textbook helped the students learn more knowledge about party, government, and the army. By the learning the textbook, the students remolded their old ideas, and armed with revolutionary idea, while affecting the uneducated education persons in rural society.

Another characteristic of the textbook was of the importance of labor production. Contrast with the textbook of KMT, over a quarter of the content was related to the labor production in textbook from border region, while the latter hardly had any such content. For example, in volume 1, lesson 15 named spring ploughing, and lesson 18 named eating and clothing; in volume 2, lesson 18 named autumn harvest, lesson 23 named autumn plowing, and so on.

According to the data of archive, from August 1944 to July 1945, no more than one year, the number of junior primary school and complete primary school increased, and the number of private primary school had a tenfold increase.

The deep development of education also become an essential reason of CPC winning the civil war. In 1946, Jinsui region administrative bureau of education was the new and old liberated areas the lead agency for education career, in the new historical situation, used the district and central primary school, elementary school principals for the center with complete elementary school principals in this area. The guidance work of district elementary school, each county first completely elementary school principals of the county superintendent, cooperate with administrative leaders to develop national education.) It can be seen that, the school district and the administrative district were in complete accordance with each other, and the talent team after the baptism of the civil war had become the backbone of education in Jinsui base area. In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the government of Xing County was faced with the heavy task of autumn levy and was required to play the role of “fulcrum leadership” by “publicizing various policies through winter schools and primary schools.” )

Under the guidance of the new-democratic educational thought, the government of Jinsui Border Area made its great efforts to develop the elementary education, which was combined with the war, production, society, as well as family, and finally led to the road of modern new-democratic education, which was national, scientific, and popular.

## Conclusion

This paper discussed the invisible battle between CPC and KMT in the period of the Civil War, including political propaganda, social mobilization, organization construction, education development, and so on. It is not hard to see, the triumph of CPC was comprehensive one. It is more than a military victory and successful land reform. This paper attempted to explain the reason of CPC's success from the perspective of basic rural government. In the Civil War, the vast rural areas, and the largest number of peasants among Chinese population were the most important factors. Comparing with KMT who was interested mainly in industrialization and put policy priority to develop industry, commerce and banking business, the CPC kept to the road of agricultural development.

This paper focused on the local history of Shanxi province and utilized the historical archives from the archive museums in Shanxi. These data showed a different historical prospect. Based on it, I found the rural masses burst forth great revolutionary enthusiasm, and this process also was connected with the modernization and nationalism. What were they from, or who produced them? In this paper, I discussed the intellectual history from CPC's agricultural calendar and the textbook of primary school.

The agricultural calendar of 1947 printed by CPC in Shanxi province was an interesting daily necessity, because the calendar was a part of daily time management of Chinese people at that time. In the Civil War, the calendar became an effective tool of CPC local government to carry on policy propaganda and social mobilization. When the peasants and their family members used the calendar, they soon became the supporters and advocates of CPC in the Civil War. The development of elementary education of CPC was also an important factor. We could see the ideological and political education of CPC was the key content in the textbook. It helped the students set up CPC's worldview and outlook. The students accepted the revolutionary, military, and patriotic education. By learning the textbook, the students of the area remolded their old ideas, and armed with revolutionary idea, while affecting uneducated persons in rural society. From these concrete topics, maybe we could find the reason why CPC won this civil war.

KMT, in contrast, also carried out the organization construction. National Revolutionary Society was one of the most important political organizations of KMT government in Shanxi Province. The local warlord Yan Xishan in Shanxi hoped to take advantage of this organization to fight against the base of CPC. The branches of National Revolutionary Society were existing over the whole province, nearly in every village. It was gradually integrated with other political organizations and became the core political organization of the leadership. According to Yan's idea, this organization would become a strong united constitution of national revolution. For the research on political, military, economic, and social history of modern Shanxi province, National Revolutionary Society had a very significant importance, and also the indispensable content of research on the local history of modern in Shanxi province and the rule of

Yan Xishan in Republic China. However, scholars seldom concentrated on the political feature of its core leadership, while they always put emphasis on its destructive effect on the united front against Japanese aggression, and its reactionary effect of dividing and destroying CPC. On the other hand, the research of Yan Xishan and local history in Shanxi province still focus on political idea and social practice, and not yet investigate the construction of political organizations in detail. Even though the organizational construction of KMT was relatively complete, it did not do its job in the Civil war. KMT overstressed the size and the rational bureaucracy and lacked the relative flexibility and efficiency in the wartime. That was in some degree the reason why KMT met its Waterloo.

The observations made in this paper could suggest; While fought against KMT, CPC tried to develop agricultural economy to mobilize every available resource for the purpose of civil war. Its policy had three features. Firstly, CPC politicized local population with its ideology and viewpoints. Secondly, in order to do so, it had to satisfy the needs of local population, youth, intellectual, women and minority groups, such as land ownership, safety, and security of life, better living standard, new knowledge, freedom and liberty, etc... Thirdly, to develop agrarian economy meant the modernization agriculture, hence it had to improve people's scientific and technological knowledge. Its policy had effective means, too. The tools this paper treated, agrarian calendar and primary education, were very accessible to every rural population, therefore when employed in adequate ways to the educational level of the people, they would be very effective in both educating and mobilizing them. In contrast to CPC's policy and organization, National Revolutionary Society, its opponent in the region, was not able to organize rural population, though the society was very large and covered most of the region. Its inability rooted in its leadership and organizational feature. In short, one of the reasons of the victory of CPC could be its success of integrating political propaganda and modernization of agrarian society with adequate and effective tools.

