

Management of Civil Servants in Sichuan under the Context of Patriotism during the Anti-Japanese War: Taking the Aircraft Donation among Civil Servants of Nanxi County as an Example

Zily Zheng¹

¹School of History and Culture, Sichuan University, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China.

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Abstract: After the outbreak of the Comprehensive Anti-Japanese War, the National Government appealed for aircraft donation among civil servants. Civil servants in Sichuan maintained middle enthusiasm during the whole process of donation. But for civil servants, the airplane donation did not bring economic pressure; for the air force, the small donation made little difference in armament expansion. The donation had more symbolic significance than practical usage; it stimulated the patriotic spirit of civil servants, and made them play a supportive role in the War of Resistance. At the same time, with the inspiration of patriotism, the National Government achieved better results in civil servant management.

1. Introduction

The definition of "patriotism" varies slightly in different tool books and Websites. But it generally refers to a kind of support and love for motherland hold by individuals and collective. At present, in the field of aircraft donation among civil servants, Chinese historians mainly focus on the thought and activities of "saving the country through aviation", rather than the specific situations of aircraft donation. From the regional perspective, relevant researches concentrate on studying the Middle East area and the whole country; little attentions are paid to the rear area. Therefore, the study of aircraft donation among Sichuan civil servants does not only enrich the research field, but also find the positive effect of patriotism on civil servant administration during the Comprehensive Anti-Japanese War.

2. The Launching of Aircraft Donation

2.1 The thought of "saving the country by aviation" in modern China and the movement of aircraft donation.

With the great breakthrough in weaponry technology since modern times, the scope of army operation expanded to three dimensions of land, sea and air. Aircrafts had been used for military purposes since the early days of the First World War. After the war, countries all over the world generally recognized the importance of air to warfare; air forces were quickly built as a new military branch.

There was a long history in modern China of serving the country through offering aircrafts and donations. During the Revolution of 1911, overseas Chinese donated money to buy planes and support the anti Qing uprising. During the period of Beijing Government, aircrafts began to be used in military operations. After the establishment of the National Government, the public realized the importance of aviation industry: it was urgently needed for China to conclude air treaty with foreign countries and establish air sovereignty. [1]

After the January 28th Incident in 1932, the overseas Chinese in Philippines donated 30 aircrafts to the 19th Route Army, which was fighting in Shanghai at that time. This was the first event which linked aircraft donation with Anti-Japanese War. After the battle, Shanghai citizens launched the campaign of "saving the country by aviation" and raised 1 million 390 thousand yuan to order 18

fighter planes from the United States. In July 1936, the National Government unified domestic organizations and set up China Aviation Construction Association based in the capital Nanjing. [2] From May to October, 1936, the China Aviation Construction Association and the Memorial Committee of Offering Aircrafts on Chiang Kai Shek's Birthday launched a nationwide campaign named "offer birthday congratulations through aircraft donation". After the outbreak of the Comprehensive Anti-Japanese War, aircraft donation became one of the most important channel for citizens in the rear area to support the War of Resistance.

2.2 The launching of aircraft donation project.

In January 25, 1933, the Central Political Conference of Chinese Nationalist Party passed the resolution of appealing aircraft donation to save the country. [3] After the establishment of the China Aviation Construction Association, in December 1936, the Approach on Collecting Aircraft Donation among Civil Servants proposed by the Association was approval by the Cabinet and implemented. It is noteworthy that the Approach stipulated different collection standards according to the monthly salaries of civil servants. For instance, if the salary of a civil servant was Higher than 600 yuan, 10% of aircraft donation would be collected; but for civil servants with salaries less than 30 yuan, no aircraft donation needed be paid.

After the promulgation of the Approach, Sichuan civil servants paid their aircraft donations. As the executor of state power, civil servants had better economic conditions compared with other social groups. Meanwhile, Sichuan located at the rear area of China, and had relatively stable economic situations. Civil servants in Sichuan had relatively steady income. In existing documents, archives of Nanxi County are more detailed. In the following passage, the specific situations of aircraft donation among civil servants are investigated with several units of Nanxi County as examples.

3. The Collection of Aircraft Donation among Civil Servants of Nanxi County

3.1 The situations of Nanxi County Collection Bureau.

In the summer of 1937, the Administrative Inspector Office of the Sixth District of Sichuan Province ordered Nanxi County Collection Bureau to collect aircraft donation from July of that year. [4] Afterwards, the Bureau began to collect donation. In July and August of that year, the average donation amount was 2.97 yuan per month. [5]

In September, the donation amounts changed. From September 1937 to February 1938, the average donation amount was 2.33 yuan per month. Specific amounts are listed in the table. [5]

Table 1

Title	Director general	director		clerk	Total
Name	Wei Pu	Chang-qi Zhou	Hao-zhong	Jing-tang Li	
Salary	108 yuan	39 yuan	39 yuan	33 yuan	219 yuan
Donation rate	1.5%	20 cents	20 cents	20 cents	
Donation amount	1.73 yuan	0.2 yuan	0.2 yuan	0.2 yuan	2.33 yuan

The situations of 1939 are as following. Compared with September 1937, the director general and clerk of the Bureau changed in January and February of 1939. But the donation amounts remained. The salary of director general was the highest. According to provisions, civil servants with monthly salary more than 101 yuan needed to donate 1.5% of his salary. Thus, the director general needed to pay 1.73 yuan. The salaries of the other three staffs were between 31 and 50 yuan, so they only needed to donate 0.2 yuan. Analyze from the perspective of percentage, 0.2 yuan only accounted for 0.6% of Bo-yin Yuan's salary of 33 yuan, and 0.5% of Chang-qi Zhou's and Hao-yue Zhong's salary of 39 yuan. Analyze from the perspective of time, price of commodities definitely rose during the 1 year and 5 months of donation. But the donation amounts remained unchanged. [6] During that period,

inflation devalued the money they paid. 1.73 yuan paid by the director general and 0.2 yuan paid by other three staffs could buy fewer and fewer commodities. Therefore, it can be concluded that aircraft donation paid during that period did not bring obvious burden to the life of civil servants.

Donation situations afterwards are as following. From April to June 1939, the Bureau paid a total of 3.8 yuan per month. [6] The salaries of all staff rose. The monthly salary of director general Shao-zhai Liu increased to 160 yuan, so he needed to pay 3.2 yuan, which accounted for 2% of his salary. The monthly salaries of rest staffs were less than 40 yuan in February; at this time, their salaries reached to 50 yuan. But they still paid aircraft donation of 0.2 yuan, which accounted only for 0.4% of their monthly salaries. [7]

According to provisions, the donation lasted for two years. [8] The final month of donation collection for Nanxi County Collection Bureau should be July 1939. In the original file, the data of final month was in line with that of April to June, [9] so it could be concluded that the amount of aircraft donation paid by the Bureau remained unchanged from April 1939 to the cessation of donation.

It can be seen that, in Nanxi County Collection Bureau, general staffs with monthly salaries between 31 and 50 yuan only needed to donate 0.2 yuan per month. Their salaries increased but the donation amounts remained unchanged. Aircraft donation produced increasingly weak impacts on the life of civil servants. For the director general, though the donation rate rose from 1.5% to 2%, it took only a small part of his monthly salary. The collection of aircraft donations did not have significant impacts on the life quality of general staffs and the director general. The impacts were even weakened by inflation.

3.2 The situation of Junior Middle School of Nanxi County.

In accordance with procedures issued by the Cabinet in December 1936, all civil servants in "the party, the government, the army and schools" were required to donate. In addition to the Collection Bureau, aircraft donation was also collected among staffs in the Junior Middle School of Nanxi County. Analyzing the donation situations of this school from July to October 1937, following facts can be found. First, of the 37 staffs who donated money from July to October 1937, 11 people only paid 0.2 yuan, and the other 26 staffs paid 1% of their monthly salaries for their monthly salaries were between 51 and 100 yuan. Second, the monthly salary of the principal was also within 100 yuan, so he needed to pay 1% of his monthly salary like the other 26 staffs. [10]

The donation situations of the first four months are provided as above. Records about January and February of 1938 were missing. From March to June, the donation amounts remained the same. [10] By comparing the donation amounts with monthly salaries, it could be found that except for staffs who paid 0.2 yuan, the donation rate of all staffs was 1%. [11] The monthly salaries of four teachers increased a little due to class fees, but the 1% donation was calculated after cutting the class fees. In general, the monthly salaries of middle school teachers were higher than those of Nanxi County Collection Bureau employees, so the payment amounts were also higher. Although a few staffs paid 0.2 yuan, most people including the principal only needed to pay 1% of their monthly salaries. The economic burden was not heavy.

In conclusion, aircraft donation did not lower the living standards of civil servants from the Collection Bureau and the Junior Middle School. On the contrary, with the rise of commodity prices, the standard of aircraft donation remained unchanged. The director general of the Collection Bureau only needed to pay 2% of his salary in 1939. [12] The plane donation only took a very small part of their monthly income, and did not bring financial burdens.

4. Significance and Influence of Aircraft Donation in Civil Servants of Sichuan

Since the aircraft donation did not bring financial burdens to civil servants, can it help the air force to expand armaments? In 1937, the price of a pursuit plane was about 100 thousand yuan, [13] and for conservative estimation, an air force squadron with combat effectiveness needed at least 10 to 20 pursuit planes. [14] That is, at least 100 to 200 million yuan should be paid; while each unit only donated a few yuan per month. Considering the loss rate of fighters at the early stage of the

Anti-Japanese War, the donation was a drop in the bucket. By the middle of 1939, the Japanese army did only occupy a large number of cities and traffic lines in middle and east areas, but also expanded into the inner land of China. To the west they conquered Yichang of Hubei; they even occupied Tengchong and Longling of Yunnan from the direction of Burma. At that time, the National Government had lost the control of the air in middle and east China, and it had no significance to collect aircraft donation any more. The China Aviation Construction Association announced that the final donation date was July 1939. The donation lasted for only two years. Obviously, aircraft donation did not produce obvious impacts on air force building.

So what is the real purpose of aircraft donation? First of all, the issue can be analyzed from the perspective of Anti-Japanese War. Aircraft donation was collected only at the first two years of the Anti-Japanese War. At that time the war was the most intense. The aircraft donation called civil servants of Sichuan to work together with one heart, and appealed for united efforts to save the nation. It constantly reminded civil servants of their sacred missions as national staffs in the rear area. Due to its vigilance and encouragement functions, aircraft donation can be regarded as a symbol or ceremony which played a role in social identification and social mobilization. For instance, some scholars point out that, the image of Sun Yat-sen has been built as a symbol of the Chinese Nationalist Party. Through commemorating him, functions of integrating society, encouraging people and serving the country can be realized. [15] Similarly, aircraft donation can be regarded as a symbolic ceremony carried out due to the War of Resistance, and a kind of patriotic activity aims to appeal civil servants to support the War of Resistance.

Secondly, the issue can be analyzed from the perspective of civil servant management. Civil servants maintained high enthusiasm due to the subjective factor of patriotism and the objective factor of low donation amounts. The collection of aircraft donation diverted discontent of civil servants and their families to the government, and stabilized the ruling of National Government to a certain extent.

To sum up, civil servant aircraft donation carried forward the spirit of "saving the country by aviation" in modern China. Although the donation did not cause economic burdens to civil servants, and produced only slight influence on air force building, it was a symbolic ceremony which could stimulate the national spirit and patriotism of civil servants, and inspired them to be brave and tolerant in front of the strong enemy. In addition, aircraft donation was also a management method of the government. Through the inspiration of patriotism, civil servants could actively fulfill their wartime obligations; the management objectives of integrating Sichuan civil servants, supporting the War of Resistance and serving the country could also be achieved.

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[9] Digital archives of Nanxi County of the Republican period, Southwest Literature Research Center of Sichuan University, 8-1-483.

[10] Digital archives of Nanxi County of the Republican period, Southwest Literature Research Center of Sichuan University, 10-1-5.

[11] According to the Approach on Collecting Aircraft Donation among Civil Servants proposed by China Aviation Construction Association, civil servants with monthly salaries between 31 yuan and 50 yuan only needed to donate 0.2 yuan. Civil servants with monthly salaries more than 51 yuan needed to pay the donation according to different percentages of their monthly salaries.

[12] According to regulations, aircraft donation among civil servants began at 1937 and lasted for two years. 1939 was the last year of civil servant aircraft donation, and the peak year of commodity price since the beginning of the Comprehensive Anti-Japanese war. This shows that the amount of aircraft donation remained and had little impacts on civil servants.

[13] Calculation on the prices of fighters at that time go as following. Han-hun Li wrote articles titled Promoting the One County One Airplane Movement and Aviation Construction and One County One Airplane Movement, and expressed that "each aircraft cost 200 thousand yuan". Fu-man Tang and Xiang Ou-yang wrote the article of Aircraft Donation Movement in Guangdong during the Anti-Japanese War, which described that "each aircraft cost about 90 thousand yuan; Nanjing Aviation Committee purchased 11 airplanes"; "each aircraft cost about 100 thousand yuan according to commodity price of 1936". According to above data, the average price of aircraft is estimated at about 100 thousand yuan.

[14] According to page 38 of Ying-qin He's Military Report during the War of Resistance (thirty-second volume of the Series of Republic of China, second edition), there were 31 squadrons in the air force before the War of Resistance. According to page 112 of Anti-Japanese Aggression (first volume), which is the third part of Wei-guo Jiang's National Revolutionary War History, the air force had 600 planes at that time. So it could be estimated that an air force squadron with combat effectiveness needed about 20 aircrafts.

[15] Y.Q. Chen, The memorial-week of Sun Yat-sen in time and ritual dimensions, J. Open Times. 04 (2005).