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Research on the Daily Teaching and Social Practice of National Schools in Bishan County during the Period of Full-scale War of Resistance (1940-1945)

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Abstract

During the period of the full-scale War of Resistance, county-level national education developed rapidly. As a microcosm of the implementation of national education in the rear area of the War of Resistance, Bishan County had demonstrative significance for the development of national education in other parts of the country. Under the influence of the ideological trend of resisting the enemy and saving the country, the daily teaching and social practice of national schools in Bishan County reflected the characteristics of wartime. The national education in Bishan County exhibited characteristics such as coerciveness, struggle, planning, and practicality. A comprehensive review of the national schools in Bishan County shows that while they played a role in enlightening the people and promoting the War of Resistance, due to objective constraints, they still found it difficult to change the customs and traditions of rural society.

Keywords

Period of Full-scale War of Resistance, Bishan County, National Schools, Daily.

1. Introduction

At present, in the field of educational history, research on the "history of educational life" is flourishing and has gradually become a new academic research paradigm. This research paradigm aims to record and study the educational life of educators and those being educated from the perspective of education participants, adopting a "bottom-up" approach. In other words, the history of educational life focuses more on the daily learning, life, and social practice of teachers, students, and other education workers. This represents an expansion and extension of the contemporary educational philosophy of "people-oriented" academic thought in the field of educational history research. [1] In this section of the study, the author attempts to adopt this perspective to salvage fragments of the daily learning and social practice of elementary school students under the national crisis. Due to limitations in historical materials, we are unable to restore the growth experiences of each student under the wartime national education system through more detailed narratives of educational life. Instead, we can only strive to place the subjectivity of "students" within the historical context of the implementation of wartime national education in the rear area. By analyzing their participation in daily learning and social practice activities, we outline the daily activity scenes of those receiving wartime national education from a detailed perspective.

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2. Daily Teaching Conditions in Wartime National Schools in Bishan County

First, let us examine how elementary school students in national schools enrolled, took exams, and graduated during the process of shaping the cultural field of national education in the wartime rear area. What were their academic achievements?

Taking Bishan County as an example, wartime national education in the rear area exhibited a distinct coercive nature regarding student enrollment. The National Government required local township offices and security offices to be responsible for implementing a policy of compulsory enrollment for school-age children and imposed penalties on those who refused to enroll. The punitive measures included:

(1) Face-to-face persuasion: "Anyone who should enroll but does not must be given a face-to-face persuasion within a specified time period, directed at their family, guardian, or the individual themselves, requiring them to enroll."

(2) Public warning notices: "Those who refuse to comply with the persuasion may have their names publicly displayed as a warning."

(3) Fines or labor penalties: "Those who still refuse to enroll may be fined between one and five yuan by the county or city government or be required to perform labor for a corresponding period, and they must be ordered to enroll within a specified deadline."

(Implementation Outline of National Education, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-156, Page 9).

Despite these measures, the enrollment rate of students in wartime Bishan County's national schools remained very low, and the number of students who actually completed their education was even smaller. Some students registered for school but failed to attend after the start of the semester; others dropped out after studying for a period of time. Both central schools and security national schools faced such enrollment issues. For example, statistics from 1944 for the Second Central School of Daxing Township showed a significant disparity between the number of enrolled students and those who actually attended, with an extremely imbalanced ratio of male to female students.

Table 1. Enrollment and Actual Attendance of Students at the Second Central School of Daxing Township (1944)

Grade Level	Student Count			
	Enrollment		Actual Attendance	
	Boys (Persons)	Girls (Persons)	Boys (Persons)	Girls (Persons)
First Grade (Second Term)	25	14	12	6
Second Grade (Second Term)	29	7	14	2
Third Grade (Second Term)	24	7	9	1
Fourth Grade (Second Term)	25	4	9	1
Total	141	40	44	10

Source: This table was compiled based on the Student Enrollment List of the Second Central National School of Daxing Township, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-568, Page 122.

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From the above table, it can be observed that in 1944, the Second Central School of Daxing Township had four grades, with significantly more boys than girls in each grade. The total number of enrolled boys was 141, while the total number of enrolled girls was only 40. Meanwhile, the actual attendance was much lower, with only 44 boys and 10 girls present. The number of students attending classes was clearly lower than the number of enrolled students.

Similarly, the security national schools also had low enrollment rates. According to statistics on the number of students in the Fifth, Eighth, and Ninth Security National Schools of Daxing Township in 1944 (see the table below), the problem persisted.

In the Fifth Security National School of Daxing Township, the number of enrolled boys was 46, and the number of enrolled girls was 24. The number of boys who actually attended was 19, while the number of girls was 10.

In the Eighth Security National School of Daxing Township, the number of enrolled boys was 47, and the number of enrolled girls was 20. The number of boys who actually attended was 18, while the number of girls was 12.

In the Ninth Security National School of Daxing Township, the number of enrolled boys was 33, and the number of enrolled girls was 20. The number of boys who actually attended was 20, while the number of girls was only 6.

Across these three security national schools, the total number of enrolled boys was 126, and the total number of enrolled girls was 64. However, the actual number of boys attending was only 57, and the actual number of girls attending was only 28. The enrollment rate for boys was only 45%, while for girls, it was merely 43%, both of which were less than half of the total number of enrolled students!

Table 2. Enrollment and Actual Attendance of Students at the Fifth, Eighth, and Ninth Security National Schools of Daxing Township (1944)

School	Student Count			
	Enrollment		Actual Attendance	
	Boys (Persons)	Girls (Persons)	Boys (Persons)	Girls (Persons)
Fifth Security National School	46	24	19	10
Eighth Security National School	47	20	18	12
Ninth Security National School	33	20	20	6
Total	126	64	57	28

Source: This table was compiled based on the Comparison Table of Class Enrollment Numbers for the Second Semester of the 33rd Academic Year of the Fifth Security School of Daxing Township and the Comparison Table of Class Enrollment Numbers for the Second Semester of the 33rd Academic Year of the Eighth and Ninth Security Schools of Daxing Township, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-568, Pages 97–107.

Overall Analysis. In general, most national schools in the wartime rear area exhibited the phenomenon of "low enrollment rates, low graduation rates, and high dropout rates" among students. Taking Bishan County as an example, in 1942, the county's township central schools initially planned to enroll 200 students. However, due to low enrollment rates and a significant number of students dropping out midway, the number of students who ultimately completed their education and participated in the graduation examination was even smaller. Moreover, their examination performance was not ideal (see the table below).

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That year, a total of 15 townships in Bishan County reported student graduation results: Zhengxing Township, Zhongxing Township, Longxing Township, Zhuanlong Township, Fulu Township, Yifeng Township, Dalu Township, Jianlong Township, Chengnan Township, Daxing Township, Dingjia Township, Sanjiao Township, Chengxi Township, Zitong Township, and Dinglin Township. The total number of students who participated in the graduation examination was 341. The examination subjects included nine disciplines: Chinese, Arithmetic, General Knowledge, Scouting, Physical Education, Music, Fine Arts, Handicrafts, and Singing Games.

Among these nine subjects, the highest average score was in Chinese, at 73.44 points, while the lowest average score was in Physical Education, at 69.14 points. The overall average score across all subjects for students in the 15 township central schools was 71.35 points.

For instance, in February 1942, the fourth security national school in Zhengxing Township recruited 37 students for its children's class in the second semester. However, "only seven students eventually graduated" (Graduation Student List of the Second Semester of the 31st Academic Year of the Fourth Security National School of Zhengxing Township, Bishan County, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-341, Page 281).

Similarly, the children's class of the Twelfth Security National School in Daxing Township had an enrollment of 40 students at the beginning of the semester. However, "by the first semester of 1941, only four students graduated" (Graduation Student List of the First Semester of the 30th Academic Year of the Twelfth Security National School of Daxing Township, Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-189, Page 106).

Table 3. Graduation Examination Results of Students in Township Central Schools of Bishan County (1942)

Central School	Number of Examinees	Average Scores									
		Chinese	Arithmetic	General Knowledge	Scouting	Physical Education	Music	Fine Arts	Handicrafts	Singing Games	Overall Average Score
Zhengxing Township	40persons	75.2	74.0	74.6	75.7	69.8	71.8	70.0	73.1	69.3	72.6
Longxi Township	18persons	78.3	70.5	72.5	71.3	69.3	74.2	68.7	71.0	73.6	72.2
Zhongxing Township	14persons	71.9	69.1	68.2	71.6	70.3	72.8	74.5	73.0	68.0	71.0
Zhuanlong Township	16persons	72.2	74.7	75.5	76.0	72.5	73.8	78.2	65.5	69.1	73.0
Fulu Township	7persons	76.7	68.2	73.0	77.0	74.8	67.7	70.9	76.4	75.7	73.4
Yifeng Township	14persons	70.7	70.1	67.7	69.5	70.2	60.2	65.5	78.2	66.5	68.7
Dalu Township	31persons	71.2	69.5	74.5	72.5	69.8	65.6	71.3	66.5	78.4	71.0
Jianlong Township	23persons	73.3	69.0	69.5	72.5	68.9	70.2	69.8	62.7	72.6	69.8
Chengnan Township	46persons	74.1	72.0	77.3	73.5	67.8	72.8	67.3	75.0	77.0	72.9
Daxing Township	11persons	75.3	67.5	68.5	74.2	65.3	68.9	73.1	67.9	75.0	70.6
Dingjia Township	42persons	75.0	72.0	76.2	68.0	65.4	63.8	72.7	64.1	76.7	70.4
Sanjiao Township	30persons	72.5	76.0	72.1	77.0	67.5	72.8	76.4	73.6	74.3	73.6
Chengxi Township	6persons	73.0	68.7	71.5	73.2	68.0	66.3	73.8	70.9	67.5	70.3
Zitong Township	38persons	70.6	69.4	69.5	71.5	69.5	70.5	69.1	70.7	69.8	70.0
Dinglin Township	5persons	71.6	71.6	72.0	76.0	68.0	67.9	70.9	69.2	69.4	70.7
Overall Average Score	341persons	73.44	70.82	72.17	73.3	69.14	69.29	71.48	70.52	72.19	71.35

Source: This table was compiled based on the following documents: Records on the General Situation of National Primary Schools and Related Physical Education Meetings, Reports on the Qualification Review of Primary School Teaching Staff, Reports on Various Aspects of the Security Schools in Longxi, Chengdong, and Chengnan Townships, Membership Roster of the

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National Education Research Association of Puyuan, Dingjia, Tutang, and Central Townships, Records on the General Situation of National Primary Schools and Related Physical Education Meetings, Reports on the Financial Expenditure Issues of Central Security Schools, Reports on the Appointment and Transfer of School Principals and Related Conditions in Yifeng and Tutang Townships, Documents on School Construction Funds, Student Rosters, Graduation Certificates, and Other Materials, Reports on the Rice Rations of Teaching Staff in Central Schools of Yifeng, Taihe, Shizi, and Dalu Townships, as well as Financial and Class Information of Security Schools in Various Townships, Reports on School Financial Expenditures and Student Issues, Inventory and Updated Rosters of New and Graduating Students from Dinglin Township Central School, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive Nos.: 1-4-568, 1-4-341, 1-4-402, 1-4-694, 1-4-559, 1-4-449, 1-4-496, 1-4-576, 1-4-660, 1-4-450, 1-4-325, etc.

Why Did Students Generally Perform Poorly in Their Studies? It is important to recognize that this situation cannot simply be attributed to students being lazy or unintelligent. Rather, it was closely related to the wartime environment in which national education was implemented in the rear area and its objective effects.

For example, the shortage of teachers negatively impacted students' learning conditions. As previously mentioned, many teachers, unable to receive their salaries, experienced increasing conflicts with schools. When their attempts to demand wages were unsuccessful, they resigned, leading to a severe shortage of teachers. In 1944, at the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Security National Schools of Jielong Township, "classes had been conducted for over a month, yet the expenses for rice, vegetables, and other necessities had to be borrowed externally, making it extremely difficult. If this situation continued, morale within the school would become unstable" (Petition from the Security Schools of Jielong Township Requesting the Issuance of Salary and Rice to Maintain the Current Situation, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-400, Pages 216–217).

After failing to receive assistance from the county government, four teachers from the Second, Fourth, and Fifth Security National Schools were forced to seek other employment, further exacerbating the teacher shortage. Regular teaching activities became increasingly difficult to sustain, naturally leading to student attrition.

Similarly, in January 1941, the principal of Gaoshiti Security National School in Luming Township, Lian Huanran, reported:

"Teacher Pan Zhonglian has been employed at the school for several months but has not received a single penny in salary, making his situation unbearably difficult. He has repeatedly requested his wages, but the school is unable to cover his salary in the long term. Moreover, the township supervisor Zhang Wencan has persistently obstructed official duties, disregarded the governance of local education, and misused his authority to interfere with the hiring of teachers and the distribution of salaries. I therefore request the county government to intervene."

(Petition from Gaoshiti Security National School in Luming Township Requesting the Payment of Teacher Salaries, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-271, Pages 812–814).

With no salaries, teachers had no choice but to spend their time seeking payment. Even those who continued to teach were often distracted, making it difficult to ensure teaching effectiveness. Students, lacking motivation and supervision, found it easy to abandon their studies and drop out.

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The Impact of Inadequate School Facilities on Student Learning. The rudimentary conditions of wartime national schools, including poor school buildings and insufficient equipment, further reduced students' enthusiasm for learning. Many schools lacked basic teaching materials, leaving students with only the teacher's in-class lectures as their sole source of knowledge, which was far too limited. The severe lack of school facilities made it difficult to stimulate students' motivation to learn. With a narrow knowledge base and weak academic foundations, students easily lost interest in their studies.

For instance, the Seventh Security National School in Puyuan Township was "located at a key transportation hub, but its facilities were completely inadequate" (Petition from the Seventh Security School of Puyuan Township Requesting the Issuance of Two Sets of Ping-Pong Equipment, Twenty Sets of Badminton Equipment, One Set of Children's Educational Posters, and Maps of Sichuan Province and Other Regions, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-498, Page 90).

The school principal, Wen Juchang, stated:

"Our school lacks proper teaching equipment and has very few supplementary resources. There are no recreational items for children's games to help stimulate their interest. Additionally, when visitors come to observe, the poor condition of the facilities makes it quite embarrassing."

(Petition from the Seventh Security School of Puyuan Township Requesting the Issuance of Two Sets of Ping-Pong Equipment, Twenty Sets of Badminton Equipment, One Set of Children's Educational Posters, and Maps of Sichuan Province and Other Regions, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-498, Page 91).

The lack of equipment limited students' access to knowledge and restricted their perspectives, making it even harder for students with weak academic foundations to develop an interest in learning.

Many townships originally had plans to establish national schools, but they often faced difficulties right from the site selection stage. The process of selecting a location, raising funds, constructing buildings, and acquiring equipment was extremely challenging. In some cases, just finalizing the school's site selection took several years, forcing local students to attend schools in neighboring townships.

During the school establishment process, delays caused by insufficient funding further postponed the opening of schools. Even when schools were finally built, their facilities frequently suffered from various issues, and the learning environment remained unstable. With students having to constantly relocate and commute, their ability to focus on learning was naturally affected.

The Impact of Wartime National Education on Local Society

Despite facing numerous obstacles, the widespread implementation of national education in the wartime rear area did lead to a preliminary increase in student enrollment rates, particularly for female students. This also brought about some changes in local social customs.

For example, according to observations made by Canadian researcher Elizabeth and others in Xinglongchang, after Bishan County implemented national education during the War of Resistance:

"Previously, wealthy families only sent their sons to school, but now they were also enrolling their daughters. People were intrigued by the increasing number of female students in town, as they had never seen such a phenomenon before. Another notable change was that, in the past, villagers would gather in tea houses to discuss current affairs. Those engaging in these discussions were usually well-traveled gentry or merchants who had visited the county town or Chongqing and thus had a broader perspective. Now, after school, students would bring

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home the latest battlefield news they heard from their teachers, providing an additional source of information. However, for ordinary farmers—especially women—who were busy with daily survival, so-called national and international affairs remained distant and irrelevant to their lives. More concerning was that, over time, instead of accelerating, the pace of national education reform actually slowed down." [2]

3. Social Practices Conducted by National Schools in Bishan County During Wartime

Furthermore, although the daily learning of students in national schools in the wartime rear area was not directly affected by the ravages of war, the national crisis necessitated an approach of "integrating war into education," disrupting the once peaceful rural school environment. Consequently, despite being located in remote mountainous areas, the central schools and national schools of Bishan County actively participated in the promotion of resistance efforts and integrated these activities with lively and diverse extracurricular and social practice initiatives. These activities became one of the key means of mass mobilization and cultural propaganda in the wartime rear area.

In other words, the extracurricular and social practice activities of elementary school students in the wartime rear area primarily revolved around themes of "resisting aggression and building the nation" and "patriotism and opposition to the enemy." These activities included supporting the frontlines, academic competitions, and current affairs propaganda. By combining wartime knowledge from national education with everyday practical skills, these initiatives enriched students' extracurricular lives and broadened their perspectives. The specific activities are as follows:

3.1. Fundraising for Winter Clothing and Military Conscription Propaganda Activities

According to the wartime educational archives of Bishan County, as early as November 1940, the central school of Zhengxing Township had voluntarily launched a winter clothing fundraising and military conscription propaganda campaign. The school principal, Gong Zhengze, placed great emphasis on cultivating students' patriotic awareness. During morning assemblies and school meetings, he frequently conveyed news of frontline soldiers' hardships and sacrifices, urging teachers and students to contribute their efforts in support of the troops.

To this end, the school launched a winter clothing donation campaign. "On the morning of November 5, the school held a morning assembly where Principal Gong Zhengze stated that the soldiers on the frontlines were fighting to the death against the enemy and deserved our utmost respect. As citizens of this nation, we must spare no effort in supporting them and boosting their morale. The battlefield conditions were harsh, and with the approach of winter, military supplies were severely lacking, making it difficult to sustain the troops. Therefore, our school is initiating a winter clothing donation campaign, hoping that teachers and students will contribute wholeheartedly and work together to provide support from the rear. Within a month, all students and faculty actively participated in the donation effort, giving away their excess clothing to frontline soldiers as a gesture of support for the war effort. The school, comprising 108 members, collectively donated 215 pieces of clothing, with Principal Gong Zhengze alone contributing 24 pieces."

(Military Conscription Propaganda by Schools, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-107, Page 66).

The winter clothing donation campaign achieved remarkable success at Zhengxing Township Central School. The initiative soon spread to other townships, with the central schools of

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Mafang Township, Sanjiao Township, Qingmu Township, Longxing Township, Dalu Township, Chengnan Township, Longfeng Township, and Zhongxing Township also organizing similar campaigns on a large scale. The following table presents specific data on the winter clothing donation efforts of central schools in various townships of Bishan County.

Table 4. Winter Clothing Donation Achievements of Central Schools in Various Townships of Bishan County (November 1940)

Township Central Schools	Total Number of Faculty and Students (Persons)	Donated Winter Clothes (Items)
Zhengxing Township Central School	108	215
Mafang Township Central School	99	150
Sanjiao Township Central School	110	189
Qingmu Township Central School	120	220
Longxing Township Central School	87	90
Dalu Township Central School	110	177
Chengnan Township Central School	103	190
Longfeng Township Central School	90	124
Zhongxing Township Central School	104	192

Source: This table was compiled based on Military Conscription Propaganda by Schools, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-107.

At the same time, the central school of Linjiang Township in Bishan County spontaneously organized a military conscription propaganda team. Under the leadership of Principal Cai Tingrong and Director of Academic Affairs Qian Guangxing, all 94 male and female students from the school traveled across different regions to conduct conscription propaganda.

The propaganda team "traveled deep into Danfeng Township, Shizi Township, Laifeng Township, and Jianlong Township, where they posted recruitment slogans and posters, distributed military conscription brochures on the streets, and explained military service laws and policies. Through these efforts, they expanded their influence and aimed to awaken the public, calling on everyone to contribute to the war effort."

Subsequently, "school faculty member Zeng Yongzheng led a group of male and female students to remote areas of Dingjia Township and Luming Township to continue the conscription propaganda efforts. They organized conscription speeches, comforted conscripts preparing for military service, and performed theatrical plays. To avoid imposing additional burdens on the local people, all teachers and students prepared their own meals, demonstrating a responsible attitude that was well received by the local community."

(Instruction Approving the Commendation of All Faculty and Students of Zhengxing Township Central National School for Their Enthusiastic Military Conscription Propaganda Efforts, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-107, Page 67).

On the anniversary of the "July 7th Incident" in 1941, the entire faculty and students of Daxing Township Central School, along with those from the Second, Third, and Fourth Security National Schools, traveled to Qingmu Township to provide comfort and support to the families of soldiers fighting in the war. They distributed relief supplies to military families and wrote letters to frontline soldiers on behalf of their families to maintain communication and boost morale.

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It can be said that the military conscription propaganda efforts led by elementary school students in the wartime rear area helped the public understand the severity and difficulty of the war. These initiatives encouraged citizens in the rear to actively support the war effort through practical actions. The teachers and students from the central and national schools of Bishan County displayed remarkable enthusiasm for the national salvation movement. As they tirelessly traveled across the region to promote conscription, they endured hardships, provided for themselves, and devoted themselves to the country—a truly commendable effort that left a profound psychological impact on all involved!

3.2. Wartime Academic and Skill Competitions

During the wartime period, national schools in the rear area regularly organized academic and skill competitions to assess students' mastery of wartime knowledge and their practical application abilities. After the competitions concluded, townships would reward schools that achieved excellent results and provide guidance to those with unsatisfactory performance. These competitions were designed to be lively and engaging, serving as a means for national schools to evaluate students' learning outcomes and encourage them to study diligently.

For example, on October 24, 1944, the central school and various security national schools of Qitang Township held an academic and skill competition to assess teaching effectiveness and student performance. This event garnered significant attention from local gentry and townspeople. According to archival records:

"Qitang Township's autonomous counselor, Rong Huidi, in accordance with relevant regulations, convened a meeting with Qitang Township senators, township representatives, the chairman, and individuals enthusiastic about education to organize the academic and skill competition. It was decided that the central national school and security national schools would hold the competition within the township, with the event scheduled for November 10. The competition subjects included Chinese, General Knowledge, National Defense, Arithmetic, and Public Speaking. Among them, Chinese, General Knowledge, National Defense, and Arithmetic were divided by grade level for competition. The selection method for winners was as follows: one student per grade was selected for the Public Speaking category, while the top three students in each grade were chosen for the other subjects. The competition expenses were to be raised by the township head, who entrusted security heads to solicit donations."

(Report on the Academic and Skill Competition of Students in Qitang Township Central National School and Security National Schools, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-496, Page 52).

Table 5. Statistics on the Academic and Skill Competition of Students in Qitang Township Central National School and Security National Schools (1944)

School	Participants	Winners	Winning Rate (%)
Central School	56(Persons)	34(Persons)	60.71%
Second Security National School	32(Persons)	3(Persons)	9.3%
Third Security National School	42(Persons)	5(Persons)	11.9%
Fourth Security National School	13(Persons)	0(Persons)	0
Sixth Security National School	36(Persons)	3(Persons)	8.3%
Seventh Security National School	28(Persons)	4(Persons)	14.29%
Eighth Security National School	40(Persons)	5(Persons)	12.5%
Ninth Security National School	38(Persons)	6(Persons)	15.79%
Tenth Security National School	36(Persons)	7(Persons)	19.44%

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Source: This table was compiled based on Report on the Academic and Skill Competition of Students in Qitang Township Central National School and Security National Schools, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-496, Page 52.

As shown in the table above, the schools participating in the Qitang Township academic and skill competition included one central school and eight security national schools: the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Security National Schools.

The central school had 56 students participating, with 34 students achieving outstanding results, resulting in a success rate of 60.71%.

The eight security national schools had varying numbers of participants, ranging from 13 to 42 students. However, the number of winners was relatively low.

Among them, the Fourth Security National School had 13 students participate, yet none achieved outstanding results, yielding a success rate of 0%.

The Tenth Security National School had 36 participants, with 7 students winning awards, yielding a success rate of 19.44%.

In total, 265 students from the eight security national schools participated, with 33 students achieving outstanding results, giving an overall success rate of 12.45%.

Compared to the 50% success rate of the central school students, the performance of the security national school students was significantly lower.

3.3. Installation of Radios and Current Affairs Propaganda Activities

During wartime, various propaganda and public speaking activities were frequent. National schools regularly held lectures on civic knowledge, current affairs, military topics, as well as musical performances, and mobile film screenings. Many of these activities were conducted via radio broadcasts. To ensure the timely and rapid dissemination of frontline news and national policies to the public, the Sichuan Provincial Department of Education mandated that "all national schools establish radio rooms, install direct current radios, and assign radio operators to handle transmissions, so that current affairs news and central government decrees could be broadcast throughout rural villages" (Use of Radios by Schools and Civic Education Centers, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-107, Page 58).

In May 1941, the central school of Mafang Township launched an extracurricular practice initiative titled "Installing Direct Current Radios to Expand Resistance Propaganda." A radio operator was invited to the school to demonstrate the installation process and distribute "Radio Usage Instructions" to teachers and students, teaching them how to install and operate the radios. Through this, teachers and students gained an understanding of radio functionality and learned how to use the equipment.

It is worth noting that direct current radios had a wide range of applications. They could receive and relay various types of information, including announcements for morning assemblies and gatherings, as well as broadcasts of wartime music, films, and propaganda materials. This expanded the sources of information available to students and teachers, addressing the problem of "information blockades and ignorance" caused by limited access to news. As such, radios became one of the most essential tools for wartime public mobilization in the rear area.

According to wartime archives, national and central schools in Bishan County also organized specialized "Moral Education Days" as a means to integrate school activities with social engagement. These events were held on the first week of every month and were independently organized by each school. Activities included national weekly and monthly assemblies, the promotion of the New Life Movement, and social service initiatives.

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For example, during national weekly assemblies, schools guided students to elect officers to oversee the events. These officers were responsible for persuading the public to participate as members, explaining important current affairs, and providing moral education. The assemblies were supplemented with music, drama, film screenings, and slideshow presentations to spark public interest in gatherings.

During national monthly assemblies, schools collaborated with local government agencies and organizations to host joint events. Township heads and security officers were required to attend and explain key government decrees, such as national mobilization, military service policies, and grain regulations, thereby increasing public engagement in such assemblies.

In promoting the New Life Movement, schools mobilized students and based their activities on various hygiene and cleanliness regulations. For social service work, schools developed specific rules, organized exhibitions and seminars, provided labor and employment guidance, and advised local communities on agricultural practices, among numerous other initiatives (Outline of Moral Education Work in Various School Levels, Archives of Bishan County, Sichuan Province, Republic of China, Collection of the Research Center for Southwest China Literature, Sichuan University, Archive No.: 1-4-323, Pages 19–20).

4. Conclusion

However, the role of wartime national education in mobilizing the public should not be overstated. Most central and security national schools, within the context of rural society at the time, were like "solitary sails on a vast ocean," struggling to challenge traditional Chinese perceptions of rural education and deeply ingrained local customs.

The renowned French scholar Pierre Bourdieu also pointed out that "a child's expectations for education and career prospects are closely linked to their parents' educational background and cultural environment." [3] Similarly, the Chinese historian Qian Mu once stated: "If one is to discuss the foundations of cultural traditions and psychological habits in Chinese society, one must recognize that they were fundamentally established by the private school (sishu) system. This is an aspect that cannot be overlooked." [4]

According to field research conducted by Tong Runzhi on rural Bishan County during the later years of the War of Resistance, "more than half of school-age children were out of school... In the past, at least half of elementary education was conducted through private schools. Although national schools have been gradually established in recent years, private school education remains significantly widespread." [5]

Thus, in a social environment where political, economic, and cultural structures in the wartime rear area largely remained unchanged, even under the enforced implementation of national education policies, it was extremely difficult for central and security national schools to fully replace the traditional "sishu" (private school) system. [6]

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