

The textual perspective of the image construction of the Communist Party of China during the Anti-Japanese War

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Abstract: The image of a political party is a kind of intangible asset, which profoundly affects the future development trend of a political party to some extent. During the Anti-Japanese War, the image construction of the Communist Party of China had various forms. As the symbolic construction and expression method of the party's external image, text was a key media resource. The Communist Party of China has successfully shaped the advanced image of the Party in the war of resistance for the people and actively fighting the war of resistance through various text propaganda methods, such as the articles of leaders, news periodicals, foreign manifestos, and propaganda reports by foreign journalists. With the evidence of the specific Anti-Japanese War actions, this image has gradually gained popularity among the people, enhanced the prestige and influence of the Party in the minds of the people, provided potential support for the vigorous development of the Party in the future, and indirectly provided a relatively stable popular foundation for the victory of the Party in the Liberation War later.

1. Introduction

The term "political party image" comes from the British scholar Graham Wallas, who argues that "a political party is primarily a name which, like any other name, on hearing or seeing breeds an 'image' which unconsciously and gradually transforms into an automatic understanding of its meaning." [1] P53 The image of a political party is an indelible and unchangeable external image that is gradually formed in the minds of the public through the visualisation of political achievements, the image of the leader and the style of the party. The Anti-Japanese War is a special period in the modern history of China, and it is also a key period for our Party to flourish and win the hearts of the people. During this period, the Communist Party of China always upheld the belief of saving the country in the war of resistance against Japanese aggression, united against the enemy and held high the banner of resisting foreign aggression. Through a lot of fruitful work, the Party successfully built a good image of serving the people in the war of resistance against Japanese aggression and won the trust and firm support of the people. However, good image building requires not only outstanding

achievements but also powerful publicity and wide dissemination. As an important media resource for the image building of a political party, text is a powerful way to spread the image of a political party, which can directly reflect the effectiveness of the external image building of a political party, and is particularly important for the development of a political party. This paper starts from the text perspective of the image building of the Communist Party during the Anti-Japanese War, and through in-depth analysis of the text construction, value implication and experience enlightenment of the Communist Party during the Anti-Japanese War, it is expected to provide some inspiration and reference for the image building of the political party in the new era.

2. Text is the key media resource for political party image building

A text is "a set of notations transmitted from the sender to the receiver in a code or set of codes, through some medium"^{[2]P246}Specifically to the political party image text, it is a symbolic system constituted by political parties relying on their own propaganda teams in a certain context, with various symbols such as language and words according to certain rules, and is a symbolic construction and expression of the political party image."^[3]Texts are more convenient than other forms for the construction, creation and expression of a political party's image, and are the most convenient and rapid means and method of publicising the political demands and ideas of political parties. The text plays a crucial role as a 'mediator'. A good image text can clearly and intuitively inform the general public of the party's line and policies, and thus create an overall figurative evaluation of the party. On the other hand, it also transmits the interests and voices of the general public to political parties through the media, potentially influencing the flow and development of their policies in subtle ways. Through the medium of texts, political parties and the public form a positive interaction, creating a transmission-reception link between them and greatly enhancing communication and exchange between them. In short, the text is dialogical, it is "not a pure object, the text exists within the event, as a partner in communication and dialogue."^{[4]P156-157}This is why texts are an important media resource in the process of shaping the image of political parties, and are crucial to their external publicity and expression of their attitudes. However, texts as a collection of symbols are naturally abstract and arbitrary, which gives them a wide range of free play of imagination and space to be constructed and interpreted from different perspectives. Therefore, political parties need to attach importance to the dissemination of texts so that the public can receive correct and objective information and guide the public's thinking in the right direction.

3. The construction of the image text of the anti-Japanese war party of the Communist Party of China

3.1 Publicity in the press

During the war, the Kuomintang authorities deliberately slandered and degraded the Communist Party by imposing a strict information blockade and censorship, controlling public opinion, and demonizing the Communist Party as a "red-haired, green-eyed monster", a "murderous thug" and an "anti-national and anti-national group". "anti-national and anti-national groups", and that wherever the Communist Party went "the people were coerced and then brutally killed; their huts were destroyed and burned, lest they not be exhausted"^{[5]P301}.The Communist Party's development was

fettered and restrained by the public's fear of it. This, coupled with the fact that the Communist Party was at war, with poorly developed transportation, poor communication and dissemination of information, and a narrow and isolated communication area, made it difficult to build a positive image of the Communist Party. In such a critical situation, the role of the press in the construction of a political party's image was particularly important, as the press was an important and, in some cases, the only way for the public to gain knowledge of the outside world. By using plain language to attract the attention of the masses and spread anti-war ideas and awareness, it gradually broke the Kuomintang's blockade and suppression, reversing bad public opinion and giving itself a good chance to rebuild its image.

Among the news papers of the time, Xinhua Daily played a prominent role as it was the first organ of the Party published in the Nationalist-ruled areas and one of the most influential newspapers of the time. During the war period, Xinhua Daily reported with objectivity and impartiality on the bravery and tenacity of the Communist-led army in resisting the iron hooves of the Japanese invaders, and pushed out a series of high-quality reports on war heroes such as "Heroes come from the folk - the model militia in the northwest of the country with Shanggao" and "Two militia heroes", reflecting the great righteousness and heroism of the Chinese Communists. Through a large amount of practical data, such as "The First Anniversary of the Establishment of the Eighth Route Army" published in late August 1938, a comprehensive summary of "In the following year, the Eighth Route Army fought more than 600 battles of various sizes, reduced more than 34,000 enemy troops, captured more than 2,000 men, consumed many material resources of the enemy, seized a large amount of military supplies, and gave the enemy The results of the "[6]Great Destruction and Threat to Transportation. In addition to this, it also published a number of commentaries exposing the one-sided and passive resistance of the Kuomintang, highlighting the Party's active In addition to this, many commentary articles were published to expose the one-sided and negative war resistance of the Kuomintang. All in all, through the propaganda of the press, the CPC built up an image of a political party of lasting resistance and gave the people in dire straits the courage and confidence to fight the war, thus winning the praise and support of the people. As the situation became clearer, the Kuomintang authorities were resentful of the Communist Party's use of party newspapers to promote its political ideas, and increased the blockade on the Communist Party to prevent the spread and dissemination of unfavourable statements. Under these circumstances, the Communist Party fought hard and vowed to defend its right to speak. "The Xinhua Daily dealt with this oppression by the Kuomintang reactionaries by anti-censorship editorially, anti-blockade in terms of circulation, and economically, especially in terms of paper supply, by the policy of self-reliance, supplemented by foreign aid. In a word, the struggle is legal and illegal." [7] P16 It was the Communist Party's principle to defend freedom of expression, to expose the machinations of the Kuomintang and to bring the facts to the people. The Chongqing edition of Xinhua Daily was published under the direct leadership of Zhou Enlai until late February 1947. During its nine years of existence, Xinhua Daily was always in the forefront, firmly at the centre of public opinion in the hinterland of the Kuomintang, and was praised by the public as "a star of enlightenment in the darkness of chaos and confusion", serving as a strong weapon for the Party's anti-Japanese work and a bridge to the outside world. "The existence of newspapers was an open link between the Communist Party and the people, who could always look to them for guidance on the Party's policies and achievements in the liberated areas. At the same time, the existence of newspapers allowed the people in the Nationalist-ruled areas to express their will and

voices more or less freely through them. So it is of great political and practical importance to keep the newspapers in existence." [7]P16

In the National Unification Area there was the Xinhua Daily as the voice of the Party and the high ground of public opinion, while in the border areas there were the Liberation Daily and the Masses Daily as the Party's "spokesmen". "The Jiefang Daily was not just an ordinary so-called newspaper, it was an official newspaper and a mentor to the cadres of the Communist Party, government and military institutions in the region. In fact, it was like an endless and systematic textbook of new democratic policies. The other daily newspaper in Yan'an was the mass newspaper, whose task was to produce a two-page paper for a less knowledgeable and less literate audience. Using only a thousand of the simplest Chinese words and phrases, the mass newspaper was more of a textbook for millions of ordinary people than the liberation newspaper, and was widely utilised in primary schools, adult tuition schools and in the growing number of newspaper-reading groups."^{[8]P115-116} The role of the press in propagating public opinion cannot be underestimated and is of great significance in the shaping and construction of the image of political parties, and should not be taken lightly.

3.2 Declaration of the political position of the representatives of the Communist Party

During the war period, when the situation was tense and volatile, the spread of true and false information was widespread, and the dissemination of false information could easily lead to panic and anxiety among the public, causing bad social effects. Therefore, the communication of a clear political stance, so that the public can be informed quickly of a party's approach and attitude to an event, is crucial to building the image of the party. During this period, the Communist Party of China issued a timely political declaration of resistance to the war, demonstrating its determination and perseverance, which greatly calmed the public, easing their anxiety and strengthening their courage and confidence in the ultimate victory of the war. Especially when the Kuomintang authorities were still unclear about their attitude towards the war and were hesitant to openly break with the Japanese invaders, the CPC's approach was widely supported by the masses and after the September 18 Incident, the CPC promptly issued the Manchurian Provincial Committee's Declaration for the Armed Occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese Imperialists. This was the first cry of the Chinese Communist Party on behalf of the Chinese nation against the invasion, reflecting the tenacity and firm belief that the Chinese nation would never yield in the face of foreign aggression, and thus China began the difficult course of the 14-year war of resistance. As the situation in China changed suddenly and the national crisis deepened, the Chinese Communist Party, in the spirit of unity and solidarity of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, formally issued the August 1 Manifesto on 1 October, which was a tsunami of shock and praise from all walks of life and gave a strong impetus to the anti-Japanese movement.

The Communist Party of China not only issued declarations of resistance in accordance with the development of the situation for continuous social mobilisation, but also actively encouraged the resistance of warriors. Mao Zedong called Fu Zuoyi to express his heartfelt support and admiration for his "repeated victories against Japan with a lone army" [9] P435. After the "Double Twelfth" Incident, the Red Army generals jointly and publicly issued the "Telegram on the Xi'an Incident to the Kuomintang National Government", praising Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng for their efforts and contributions to the resistance against Japan and firmly refuting the sinister intentions of the pro-Japanese faction in trying to start a full-scale civil war on the pretext of "crusading" against Zhang and Yang. On 16 December, Mao Zedong sent an urgent telegram to Yan Xishan, stating that "the

situation should be resolved peacefully and there should not be another civil war" [9] P442. The Communist Party of China (CPC) was able to mediate a successful resolution to the "Double Twelve" Incident. The day after the July 7 Incident, the Communist Party sent a telegram to the whole country, shouting "Pingjin is in danger! North China is in danger! The Chinese nation is in danger! It was pointed out that the only way out for China was to carry out a nationwide war of resistance, and called on the people, army and government of the country to unite and build a strong Great Wall of national united front to resist the Japanese invasion." [10] P463 Through the publication of one manifesto after another, the Communist Party of China conveyed its position and attitude to the outside world in a timely manner, establishing the image of a political party resolutely resisting war and resisting war for the people, and gaining the support of the general public, the appreciation of non-partisans and people from all other parties, as well as the sympathy and solidarity of international progressives with China.

3.3 Political articles written by leaders

As the representative and symbol of a political party, the leader is the spiritual pillar of the party and represents the temperament and overall outlook of the party. The crystallisation of the leader's ideas is reflected in the writings of the leader, and these articles and writings are a concentrated expression of the leader's image and the overall image of the party. During the war period, the Central Committee, led by Mao Zedong, took the lead in writing a rich and incisive cultural and theoretical discourse, through which it clearly demonstrated the determination and attitude of the Communist Party of China to fight the war and revealed to the general public the party's image as a party that insisted on fighting against Japan and would never compromise. At this critical moment, Mao Zedong wrote two articles analysing the current situation: "The Strategic Problems of Guerrilla Warfare against Japan" and "On Protracted Warfare", objectively and calmly explaining the circumstances of the times in which China and Japan were living, their strengths and weaknesses, and the reflection of international public opinion, pointing out that we should adopt a protracted warfare approach according to our characteristics and consume the enemy. He criticised the widespread misrepresentation of the "doomsday theory" and the "quick victory theory", and at the same time denounced the opposition voices within the Party that rashly denied the role of guerrilla tactics in the war, and affirmed the necessity of guerrilla warfare in the war effort. Through these two articles, the negative thinking within and outside the Party was quickly reversed, and the courage to fight against the Japanese invaders was boosted, giving the people a shot in the arm. In addition, Mao Zedong personally wrote lectures and insisted on giving lectures, speeches and reports to Party cadres and students. According to a rough estimate, he visited the anti-Japanese military and political universities and Party schools for a total of more than 100 times during the war, and through these speeches he quickly stabilised people's hearts and minds and united the people, achieving remarkable results. Other leaders of the Party Central Committee, such as Liu Shaoqi and Zhu De, also published articles to demonstrate their determination to fight to the end, calling on the people to defeat Japanese imperialism and liberate all of China. The political articles written by the leaders, in which the ideas of the Party were crystallised, were a banner and a sail for ordinary communists and the people, guiding the way forward.

3.4 Writings by foreign journalists

In a war environment of beacons and crises, press propaganda was difficult, but at the same time its importance came to the fore, as it was the main means of mobilisation against the Japanese and the main channel of communication with the outside world. In order to break the Kuomintang's information blockade, Mao Zedong attached great importance to the propaganda reports of progressive-minded or politically neutral Chinese and foreign media, hoping to convey the Communist Party's anti-war philosophy, policies and achievements to the outside world through them. To this end Mao Zedong gave several interviews to journalists such as Edgar Snow and Wang Gongda in the US and Bertrand and Stein in the UK, and provided "An Introduction to the General Situation of the Chinese Communist Resistance", detailing the actual situation of the Communist side of the resistance, including personnel and equipment, numbers of people fighting the war, and casualties during the battles. These detailed data showed the heroic stance of the people's army under the leadership of the Communist Party of China in resisting the Japanese invaders, denouncing the Kuomintang's rumour of slandering the Communist Party as a "wandering but not attacking" conspiracy, and illustrating the huge contribution made by the Communist Party of China in the war. At the end of their visit, they all coincidentally deepened their knowledge of the CCP and changed their impressions of the Communist Party, writing books such as "A Journey to the West", "The New Life of China", "The North China Front", "China's Thunder", "The Challenge of Red China" and news reports such as "China's Guerrilla Bases". These writings and reports were published and carried internationally at the time, especially Edgar's A Journey to the West, which generated worldwide buzz and became a worldwide sensation upon its release, selling over 100,000 copies. The appearance of this book marked the beginning of a whole new era in the West's understanding and knowledge of China. The writings of these Western journalists disseminated the Communist Party's philosophy of "anti-Japanese resistance, democracy and national unity"[11]P224, clarified many false statements that demonised the Communist Party, and made people across the country and the world aware of the real situation of the Communist Party and the efforts and achievements of the Communist Party in fighting the enemy. Through the fieldwork and personal experiences of foreign journalists, the Communist Party was given a proper name, and because "speaking for me through the mouths of others" was more convincing than "mentioning it on your own initiative", public opinion at home and abroad re-examined and re-evaluated the role of the Chinese Communist Party on the battlefield, especially Western powers such as Britain and the United States gradually took the CCP seriously and gave it the necessary material and human support during the subsequent tense period of the war.

4. The role of the Communist Party of China's anti-war party image texts during the war period

4.1 It helps to demonstrate the determination to resist the war

During this particular period of resistance, the Chinese Communist Party used various texts and other forms to publicise its policies, to convey its belief in resolute resistance to the war to the public, to demonstrate its determination to fight the war, and to establish the image of a political party that was resolute in its resistance and fought in blood for the interests of the people. The achievements of political parties were an important means for them to win the political approval of the public on a large scale. Most of the news papers, manifestos and leader's articles of this period reported

extensively on the party's policies and achievements in the war. Through a multitude of facts, they were used to inspire the people and give them the strength to fight the war. For example, in late April 1939, two days in a row, the Xinhua Daily published a report by the deputy commander of the New Fourth Army, "In the past year, the New Fourth Army participated in two hundred and thirty-four battles, in which 1,539 rifles, 32 light machine guns, four heavy machine guns and 48 barges were captured. Heavy machine guns, forty-eight barges, twenty pistols, and about twenty-two thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight won of Japanese money"[12]. The report contains a large number of detailed figures that clearly show the heroic struggle, tenacity, willingness to die and fear of sacrifice of the Communist troops on the battlefield. The generals in the army always fought at the forefront, leading by example, and sacrificing their lives for their country in countless ways, establishing the glorious image of Communist Chinese defending their country.

4.2 Facilitate the clarification of inaccurate facts

"In the face of the KMT's stance of controlling public opinion, blocking information and keeping a tight lid on Communist speech, the ruling KMT controls the country's instruments of public opinion, and its strong discourse leaves little room for the Communist Party's voice to spread."[13] The Kuomintang speculated that the reason for the Communist Party's sudden change of strategy was that the Red Army had very little strength left on its long march and wanted to save itself under the banner of the anti-Japanese National United Front as a temporary "delaying tactic". This slogan was only a short-lived strategy of the Communists to deceive the people, not their true intentions. The Kuomintang's skepticism led some in the media to question the intentions of the Communists and the authenticity of the war. For this reason Chen Yun suggested that the anti-Japanese national united front was "naturally strategic" and that this strategy was "not transient, but long-term"[14] P5. At the same time, Kai Feng, head of the Propaganda Department, seriously pointed out that what they called "political manoeuvring" was extremely absurd and ridiculous, "The Communist Party never uses its policies and strategies as a kind of manoeuvre to play with, but rather as a direction and method of action "[15] P76. Through this specific and universal visualisation of the text, the Communist Party of China responded to the challenge in a concise and powerful manner, helping itself to clarify inaccuracies and to express its true intentions and the actual situation accurately, which is conducive to reshaping the image of the party, making the public less susceptible to the influence of the one-sided words of the Kuomintang and allowing the public to make their own judgements and draw their own conclusions.

4.3 Facilitate the provision of public opinion support

In the late War of Resistance, the Kuomintang implemented a strategy of passive delay in the war and proactive anti-Communist actions, frequently carrying out military operations against the Communists and setting off three anti-communist climaxes, the most famous of which was the South Anhui Incident. "They unreasonably demanded that the Communist troops south of the Yangtze River should be evacuated by a certain date and reach the north of the Yangtze River. The Kuomintang newspapers made a lot of propaganda about this, trying to turn black and white and incite public opinion against the Communists. The Communists were forced to transfer their troops in order to maintain unity. On the way, they were suddenly attacked from the Kuomintang side and in the process,

more than 9,000 anti-Japanese soldiers died innocently and Comrade Ye Ting was captured. Subsequently, on 17 January, the Kuomintang issued a counter-revolutionary directive, slandering the New Fourth Army as "mutinous" and making a decision to revoke its number. On behalf of the Party Central Committee, Comrade Zhou Enlai issued a solemn protest to the Kuomintang reactionaries and, in order to mourn the fallen officers and soldiers of the New Fourth Army who had meritoriously fought against the Japanese, decided to publicly protest against this atrocity of the Kuomintang and sorrowfully inscribed the following eulogy and elegy: "Mourning for those who died in Jiangnan!" "A thousand ancient grievances, one leaf in Jiangnan; the same room, why are they tormented by each other!" [7] P20 The Xinhua Daily published Comrade Zhou Enlai's own eulogy and elegy in woodcut as a public protest against this Kuomintang crime! The eulogy and elegy were published at the same time as the KMT's order to revoke the number of the New Fourth Army, expressing the Communist Party's indignation at the incident. The Xinhua Daily was hawked along the streets on the same day, breaking through the heavy blockade of the Kuomintang and allowing the general public to know the truth of what had happened. The dissemination of these newspapers exposed the crimes of the Kuomintang and brought to light the Kuomintang's actions to undermine cooperation and disrupt the war effort. They won the sympathy and solidarity of public opinion from non-partisans, people from other parties and international support. In the face of the Kuomintang's suppression, the output of these texts provided a space to express the reality of the situation and the Communist Party had the opportunity to make its attitude known to make its voice heard and thus gain the support of public opinion.

5. Summary

Texts are an important vehicle for political party image building, with the advantages of convenience and wide dissemination, and were the main way and means of political party image building during the war period. The CPC expressed its attitude and position through various textual output methods such as news papers, leader's articles, press articles, foreign manifestos and propaganda reports by foreign journalists, which had the multifaceted effects of strengthening its determination to fight the war, clarifying untrue facts and providing The Communist Party's efforts were effective in many ways. At a time of national tragedy, the Communist Party successfully portrayed itself as a political party that actively fought the war and fought for the people, bringing hope to the general public, winning the support and love of the people, and gaining the hearts of the people.

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