

近似建研究

MODERN CHINESE HISTORY STUDIES

2022 · 5

中国社会科学院近代史研究所主办

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Modern Chinese History Studies

中国人文社会科学综合评价(AMI)权威期刊 中文社会科学引文索引(CSSCI)来源期刊 全国中文核心期刊 RCCSE 中国权威学术期刊

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本刊不以任何形式收取版面费 全国社科工作办举报电话:010-63098272

1979年创刊 总第251期 9月出版

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本期执行编辑/潘晓霞 技术编辑/贾亚娟

Modern Chinese History Studies

No. 5, 2022

Established studies on the environmental history of North China are preoccupied with the issue of environmental degradation, largely neglecting the agency of people in adapting to environmental changes. Since the farm irrigation system was introduced into West Hebei in 1727, local governments and the local people worked together to put in place distinctive reclamation, plantation, irrigation and management rules in the riverine areas. Nevertheless, the local riverine areas continuously shrank due to frequent flooding and ecological degradation. The CPC led all walks of society in the riverine areas to adapt to ecological degradation there after 1937. They precipitated the ecological recovery of the riverine areas by increasing financial and labor inputs and reforming relevant management rules. In addition, they tried to find the underlying reasons of frequent flooding in the riverine areas and realized the interconnections of mountains, rivers, forests and riverine areas in the environmental restoration of riverine areas. Thanks to their science-guided efforts, the local riverine areas realized sustainable development afterwards. Thus, ecological degradation as a structural constraint should not become an insurmountable obstacle for human agency. Studies on the environmental history in the base areas of North China should become an integral part of the Chinese environmental history and the evolving history of CPC's conceptions on ecological civilization.

Ranchers in Inner Mongolia utilized forage quite differently during the period of the Republic of China. In pure pastoral areas, nomads followed the traditional way and migrated with their herds periodically. In the agricultural areas and pastoral farming areas, people fed their herds mainly by cutting and storing grass and utilizing crop residues. Forage trade between farmers and herdsmen contributed to the increasing commercialization of forage. In order to modernize the local animal husbandry industry and improve the government's control of the frontier areas, the Nationalist Government worked in partnership with researchers to introduce new ideas on grass cutting, grass storage and grass planting and new technologies into Inner Mongolia. Meanwhile, the Japanese also tried to reform the ways through which forage was utilized in Inner Mongolia through the local puppet regime, with an eye to exploit the local livestock wealth. Nevertheless, most of these initiatives fell apart due to social unrest and the warring situation. Meanwhile, these new ideas on forage utilization were based on the experiences of western countries and the situations of inland Chinese agricultural provinces. It turned out that they were incompatible with the social systems, the diverse modes of animal husbandry production and traditional ideas and culture of Inner Mongolia. As a result, the modes of forage utilization and animal husbandry production in Inner Mongolia were a mixture of old and new.

After the end of the Paris Peace Conference, the Japanese government urged the UK and the US governments to "persuade" the Beijing government to negotiate with the Japanese side. By signing a treaty with the Chinese government, the Japanese government aimed to maintain its sphere of influence in Shandong. To realize this aim, the Japanese also competed with the British and the American in Shandong. This was the background under which the Treaty for the Settlement of Outstanding Questions Pertaining to Shandong and its auxiliary agreements were negotiated and signed. From its "returning the Jiaozhou Peninsula to China" to the outbreak of the September 18 Incident, the Japanese made Shandong its economic backyard although it nominally respected the Versailles-Washington System in the Far East at the same time. Using the huge amount of ransom the Chinese side had to pay to reclaim the Jiaoji Railway as the leverage, the Japanese controlled the income generated by the Jiaoji Railway and eventually put it under forced occupation. The Japanese also controlled major mineral mines, occupied large chunks of land and dominated the transportation, mining, manufacturing, trade and finance sectors of Shandong. Neither the British nor the American could challenge the dominance of the Japanese

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in Shandong. The Japanese enormous presence in Shandong also set the stage for the all-out invasion of Shandong by Japanese navy and army.

After the end of the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese state and private capital, apart from dominating the South Manchuria Railway Company, also monopolized such economic sectors like transportation, harbor, mining, finance, trade, industry and agricultural product processing in Northeast China. By issuing loans and sponsoring "joint undertakings," the Japanese also got the rights to construct roads, mine minerals, utilize the land, cut forests and operate enterprises in Northeast China. What's more, these economic activities by the Japanese were not confined merely to South Manchuria. By taking advantage of the changes in the situation of East Asia in general and the Northeast Asia in particular, the Japanese capital made its way to North Manchuria and East Inner Mongolia by issuing loans and sponsoring "joint undertakings." Consequently, the Japanese capital had infiltrated deep in Northeast China before the outbreak of the September 18 Incident. Japan's economic dominance in Northeast China paved the way for its complete occupation of Northeast China after the September 18 Incident.

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The educational interactions between China and foreign countries maintained its momentum around 1920. Suggested by Edward Hume, Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology initiated a plan to establish an engineering university in China. A special committee was created for relevant planning and investigation work. Thomas Meloy was tasked to collect information in China although he was not the formal agent of the committee. He and John A. L. Waddell actively promoted the project in China. Thomas Meloy signed a draft contract of cooperation with the Southeast University of China without authorization from the American side. Consequently, the proposed project was aborted in the end. The special committee and President A. Lawrence Lowell insisted to raise funding in China and try to keep the proposed university under American control, which turned out to be unreasonable and unrealistic. Both Meloy and Waddell overstepped their mandate and their activities seriously undermined the implementation of the plan. The plan's failure shed light on the complex relationship between cultural internationalism and imperialism and their inherent dilemmas

English abstracts translated by Jia Yajuan

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编 辑 《近代史研究》编辑部

出 版 近代史研究杂志社

出版日期 单月27日

地 址 北京市朝阳区国家体育场北路1号(100101)

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电 话 010-87420921

国内发行 社会科学文献出版社

全国各地邮局

邮发代号 82-472

国外发行 中国国际图书贸易集团有限公司(北京399信箱)

国外代号 BM-298

印 刷 三河市龙林印务有限公司

ISSN 1001-6708 CN 11-1215/K

如有印装质量问题,请与社会科学文献出版社联系调换 电话: 010-59366562



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