The Rethinking of “the Year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement”

Xiaohong Zhu
Ideological and Political Education in College, North China Institute of Water Conservancy and Hydroelectric Power, Zheng Zhou 450011, China

Abstract: In this study, we have a research of the rethinking of “the year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement”. The “Women’s Domestic Products Movement” which was launched in 1934 has been denied by people now and before because of failing to reach the country’s intended purpose. From the angle of economic history, “Women’s Domestic Products Movement” played a positive role in promoting the domestic sales growth, reducing the index of export and import value. After carefully referring to the related historical material and carefully studying and reading the discourse, evaluation on the women domestics Products Movement today and before, the author attempts to re-examine (survey) the history of “the year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement” from a different perspective.

Keywords: Economic history perspective, the year of women’s domestic products movement

INTRODUCTION

China has launched a vigorous campaign of Domestic Products Movement in 1930s, which was the year of Domestic Products Movement in 1933, the year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement in 1934, the year of Students’ Domestic Products Movement in 1935, the year of Citizens’ Domestic Products Movement in 1936, the year of Civil servants’ Domestic Products Movement in 1937. The historians at that time and later had different views for the movement occurred in 1933, 1935, 1936 and 1937, but all they agreed that the movement occurred in 1934 was a failure. Pan (1998) have a study on modern Chinese domestic products movement. Wang (2007a) have a research of the "Modern" and "patriotic" -the discourse on "the year of Women Domestic Products Movement" in 1934. Pan (1996) study the Chinese modern domestic movement. Yang (1934) have a research of the women domestic movement. Mu and Zhao (1995) have a research of the anthology of MusOuchu. Zhou (2004) study the movement of "the year of chinese domestic products" and the worship of western world. Wang (2007b) analyze the "Modern" and "patriotic" -"Women Domestic Products Movement" in 1934. Qiao (2006) study the comment on students’ domestic products movement in 1935. Pan (1995) study the study on modern Chinese Domestic Products Movement. Yan (1995) study the statistical selections of modern chinese economic history. Zhao and Wang (2002) have a research of the General History of China's economy. Pan (1998) analyze the study on modern Chinese Domestic Products Movement.

In this study, we have a research of the rethinking of “the year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement”. The “Women’s Domestic Products Movement” which was launched in 1934 has been denied by people now and before because of failing to reach the country’s intended purpose. From the angle of economic history, “Women’s Domestic Products Movement” played a positive role in promoting the domestic sales growth, reducing the index of export and import value. After carefully referring to the related historical material and carefully studying and reading the discourse, evaluation on the women domestics Products Movement today and before, the author attempts to re-examine (survey) the history of “the year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement” from a different perspective (Thomas et al., 2009).

THE CONSTRUCTION OF “THE FAILURE OF WOMEN’S DOMESTIC PRODUCTS MOVEMENT”

The “Domestic Products Movement” in 1933-1937 was a climax on the Chinese Domestic Products campaign. At the end of 1933, the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, China's domestic production and marketing cooperative associations, the Shanghai Women promoting domestic products team and such six groups held a joint meeting, took 1934 as “the year of Women Domestic Products”, then established the Women's
Domestic Movement Committee, which led the promoting campaign in the whole year.

Since the New Year in 1934, "Women Domestic Products Movement" vigorously carried out across the country, Wang Qiang sums in his article "the discourse on "modern" and "patriotic" -the year of Women Domestic Movement" in 1934> that, at that time the main forms are: First, a variety of domestic propaganda. Second, the large-scale domestic products company setting to expand sales of domestic products. Third, to organize the domestic products mobile exhibition in Northwest China. Forth, to criticize the modern vogue of "city women", re-elucidate the meaning of "modern".

But almost at the same time, the view of "Women Domestics Products Movement Failure" was slowly constructed, which today seems quite intriguing. As early as "Women Domestic Products Movement" was performed just three months, a Japanese newspapers in Shanghai claimed that the first quarter of 1934 Chinese trade deficit created historical record and thus conclude that the "Women Domestic Products Movement " failed completely. Then, along with the customs statistics announced in each quarter, the view of "Women Domestics Products Movement Failure" had been proposed continuously in newspapers: because perfume paint imported a total of 652,486 Yuan in the first 6 months, some people wondered and exclaimed that the barriers of "the year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement " were totally destroyed. Some people "queried the results secretly for the whole year" and "they couldn’t help but sigh and disappoint". Some people summarized up the achievements of "Women Domestic Products Movement" and concluded that it was inevitable that there were not any effect in "Women Domestic Products Movement". If these words were just some scholars’ emotional words, then the cotton experts, industry and commerce celebrities Mu Ouchu, who published an article <the true meaning of the year of Students’ Domestic Products Movement> in January 1935, has once said "the first year, also in a tough beginning, there was nothing to say; but the second year was a marked failure, because cosmetics were imported more than the quantity in 1933s according to customs investigation and this visibly showed that Chinese women did not voluntarily buy domestic products ". "Not only this, if we wanted to know how should the year of Students’ Domestic Products Movement carry out, we must know how the year of Women’s Domestic Products Movement failed", "otherwise, the year of Students’ Domestic Products Movement would fail after the Women Domestic Products Movement". The words of Mu Ouchu should represent the mainstream awareness of the business community and people who advocated domestic products. Through these investigations we can see in that year, the attitude for "Women Domestic Products Movement" was basically negative in public opinion.

Today's researchers were impacted of these media and the mainstream consciousness of that year; they interpreted and construct again "the failure ism of Women Domestic Products Movement". In the article of Zhou Shifeng, he analyzed that, "it is very easy to find that Women Domestic Products Movement primarily stemmed from businessmen’s anxiety to market and how to select the name are based on considerations of their target markets and changes of the name was the proof of failure.". Wang Qiang said in his article: "the Women Domestic Products Movement reflects the relationship between urban women-the main consumer groups of domestic products and the domestic movement and its failure has exposed some problems in the modern domestic movement." Qiao Zhaohong discussed the Year of Students’ Domestic Products Movement" in 1935, but when come to Women Domestic Products Movement, he also used the word "failure ". In this way, people today and before through time and space joined hands and made the final failure conclusion on “Women Domestic Products Movement”.

How should we look on "Women Domestic Products Movement" in 1934? Only by the statistics of the customs will be able to conclude that it was failed or not? Were women really not patriotic? With this problem, I tried to analyze the following aspects in order to answer queries in the mind.

**SOME QUERIES AND ANALYSIS ON THE FAILURE OF “WOMEN DOMESTIC PRODUCTS MOVEMENT”**

First of all, the origin of “Women Domestic Products Movement” was worth the deeply research. According to Pan Junxiang’s analysis in his article <the study of modern Chinese Domestic Products Movement>, “when the Chinese Domestic Products Movement was coming to an end in 1933, we reviewed its working effect and lesson, discovered that the import still a substantial increase, only Shanghai in 1933, the consumption of imported cosmetics cost more than 1.39 million Yuan in the first 10 months.”. While the main body of cosmetics consumption were clearly women, so the advocates of Domestic Products Movement began to comment like that in the newspaper, “therefore, in today's era, we persuaded the men to promote domestic products rather than let women like using domestic products”, If women “resisted the enemy goods by their self-consciousness and loved to buy domestic products, the effect would be more than politics and guns”. This shows that when faced the trade deficit, the advocates
of domestic products didn't analyzed of this political, economic factors deeply, but directly put the hopes and responsibility of reducing imported commodities on women. If this is the original intention, then, the failure of women domestic movement would be inevitable. As we all know, modern China was poor and weak, the modernization of the economy can not be done overnight, expectations to change the trade deficit in one year or even years, is an impossible task even for men, rather than mention the women. As Mu Ouchu said in the article, "some one must say the failure of Women Domestic Products Movement was due to the Chinese women who are not patriotic. Although some part of the words is right, but if a country economic issues, financial issues, business issues, only depend on national patriotism, that all laws and policies, such as the so-called 'protection', 'higher tariff barriers' and so on are useless”. So, in a sense, “Women Domestic Products Movement” was the concentrated expression of Chinese domestic products group after desperately trying everything and then the failure of Women Domestic Products Movement is just unreasonable vent to the huge contrast between the expectations and the reality.

Secondly, the arguments used by people who approved of the viewpoint that “Women Domestic Products Movement was failed” also were worth deliberate. From their articles and speeches, we can easily find their main arguments were the customs statistics, the growth figures of the perfume, cosmetics, namely, in 1934 the imports of women's cosmetics reached more than 200 million, simply denied the "Women Domestic Products Movement" would be somewhat reluctant. We can easily find that from 1873, China's foreign trade has been living in unfavorable balance of trade position, China's import and export trade value and unfavorable balance of trade index has been the rise in 1932 was 967.19 million yuan and 214.1, respectively when we looked up the 1871-1936 import and export trade value table in the book of <Chinese modern economic history statistical data> which was edited by Zhao Dexin, Wang Fangzhong. While it began to decrease year by year from 1933, the highest point was 11513 yuan and 28.4 in 1937. Although some scholars have analyzed it was the performance of the world economic crisis and economic recession and the direct result of Chinese tariff autonomy raising, but I think this phenomenon was relevant to the carrying out of the domestic movement. So, under the pushing of domestic products movement, even some monopoly of imports of large companies in Shanghai have had to adjust their management orientation to sell part of domestic products, while selling foreign goods. Like the well-known company in Yongan before 1931, Chinese products accounted for only 25% of the purchase, then in 1934 the proportion of volume of distribution of domestic growth to 60.5% and in 1935 it rose to 63.1%, 65.1% in 1936. Although there is no specific sales data throughout the country during the year, but it is not difficult to deduce from a series of domestic products promoting movement and the relevant report that domestic sales in “the year of domestic movement” grew a lot, this is a fact that cannot be denied.

Thirdly, who should be blamed for the import growth of the perfume and cosmetics? For this problem, Zhou Shifeng and Wang Qiang analyzed from the perspective of social history in their articles, such as that was caused by the social concept of worship at that time, I intend to analyze from the perspective of economic history. According to the scholar's study, by the 1930, textile machinery, motors, steel, products, home appliances, electrical instruments, cosmetics and other industries, foreign goods occupied a larger percentage; domestic market share was low, about 20%, survived among the market gap of foreign goods. Why did occupy such low market share? The reasons are two: First, the quality and price of most of these domestic products didn’t compete with foreign goods; the second is due to the lack of professionals and capital. It is not difficult to find that the factories which specialized in cosmetic products in China at that time were very little and only some low-end products, high-end products simply cannot produce such as perfume and whose sales of such products in cities were often very large. In this case those companies which sold cosmetics should import of these products to meet market demand and to make profits. Therefore, it should be the law of supply and demand at work, rather than the result of the "women are not patriotic".

CONCLUSION

In modern historical context of the poor and weak, the biggest obstacle to China's economic development did not lie in women as consumers to buy domestic products, but rather the capabilities and behavior of the government's economic development. Selected historical materials on <the Republic of China's industrial and commercial tax> included in the central accounting of revenue and expenditure of 1932-1936 of the Nanjing central accounting income and expenditure comparison table of expenditure schedule clearly pointed out that the whereabouts of Nanjing national Government spending: spending the first military charges, the second is the debt, while and the annual investment traffic and business cost much less. This means that the country's
fiscal revenue is not used on construction, but used for militaristic. No wonder that the United States scholars Thomas grawski who was famous for researching China economic history commented: "Government income has always been rarely, but spending often focused on national defense, administration and debt which took little effect on economic growth, …, before 1949, public investment on the majority of economic sectors in China have little effect," "the Government did not directly involved in promoting economic growth and their abilities to provide a suitable environment for the development of private enterprises were also limited." For this point, the economists at that time recognized the meaning, but they didn’t speak out because of the pressure from government, but only passed the anger on consumers and hated their unpatriotic because of disporting domestic products and thus women labeled as "unpatriotic" label in an attempt to reverse the decline in the patriotic banner, to achieve the purpose of the foreign goods to compete for profit, this is their original intention.

Businessmen accused women for profits, but sadly, the so-called patriotic personage didn’t know the truth also began to accuse women endlessly, so the whole society put the blame upon women, who inadvertently also became the "scapegoat", this is a true portrayal of Chinese women who were treated as the vulnerable groups. Their image was based on the needs of the country and sometimes their role was wife for taking care of husband and children, sometimes their role was heroine of “Hua Mulan " type and sometimes they became the sinner in domestic products field. Even so, there was still a weak voice to protest this point, a lady whose penname is “silly sister" made a speech on the magazine, she said that who that relied on women's consumption to revitalize the domestic products and this shows that men were incompetence. Unfortunately, such a protest can only be submerged in the sound of a noisy accusations and finally into the dust of history.

REFERENCES

Yang, D., 1934. For Women Domestic Movement. SHEN BAO.