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MAKING THE NEWS IN SHANGHAI

SHEN BAO AND THE POLITICS OF NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM

1912-1937

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE RESEARCH SCHOOL OF PACIFIC STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF FAR EASTERN HISTORY
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

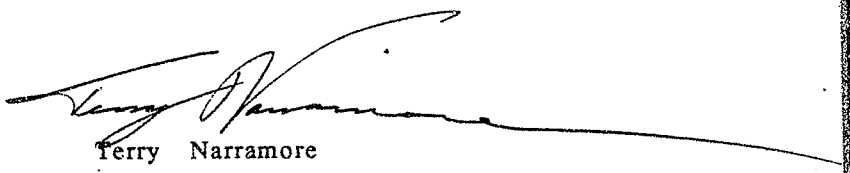
BY

TERRY NARRAMORE

CANBERRA
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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

Unless otherwise stated, this is my original work.



Terry Narramore

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the politics of Shanghai newspaper journalism from 1912 to 1937, with particular emphasis on *Shen Bao* as a case study. It is concerned only with commercial newspaper journalism, as distinct from party political journalism. As such it proceeds from the belief that newspapers like *Shen Bao* must first and foremost be understood as commercial enterprises. It argues that economic, technical and organizational constraints played an important part in shaping the political character of newspaper journalism in Shanghai. It shows how, in adapting to the peculiar economic and political environment of the Shanghai International Settlement, newspapers faced the contradictory pressures of a dependecy on foreign resources on the one hand, and the demands of rising anti-imperialist nationalism on the other. Until the late 1920s, a big commercial newspaper like *Shen Bao* was inclined to take whichever course it judged to be the least damaging to its survival as a viable business, even if this sometimes contradicted the weight of nationalistic public opinion.. This situation changed dramatically with the rise of Japanese militarism in China, beginning with the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931. *Shen Bao* and its proprietor, Shi Liangcai, became Shanghai's most prominent voices in the anti-Japanese movement and, thereafter, outspoken critics of the the Nationalist government's response to the crisis. This eventually led to Shi Liangcai's assassination, at the hands of government agents in November 1934.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part deals with various constituent elements which helped to shape the development of Shanghai newspaper journalism in general. It examines the historical background, newspaper readership, patterns of ownership, economic and technical

aspects of the industry, and the attempts by journalist to develop a profession against the background of the rise of commercial newspapers. The second part is a case study of the rise of *Shen Bao* and Shi Liangcai. It is a political history, focusing on the paper's expression of political opinion and its response to the major political events of the day, such as the May Fourth and May Thirtieth movements, the rise of the Nationalists to power and the rise of Japanese militarism in China. This study hopes not only to shed some light on the politics of Shanghai newspaper journalism, but also to contribute to a broader understanding of Chinese politics of the period.

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PREFACE

Today the mass media are the subject of an enormous amount of research and, at times, vigorous debate. As part of the print media newspapers have attracted their fair share of attention, but this has been sharply focused on the present or the recent past. The study of the history of newspapers has attracted less attention and very few historians. For many of the works on the history of newspapers are written by and for people who have some kind of connection with journalism. These works consequently have an in-house character and they seldom attempt the more difficult task of placing newspapers in a wider historical context.[1] Over recent years the situation has improved with the emergence of a number of impressive studies of the modern history of newspapers, particularly in Britain.[2]

There is an even more serious dearth of publications on the history of newspapers, and the press in general, in China. One reason for this is that before the Communists won control of the country newspapers were never able to attain the same degree of political influence as their counterparts in Europe, the United States or Japan. Some daily newspapers in Britain and the United States, for example, passed the million mark in circulation in the early part of this century, while in Japan the leading

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1. Two examples of this approach would be F. L. Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960* (New York: Macmillan, 1969) and Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper: An International History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), although both these works are successful examples of their genre.

2. See, for example, Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981, 1984); Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1978); Michael Harris and Alan Lee, eds., *The Press in English Society: From the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986). Of coures, there are likely to be other examples which have escaped my attention.

newspapers approached this mark in the 1920s.[3] The circulation of Chinese newspapers never went far beyond 150,000 during the Republican period. Moreover, for most of the Republican period China lacked a genuine system of parliamentary government on which newspapers could comment and report, so they were unable to claim that their readers embodied that mysterious political influence attributed to the electoral voter. It was difficult to sustain a claim to be the "Fourth Estate" when none of the other "estates" made much of an impact on the militarists who dominated government structures. Chinese newspapers were, nonetheless, the "most widely distributed printed product," and constituted the principal source of regular information on political, cultural and economic affairs.[4] In short, they were important because they were the dominant medium of communication throughout the Republican period. The various political leaders, from Yuan Shikai to Jiang Jieshi (Chiang K'ai-shek), and the foreign authorities of the International Settlement in Shanghai, believed newspapers were important enough to warrant their surveillance and control. This often unwelcome attention ensured that newspapers were an inseparable part of the political scene, whether they liked it or not.

Chinese scholars have, of course, given some attention to this subject, and over the past few years a number of useful general histories have been published.[5] With few exceptions, however, these have been in the nature of surveys of the various newspapers published during the

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3. On Britain see Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), pp. 226-229; on both the U. K. and the U.S. A. see Smith, *The Newspaper*, pp. 156-161; on Japan see Shuichi Kato, "The Mass Media: Japan," in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. Robert E. Ward and Dunkart A. Rostow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 239-240.

4. The quoted phrase comes from Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 195 in reference to Britain, but it has universal relevance.

5. For a review of the literature see the Introduction to this study.

entire modern period, from the early nineteenth century to 1949. They inevitably sacrifice systematic analysis to breadth of coverage.

Hence, in the hope of being able to bring at least some systematic analysis to bear on the history of Chinese newspapers during the Republican period, this fool rushed in. The period 1912-1937 was chosen because this was the time when newspapers experienced their most rapid growth and their political influence achieved greatest significance. Party newspapers were excluded from this study because they are a different animal to a commercial newspaper and because, by and large, their behaviour is predictable. A party newspaper should promote the party's ideas and outlook, but what is the role of a commercial newspaper? Naturally, it has to make money. But it cannot do this without regard to the political environment around it, and sometimes it will even pass comment on that environment. This presents a far more interesting case of political influence than party newspapers.

Republican China could boast of any number of commercial newspapers, so it was inevitably necessary for this study to be selective. In the end, I opted for a newspaper with the highest level of circulation and widest geographical distribution. *Shen Bao* fitted this description. Moreover, it was clearly the most successful commercial newspaper of the day and its proprietor, Shi Liangcai, became China's most influential press mogul. Other newspapers, with smaller circulations, are equally deserving of attention. Tianjin's *Da Gong Bao*, for example, was probably the best edited newspaper in China, although, as Lin Yutang wrote, it catered to "a perhaps overeducated public."[6] But Shi Liangcai was the epitome of the successful newspaper proprietor, in a sense, the Northcliffe of China. He

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6. Lin Yutang, *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), p. 131.

and his newspaper almost suggested themselves as subjects worthy of study.

Even in focussing on Shi Liangcai and *Shen Bao* the subject remains a large and unwieldy one. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, this study concentrates on what the late Alan Lee referred to as the "production," in contrast to the "consumption," side of the newspaper press.[7] This means that most attention is given to the various elements that went into making a newspaper like *Shen Bao*, and little attention is given to the impact on society of such newspapers. The title of this study would have been "Manufacturing the News in Shanghai" if the word "manufacturing" did not sound so ugly. Despite the consequent narrowing of the subject, it is still evident that, on occasion, things have still gone a little out of control. Newspapers are such monsters that it is easy to understand why few people tackle them.

Much of what follows will not seem so new to some Chinese scholars who have done some work in related areas. I owe a great debt to their work. All those who come to this subject must acknowledge the work of Ge Gongzhen, one of China's great journalists, who died of illness in 1935. His book *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* (*A History of Journalism in China*), first published in 1927, is a minor miracle of painstaking research. To many it might look like one long list of newspaper titles, but it is much more besides, and few who have followed in his footsteps have given Ge adequate acknowledgement. The dissertation by Qin Shaode of Fudan University has proved very useful in leading me to the most relevant parts of *Shen Bao* for the period 1931-1932. Professor Fang Hanqi of the Chinese People's University in Beijing was a great help to me, not only through his own work on the period up to 1919, but also during my field-trip to China in 1985. Chinese scholars have been working on a general history of *Shen*

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7. Lee, *Origins of the Popular Press in Britain*, p. 17.

Bao and Professor Fang provided me with some of the dratfs of the project. As far as I am aware, this history has not yet been published. While I was in China, Ma Yinliang, former manager of *Shen Bao*, and Sun Enlin, formerly an editor with the paper, graciously passed on some of their store of experience of journalism in the 1920s and 1930s. Professor Ning Shufan at Fudan University provided access to material in Shanghai. I am grateful to Zhu Minshen and his associates at Shanghai University who assisted me in gaining access to the Shanghai Municipal Library.

I am also grateful to my supervisor, Dr. John Fincher, for his support and encouragement throughout the course of this thesis. Dr. Michael Godley provided help through a number of very useful informal discussions and by reading some of the chapters Much important source material was either given to me or brought to my attention by Dr. Ho Hon-wai, who also provided the encouragement of a friend. Brian Martin shared with me his profound knowledge of the politics of Shanghai gangsterism and alerted me to connections between journalists and gangsters. Brian Moloughney provided encouragement and thoughtful reading of one chapter. I would also like to thank Professor Wang Gung-wu for giving me the chance to undertake doctoral studies in the Department of Far Eastern History. Thanks must go to Judy Smart and Pete Clarke, past teachers whose influence I value highly. For the Chinese characters in the glossary and, more than this, for his friendship, thanks to Jin Songping.

In this day and age admissions of weakness or self-doubt are too easily interpreted as mawkish sentimentality. I cannot help feeling that a lot more could have been done with this subject. In part I felt constrained by the nature of a doctoral dissertaion, but perhaps the answer lies closer to home. But, for many reasons that need no elaboration, this is not the study I hoped it could be. Of course, I alone bear responsibility for the faults of this study, and perhaps I have been unfair in even associating

some of the people mentioned above with this thesis. All I can say is "It is done."

I can not find the words to express thanks to my parents. Perhaps one day, by my actions, I will give them some small reward for their love.

INTRODUCTION

In November 1934 Shi Liangcai, proprietor of *Shen Bao* and Shanghai's most powerful press mogul, journeyed to Hangzhou seeking rest and some relief for his stomach ulcers. On his return to Shanghai on November 13, Shi Liangcai's chauffeur-driven car was ambushed by assassins Shi lept from the car and ran for his life, but was eventually caught and shot to death. Though at the time nobody publically accused the Nationalist government of being responsible for Shi Liangcai's murder, it is now possible to conclude that Dai Li's Jun Tong, a secretive wing of the Guomindang, planned and carried out the assassination.[1] Why did the Nationalists feel compelled to take such drastic action, and how was it that Shi Liangcai rose to such a prominent and influential position as to became the target of an assassination?

At the time of his death Shi Liangcai did not owe any allegiance to any party political causes. One of Shi's greatest achievements in his climb to the status of press mogul was that once he gained full control of *Shen Bao* in 1915 he did not have to rely on subsidization from government or party sources to stay in business. Over the next decade he built *Shen Bao* into a newspaper of national importance, and when the Nationalist

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1. An analysis of Shi Liangcai's assassination is given in chapter 8. *Shen Bao*'s own report on the assassination referred only to "thugs" (*feitu*) as the culprits, although it did state that the car driven by the "thugs" had a Nanjing license plate. See "Shi Liancai Xiansheng Ehao" [The Solemn News of Mr. Shi Liangcai's Death], *Shen Bao*, November 14, 1934. Nobody was ever charged over Shi's assassination. Shen Zui, a former member of the Jun Tong now resident in China, gives the most detailed account of how the Jun Tong plotted Shi Liangcai's assassination in "Yang Xingfo, Shi Liangcai bei Ansha de Jingguo" [The Process of the Assassinations of Yang Xingfo and Shi Liangcai], *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 37 (Beijing: Wenshi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1963), pp. 169-171. The Jun Tong's involvement has been confirmed by Wei Daming, a Taiwan source and also a former associate of Dai Li; see Wei Daming, "Pingshu Dai Yunong Xiansheng de Shigong" [An Assessment of the Achievements of Mr. Dai Yunong (Dai Li)], *Zhuanji Wenxue* 38.2 (Feb. 1981): 40-45.

government came to power in 1927 *Shen Bao* was far and away the most influential newspaper in Shanghai. In early 1929 Shi Liangcai extended his operations when he bought control of *Shen Bao*'s greatest rival in Shanghai, *Xin Wen Bao*. Shi Liangcai never allowed his newspapers to be openly critical of any government in this period. He set *Shen Bao* on an entirely new course, however, when the Japanese military invaded Manchuria and bombed Shanghai in late 1931 and early 1932. With *Shen Bao* as his platform Shi put himself at the head of a campaign in Shanghai to oppose the Nationalist government's policy of non-resistance to Japan and to broaden the political base of the government. If the story were left here Shi Liangcai could be seen as the proprietor of the most successful independent newspaper enterprise of the day. Similarly, his assassination could be seen as symptomatic of the Nationalist government's repression of independent critics.

Yet the central argument of this study is that newspaper journalism in Shanghai was, far from being independent, intimately involved with the politics of the day. This argument relies on a definition of politics which attempts to go beyond parties and cliques. On one level it seeks to demonstrate that even the pursuit of commercial success involved political constraints which shaped the character of newspaper journalism. *Shen Bao* was the outstanding example of this form of newspaper journalism. Newspapers like *Shen Bao* can best be understood by examining their position as large commercial enterprises in the wider economic and political environment of Shanghai. On another level the central argument of this study will focus on the historical background to the radical changes in *Shen Bao*'s journalism after the Shenyang Incident. It will be seen that these changes were inseparably linked with Shi Liangcai's social position and the development of his relationship with Shanghai capitalists. Some elaboration of the two levels of the central argument is warranted.

If Shi Liangcai is seen primarily as the head of a newspaper enterprise, and in one sense a businessman, then it can be shown that the history of *Shen Bao*'s journalism involved a more complex process than the articulation of an independent voice. For it is important to bear in mind that for almost the first twenty years of its existence under Shi Liangcai *Shen Bao* was not so much independent as silent. As a matter of policy it did not broadcast any political line to its readers. This was because the drive for commercial success took priority over everything else. This simple rationale affected newspaper journalism in Shanghai in several important ways.

First, the most obvious rule for newspapers to follow was to do nothing which would upset the foreign authorities in the International Settlement. It was they who held legal jurisdiction over the territory upon which newspaper enterprises were founded. *Shen Bao* started life in 1872 under English ownership, but even after it passed entirely into the hands of Shi Liangcai it, like all the major Shanghai dailies, was registered as a foreign business subject to foreign law. The irony was that this system of registration was considered to afford greater protection from the militaristic rulers of China. Such a schizophrenic existence sometimes compelled newspapers which were published for a Chinese audience to omit news of important local affairs for fear of attracting the censure of the foreign authorities. For instance, as will be seen in chapter five, *Shen Bao* and other Chinese newspapers gave scant coverage to the anti-imperialist May Thirtieth demonstrations and even published official British interpretations of these events.

Secondly, and related to the first point, the financial and technical structures of newspapers in Shanghai were in many ways dependent upon foreign resources. Again this represented commercial adaptation to the prevailing situation in Shanghai. Advertising, the lifeblood of commercial newspapers, was the most obvious example of dependance. Though there

are no precise statistics on advertising in China, *Shen Bao*, and the other Shanghai newspapers, drew heavily on revenue from advertisements for foreign companies. This, too, was a political issue. During both the May Fourth Movement and the demonstrations of May Thirtieth Shanghai newspapers felt compelled by public pressure to impose bans respectively on Japanese and British advertising. It will be seen that the advertising contracts of some foreign companies, the British-American Tobacco Company being the principal example, were so prized that during the May Thirtieth Movement newspapers such as *Shen Bao* were loath to cancel them. The control of news agencies was also of considerable political significance. *Shen Bao* developed an extensive network of correspondents and funded its own national news agency, but it continued to make use of foreign news agencies such as Reuters and, until the outbreak of the Shenyang (Mukden) Incident, the Japanese Toho and Rengo. Moreover, China was without an international news agency of its own until the early 1930s. Thus not only were many of the telegraphic dispatches of national news published in Shanghai newspapers supplied by foreign news agencies, but for much of the Republican period the Chinese press was unable to present its own version of internal events to the outside world. The basic resources of a newspaper enterprise, printing machines and newsprint, were imported almost exclusively from foreign countries. Though these imports had no discernible political impact on the newspapers, this sort of dependence on foreign resources did little to encourage the development of these industries in China. Newspaper support for a large-scale paper mill, for instance, did not materialize until the mid-1930s.[2]

Thirdly, the dominance of commercial imperatives meant that journalists played a largely subordinate role in the production of

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2. See chapter 2 of this study.

newspapers. Shi Liangcai and a few of his most senior staff held a tight rein over the editorial character and general content of *Shen Bao*. The important decisions at *Shen Bao* were made by Shi, the general manager, the finance manager and the chief editor, and a similar pattern appears to have been the norm at other major Shanghai dailies. For this reason, with the exception of the first six years of the Republic, when prominent Beijing political correspondents were given their own columns, one can search in vain for a single byline in the pages of *Shen Bao*. It is no exaggeration to say that Shi Liangcai had a tendency to use telegraphic dispatches as a substitute for journalists. This domination of newspaper production by the proprietor and his senior staff made the task of developing journalism into a profession, which was even a struggle in more developed countries, especially difficult in Shanghai.[3] The difficulty was compounded by the large number of journalists who, instead of pursuing professional status, decided that taking bribes from politicians and influential figures in Shanghai was one way to improve their income. Through the warlord era this sort of practice became so much a part of the political scene that those who called for professionalization were driven by the hope that journalism could be depoliticized. They thought the development of commercial journalism, based upon advertising revenue rather than political subsidies, held the key to professionalization. When journalists looked for professional models to emulate they inevitably turned to Europe and, in particular, the United States. They constantly expressed the desire to improve their standing along the lines of the profession in the more developed countries, but they were in such a weak

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3. It is worth noting that journalists in most countries have struggled to achieve a professional standing and they tended to succeed only when the newspaper press flourished as an industry. Journalists lack the personalized client relationship and the control over entry into the occupation common to doctors and lawyers. See Peter Golding, "Media Professionalism in the Third World: The Transfer of an Ideology," in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 295.

position *vis-a-vis* their proprietors that foreign models did not develop much beyond the theoretical plane and tended to be confined to academic journalism. It is nevertheless important to analyse the models put forward by Chinese journalists at the time, for they reveal a great deal about the problem of adapting the creeds born in industrialized societies to a less developed setting. Hopes that a strong profession could be realized through commercial journalism in the end remained unfulfilled, and the crisis of Japanese militarism in China overwhelmed concerns for the development of an apolitical profession. Within newspaper enterprises only the trusted, top ranking editors were well rewarded by proprietors. Journalists at lower levels could be thankful for steady employment (and most did not register any protests audible to the historian), but the majority had little choice other than to be obedient scribes. This hierarchical line of management underlined the fact that the proprietor-journalist relationship remained at heart an employer-employee relationship.

Government control of the press was, of course, an ever-present factor in running a newspaper. There is no need for this study to duplicate the research already done on the subject.[4] Instead, the ways in which newspapers and their journalists adapted to government control will be emphasized. It will be seen that, though nobody involved with newspaper journalism welcomed strict government control, as commercial enterprises newspapers had ways of finding the path of least resistance even if this meant being silent on issues of national importance. This was a particularly complex issue because, as suggested above, Shanghai newspapers were constrained by commercial priorities which often amounted to self-censorship. The outspoken *Shen Bao* of the early 1930s,

4. See Lee-hsia Hsu Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

for instance, was bought to heel by government-imposed postal bans which threatened the paper's earnings. Thus, during many of the significant historical events of the Republican period what the newspapers did not report revealed more about their political character than what they did report.

Unless due recognition is given to the ways these sorts of commercial constraints shaped newspapers, there is a risk that the sometimes subtle political character of *Shen Bao*'s journalism could be remain hidden beneath the label "independent."

The question remains as to why Shi Liangcai departed from these strict commercial imperatives and converted *Shen Bao* into a platform for opinion opposed to the Nationalist government's policy of non-resistance to Japan. The second level of the argument in this study can, it is hoped, provide an explanation. It will be remembered that the second level focuses on the importance of Shi Liangcai's social position and his relationship with Shanghai capitalists. These elements of Shi's life were by no means static. They developed as Shi Liangcai's stature in Shanghai commercial and political circles improved with the success of his own enterprises. Even before he entered the newspaper world, Shi Liangcai had intimate connections with the commercial and political elite of Jiangsu, particularly the constitutionalists headed by Zhang Jian. Shi held several local administrative positions before and after the 1911 Revolution. He was first installed at *Shen Bao* in 1912 thanks to Zhang Jian. Shi then devoted his energies to newspaper journalism and retreated from direct involvement in the administration of Shanghai. The expansion of his newspaper enterprise nevertheless carried Shi into the heart of Shanghai commercial circles. The need for financial backing to this expansion led to connections in banking and Shi helped to establish the Zhong-Nan Bank in 1921. By 1929, when his purchase of *Xin Wen Bao* gave him control of China's two biggest newspapers, Shi was a wealthy man in his own right

and his investments extended beyond his huge newspaper enterprise.[5] Almost twenty years of single-minded commercial expansion made Shi Liangcai a leading figure in Shanghai society. If the Japanese military had not attacked China, Shi would probably have been content to remain a well-connected Shanghai press mogul with little political ambition. But the Japanese attacks on Manchuria and on Shanghai in particular inspired Shi to feel a greater responsibility for Shanghai's economic and political affairs. It marked a resurgence of the interest he had shown in the administration of Shanghai during the 1911 Revolution. The difference was that Shi had steadily built a formidable presence for himself in Shanghai with his newspaper enterprise as the centre-piece. This gave him unrivalled potential to broadcast his views and to shape public opinion. After the Shenyang Incident and the bombing of Shanghai, it was his standing and influence within local society which enabled Shi to unite some of Shanghai's most powerful capitalists in opposition to the Nationalist government's Japan policy. Shi also attempted to pressure the Nationalist government into broadening its base in the hope that a non-partisan, national coalition government could be created to deal with China's crisis. *Shen Bao* served as a mouthpiece for these causes and Shi Liangcai organized his own civic associations in an effort to, at least in part, construct an alternative to government authority in Shanghai. It will be seen that Shi Liangcai and his supporters among the Shanghai capitalists acted both out of a belief that government policy put the stability and survival of Shanghai at risk and a heightened sense of

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5. Shi Liangcai invested in, or helped to found, the Zhong-Nan Bank, the Minsheng Cotton Mill, the Wuzhou Dispensary Company and the Zhonghua Book Company. See "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng Ehao," *Shen Bao*, November 14, 1934; Huang Yanpei, "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng zhi Shengping" [The Life of Shi Liangcai], Special Supplement in Memory of Director-General Shi, *Shen Bao Yuekan* 3.12 (Dec. 1934): 10-11; Howard L. Boorman and Richard C. Howard, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, 4 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967-1971), 3: 126-128. Details of Shi's various interests and positions are discussed in part 2 of this study.

responsibility for local government. Though they did not speak of their activities in these terms, in effect they wanted to increase their influence in Shanghai at the expense of the Nationalist government's authority. Partly as a concession to Shi Liangcai's influence in Shanghai, in October 1932 the Nationalist government made him head of the Shanghai Provisional Senate (Shanghai Shi Linshi Canyihui). It was above all his attempt to organize a political movement as a challenge to government authority which brought about Shi Liangcai's demise. Following his assassination, *Shen Bao* retreated into political silence.

In more general terms, this study of the history of newspaper journalism, which concentrates on the example of *Shen Bao*, is an effort to add another dimension to research into society during the Republican period. It attempts to contribute not only to a deeper understanding of the political role of the newspaper press, but also to a more complete picture of the nature of the relationship between Shanghai capitalists and the Nationalist government. Lloyd Eastman and Parks Coble have argued that the Nationalist regime was an autonomous force which subordinated and suppressed the influence of the capitalists. In Coble's words, "relations between the two groups were characterized by government efforts to emasculate politically the urban capitalists and to milk the modern sector of the economy."[6] Shi Liangcai's rallying of capitalists after the Japanese attack on Shanghai suggests a more complex relationship between the two groups. It indicates that government authority lost some ground to the Shanghai capitalists in this period. Government sponsored initiatives such as the formation of the Shanghai Provisional Senate were, in a sense,

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6. Parks M. Coble, Jr., *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council of East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1980), p. 3. See also Lloyd Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

exercises in damage control aimed at restoring the government's relations with disgruntled members among the Shanghai capitalists.

The contribution of Shi Liangcai and *Shen Bao* to these events has not been studied at any length by scholars outside China. Scholars in China have tended to see Shi Liangcai as a member of the national bourgeoisie (*minzu zichanjieji*) who gave vent to his patriotic ideals following the Japanese military attacks on China. In addition, Shi Liangcai's brand of national capitalism (*minzu zibenzhuyi*) is said to have stood in opposition to the Nationalist government's development of bureaucratic capitalism (*guanliao zibenzhuyi*).[7] This study will show that there is only a superficial accuracy to these views. Shi Liangcai's political attitude in the early 1930s did reflect a nationalistic or patriotic response to China's national crisis. Yet the way in which *Shen Bao* was constrained by its dependent position *vis-a-vis* foreign powers has already been highlighted. It was very likely that, to give just one example, some of *Shen Bao*'s anti-Japanese editorials were printed on imported Japanese paper.[8] The label "national bourgeoisie" therefore does not make a clear distinction between political attitudes and economic realities.[9] Similarly, bureaucratic capitalism, via the C.C. Clique, did eventually gain control of *Shen Bao* (and several other important Shanghai newspapers); however, this was not until after the management of the paper had been undermined by the Japanese occupation of

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7. Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao" [On Shen Bao During the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management] (M.A. dissertation, Fudan University, 1982), pp. 4, 26, 28-29; Liang Jialu, et al., *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 339-342. Perhaps understandably, there has not been a detailed study of Shi Liangcai done in Taiwan.

8. Japanese newsprint accounted for 66.6% of total newsprint imports in 1931. See Rudolf Löwenthal, "Printing Paper: Its Supply and Demand," *Yenching Journal of Social Studies* 1 (June 1938): 116. See also chapter 2.

9. This sort of problem is sensibly discussed in Sherman Cochran, *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 207-212.

Shanghai.[10] Although *Shen Bao* under Shi Liangcai did stand for an open, liberal-democratic style of government, a simple materialist connection between modes of capital and political ideologies does not provide a satisfactory explanation of Shi Liangcai's rise and fall. The fact that Shi's influence owed a great deal to his connections with Shanghai capitalists does not mean that together they formed a class bloc. The capitalist members of Shi's anti-Japanese movement, for instance, did not necessarily share the same agenda. Through *Shen Bao* Shi Liangcai went far beyond them in his expression of political opposition to government policy. His assassination will thus be shown to have been politically motivated rather than the result of a struggle between two modes of capital.

Apart from the work of scholars in China and Taiwan, the history of the Chinese press, particularly in the Republican period, remains a largely uncharted area of research.[11] For better or worse this study marks a tentative beginning to the process of bringing some interpretive weight

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10. For details see chapter 8.

11. A good brief history of the rise of the newspaper press appears in E. Perry Link, Jr., *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 95-125. This mainly draws upon: Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu* [Memoirs of the Bracelet Shadow Chamber] (Hong Kong: Dahua Chubanshe, 1971); Roswell S. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1933), and; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Taibei: Guoli Zhengzhi Daxue Xinwen Yanjiu Suo, 1966; reprint ed., Sanmin Shuju, 1984). To this list should be added the pioneering work by one of China's great journalists, Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1927; reprint ed., Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1982) which became the basis for many subsequent general histories too numerous to list here. (See the selected bibliography). One such general history is Lin Yutang, *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936) which extends Ge's work into the 1930s. The best of the recent general histories published in China are: Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi* [A History of the Modern Press in China], 2 vols. (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1981); Liang Jialu, et al., *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi*, and; Li Longmu, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye Shigao* [A Draft History of the Press in China] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1985). For a recent article on the press see Leo Ou-fan Lee and Andrew J. Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in the Late Qing and Beyond," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 359-378.

to one aspect of a huge subject. The search for interpretive and comparative perspectives has led to a consideration of some of the vast literature on the press and the mass media in industrialized countries. Because they have tended to be a by-product of the industrial experience around the world, it is reasonable to expect to find some similarities between modern commercial newspapers across social and cultural boundaries. Indeed, some sociologists have argued that the international media of the present are largely the result of a "century-long dominance of Anglo-American media products and styles" throughout the world.[12] China in the Republican period does not readily submit to generalizations of this kind, but interpretive perspectives centred on the rise of newspapers in industrialized societies can still be of some value if applied selectively.

This study, in emphasizing that newspapers need to be understood as primarily commercial enterprises, is partly informed by writings on the "political economy of mass-communication."[13] The value of this approach is that it attempts to comprehend the material constraints which shaped the historical development of the media. It can offer useful insights provided that one's research is focused on the control of the the production of media such as newspapers. The problem is that though the political economy approach seeks to avoid deterministic formulas, it tends

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12. Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media are American: Anglo-American Media in the World* (London: Constable, 1977), p. 18. Tunstall includes China in this pattern of "Anglo-American" domination (pp. 192-194), but this interesting book inclines toward over-generalization. The author's treatment of China suffers as a result.

13. See, for example, Nicholas Garnham, "Contribution to a Political Economy of Mass-communication," *Media, Culture and Society* 1.2 (April 1979): 123-146; Graham Murdoch and Peter Golding, "Ideology and the Mass Media: The Question of Determination," in *Ideology and Cultural Production*, ed. Michelle Barrett, et al. (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 204-205. A good brief summary of the range of theory on the mass media is given in James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott, "The Study of the Media: Theoretical Approaches," in *Culture, Society and the Media*, ed. Michael Gurevitch, et al. (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 11-29. The political economy approach to media has yet to produce an historical study of newspapers and, like most sociologists, is most concerned with the present.

to reduce contingent historical and cultural factors to, in the final analysis, materialist explanations. In Republican Shanghai, where newspapers had to adapt a Chinese cultural heritage to an environment constrained by a foreign economic and political presence, an understanding of material factors has to be balanced by particular cultural and historical factors. For instance, there is a commonly held view that the commercialization of the press in industrial societies led to a concentration of newspaper ownership. As a result, some scholars have argued that there has been a depoliticization of the press.[14] There was a growing tendency toward a concentration of ownership of Shanghai newspapers, and commercial pressures certainly shaped newspaper journalism; however, this study will show that before the war with Japan intervened the ownership patterns of the Shanghai press, let alone the press throughout China, were far from assuming monopoly proportions. Moreover, it will be seen that rather than commercialization producing a depoliticizaion of the press, extraordinary events like the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in fact reinvigorated the political charater of commercial newspapers like *Shen Bao*.

Similar observations can be made in relation to European and American models of professional journalism which were spread to many parts of the world.[15] Though Chinese journalists accepted the principles of these models, they were in no position to be able to put them into practice. Their dilemma suggests a pattern of newspaper journalism more like that found in developing societies whose experience of industrialization was

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14. One of the best examples of this view is Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981, 1984). Few would question the growing concentration of newspaper ownership, but, as this study hopes to show in its own way, a non-party press is far from being a non-political press.

15. For works which emphasize the pervasiveness of these models see especially, Tunstall, *The Media are American*, pp. 95-98, 145-154, 201-208; Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper: An International History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp. 143-184.

limited to urban regions and whose press was similarly constrained by the presence of foreign authorities. Though little research has been done in this area, it is possible that useful comparisons could be made between Shanghai newspaper journalism and that in India under the British, the Philippines during the American occupation or Vietnam under French rule.[16]

The two parts of this study represent a division between an examination of the general characteristics of Shanghai newspaper journalism and the political history of *Shen Bao* as a case study of such journalism. *Shen Bao* under Shi Liangcai was the leader in its field, but its position cannot be fully appreciated in isolation of the broader development of newspaper journalism in Shanghai. During the period under study there were four dailies which dominated newspaper journalism in Shanghai. The so-called "four big newspapers" (*si da baozhi*) which will be mentioned time and again were *Shen Bao*, *Xin Wen Bao*, *Shi Bao*, and *Shi Shi Xin Bao*.[17] *Xin Wen Bao* was *Shen Bao*'s great commercial rival until it was taken over by Shi Liangcai in 1929. *Shi Bao* was the leading reformist newspaper during the years leading up to the 1911 Revolution, but it went into decline from the beginning of the Republic until it was sold in 1921 to a businessman who converted it to a form of yellow journalism. *Shi Shi Xin Bao* was the principal organ of Liang Qichao's Research Clique (Yanjiu Xi) during the warlord era. In a

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16. See for example the entries under India, South Vietnam and the Philippines in John A. Lent, ed., *The Asian Newspapers' Reluctant Revolution* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971); E. Lloyd Summerlad, *The Press in Developing Countries* (Sydney: University of Sydney Press, 1966), pp. 2-4; S. Natarajan, *A History of the Press in India* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962). In many developing countries, the majority of which had some experience of colonialism, the foreign presence was so strong that the dominant foreign language became one of the main languages of the newspaper press.

17. *Shen Bao* romanized its name on its masthead as "*Shun Pao*." *Xin Wen Bao* referred to itself as "*Sin Wan Pao*." *Shi Bao* gave itself the English title, "*Eastern Times*," while *Shi Shi Xin Bao* was known in English as the "*China Times*." I use the standard Chinese pinyin form for each newspaper.

drawn out process that began in 1927 it was eventually taken over by the former manager of *Shen Bao*, Zhang Zhuping. Something of a master of his trade, by 1932, with three other press establishments in tow, Zhang had established himself as Shanghai's second press mogul. Though they are not central to this study, at different times the histories of the other major dailies were linked to that of *Shen Bao*. Many of the changes that *Shen Bao* experienced were the result of competition with these newspapers or adjustments to changes in the market for newspapers. Some insights into *Shen Bao*'s journalism can therefore be provided through relevant comparisons with its three major competitors.

Chapter one of this study outlines the general character of the Shanghai newspaper audience, and presents a brief history of Shanghai newspaper journalism up to the 1911 Revolution. The economic and organizational constraints which shaped Shanghai newspaper journalism are presented in chapter two. Chapters three and four discuss the important but largely unsuccessful attempts by Chinese journalists to build a profession. It will be seen that while they started out attempting to escape politics, in the end journalists were overwhelmed by it. The whole of part two is taken up with a political history of *Shen Bao* from 1912 to 1937. This is inevitably an episodic history because time constraints did not allow a thorough survey of the paper over this twenty five year period. Most attention is therefore given to *Shen Bao*'s response to such political highlights as the May Fourth movement, the May Thirtieth movement, the rise of the Nationalists to power and the crisis of Japanese militarism in China. Nevertheless, a great deal can be learnt about the nature of newspaper journalism and its political role in Shanghai society of the day from this humble beginning.

The research in the following pages was undertaken partly in the belief that newspaper journalism achieves ultimate success when it possesses active political influence without having to be party political. In

these terms, this is the story of why Shanghai newspaper journalism was only a partial success.

PART I

SHANGHAI NEWSPAPERS

AND

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOURNALISM

CHAPTER I

READERS, WRITERS AND BUSINESSMEN
THE BACKGROUND TO NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM

There are two important aspects to the development of Shanghai newspaper journalism which, though not central to this study, must be given due consideration. First, although the following chapters are concerned more with the "production" side of the newspaper press than with its wider social impact, it is important to attempt to define the general character of the newspaper audience. A newspaper's influence is, at least in part, limited by the size and character of its audience, and the inability of Shanghai newspapers to achieve genuine mass circulation was one cause of their limited political success. Secondly, Shanghai newspaper journalism clearly did not begin in 1912. By then it could already claim a forty year history and a brief account of the main features of journalism in those years is in order.

This chapter will show that newspaper journalism was from the beginning wedded to commercial growth in urban centres like Shanghai. As the population and economy of urban centres expanded, so the size of the newspaper audience expanded. The great watershed for the expansion of the newspaper audience was the establishment of the Republic. Before then commercial newspapers like *Shen Bao* circulated among a small, upper-class elite. Significant expansion in audience size did not occur until after 1912, and the real take off point did not come until the decade leading up to the Northern Expedition in 1926.

In 1931 *Shen Bao*'s circulation reached a plateau of around 150,000. With a circulation of this size determining the social groups which made

up the paper's audience becomes a more difficult task. The audience mix was more complex than in the years before the Republic, as was Shanghai society. This was linked to changes in the social profile of Shanghai which still have not been thoroughly researched. The rise of the commercial and industrial class in the Republican period is by now relatively well known.[1] This group, along with the gentry, formed one of the pillars of the newspaper audience from the beginning. Beyond this elite the picture is not so clear. The growth in what are commonly thought to be the middle-class occupations of industrial societies[2], clerks, shop assistants, professionals, and others in the service industries, is less well understood in the industrializing parts of Republican China.[3] Social groups associated with occupations of this sort opened up an entirely new audience for Shanghai newspapers. It will be seen that the circulation of *Shen Bao* in the late 1920s and early 1930s (150,000 plus) was large enough to suggest that these social groups, which, for want of a better term, could be referred to as the Shanghai middle class, formed the second pillar of the newspaper audience. But it was very unlikely that *Shen Bao*'s audience went beyond this social terrain.

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1. Research on these social groups has been more concerned with their relationship with the state and the Guomindang than with their social habits. See Marie-Claire Bergère, "The Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911-1949" in *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), vol. 12, pt. 1, pp. 721-827; Parks M. Coble, Jr., *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980); Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Political Power in Shanghai, 1890-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985). Bergère's article presents a good overview of the wider literature on the subject.

2. A vivid general account of this phenomenon in Europe is given in E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1962; Abacus edition, 1977), pp. 224-245.

3. An interesting attempt to define the urban middle class in terms of their readership of popular literature has been made in E. Perry Link, Jr., *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Literature in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 5-7. This chapter follows some of Link's important observations about this social group.

The "writers," the journalists, of this chapter, like the newspapers they served, did not experience significant advancement until the beginning of the Republican period. Chapters three and four present a detailed assessment of that advancement from 1912 to 1937. Attempts to build professional journalism during those years can nevertheless be better understood against the background of the development of treaty port journalism up to the 1911 Revolution. For many of the journalistic habits formed before 1911 lasted well into the Republican period. In addition, the evolution of treaty port journalism shows the important ways in which Chinese journalists drew on parts of their own cultural heritage in putting newspapers together. This process went on despite a pervasive foreign presence in the newspaper press, from ownership to the development of the ideals of journalism. The complex interaction between Chinese journalists, foreign ownership and foreign models of journalism serves as a warning against making generalizations about imperialist domination of China's earliest commercial communication medium.[4]

It is difficult to say whether or not there were journalists in the modern sense before the Republican period. The treaty port newspaper represented a union between largely foreign business interests and a few Chinese editors valued for their literary skills. Businessmen like *Shen Bao*'s Ernest Major provided the capital necessary to set things in motion while his Chinese staff put the words together to form the text. The permanent, newspaper-based reporter was unknown, and day-to-day management was the responsibility of a handful of staff. Defining those who wrote for the newspapers as journalists is made more difficult by figures such as Wang Tao, Liang Qichao and Yu Youren. Were they journalists or polemical writers and essayists? Journalism as an

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4. See, for example, Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media are American: Anglo-American Media in the World* (London: Constable, 1977), pp. 192-194.

occupation becomes less confusing if in this early period it is seen as a branch of writing, as one of the new career paths that commercial growth in the treaty ports opened up to those with literate skills. Although events of the period are seldom seen in this light, even the great writers like Liang Qichao could not have achieved their considerable influence without the facilitating role played by the commercialization of printing and publishing.[5] This commercialization affected all areas of the writing process of which journalism was one part. By the last years of the Qing, for instance, there was still no clear demarcation between the journalist as news gatherer and the journalist as creator of short fiction (some might say the distinction remains unclear), and successful journalists combined both forms of writing. Hence the reference to journalists as "writers" in this chapter.

Readers: A Profile of the Newspaper Audience

When the Englishman Ernest Major founded *Shen Bao* in Shanghai in 1872 it was hardly an overnight success. In its first year of publication it achieved a circulation of only six hundred. Five years later circulation was around five thousand, and even in 1912 it had only reached seven thousand.[6] The potential newspaper audience of the late-Qing period was, of course, much larger. Assessing the precise size of that audience and the character of the regular newspaper readership is not an easy task, but some tentative conclusions can be made.

Although literacy rates can give some idea of the potential audience for newspapers, care needs to be taken in discussing the relationship between these two factors. It is not wise to assume a causal connection

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5. Two notable exceptions to the neglect of research into the commercial development of printing are: Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, pp. 79-125, and; Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy* pp. 109-124.

6. The Appendix lists the circulation of *Shen Bao*, 1872-1936.

between rates of literacy and the size of a newspaper audience. In nineteenth-century England, for example, it has been shown that newspaper readership always lagged far behind the literate population. The 1839 literacy rate for England has been estimated at 58.4 percent, while Raymond Williams has concluded that the newspaper-reading public of 1820 was one percent of the adult population.[7] In a related area of research, Roger Schofield has suggested that the decline in illiteracy in nineteenth-century England was probably a by-product rather than a cause of economic growth.[8] If this holds true for declining illiteracy, then it must also apply to increases in the newspaper audience.

In looking at China it is therefore important to realize that the development of the newspaper audience bore little relationship to increases in literacy and that both were probably by-products of commercial growth. Literacy rates in China nevertheless allow an assessment to be made about the size and character of the population potentially within the reach of print communication. According to Evelyn Rawski, the basic literacy rate in late-Qing China was "unevenly distributed between males and females, with perhaps 30 to 45 percent of males and only 2 to 10 percent of females possessing some ability to read and write."[9] By averaging out these percentages and applying them to China's approximate population of four hundred million, then the total

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7. Raymond Williams, "The Press and Popular Culture: An Historical Perspective," in *Newspaper History: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), p. 42.

8. R. S. Schofield, "Dimensions of Illiteracy in England, 1750-1850," in *Literacy and Social Development in the West*, ed. Harvey J. Graff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 213. Schofield makes reference to a figure of 40% as the commonly assumed minimum literacy rate necessary for growth on an industrial scale. Schofield's paper throws doubt on this assumption. See also Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), pp. 149-154 where it is argued that increases in literacy and education levels of themselves are insufficent explanations of economic growth.

9. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, p. 23.

literate population would have been around 87 million.[10] Other, more generous estimates made in the 1930s arrived at a figure of 100 to 150 million.[11]

Printed material circulated among a relatively wide cross-section of the literate population in Qing China, although it is reasonable to assume that habitual reading was common to a far smaller number of people than the 87 million literates. Rawski's figures mean that the overwhelming majority of women in Qing China (and probably Republican China) were effectively excluded from any form of print communication. Even literate women were largely left out of the audience for printed material until the reform movement of the 1890s began to consider female emancipation.[12] The highly literate male Chinese elite, on the other hand, were able to read anything available in print. Their attention focused on mastering Confucian texts to gain entry to the ranks of government service. During the Qing a substantial trade developed in the printing of these texts as well as selected questions and answers to the imperial examinations.[13] A more popular literature, based upon a vernacular language and often closely

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10. G. William Skinner estimated China's population in 1893 (excluding Taiwan and Manchuria) to be 394 million. See G. William Skinner, "Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth-Century China," in *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. Skinner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), pp. 225-226.

11. Vernon Nash and Rudolf Löwenthal, "Responsible Factors in Chinese Journalism," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 20.3 (Oct. 1936): 422. They concluded that about 100-150 million people were able, more or less, to read.

12. The cause of female emancipation was first mentioned in print by male intellectuals, Liang Qichao setting the tone for others. See Sally Borthwick, "Changing Concepts of the Role of Women from the Late Qing to the May Fourth Period," in *Ideal and Reality: Social and Political Change in Modern China, 1860-1949*, ed. David Pong and Edmund S. K. Fung (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), pp. 70-80. One of the first vernacular periodicals, *Wuxi Baihua Bao*, was launched by the female journalist Qiu Yufang in 1898, although it was not specifically directed at women. Many short-lived periodicals directed at women were published in the last decade of the Qing. See Li Youning and Zhang Yufa, ed., *Jindai Zhongguo Nüquan Yundong Shiliao* [Historical Sources on the Feminist Movement in Modern China] (Taibei: Zhuanji Wenxue, 1975), pp. 768-808, 1523-1535.; see also Roswell S. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1933), pp. 97-98; Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 107.

13. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, pp. 110-111.

connected to aural performance art of the market towns, also experienced significant growth in Qing China. This form of printed material circulated beyond the elite to merchants, artisans, shopkeepers, landlords and wealthier peasants. From time to time popular religious activities such as divination for particular ceremonies or festivities brought members of the peasantry into contact with almanacs and the like.[14] It is impossible to estimate the number of people for whom the printed word formed part of their life. Although Rawski has found a considerable degree of communication through print in a broad cross-section of Qing males, it was most likely that habitual reading was concentrated among males of urban areas or market towns.[15] It can be shown that this tendency was even more marked with periodical publications, the ultimate form of habitual reading.

Before the rise of journals and newspapers sponsored by missionaries or foreign businessmen,[16] there were two basic types of periodical publication indigenous to China. Government officials, from senior advisory levels down to the local *yamen*, kept in touch with policy developments through the capital (Beijing) gazettes (*jing bao*) which had an ancestry stretching back to the Tang dynasty. Though the content of these official news sheets was strictly controlled by the court, by the middle of the Ming dynasty private printers were permitted to publish

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14. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143, 144-145.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-154, *passim* for a discussion of the spread and reach of literacy and print communication.

16. The missionary periodicals (in the Chinese language) were at first printed in Malacca and distributed in China. William Milne started this sort of press in 1815. His efforts were continued mainly by Robert Morrison, Walter Henry Medhurst and Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff up to the Opium wars. Some missionaries, particularly James Legge, were also of some influence in the formation of Chinese newspapers in the 1860s and 1870s. See Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 16-29, 34-40. Newspapers of the foreign community in the treaty ports began appearing from the 1820s, but significant papers like the *North China Herald* did not begin publication until the 1850s. See Frank H. H. King, ed., and Prescott Clarke, *A Research Guide to China-Coast Newspapers, 1822-1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Centre, Harvard University, 1965), pp. 17-32.

them on behalf of the court.[17] Beyond this, in the market centres of China great or spectacular events, such as the battles of the Opium wars, were intermittently sold as "*xin wen zhi*," which literally meant "news paper." "*Xin wen zhi*" were hawked in the streets and sometimes contained market reports or price movements which would have been of interest to agricultural traders.[18] The *ad hoc* nature of these news sheets meant that they did not possess a fixed market nor circulation as such. The Beijing gazettes, on the other hand, formed an extensive and sophisticated network of official information. It has been estimated that the national circulation of Beijing gazettes, including reprints and copies, amounted to "some tens of thousands."[19] Some sense of the character of the audience for the gazettes was given by a contemporary foreign observer, Samuel Wells Williams. He wrote that the gazettes were "very generally read and talked about by the gentry and educated people in the cities...."[20] Among the official and educated elite of the late Qing, then, there was a well established audience for periodical publications, albeit restricted in their content to the dissemination of what could be called government "news."

The growth of Chinese newspapers and periodicals in the treaty ports from the 1870s on was initially founded upon an audience of similar character to that for the Beijing gazettes. The press remained an elite

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17. Before the Ming-Qing period *Jing Bao* were known as "*di bao*." "Di" refers to the residences of high officials. Some accounts note a primitive form of periodical publication going back to the Han period, but it is doubtful that these were more than occasional circulars restricted to the court and high officcials. See Liang Jialu, et al., *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 5-20. This is the most accurate account of this form of the press, but see also Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 7-16; Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1927; reprint ed.; Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1982), pp. 35-43.

18. Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 5-7.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

20. Samuel Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (New York:, n.p., 1883), 1: 420, cited by Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 19

phenomenon, but it touched many more among their ranks, particularly after 1895 when the reform movement gained momentum. A useful way to assess the nature of the audience for this new press is through circulation figures, which can be estimated thanks to the availability of postal statistics for the late Qing. Some preliminary calculations on a national scale have already been made by Andrew Nathan. He concludes that by 1908 national newspaper subscriptions came to about 300,000.[21] Using what admittedly amounts to not much more than anecdotal observations from the period, Nathan then observes that each periodical publication in China might have been read by an average of fifteen individuals. Although this would yield a total audience of 4.5 million, Nathan divides this figure by two on the assumption that that was the number of periodicals read on a regular basis by each member of this audience. As a "rough estimate" of total audience, he arrives at a figure of "2 to 4 million", or, "1 percent--more or less--of China's population in the last decade of the Qing."[22]

This is not the place to quibble over figures. It is not possible to make a more accurate estimate of audience size in the absence of more detailed statistical information. A figure of one percent might even be an overestimate given that early nineteenth-century England's newspaper audience was a similarly small percentage of the population but with a higher rate of literacy. This percentage does serve to highlight the vast gap between the number of literates and the number of newspaper readers in China. It emphasizes the fact that the regular readers of newspapers were limited to the highly literate political, commercial and cultural elite. This elite was by no means homogeneous. On the one hand, newspapers

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21. Leo Ou-fan Lee and Andrew J. Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in the Late Qing and Beyond," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 371.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 372-373.

circulated among an audience similar to that for the Beijing gazettes. The major Shanghai newspapers, for instance, were read by members of the Qing government, from the court down to the local *yamen* level. Even Liang Qichao's first periodical, *Wanguo Gong Bao* (founded in August 1895 and later renamed *Zhongwai Jiwen*), was distributed gratis along with the official government gazettes.[23] On the other hand, this "official" readership was clearly not the force behind the newspaper press. Unlike the Beijing gazettes, the treaty port press was driven by commercial and political groups which stood outside, and often in opposition to, the official mainstream. Recent research has shown that Shanghai newspapers of the late Qing, particularly *Shen Bao* in the 1880s, served a readership made up of the "Yangtze Valley gentry-merchant managerial elite." *Shen Bao* became a focal point for an "oppositional elite" critical of the Qing government and in favour of political activism at the regional and local level.[24] This suggests that though the audience of the Shanghai newspapers of this period was limited to the elite of society, many among that elite were, rather than being a part of the mainstream of Qing rule, closely connected to "progressive and even slightly disruptive" regional networks.[25] For this relatively small group newspapers became an important part of their participation in politics. As will be seen in chapter

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23. On the standing of the press in official circles see Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 107-110. On *Wanguo Gong Bao* (or *Zhongwai Jiwen*), which should not be confused with the journal of the same name started by Timothy Richard in 1875, and Liang Qichao see Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 90-94; Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* [A History of Journalism in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1927; reprint ed., Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1984), pp. 157-162; Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi* [A History of the Modern Press in China] (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 72-86; Daniel H. Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century: Chang Chih-tung and the Issues of a New Age, 1895-1909* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1978), p. 21.

24. See the excellent Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 142, 143-167.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

five, Shi Liangcai was himself connected to a commercial-gentry network in Jiangsu.

Shen Bao achieved a virtual monopoly over this "oppositional elite" newspaper audience through the 1880s. It outlasted all challenges to its dominance in that decade.[26] If, following Nathan, each copy of *Shen Bao* was read by fifteen individuals, its audience would have been about seventy-five thousand.[27] *Shen Bao*'s hold over this audience was not shaken until the 1890s with the arrival of *Xin Wen Bao* and the the reformist press headed by Liang Qichao.

Established in 1893, *Xin Wen Bao* was a joint venture between English and Chinese capital, but, like *Shen Bao*, it was directed at an exclusively Chinese audience. One of the keys to expanded newspaper readership, the ability to lower the retail price via subsidization from advertising revenue, was demonstrated by *Xin Wen Bao* in its market competition with *Shen Bao. Xin Wen Bao* sold for seven cash (*wen*) per copy while *Shen Bao* cost ten cash.[28] This tactic proved very successful in lifting *Xin Wen Bao*'s circulation above that of *Shen Bao*, as by 1900 its circulation of 12,000 surpassed *Shen Bao* by several thousand.[29]

Although it is difficult to generalize about the character of an audience based upon its demand for news, *Xin Wen Bao* gained a reputation

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26. See pp. 49-51 of this chapter on early newspaper rivalry.

27. *Shen Bao*'s circulation in 1887 was said to be 5,000. There are no reliable figures on its circulation in subsequent years until 1912 when it was said to be 7,000. See the Appendix.

28. Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 68, 74. According to Britton *Shen Bao* had an arrangement whereby if copies of the paper were returned to the office on the issue day, a refund of six cash could be obtained. This practice would have helped to expand the audience of the paper.

29. The most detailed circulation figures for *Xin Wen Bao* can be found in Hu Daojing, "Xin Wen Bao Sishi Nian Shi" [A Forty Year History of Xin Wen Bao], in *Zhongguo Jindai Xinwen Baokan Shi Cankao Ziliao* [Reference materials on the History of the Modern Press in China], ed. Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwenxue Xi [Department of Journalism, China People's University], (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwenxue Xi, 1982), pp. 194-195. In 1912 *Shen Bao* had a circulation of 7,000. None of these figures were based on audited circulation so they must be treated with caution.

for supplying commercial news while *Shen Bao* gave more attention to political news and reports of China's military battles with the French in Annam and the Japanese in Taiwan. *Xin Wen Bao* was therefore said to be the preferred choice of merchants.[30]

Both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* were overtaken by the politically-oriented press throughout the years leading up to the 1911 Revolution. One of Liang Qichao's most successful periodicals, *Shi Wu Bao* (founded in August 1896) achieved a circulation of twelve thousand, while in 1906 Liang's *Xinmin Congbao* boasted a circulation of fourteen thousand.[31] Although these publications were not daily newspapers, their success indicated that the Shanghai dailies failed to service a demand for news and opinion about reformist political movements. Indeed, when the Qing court reacted against the reform movement of 1898 and Liang Qichao was forced to go into exile in Japan, *Shen Bao* fell into line and adopted an anti-reformist editorial stance.[32] This proved to be close to a form of economic suicide. *Shen Bao*'s circulation began to decline as a direct result of its

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30. Huang Xiexun, "Ben Bao Zuichu Shidai zhi Jingguo" [The Initial Period of this Newspaper], in "Wushi Nian lai zhi Xinwen Shiye" [The Press over the Past Fifty Years], *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian* [The Past Fifty years], ed. Huang Yanpei, et al. (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1922), p. 26. Rankin argues that *Shen Bao* was "the chief conduit of militant [pro-war] views in the lower Yangtze during the 1880s." See Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation*, p. 156. On *Xin Wen Bao*'s commercial news see Hu Daojing, "Xin Wen Bao Sishi Nian Shi," p. 192.

31. Figures vary slightly for circulations of these two periodicals, but I have followed Nathan in arriving at a reasonable average. See Lee and Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture," p. 365.

32. See the following editorials as examples of *Shen Bao*'s anti-reform line: "Zonglun Qing Yi Bao Wu shang zhi Zui" [A Summary of Qing Yi Bao's Slanderous Crimes], December 28, 1899; "Yuan Liang Ni Wu Nan Pi Zhang Gong zhi Gu" [The Primary Reason for Liang's Slanderous Defiance of the the revered southerner, Mr. Zhang [Zhidong]], January 1, 1900; "Jingwu Kang Dang Wen" [A Warning to Kang [Youwei]'s Party], March 12, 1900. See also Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi" [A Sixty Six Year History of Shen Bao], *Xinwen Shishang de Xin Shidai* [A New Era in the History of Journalism] (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1946), pp. 90-91. There was indeed quite a slanging match going on between Liang Qichao and Zhang Zhidong in this period, with Liang's periodicals (published from Japan) frequently carrying statements that could easily be considered slanderous by present Western legal standards. At the time *Shen Bao* adopted a similar line as Zhang Zhidong, that is, support for moderate modernization and reforms under the firm control of the Qing government. On these matters see Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century*, pp. 55-56, 98-100.

conservative political outlook, and by 1904 the paper was close to being bankrupt.[33] To have any hope of successfully capturing a piece of the newspaper audience no newspaper could afford to display support or sympathy for the continuation of the traditional imperial system of government.

At the time the key newspaper repository of reformist opinion in Shanghai was *Shi Bao*. Established in June 1904 with financial backing from the Bao Huang Hui (Emperor Protection Society) of Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei, *Shi Bao* was then the most innovative force in journalism.[34] There are no reliable estimates of *Shi Bao*'s circulation, but *Shen Bao* felt sufficiently threatened by its presence to perform an editorial about-face. With an entirely new editorial staff in place, by February 1905 the reformist sympathies of *Shen Bao* were made clear. The editorial of February 8, for instance, conspicuously drew on Liang Qichao's writings in discussing the need for the Chinese to modify their concept of time and progress.[35]

This episode illustrated one of the crucial differences between the commercial newspapers and the political press. The superior capital backing and organizational facilities of the commercial newspapers could not always compensate for the demand for political information which only those with an avowed political cause (often anti-government) were willing to publish.

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33. Lei Jin, "Shen Bao Guan zhi Guoqu Zhuangkuang" [The Past Situation of Shen Bao], "Wushi Nian lai zhi Xinwenxue" [Journalism over the Past Fifty Years], in *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian* [The Past Fifty Years], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai Shen Bao Guan, 1922), p. 28.

34. See pp. 65-68 of this chapter for more on *Shi Bao*'s place in Shanghai journalism.

35. See "Shu Dong Ying Dusui zhi gan yi Li Zhongguo Qiantu" [The Eastern Sense of Existence and Encouragement for China's Future], *Shen Bao*, February 8, 1905; Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 91.

Extraordinary examples of this phenomenon were provided by Yu Youren's pro-revolutionary newspapers. His *Shen Zhou Ribao* and the so-called "three upright people" (*shu san min*), *Min Hu Bao, Min Xu Bao* and *Min Li Bao*, all achieved circulations which matched or surpassed *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*. *Shen Zhou Ribao* was founded in 1907, but Yu Youren stayed with the paper only eighty days. The "*shu san min*" appeared consecutively in the period from 1909 to 1910. *Min Hu Bao* and *Min Xu Bao*, both published in 1909, were closed down by foreign authorities in Shanghai within a few months of their appearance. *Min Li Bao*, which appeared in 1910, was a little more cautious in its approach and lasted to see the foundation of the Republic. Its circulation of twenty thousand was unprecedented in Shanghai journalism.[36]

The success of *Min Li Bao* added another dimension to the newspaper audience. It demonstrated a widespread interest in, and demand for news of, the progress of the revolutionary movement, at least in Shanghai. At the same time, it would be a mistake to assume that the respective audiences of revolutionary and commercial newspapers were mutually exclusive. Shrewd members of the "oppositional elite" hedged their bets and mixed in the circles represented by both forms of newspaper. The Shanghai banker Shen Manyun gave financial backing to *Min Li Bao*.[37] Zhang Jian, one of the most prominent figures in the Jiangsu commercial and industrial scene, was associated with both reformist and revolutionary newspapers before the 1911 Revolution. Zhang and his like-minded associates often gathered at the reformist *Shi Bao* to discuss constitutionalist politics, but in 1907 he also became a trustee of *Shen Zhou*

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36. On the circulation and character of Yu Youren's newspapers see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 481-493; Mary Backus Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902-1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 116-118; Li Yunhan, *Yu Youren de Yi Sheng* [A Life of Yu Youren] (Taibei: Xinwen Jizhe Gonghui, 1973), pp. 50-104.

37. Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, p. 120.

Ribao, Yu Youren's first foray into newspapers.[38] The character of the newspaper audience, though still limited to elite circles, therefore reflected an array of oppositional groups of far more complex dimensions than when *Shen Bao* enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the elite audience in the 1880s.

It was not until the Republican period that the newspaper audience underwent significant expansion. The only exceptions were the political newspapers. The rise of Yuan Shikai did great damage to the political press. After the second revolution of 1913, Yuan systematically shut down almost all the publications associated with the Guomindang and Sun Yat-sen's Chinese Revolutionary Party (Zhongguo Geming Dang). Ge Gongzhen has calculated that over the four year period of Yuan's rule the total annual circulation of newspapers fell from around 42 million to around 39 million.[39] Yet, when party political newspapers are discounted, it is possible to see that commercial newspapers in Shanghai expanded their circulations despite the repressive nature of Yuan's regime. Indeed, *Shen Bao*'s circulation doubled in this period, reaching fourteen thousand by 1916.[40] This was largely because it refrained from political comment and concentrated on improving distribution.[41]

The decade leading up to the beginning of the Northern Expedition in 1926 witnessed astronomical growth in the newspaper audience. By the end of 1926 *Shen Bao*'s circulation was said to be 141,440, a twenty-fold

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38. On Zhang Jian and *Shi Bao* see Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu*, pp. 329-333, 351-356. On Zhang's trusteeship of *Shen Zhou Ribao* see Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, p. 116.

39. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 240-241; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan" [The Historical Development of the Shanghai Press], *Shanghai Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.3 (Dec. 1934): 989-990.

40. See the Appendix.

41. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao" [Historical Sources on the Initial Period of Shi Liangcai's management of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 5 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1980), pp. 156-158.

increase over 1912.[42] *Shen Bao* hit the 150,000 mark in 1931, but did not expand much further. This growth rate indicates that one of the failings of the late-Qing newspaper press was that it only reached a small proportion of its potential audience. Estimates of the national literacy rate in the late 1920s and early 1930s, for instance, do not reveal an increase over the Qing proportional to the increase in newspaper circulation. Though all of the estimates of literacy in this period were imprecise, none of them went far beyond the forty percent mark.[43] In contrast, national newspaper circulation increased most rapidly during these years. Over 114 million newspapers passed through the postal service in 1927.[44] Based upon this figure it is possible to calculate the approximate size of the newspaper audience for this period in a similar fashion to Nathan's calculations for the Qing period. In 1931 about forty percent of Shanghai's newspapers were mailed.[45] Applying this percentage to the 1927 figure yields an annual national newspaper circulation of about 288 million. Since, again using the data on Shanghai newspapers in 1931, roughly sixty percent of newspapers were dailies and the remainder were published every three days, it can be said that the average weighted periodicity was 268 issues per year. When this is divided into the annual circulation of 288 million it represents over one million newspaper subscriptions (1.075

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42. See the Appendix.

43. In 1929 the Ministry of Education's own estimates put the rate of illiteracy at sixty percent in urban and eighty five percent in rural districts. See "The Movement Against Illiteracy," *China Critic*, March 21, 1933, p. 226. Nash and Löwenthal, "Responsible Factors in Chinese Journalism," p. 422 mentioned a literacy rate of twenty to forty percent, quoting Fu Baoshen, "Wo Guo Wen Mang Ren Shu zhi Mi" [The Enigma of the Number of Illiterates in our Country], *Yi Shi Bao*, May 11, 1936. A low estimate of twenty percent was given in Huang Tianpeng, "Zhuyin Fuhao yu Baozhi" [Phoenetic Symbols and Newspapers], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiangji* [A Collection of Lectures on Journalism], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Xiandai Shuju, 1931), p. 199.

44. See Table 3 in Lee and Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture," p. 376.

45. See Shanghai Shi Difang Xiehui [Shanghai Civic Association], ed., *Shanghai Shi Tongji* [Statistics on Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai Civic Association, 1933), p. 10. The total average daily circulation of Shanghai newspapers was 690,000 while the number handled by the post was 274,447.

million). In the 1930s the commonplace assumption was that each copy of a newspaper was read by between five and ten individuals.[46] If it is generously assumed that there were eight readers per copy, then the newspaper audience would have been about eight million.[47] But this might well have been reduced by individuals who habitually read more than one newspaper. If each individual read two newspaper, a realistic measure of the national audience size in the late 1920s and early 1930s would be around the four to five million mark. Although this might not seem like a great advance over the total periodical audience of the late Qing, it can be better appreciated when it is remembered that this audience excludes the readers of the vast array of weeklies and monthlies that sprang up over the same period.[48]

Despite this rapid expansion in audience size, commercial newspapers remained rooted in an urban environment. The urban character of this rapid expansion was highlighted by the growth and distribution patterns of newspapers. It was estimated that two thirds of all the Chinese press was circulated in the five cities of Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing, Guangzhou and Tianjin.[49] Population growth in the cities from the 1910s to the 1930s in itself helps to explain the larger newspaper audience. In Shanghai during this period the total population almost trebled from about 1.2 million to about 3.1 million. The Chinese constituted roughly ninety-five percent of this total, so they accounted for the almost

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46. Lin Yutang, *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. 148-149; Nash nad Löwenthal, "Responsible Factors in Chinese Journalism," p. 422.

47. In arriving at this figure I have adapted the procedure used in Lee and Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture," pp. 370-372.

48. In 1933 Shanghai alone boasted at least 130 periodical publications, with a combined circulation of 1,061,013. See *Shanghai Shi Tongji*, pp. 12-16.

49. Nash and Löwenthal, "Responsible Factors in Chinese Journalism," p. 422.

all of the increase in population.[50] *Shen Bao*'s own distribution figures for the mid-1930s show that Shanghai and surrounding areas in the lower Yangtze region were by far its biggest market. In 1934 about sixty-four percent (99,900) of the total circulation (155,950) was outside Shanghai. But the circulation in Shanghai (56,050), the rest of Jiangsu (34,950), Zhejiang (14,300) and Anhui (12,400) formed about seventy-five percent of the total.[51]

This kind of audience reach was impressive by late-Qing standards. Newspapers were still far from being a part of life in rural China,[52] but during the first twenty years of the Republic they became a commonplace part of urban life. Newspapers were accessible to any literate person in urban centres who felt motivated to read them. One indication of their availability was the number of newspaper reading rooms around the country. In 1932 there were almost thirteen thousand public newspaper reading rooms throughout China, with 182 in Shanghai and more than 3,500 in Jiangsu and Zhejiang combined.[53]

The social profile of those in the urban centres who "felt motivated" to read newspapers cannot be precisely determined, but a rough sketch

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50. The exact figures are 1,185,859 in 1910 and 3,112,250 in 1930. See Luo Zhiru, ed., *Tongji Biao zhong de Shanghai* [Shanghai in Statistical Tables] (Nanjing: Guolin Zhongyang Yanjiu Yuan, 1932), p. 21, Table 29. The rough 95% figure was deduced from comparing relative populations for Chinese and foreigners in the International Settlement (p. 25, Tables 37 and 38) and the French Concession (p. 23, Table 33).

51. Shen Bao Guan, ed., *Shen Bao Gaikuang* [The State of Shen Bao] (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1935), n.p.; Gan Jiaxin, "Zhongguo Ge Da Bao Jingying Shikuang" [An Account of the Management Conditions of China's Broadsheet Newspapers], *Su Heng Banyuekan* 17-18 (Nov. 1936): 25; Lin Yutang, *Press and Public Opinion in China*, pp. 145-148. The geographical distribution of *Shen Bao* is given in the Appendix.

52. See the discussion of the relative lack of newspaper readership in rural China of the 1930s in Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, p. 176-177.

53. Guomin Zhengfu Zhujichu Jiju [Head Office, Bureau of Statistics of the National Government], ed., *Zhonghua Minguo Tongji Tiyao* [Summary of Statistics of the Republic of China], 4 vols., rev. ed. (Taibei: Xuehai Chubanshe, 1972), 1: 346-347. The total number of newspaper reading rooms, public and private, was 15,610; for Jiangsu the number was 961 (958 public), and for Zhejiang 2,583 (2,370 public).

can still be made. The commercial and political elite were still in the 1930s the mainstay of *Shen Bao* and its rival *Xin Wen Bao*. In the words of one its own advertisements, *Shen Bao* aimed itself at a "high-class market," and boasted of "1,000,000 wealthy Chinese reached daily!"[54] This was itself a pitch to prospective advertisers, people to whom *Shen Bao* was anxious to claim a "wealthy" readership, so it contains an element of wishful thinking. In servicing the elite market *Shen Bao* naturally captured the wealthier, more educated reader, but several factors suggest that it must have reached beyond a narrowly defined, "high-class" elite.

First, the potential newspaper audience in Shanghai was probably higher than in any other part of China. Some observers suggested that as many as seventy to eighty percent of the adults in urban areas like Shanghai possessed some degree of literacy.[55] While this figure might be exaggerated, it is certainly not fanciful to suggest that by the 1930s up to fifty percent of the population in Shanghai were literate. In 1950 fifty-four percent of all those employed in Shanghai were said to be literate.[56] As with Qing China, the distribution of literacy was uneven between the sexes and the different classes. Chesneaux's study of the labour movement notes that there was a sixty percent illiteracy rate among men employed at a Shanghai cotton mill in 1924, while among women employed at another cotton mill the rate was eighty five percent.[57] Newspaper did not, therefore, figure prominently in working-class life.

The experiences of the Communist Party and union movements in publishing newspapers for the workers bear out this conclusion. During

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54. "Advertise in the Shun Bao, You Advertise China," Advertisement in *China Critic*, October 15, 1931.

55. Nash and Löwenthal, "Responsible Factors in Chinese Journalism," p. 422.

56. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, p. 20.

57. Jean Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919-1927*, trans. H. M. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 109.

the late 1920s and early 1930s labour unions, many under Communist leadership, developed their own newspapers and some were directed to women workers.[58] Many of these could, of course, be read out to the ranks by literate workers or union leaders, but in general such publications achieved little success in spreading union or Communist Party propaganda. The fact that they failed to capture a large audience was partly revealed when in the early 1930s, for instance, Communists in the underground in Shanghai were instructed from above to "orient [newspapers] to the factory and to the workers' lives" and to "write in ways that reflect the factory's real conditions."[59] If the worker-oriented newspapers of the Communists were unsuccessful, then it was most unlikely that the likes of *Shen Bao* found any readers to speak of among the working class, male or female.

Shanghai's relatively high average rate of literacy could therefore only have been recorded if there were large sections of Shanghai society for whom literacy was almost universal. A similar observation could be made about the newspaper audience beyond the "high-class" elite: it must have been concentrated in social groups for whom newspapers were an established part of daily life. A 1933 survey found that Shanghai newspaper readers tended to be intellectuals or from the middle class.[60] The category "middle class" is the most difficult to define in Shanghai, yet the social groups most closely associated with commercial growth in urban

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58. See the account of such publications in Zhong Gong Zhongyang Makesi, Engesi, Liening, Sidalin Zhuzuo Bianyiju Yanjiushi [Research Institute of the Board of the Central Communist Party for Editing the Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin], ed., *Wu Si Shiqi Qikan Jieshao* [An Introduction to Periodicals of the May Fourth Period], 3. vols. (Beijing: Renmin Chubansne, 1958-1959), 2: 161-179; 179-232.

59. *Liening Shenghuo* [Life of Lenin], no. 2, May 2, 1932, cited by Lawrence R. Sullivan, "Reconstruction and Rectificationof the Communist Party in the Shanghai Underground: 1931-1934," *China Quarterly*, no. 101, March 1985, p. 93.

60. Xu Xu, "Shanghai Xiao Shu-Bao Tan Diaocha" [Survey of Book and Newspaper Vendors in Shanghai], in his *Tushuguan yu Minzhong Jiaoyu* [Libraries and Mass Education] (Changsha: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1941), pp. 181-213, cited by Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, p. 177.

centres formed the basis of the expanded newspaper audience of the Republican period. Perry Link has presented the most extensive account of this social group to date in his study of its readership of popular fiction. Sometimes referred to as the "*xiao shi min*" (which Link has translated as "petty urbanites"), the middle class was usually defined according to occupational types such as small-merchant, office worker, shop clerk, middle-school student and professional. As Link has pointed out, the *xiao shi min* of Shanghai occupied a similar social position to the middle class of the industrialized West and Japan, but they were not as wealthy and their "basic tendency...seems to have been conservative."[61] While an occupational description of a social group lacks conceptual rigour, in the absence of further research there is no other suitable way of looking at the Shanghai middle class. Nonetheless, because much of the popular literature studied by Link was published in serial form by the Shanghai newspapers like *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*, it is reasonable to conclude that its middle-class audience was largely the same as the general newspaper audience.

Newspapers such as *Shen Bao* were particularly successful in penetrating this middle-class audience. If, according to its own claim, *Shen Bao* reached one million readers daily throughout China, each of its 150,000 issues would have had roughly 6.7 readers.[62] Applying this number of readers to *Shen Bao*'s daily Shanghai circulation of 1934 (56,050) yields an audience of 375,535. The total Chinese population of Shanghai in 1930 was about 3.06 million.[63] An occupational breakdown of

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61. Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, pp. 5-7, 189-195.

62. This seems a reasonable figure given that each newspaper was commonly held to be read by between five and ten people.

63. Luo Zhiru, ed., *Tongji Biao zhong de Shanghai*, pp. 21, (Table 29), 23 (Table 33), 25 (Table 37).

the population of Greater Shanghai (Chinese sections of the city; see Table below) shows that those employed in middle-class categories made up

TABLE. Occupational Breakdown of the Chinese of Greater Shanghai, 1930

Occupational Category	*No. of People*
Farmer	164,189
Industrial Worker	318,689
Merchant*	173,324
Education*	70,484
Party (GMD) Work*	1,836
Government Official*	4,524
Military*	904
Transport/Communication*	21,295
Journalist*	82
Engineer*	203
Lawyer*	159
Accountant*	37
Doctor*	1,518
Soldier	1,662
Police*	4,426
Labourer	89,626
Household Service	321,896
Apprentice#	67,017
Servant	49,190
Miscellaneous	60,397
Unemployed	318,117
TOTAL	1,669,575

Source: Luo Zhiru, ed., *Tongji Biao zhong de Shanghai* [Shanghai in Statistical Tables] (Nanjing: Guoli Zhongyang Yanjiu Yuan, 1932), p. 31.

* Indicates middle-class occupations for the sake of this study.
\# Indicates probable literate group, though perhaps not middle-class. Including apprentices in the middle-class yields 21% of the total, while excluding them yields 17% of the total. The approximate average percentage therefore comes to 19%.

approximately nineteen percent of the total If this figure is applied to the wider Chinese population of Shanghai, then the middle class, by the rough estimates of this study, would have numbered 581,400. In effect this meant that, at the very least, every second member (in fact 1 in every 1.6) of the Shanghai middle class read *Shen Bao*. Even allowing for inaccuracies, this represented a very successful penetration of the potential market for newspapers.

Still, it is reasonable to ask why *Shen Bao* appeared to be incapable of lifting circulation much beyond the 150,000 mark. Some of the technical and economic reasons for this will be explored in the next

chapter, but the character and content of *Shen Bao* also played a part. *Shen Bao* showed little interest in expanding beyond its solid middle-class audience and this was partly reflected in the various supplements and feature pages it developed over the years. In 1911 it began the literary page "Ziyou Tan" (Free Talk) which became one of the main forums for the Butterfly and Saturday schools of fiction which were popular among Shanghai's middle class.[64] Through the 1920s *Shen Bao* introduced an "Automobile Supplement" (November 1921), a "Commercial News" feature page (October 1924), an "Education News" page (December 1924) and a local supplement (*Benbu Zengkan*, February 1924) which covered theatre and, later, cinema. With the possible exception of cinema, all of these additions to the paper catered to middle-class pursuits.

It was only after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, when the whole of *Shen Bao* took on an activist political complexion, that attempts were made to reach literate members of the working class, both male and female. In December 1932 *Shen Bao* began a weekly supplement for sparetime study (*Yeyu Zhoukan*) which was directed at shop assistants and workers. A similar weekly directed at women (*Funü Zhoukan*) appeared in February 1934 under the editorship of Shen Zijiu, one of China's few prominent female journalists. Both supplements were backed up with the formation of night schools for their respective audiences. Following Shi Liangcai's assassination in November 1934 these tentative steps toward building a genuine dialogue with a wider audience were wound down.[65] Soon after, full-scale war with Japan erupted and newspapers were not able to reach a mass audience until after the Communist's victory.

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64. Yuan Xingda, "Shen Bao 'Ziyou Tan' Yuanliu" [The Origin and Development of Shen Bao's Ziyou Tan], *Xin Wenxue Shiliao*, no. 1 (1978), pp., 245-258; Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, pp. 165-166.

65. Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de 'Shen Bao'" [On the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management of Shen Bao] (M.A. dissertation, Fudan University, Shanghai, 1982), pp. 44-46, 48-49. See also chapter 8 of this study.

Shen Bao rose to success riding the wave of commercial growth in Shanghai. Its audience constituted a substantial slice of Shanghai society and those in the lower Yangtze regions who caught the same wave. The winning of this audience was one of the keys to its standing and influence in the early 1930s. Yet, as *Shen Bao* prospered with the expansion of the middle class, so it was limited by the relative marginality of that class within the wider social fabric of China.

Writers and Businessmen: A Survey of Newspaper Journalism in Shanghai Before 1911

Shanghai newspaper journalism of the last forty years of the Qing (worthy of lengthy study in itself)[66] bequeathed two fundamental elements to the journalism of the Republic. From treaty port newspapers such as *Shen Bao* came an established pattern of journalistic practices, news content and layout. From Wang Tao and political journalists such as Liang Qichao and Yu Youren came the Chinese interpretation of Western concepts about the role of newspapers and journalists in society.

Both of these elements were shaped by a strong foreign influence. The Shanghai newspapers were owned by foreigners, largely English and Americans, until the early twentieth century. Similarly, the central ideas of early Chinese journalism were largely derived from an understanding of Western writing on journalism or, for the majority of Chinese journalists of the period, Japanese interpretations of such writing. The economic and intellectual foundations of early Chinese journalism were therefore to a significant extent dependent upon foreigners.

But this did not by any means obliterate indigenous influences upon the development of journalism in China. Many Chinese journalists might

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66. A good synthesis of information on the early newspaper press can be found in Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, pp. 95-117. This study focuses more on *Shen Bao*'s early journalism and on the adaptation by Chinese journalists of Western concepts of journalism.

have been the employees of foreign proprietors who set up shop in Shanghai's International Settlement, but they were responsible for the day-to-day running of their proprietors' newspapers and their mastery of the Chinese language and cultural heritage gave them an obvious advantage over foreigners. In one sense newspapers represented the typical compradore-style enterprise whereby Chinese management was employed by foreign capital.[67] But newspapers provided greater opportunities for a creative Chinese input than perhaps any other foreign-owned business run by Chinese compradores. With their linguistic and cultural advantages it was only a matter of time before the Chinese would raise the capital to dominate the field themselves.

Western concepts of journalism, on the other hand, held an alluring fascination for Chinese journalists, a fascination which lasted well into the Republican period. This was because they attributed great powers to the ideal Western newspaper, for instance, the *Times* of London, and saw it as a great model worthy of emulation. Matching this ideal with the absence of conditions for its growth in China was bound to cause contradictions between the theory and practice of journalism. Thus journalists like Liang Qichao were capable of waxing lyrical on the role of the "fourth estate" in representing the voice of the people while at the same time protesting the lack of a suitable organ for his Bao Huang Hui. Liang was typical of the political journalists who were pulled in opposite directions by an intellectual attraction to Western concepts of journalism and their own attempts to realize political change. Under these circumstances it is difficult to avoid the impression that the former often served to rationalize the latter as journalists invoked the voice of the people to espouse their particular political causes. The intellectual dependence on foreign

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67. See Hao Yen-p'ing, *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China: Bridge Between East and West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), chapters 5 and 6.

journalism therefore remained just that: Western concepts were written about but not realized in practice.

In 1872, however, when *Shen Bao* made its appearance, defining the ideals of journalism was not a major issue. Newspaper journalists were more concerned with achieving business success than with theoretical definitions of their role in society. For the newspaper came into being as an adjunct of foreign commercial enterprise in China's treaty ports. Printing by modern mechanical presses was in itself one of the first foreign enterprises to take root in China, due to the efforts of the London Missionary Society and Walter Henry Medhurst.[68] The foreign community, particularly the British merchants of Canton, Hong Kong and Shanghai, had been publishing newspapers in their native languages since the 1820s. The most important of these newspapers in Shanghai was the *North China Herald*, founded in 1850, which spawned the *North China Daily News* in 1864.[69] The genesis of Chinese treaty port journalism was due largely to the combined influence of the missionary presence and foreign-owned newspaper enterprises like the *North China Herald.*

Shanghai's first Chinese language newspaper, the *Shanghai Xin Bao*, was in fact a subsidiary publication to the *North China Herald.* Established in November 1861, *Shanghai Xin Bao* was edited in turn by three missionaries, M. L. Wood, John Fryer and Young J. Allen.[70] Allen in particular was a catalyst in the creation of many Chinese language publications, the most important being *Wanguo Gong Bao* (*Globe Magazine*) which was founded in 1875 and which influenced the thought of Kang

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68. Chi-ming Hou, *Foreign Investment and Economic Development in China, 1840-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 79.

69. On these early newspapers of the foreign community see King and Clarke, *Research Guide to China Coast Newspapers*, pp. 20-23, 66, 76-81.

70. Fang Hanqi, et al., "Jindai Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye Shi Shi Bian Nian, 1815-1919" [A Chronological History of the Press in Modern China, 1815-1919], Pt. 1, in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 8 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), p. 300.

Youwei and Liang Qichao.[71] Most of the content of *Shanghai Xin Bao* was, however, simply a Chinese translation of the *North China Herald.* Excerpts from the official Beijing gazettes (*jing bao*) and Hong Kong newspapers were also included. Chinese assistants were nonetheless responsible for the composition of copy.[72]

Shen Bao followed in the footsteps of *Shanghai Xin Bao* in that it was founded with foreign capital, but *Shen Bao*'s great strength was the contribution of its Chinese staff. Ernest Major and his brother Frederic went to China as businessmen first and foremost. Starting out as tea merchants, they went on to set up the Jiangsu Chemical Factory in the early 1860s, (one of the first modern industrial plants in Shanghai), the Ruichang Match Company and a soap manufacturing plant.[73] The Major brothers then began casting about for other investment opportunities, although it is not clear whether this was due to the success or failure of their existing enterprises. In any case, Chen Xingeng, comprador to the Major brothers, proposed starting a newspaper since, in his view, *Shanghai Xin Bao* had proved a business success. Ernest Major followed up the suggestion and in May 1871 formed an agreement with three of his friends to establish a Chinese language newspaper, each one investing four hundred taels.[74] The first issue of *Shen Bao* did not appear until April

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71. Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 52-56; Martin Bernal, *Chinese Socialism to 1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 22-23. This *Wanguo Gong Bao* should not be confused with Liang's publication of the same name which appeared in 1895.

72. Fang Hanqi, et al., "Chronological History of the Press," p. 300; Britton, *Periodical Press in China*, p. 50.

73. Sun Yutang, ed. *Zhongguo Jindai Gongye Shi Ziliao, Diyi Ji* [Historical Sources on Modern Chinese Industry, First Collection], 2 vols. (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1957), 1: 125; F. L. Hawks Pott, *A Short History of Shanghai: Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the International Settlement* (Hong Kong and Singapore: Kelly nad Walsh, 1928), p. 135.

74. Major's fellow investors were C. Woodward, W. B. Pryer and John Machillop. Because Major assumed greater responsibility for running the newspaper, the total investments were divided into three part shareholdings with two parts going to Major and the rest to his associates. See *Shen Bao* Shi Bianxiezu [Unit for the Compilation of the History of Shen Bao], "Chuangban Chuqi de *Shen*

30, 1872, but Major used the intervening year to prepare a solid foundation for his newspaper. With the help of Chen Xingeng he gathered together a group of Chinese editors and managers who formed the nucleus of *Shen Bao*.[75] One of the assistant editors, Qian Xinbo, was sent to Hong Kong to study the latest developments in Chinese newspapers. Qian had become a close friend to Wang Tao when Wang was working with the British Consulate in Shanghai. Upon arrival in Hong Kong Qian renewed his association with Wang Tao who had been involved in the publication of newspapers there since 1864.[76] Thus, even before the first issue of *Shen Bao* was printed, Major had gone to great lengths to give his new business venture the best possible chance of succeeding.

As Lin Yutang has noted, Major's primary interest in commercial activities meant that he "could not be accused of founding the *Shen Bao* for purely cultural motives."[77] But Major's knowledge of China, which extended to a fluency with the language, was sufficiently well grounded for him to appreciate the value of employing Chinese staff to run a Chinese language newspaper. He was reputed to have stated that *Shen Bao*

Bao" [The Early Days of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 1 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1979), pp. 135-136, 137. See also Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 64; Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," pp. 82-83, 103-104. Britton claims that the Major brothers were looking for other investments becasue they had some surplus capital. Hu Daojing claims they wanted to invest elswhere because they were losing money. Hu has, however, cleared up the misunderstanding (found in, for example, Britton's work) that Frederic Major started *Shen Bao*.

75. "Chuangban Chuqi de *Shen Bao*," p. 137. The first comprador of *Shen Bao* was Zhao Yiru, but he left in November 1872 to begin an anti-opium medicine dispensary and was replaced by Xi Zimei. Jiang Zhixiang was chief editor, assisted by He Guisheng and Qian Xinbo. Soon after, Jiang attained the *jin shi* degree and left to take up an official position and his place at *Shen Bao* was taken by He Guisheng.

76. Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 42; "Chuangban Chuqi de *Shen Bao*," p. 138.

77. Lin Yutang, *Press and Public Opinion in China*, p. 88.

a considerable degree of exchange and mutual support between Wang Tao and the staff of *Shen Bao*. Thanks to Qian Xinbo's association with Wang, *Shen Bao* was able to draw on Wang's expertise and advice, and in return *Shen Bao* published many of Wang's essays and commentaries.[81]

The derivative nature of *Shen Bao*'s content meant that there was little incentive to develop the occupation of journalism and improve news reporting. Journalism was after all a new field of employment to the handful of Chinese staff at *Shen Bao*. At times it was clear that they considered it to be a branch of literature and they looked to the corpus of Chinese literary works for inspiration.[82] The first issue of the paper declared that[83]

> if there are scholars inclined to letters and romance and poetry, who may wish to favour us with contributions, short or long, such as the Bamboo Flute poems on renowned places, or with long songs and poems and stories we will publish them without charge. If any one has notable addresses or essays which truly relate to the national economy, the people's livelihood, the cultivation of the land, and irrigation, conservancy, and the like, whether appertaining to the economic duties of the imperial government or revealing the trials of the toiling common folk, these may be published in the paper. Such contributions will not be paid for.

There was little sense of the topicality or urgency associated with news reporting in modern journalism. Only commercial news was required to be up-to-date and it was mostly derived from the foreign press.

Despite the rather primitive journalism of *Shen Bao*, it was well placed to challenge *Shanghai Xin Bao*, its only Shanghai rival at the time. *Shen Bao* sold for eight cash per copy while *Shanghai Xin Bao* cost thirty cash per copy. Within four months of *Shen Bao*'s appearance, *Shanghai Xin Bao* had dropped its price to match its new competitor and began to

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81. "Chuangban Chuqi de *Shen Bao*," p. 138.

82. Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo Baozhi Wenti Fazhan Gaiyao* [An Outline of the Development of the Literary Form of Chinese Newspapers] (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 6-7.

83. Cited by Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 66. Bamboo Flute poetry (*zhu zhi ci*) was a form of verse dealing with local stories and customs.

publish daily rather than three days per week as it had in the past. By December 1872, however, *Shanghai Xin Bao* could no longer keep pace with *Shen Bao* and it was forced to cease operations.

There were both economic and editorial reasons for *Shanghai Xin Bao*'s failure. *Shanghai Xin Bao* was printed double-sided on high-grade newsprint whereas *Shen Bao* used a local course-grade paper. In addition *Shen Bao*'s basic advertising rate for Chinese businesses was one quarter the rate for foreign businesses. This immediately made it clear that *Shen Bao* hoped to become *the* Shanghai newspaper for the local Chinese market. But perhaps the most serious weakness of *Shanghai Xin Bao* was the strong foreign flavour in its news coverage which resulted from its dependence on translations from the *North China Herald* and the missionary background of its editors. Nor did *Shanghai Xin Bao* publish editorials, whereas, even in its first year of publication, *Shen Bao* adopted a clear editorial line. Although only detailed analysis can establish the precise nature of this line, preliminary research supports the conclusion that *Shen Bao* was a strong supporter of the industrialization and modernization of the Chinese economy. It particularly encouraged the development of Chinese participation in the economy, and on one occasion proposed Chinese representation on the Municipal Council in Shanghai.[84] In short, *Shen Bao* indentified itself much more closely with local Chinese business than *Shanghai Xin Bao*, and its Chinese staff were able successfully to project the newspaper as being "for Chinese readers."[85] As

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84. On the editorial line adopted by *Shen Bao* in the 1870s and 1880s see "Chuangban Chuqi de *Shen Bao*," pp. 140-142 which presents an overview of the paper's stance in its first few months; Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation*, pp. 141-166. For *Shen Bao*'s support of modernization and Chinese representation in the governing of Shanghai see Hu Daojing, "Shan Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 84.

85. On this rivalry between *Shen Bao* and *Shanghai Xin Bao* see Hu Daojing, *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai*, pp. 10-14; Xu Zaiping, "*Shen Bao* shi ruhe Jikua *Shanghai Xin Bao*?" [How did Shen Bao Overcome Shanghai Xin Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 15 (Beijing: Zhongguo Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), pp. 208-213. The advertising rates in *Shen Bao* in 1872 were 250 cash per 50 words for Chinese

one observer has put it, "*Shen Bao* had no more alien aspect than was warranted by the tastes of Chinese readers who were subject to the alien influences of the growing treaty port."[86]

For the next twenty years *Shen Bao* was able to fend off all challenges to its supremacy in Shanghai newspaper journalism. Five Chinese language dailies were published over this period, but none of them were able to deprive *Shen Bao* of market leadership. The first three, which were funded by Chinese merchants, lasted only two years between them (1874-1875) before financial troubles forced them to close down.[87] *Xin Bao*, funded as a joint-stock company by a group of local guilds, published continuously from 1876 until 1882 when flagging fortunes saw it become the official organ of the Shanghai Arsenal (Shanghai Jiqi Zhizao Ju).[88] Over the next decade the only other daily to publish alongside *Shen Bao* was *Hu Bao*. Again, this was launched by the *North China Herald* group in an attempt to translate their English-language news resources across to Chinese. The new manager, Frederic Balfour, was, like Ernest Major, something of a sinologue and he appreciated the value of placing *Hu Bao* in the hands of Chinese writers and editors. Cai Erkang, a writer whose style and knowledge was highly regarded, was chief editor. This Chinese presence helped to make *Hu Bao* a greater success than *Shanghai Xin Bao*. An added advantage was that, through its connection with the *North China*

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and one yuan per fifty words for foreigners which meant, according to Xu's calculations, the Chinese rate was one quarter of the rate for foreigners.

86. Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 63.

87. These newspapers started with *Hui Bao* which underwent a change of management after only three months and reappeared as *Hui Bao* with a different Chinese character at its masthead. After running up debts this newspaper again changed hands and appreared next as *Yi Bao* which also proved to be a financial failure. See Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 154; Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 71-72.

88. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 156-157; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao" [Shnaghai's Daily Newspapers], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.1 (June 1934): 221.

Herald, it had exclusive access to the telegraphic dispatches of Reuters which began operations in China in 1872. Reuters did not service other foreign language newspapers in China until 1900, and Chinese newspapers did not gain access to its cables until 1912. *Hu Bao* was published by the *Herald* group up until 1900 when it was bought and completely re-organized by Japanese interests.[89]

During this twenty year period the editors of *Shen Bao* did not substantially change the overall format of the paper, preferring to stick with what they knew best. But, with the guidance of Qian Xinbo and Ernest Major himself, *Shen Bao* put a great deal of effort into gathering reports of major national and international events, particularly China's military battles with foreign powers. The reporting of Japan's seizure of the Ryukyu (Liuqiu) Islands in 1874 became *Shen Bao*'s first great "scoop." Major sent a special correspondent to Taiwan to gather news of the military clashes there. Staff at the paper later claimed that these reports alone pushed *Shen Bao*'s circulation from around six hundred to well over the thousand mark.[90] Almost a decade later, when Chinese and French forces clashed in Annam, Major sent a Russian correspondent to the area in the hope that he would furnish disinterested reports of the fighting. When he reported Chinese losses, however, *Shen Bao* met with outspoken protests from readers, some of whom allegedly denounced the paper as a French accomplice. The *Shen Bao* staff looked back on this incident as an example of the paper's commitment to fair reporting in contrast to *Hu Bao* which, they claimed, fed the reading public on exaggerated reports of

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89. On *Hu Bao*, which soon after its creation changed its name to *Zilin Xi Bao*, see Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 109; Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 51; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 242-243. On Reuters in China see Hu Daojing, *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai*, pp. 50-51; Graham Storey, *Reuters' Century, 1851-1951* (London: Max Parrish, 1951), pp. 62, 69, 179, 204-206.

90. Huang Xiexun, "Ben Bao Zuichu Shidai zhi Jingguo" [The Initial Stage of this Newspaper], "Wushi Nian lai zhi Xinwen Shiye" [The Press over the Past Fifty Years], in *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian*, p. 26.

Chinese victories.[91] In the end, *Shen Bao*'s efforts in gathering news from as wide a network as possible gave it a distinctive quality within the newspaper market and became one of its biggest selling points.

By the 1880s *Shen Bao* had its own branch offices in such major urban centres as Hangzhou, Suzhou, Nanjing, Hankou, and Beijing. These not only served as centres for the distribution of newspapers, but also as contact points for *Shen Bao*'s correspondents. Correspondents were also employed in smaller regional centres such as Ningbo and Yangzhou. These correspondents held only a tenuous position within the newspaper and were more like what generally were known in the industry as "stringers." This meant that they were not part of the regular salaried staff. As shown above, at first *Shen Bao* did not offer any remuneration for contributed articles or reports. By 1875 it had developed a system of hiring paid correspondents. Conditions of employment varied according to the city in which the correspondents were based. Those interested in becoming the Beijing correspondent were asked to report to the *Shen Bao* offices in Shanghai where their prospects would be assessed. In Hankou it was considered sufficient for prospective correspondents to make enquiries to the *Shen Bao* representative in that city, while the Tianjin correspondent was chosen according to the quality of reports sent to *Shen*

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91. Huang Xiexun, "Ben Bao Zuichu Shidai zhi Jingguo," p. 26; Sun Enlin, "Zaoqi *Shen Bao* de Xinwen Soujizhe" [News Gatherers in the Early Period of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Daxue*, no. 3 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), p. 77. *Shen Bao* was also the first newspaper to send a correspondent to Ningbo to cover the Sino-French battles there in 1885. See Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 88. Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 97 claims that Qian Xinbo decided on a policy of deliberately exaggerated reporting to boost *Shen Bao*'s circulation. This might have been the case in the Sino-Japanese clashes of 1874, but is less certain, in view of the evidence above, for the Sino-French battles of 1883-1885. In 1900 Liang Qichao certainly complained of the exaggerated reporting of various battles in the treaty port press, but did not specify particular newspapers. See Liang's article "Ben Bao Diyi Bai Ce Zhuci bing lun Baoguan zhi Zeren ji Ben Guan zhi Jingli" [Congratulations on the One-hundredth Edition of this Journal and a word on the Responsibilities of Newspapers and the Experience of this Journal], in *Xinhai Geming Qian Shi Nian Shiqi Lun Xuanji* [Selected Essays from the Decade Prior to the 1911 Revolution], ed. Zhang Dan and Wang Renzhi, 3 vols. (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1977), 1: 44. Originally published in the 100th edition of *Qing Yi Bao*.

Bao by hopeful candidates. Only the correspondents in major centres, from Beijing down to Suzhou, were paid a regular monthly salary. In more remote areas correspondents were paid by word-count of their reports sent in by post. Payment for these early "stringers" was so low, however, that it must have remained a form of side-line work for those able to turn a quick phrase. In 1877 the Suzhou correspondent, for instance, was paid just four yuan per month.[92]

A special premium was placed on reporting events in the Shanghai courts. Together with information from the Beijing gazettes and commercial news, court reporting became one of the staple items of news for *Shen Bao*. Quick and accurate notation were called for, and court reporters were generally better paid than correspondents. Those wishing to be court reporters were, like the more important correspondents, asked to discuss their prospects at the *Shen Bao* offices. The successful candidates were instructed by *Shen Bao* to go everyday to the court trials to "transcribe confessions."[93] These court reporters were the first to be employed on a regular basis by the newspapers and they soon developed a life-style of their own, something of a journalistic sub-culture. They found it convenient to gather at a teahouse facing the courts on North Zhejiang Road. There they would exchange gossip and stories, and would sometimes negotiate deals with those involved in the court cases who were anxious to avoid publicity. These rituals continued right up to the early Republican period.[94]

The rather emphemeral quality associated with newspaper reporting was partly reflected in the words used to describe the position. Reporters were literally referred to as "enquirers" (*fang yuan* or *fang shi*

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92. Sun Enlin, "Zaoqi *Shen Bao* de Xinwen Soujizhe," pp. 78-79. Sun's article is a very useful brief account of early newspaper reporting.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 78; Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 50.

94. Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, p. 320; Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 111.

ren), suggesting an unwanted visitor. Moreover, reporters were not held in any social esteem and were generally regarded as being failed scholars. Ge Gongzhen observed of late-Qing journalists:[95]

> At that time the so-called outstanding members of society were all besotted with the imperial examinations. Nobody wanted to take up journalism except unconventional scholars and boorish students, or those who wished to give vent to some sort of gloomy, senseless notion. Reporters in each city seemed of noble character, but there was no denying the facts.

Newspaper journalism was therefore still an unattractive career choice throughout this period. In any case, even the most successful newspapers, such as *Shen Bao*, did not offer great employment opportunities. Local Shanghai reporters would have numbered one or two, and, as has been demonstrated, a correspondent's income was less than life sustaining. Unless one attained a position on the permanent editorial staff (which numbered around five or six), newspaper journalism did not hold out many prospects for advancement.

Perhaps the only progressive feature of Shanghai newspaper journalism before the Republican period, and the last to arrive, was the telegraphic dispatch. *Shen Bao* published its first international dispatch on January 30, 1874.[96] This was carried by the Danish Great Northern Telegraph Company, one of the dominant forces in telegraphic communication in East Asia. This Danish company and the British-owned Eastern Extension Telegraph Company were the main competitors in the race to lay both international and national cables in China. The Chinese government was initially resistant to foreign companies landing cables on Chinese territory, but by 1870 the Eastern Extension Company was able to run one from Hong Kong up the coast to a hulk moored outside Shanghai. The Danish in turn began to lay cable from Hong Kong to an uninhabited

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95. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 132.

96. This dispatch concerned a meeting of the British cabinet.

crag off Shanghai known as Gutzlaff Island which came within the jurisdiction of the Inspector-General of Chinese Foreign Customs (that is, foreign jurisdiction). Without seeking Chinese government permission, in a night-time operation in December 1870, they ran the cable from the island into the International Settlement. This surreptitious action linked China to the international telegraph network for the first time.[97] With the support of Li Hongzhang and Sheng Xuanhuai, in 1881 the Great Northern were also contracted to assist the Chinese in laying a cable from Shanghai to Tianjin. In 1884 this was extended to Beijing.[98] *Shen Bao* was quick to make use of this cable link. On January 16 1882 it became the first Chinese-language newspaper to publish a cable from the Tianjin line. The link to Beijing reduced *Shen Bao*'s dependence on the official Beijing gazettes for news of government affairs in the capital. Telegraphic dispatches were infrequently used in this period, however, because they were an expensive form of communication. It was only after 1912, when the government granted newspapers a special reduced rate for telegraphic dispatches, that news reports via the cable became commonplace.[99]

Once it had settled on its own pattern of journalism, made up of excerpts from other treaty port newspapers and Beijing gazettes, commercial news, court reports, the reports of correspondents and the

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97. Jorma Ahvenainen, *The Far Eastern Telegraphs: The History of Telegraphic Communication between the Far East, Europe and America before the First World War* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1981), pp. 42-44.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62; Albert Feuerwerker, *China's Early Industrialization: Sheng Hsuan-huai (1844-1916) and Mandarin Enterprise* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University press, 1958), pp. 190-194. Ahvenainen points out (p. 60) that the Great Northern helped develop a mathematical code which enabled symbols for Chinese characters to be transmitted by telegraph.

99. Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 87-88; Ning Shufan, "Zhongguo Jindai Baokan de Yewu Yanbian Gaishu" [An Outline of the Evolution of the Profession of Journalism in Modern China], in *Xinwen Daxue*, no. 3, p. 86; Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, pp. 347-348, 415ff.; Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 68. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian* [Fifty Years of Life as a Journalist], 2 vols. (vol. 1; Hong Kong: Wuxing Jishu Baoshe, 1957; vol. 2; Taibei: Yuesheng Wenhua Shiye Youxian Gongsi, 1988), 1: 55-56, notes that the reduced rate from Beijing was 3 *fen* (cents) per word, but such cables received lowest priority at the telegraph offices and arrived only about two to three o'clock in the morning.

occasional telegraphic dispatch, *Shen Bao* was content to carry on into the early 1890s unchanged. Apparently pleased with their business success, in 1889 Ernest Major and his brother decided they were ready to retire and return home to England. Before they left China they converted their six enterprises into the Major Brothers Ltd., with declared capital assets of 300,000 taels.[100] This was divided into six thousand shares, of which the Major brothers returned home with two thousand. *Shen Bao* passed into the control of three fellow Englishman and one Chinese, but was, even more than in the past, managed day-to-day by Chinese staff, particularly the comprador Xi Zimei (Xi Yuqi) and the new chief editor Huang Xiexun.[101] Although Major kept an investment in *Shen Bao*, he left at an opportune time because his paper, in its complacency, actually declined throughout the 1890s and lost its market leadership in the years of political upheaval that led to the fall of the dynasty. *Shen Bao*'s staff and their approach to journalism were left behind by the political journalists.

The first blow to *Shen Bao* came from *Xin Wen Bao*, a newspaper which practised a similar style of journalism [illegible] which, in a sense, pulled the rug from underneath *Shen Bao*'s market. Soon after its foundation in 1893, a portion of the shares in *Xin Wen Bao* were sold to Sheng Xuanhuai, a factor which was important in determining the future ownership of the paper.[102] *Xin Wen Bao* pitched itself to more directly than *Shen Bao* to a

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100. Sun Yutang, *Zhongguo Jindai Gongye Shi Ziliao, Diyi Ji*, 1: 246. The six enterprises of Major Bros. Ltd. were the Jiangsu Chemical Factory, the Ruichang Match Factory, the Major Bros. Soap Factory, *Shen Bao*, the Shenchang Book Company and the Dianshi Zhai Lithography Company.

101. Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," pp. 88, 91. Those in control of *Shen Bao* were E. O. Abuthnot, George McBain, Robert Mackenzie and Liang Jinchi. Xi Zimei, the second comprador to *Shen Bao*, died in 1897 and his younger brother, Xi Zipei (Xi Yufu) took over. Ernest Major lived on until 1908.

102. Hu Daojing, "*Xin Wen Bao* Sishi Nian Shi," p. 187. Though they do not appear to be known for anything else, the first investors in *Xin Wen Bao* were A. W. Danforth, F. F. Ferris (both Englishman) and Zhang Shuhe. Sheng Xuanhuai appears to have been interested in the paper for commercial rather than propagandistic reasons.

merchant audience and from the start concentrated upon chipping away at *Shen Bao*'s place in the market. Its price advantage (three cash) over *Shen Bao* has already been noted. In addition, *Xin Wen Bao*'s staff hired groups of people to carry copies of the paper at night by boat to the main centres of the Jiangnan region, for instance, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou and Zhenjiang, to ensure that *Xin Wen Bao* would be available before *Shen Bao*. As also noted previously, *Xin Wen Bao* soon established a circulation advantage over *Shen Bao* of several thousand.[103] In 1899, however, one of the proprietors of *Xin Wen Bao*, A. W. Danforth, declared bankruptcy due to the failure of his tiling company in Pudong. The Court of the Consuls in Shanghai, which had jurisdiction over foreign residents, ordered Danforth to sell *Xin Wen Bao* to his principal debtor, the American Bucheister Company. In November that year the Bucheister Company in turn sold the paper to a fellow American, John Calvin Ferguson. Ferguson went to China as a missionary in 1886 and was quickly vaulted into the centre of Chinese politics through his connection with Sheng Xuanhuai who became Ferguson's highly placed patron. Sheng appointed Ferguson Chancellor of the Nanyang College in 1897, and no doubt Sheng's interest in *Xin Wen Bao* helped facilitate Ferguson's purchase of it. Through Sheng Xuanhuai, Ferguson served, in turn, as an adviser to Liu Kunyi (Viceroy of Liangjiang), Zhang Zhidong and Yuan Shikai (before and after the 1911 Revolution). Like Ernest Major, Ferguson was something of a sinologue and he had the good sense to leave the management of *Xin Wen Bao* to Chinese staff. Wang Hanxi, Ferguson's comprador, controlled the paper with his two sons while Ferguson took up residence in Beijing where he could tend his valuable entrée to the Chinese political leadership. In order to improve *Xin Wen Bao*'s penetration of the market and attract greater advertising, in 1906 Ferguson took in Chinese investors, selling thirty five

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103. *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 194.

percent of the stock to a group headed by Zhu Baosan, He Danshu and Su Baosen.[104] All in all, *Xin Wen Bao* represented a formidable challenge to *Shen Bao*, and the two giants of daily newspaper journalism carried on their market competition up to 1929 when *Shen Bao*'s Shi Liangcai launched his takeover of *Xin Wen Bao*.

By the turn of the century, however, neither *Shen Bao* nor *Xin Wen Bao* could be considered the most innovative forces in Shanghai journalism. With China's defeat in the 1894-1895 war against Japan and the subsequent scramble among the foreign powers for further territorial and economic privileges in China, there came a flood of periodical publications expressing opinion on the national crisis. Ge Gongzhen recorded 216 newspapers and 122 magazines published in the few years after 1894.[105] This was a period of high idealism, of political journalism which reflected an enlightenment spirit. The press in general was accorded a major role in educating the public and transforming their values to be more receptive to changes which, it was hoped, would see China develop in a similar way to the industrialized West and Japan. In a reflection of liberal views of the press common to Europe and America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the press and the journalist in China were seen as agents of political and social change. The people (*min*), popular will (*min yi*), and public opinion (*yu lun* or *gong*

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104. On the early ownership of *Xin Wen Bao* see Hu Daojing, "*Xin Wen Bao* Sishi Nian Shi," pp. 187-188. On Ferguson see Zhang Rui, "Wo suo Zhidao de Fukaisen" [The Ferguson that I Knew], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), pp. 157-159, 160-167; Feuerwerker, *China's Early Industrialization*, pp. 72-73, 271, n. 65; Diary of George E. Morrison, August 28, 1911, Mitchell Library, Sydney (relevant copies made available to me by courtesy of Dr. Lo Hui-min). See also Tao juyin, "Wo suo Liaojie de Xin Wen Bao" [What I Know about Xin Wen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 6 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 101ff.; Tao Juyin, "Xin Wen Bao Fazhan Shi" [The Historical development of Xin Wen Bao], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 4, pp. 128-129; Wang Zhongwei, Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi" [My Relationship with Xin Wen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 12 (Beijing: Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), pp. 128ff.; Yan Duhe, "Fukaisen yu Xinwen Bao" [Ferguson and Xin Wen Bao], in *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi Cankao Ziliao*, 1: 197.

105. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 145-150; Lee and Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture," p. 364.

lun) became the primary justifications for political action. It was difficult enough for journalists in industrialized countries, where parliamentary governments were already in place, to realize these high ideals, but problems were compounded in late-Qing China where the press circulated among a small elite of less than one percent of the total population.

One of the first steps in articulating a notion of the press, particularly newspapers, as an agent of political and social change was actually taken by Wang Tao over a decade before the crisis of the Sino-Japanese war. Although *Shen Bao* in particular was influenced by Wang's journalistic practices, at that time his theories on the role of newspapers did not have any significant impact outside of his adopted home of Hong Kong. Wang found parliamentary forms of government attractive for what he believed to be their ability to respond to the will and needs of the people. "Those who are good at governing," he wrote[106],

> place value in seeking out what grieves the people and in understanding the sentiments of the people. If the people regard something as inconvenient it need not be carried out; if they do not approve of something it should not be forced upon them. [Those who govern] should examine the illnesses and irritations of the people and soothe their pain.

Wang believed that newspapers could form a vital link in the chain of communication between the people and government of this sort. As early as 1878 he proposed that newspapers should be established throughout the country to facilitate communication between the people and the Qing government.[107]

Wang tended to accept an idealized view of the influence of newspapers in the West, particularly the London *Times*. He wrote that "the belief of the [British] people in the *Times* of England is unshakeable. In

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106. Cited by Chen Zusheng, "Wang Tao," pp. 22-23; See also Paul Cohen's translation in *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 219 and pp. 220-226 on Wang's interest in parliamentary government.

107. See Wang's "Lun Ge Sheng hui Cheng yi She Xin Bao Guan" [On the establishment of Newspapers in Each Province]. *Shen Bao*, February 19, 1878.

important national affairs everybody takes what the *Times* says as the standard [because] its editorial judgement is in accord with the will of the people (*ren xin*)."[108] This view of the ideal newspaper was almost as glowing in its praise as the *Times*' own description of the press as "daily, and for ever appealing to the enlightened forces of public opinion--anticipating if possible the march of events--standing upon the breach between the present and the future, and extending its survey to the horizon of the world."[109]

But Wang Tao's idealism anticipated similar notions about the role of newspapers that were commonly expressed by the political journalists after 1895. Liang Qichao's influence was, of course, pre-eminent, although Lin Yutang goes too far when he claims that "the 1911 Revolution was very largely the result of [Liang's] powerful pen."[110] Liang was at heart a polemical writer. More than anything else he wanted to convince his readers to think in a certain way or to accept certain values. Though he was perhaps the first Chinese writer to fully articulate notions of the press as the "Fourth Estate" which kept an eye on government for the benefit of the people, Liang was never content with only being able to reflect public opinion. He wanted to guide and shape it, almost to make it himself. Over the years this implicitly elitist attitude to the role of the press hardened in line with Liang's increasingly pessimistic political solutions for China which, in the end, held only the promise of "enlightened autocracy" (*kaiming zhuanzhi*).[111]

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108. Cited by Lai Guanglin, *Zhongguo Jindai Baoren yu Baoye*, p. 133.

109. This appeared in the *Times* in February 1852, cited by Gerge Boyce, "The Fourth Estate: The Reappraisal of a Concept," in *Newspaper History*, p. 19.

110. Lin Yutang, *Press and Public Opinion in China*, p. 97.

111. See Liang Qichao (Yin Bing), "Kaiming Zhuanzhi Lun" [On Enlightened Autocracy], in Zhang Dan and Wang Renzhi, ed., *Xinhai Geming Qian Shi Nian*, 2: 165-196; Philip C. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), pp. 81-83.

At the beginning of his career in political journalism, Liang Qichao, like Wang Tao, saw the press as a means of communicating knowledge and information, both internationally and between the government and people within China. In 1896 he wrote that "the more the people read the press, the more intelligent they become; the greater the press, the stronger the nation. This is wholly a consequence of facility of intercommunication and mutual knowledge and understanding."[112] Liang also pointed to the London *Times* as an example of a newspaper which commanded the respect of both the government and the public. Liang most admired Western newspapers because of what he perceived to be their political influence and close involvement with government affairs. He was as yet unconcerned about notions which saw newspapers as being necessarily independent of government. He believed that[113]

> the press is in such a position in the affairs of the [Western] nations, therefore, that there are men who were editors yesterday and today are active officers of the government; and there are officials who, dismissed from high posts in the morning, in the evening enter newspaper offices.

Despite their own claims of independence, senior editors of newspapers in England in the 1880s and 1890s did, ironically, match Liang's description of men who were in close contact with members of the government.[114] At the same time, this description was suggestive of the role Liang envisaged for himself in China's political system.

Indeed, Liang did at first attempt to influence the government from within. Together with Kang Youwei and, in a continuation of the missionary presence, Timothy Richard, Liang first published a daily, *Wanguo Gong Bao*, in Beijing. This was founded in August 1895 and later

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112. "Lun Baoguan you Yi yu Guo Shi" [On the Value of Newspapers in National Affairs], *Yin Bing Shi Wenji* (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1916, 1926), cited by Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, p. 88.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

114. Boyce, "The Fourth Estate," pp. 28-35.

changed to its name to *Zhongwai Jiwen*. *Zhongwai Jiwen* had the official backing of Zhang Zhidong, Yuan Shikai and Wen Tingshi, as did the organization behind it, the Qiang Xue Hui. The government censor closed this down within a few months and Liang then moved to Shanghai to start another daily, *Qiang Xue Bao* (founded January 1896) which was again backed by Zhang Zhidong. *Qiang Xue Bao* was re-organized in March when official pressure resulted in the dismissal of Wen Tingshi and the banning of the Qiang Xue Hui. It reappeared in August as *Shi Wu Bao*, which was published every ten days. It has already been shown that Liang's first two publications, the dailies, were aimed mainly at an audience of government officials.[115] *Shi Wu Bao*, with a circulation in 1898 of around 12,000, reached an audience beyond these official circles and was the most successful periodical publication of its day. Yet, even with *Shi Wu Bao*, Liang's partial dependence on official financial backing allowed Zhang Zhidong to precipitate a split between Liang and one of his fellow editors, Wang Kangnian. Zhang used Wang to gain financial control of *Shi Wu Bao* and converted it into an official organ.[116]

When the reform movement turned sour in 1898 and Liang sought refuge in Japan, the influence of Western-derived concepts of newspaper journalism showed up more clearly in his writing. In 1901 he cited Edmund Burke's characterization of the press as the "Fourth Estate" of the realm, and accepted at face value the extraordinary influence sometimes attributed to newspapers in the West. "The only way to assess the relative strength of a nation," he concluded, "is by the number and quality of its

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115. See p. 27 of this chapter.

116. On these publications and events surrounding them see Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 157-162, 177-182; Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century*, pp. 33-36; Luke S. K. Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days: Personalities, Politics, and Ideas of 1898* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on Easte Asian Studies, 1984), pp. 188-192; Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 90-94; Lin Yutang, *Press and Public Opinion in China*, pp. 94-97; Lai Guanglin, *Zhongguo Jindao Baoren yu Baoye*, pp. 174-182; Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 72-86, 110-125.

newspapers." A good quality newspaper, he added, required four essential ingredients: a fixed and noble purpose; progressive (*xin*) and honest (*zheng*) ideas; abundant and up-to-date material, and; accurate, quick reporting. Liang's idea of a "noble purpose" was one which worked to "the benefit of the greatest number of the people."[117] All of these notions were strikingly similar to the view of the press popularized by the English Utilitarian philosophers and taken on by many of the leading editors of newspapers in that country such as W. T. Stead (*Pall Mall Gazette*), C. P. Scott (*Manchester Guardian*) and A. G. Gardiner (*Daily News*).[118] Stead, for instance, despite being one of the pioneers of the sensationalist "new journalism," retained an idealistic view of the press as "at once the eye and ear and tongue of the people."[119] Liang expressed an identical view in his own words:[120]

> In the West there is a saying: newspapers are the ears, eyes and voice of a nation, the mirror to the multitude, the king of the literary world, the lamp of the future and the essence of the present. What formidable power! What a heavy responsibility!

Liang also cited a work on the development of the press in Europe and the Unites States by a Japanese journalist, Matsumoto Kunpei. It was very likely that Liang's knowledge of the press in the West came through Japanese works of this kind, and Matsumoto's book was translated into Chinese in 1903 as *Xinwenxue* (*Journalism*), the first work in Chinese on the subject.[121]

Liang's identification with a basically Fourth Estate model of newspapers and their seemingly all-powerful editors already marked quite

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117. "Ben Bao Diyi Bai Ce Zhuci," p. 45.

118. Boyce, "The Fourth Estate," pp. 21-22, 25-28; For an excellent study of Gardiner and his era see Stephen Koss, *Fleet Street Radical: A. G. Gardiner and the Daily News* (London: Allan Lane, 1973).

119. Cited by Boyce, "The Fourth Estate," p. 25.

120. "Ben Bao Diyi Bai Ce Zhuci," p. 44.

121. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan*, p. 643, n. 1.

an advance on his earlier vision of newspapers as a medium of "intercommunication." In 1902 he claimed even greater powers and responsibilities for newspapers, and their journalists, as his polemical temperament hardened. Liang came close to saying that newspapers should stand above the government, directing the nation for the people from a position of paternal omnipotence.[122]

> The political future of our country, whether it progresses or declines, cannot but be linked with newspapers....Some of my past newspapers in China, I readily admit, had connections with the government, but I regarded them as being like advisers to the government, correcting its mistakes and shortcomings. I will not say that this is not one of the duties of a newspaper; however, nor will I say that this is the limit of our duties. Why? Because newspapers are not the government's subjects, but stand on an equal footing with the government. Furthermore, the government receives the mandate (*weituo*) of the people and is the servant of the people; newspapers represent the will of the people and speak for the public. Thus the way a newspaper regards the government should resemble the way a father regards a son: if he does not understand something, he is given guidance; if he falters, he is given a helping hand....This is not to say that the government should be made to feel embarrassed by everything. With increasing guidance and support, given with the utmost sincerity, even a naughty child must finally feel moved to develop scruples. This is the reason that the nation depends upon newspapers, and it is the very smallest obligation that [journalists] like ourselves owe to the people.

Not even W. T. Stead and his cohorts went so far in their heady idealism to compare the relationship between the press and the government with that between father and son. But Liang was not content with guiding the government. In what amounted to something akin to a political "new journalism," he advocated a form of editorial sensationalism to guide the people. At the same time, anticipating the principle of strict separation between editorial and news content which journalists of the Republican period favoured, Liang argued that "in a newspaper, objectivity cannot exist without subjectivity."[123]

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122. Liang Qichao, "Jinggao Wo Tongye Zhujun" [An Address to My Colleagues], in Zhang Dan and Wang Renzhi, ed., *Xinhai Geming Qian Shi Nian*, p. 219.

123. *Ibid.*, p. 220. A partial translation of this passage appears in Lee and Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture," p. 367, but the important sections

> What is meant by guiding the people?...Recent developments in government and changes among the people, national and overseas events are all reported objectively. In comparing recent events, analysing recent phenomena and assessing the benefit to the people of all that has been deduced and expounded, there has to be subjectivity. In a newspaper, objectivity cannot exist without subjectivity. Subjectivity embraces a myriad of different things, but...good journalists aim to guide the people....Once a journalist is fixed upon a certain goal, he/she should pursue it with extreme comments (*jiduan zhi yilun*); even if slightly biased and excited, this is not a defect. Why? If I have an extreme view about a certain point, at the same time somebody else with an extreme view about another point will [act as a] corrective, and there will somebody else again who takes the middle ground and changes my attitude. [By a process of] mutual bias, mutual correction and mutual persuasion the truth will out. If we casually follow one another with indecisive words, the minds of the people throughout the country will all be calm and government of the people [or democracy] will stagnate. For people who are content with the familiar are startled by the unfamiliar. What must be done is to make the startling into the familiar, and only then will the intelligence [of the people] gradually advance.

Although this was clearly one of Liang's strongest pleas for polemical journalism, his insistence on "startling" (*hai*) or sensationalist editorial writing should not obscure his important, if idealistic, distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, and his own version of Milton's libertarian "self-righting process." Both were pillars, even if only on a theoretical level, of liberal journalism in the West.[124]

Liang Qichao the journalist, armed with his newspapers, as political guide and guardian of the people formed a romantic image that Liang himself sometimes found hard to accept. He knew the reality of newspaper journalism in China, but, like many Chinese journalists who came after

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revealing the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity and what amounts to Liang's version of the "self-righting" process are missing.

124. See, for instance, Fred S. Siebert, et al., *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press should Be and Do* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp. 44-62. Milton wrote: "And though all the windes of doctrin were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licencing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falshood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors in a free and open encounter?" See John Milton *Areopagitica*, ed. John W. Hales (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882), pp. 51-52. For one view that argues that Liang Qichao favoured subjective advocacy at the expense of objective journalism see Kang Ludao, "Baoren yu Jiandai Zhongguo Zhengzhi Wenhua de Bianqian" [Journalists and the Transformation of Modern Chinese Political Culture], *Zhishifenzi* [Intellectuals] Spring 1985, p. 26.

him, held on to an unrealistic appreciation of the power of the press in the West. For instance, Liang described his own journal, *Qing Yi Bao*, in which the above article appeared, as being somewhere "between a party and a national journal," meaning that it had not yet attained the national standing and influence of the great newspapers of the West which he considered to be above party politics.[125]

Liang's own experience in publishing journals attested to the difficulty of realizing his ideals. His first publications were all compromised by their official connections and sponsorship. After the 1911 Revolution Liang admitted that "for those of us engaged in journalism the greatest difficulty is to remain economically independent."[126] Indeed, all of Liang's later journals were in effect financed as organs of his own party causes.

An interesting case in point was the reformist Shanghai daily *Shi Bao* founded in 1904. After *Qiang Xue Bao* was re-organized in 1896, *Shi Bao* was the only other daily publication which Liang was able to help finance. Without a wealthy businessman's assistance, dailies were normally out of the reach of even the most successful writers like Liang. Liang and Kang Youwei wanted to establish *Shi Bao* as a platform for their Bao Huang Hui. They had effectively been prevented from publishing any journals in China since the 1898 reaction, so Liang's plans for establishing *Shi Bao* were made in Hong Kong, and before the paper's appearance on June 12 he traveled incognito to Shanghai to finalize arrangements.[127] Di Chuqing, one of Liang's followers, was put in charge of *Shi Bao*. Di had lent

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125. "Ben Bao Diyi Bai Ce Zhuci," p. 52.

126. Liang Qichao, "Shi Shi Xin Bao Wu Qian Hao Jinian Ci" [Commemoration of the Five Thousandth Edition of Shi Shi Xin Bao], cited by Lai Guanglin, *Zhongguo Jindai Baoren yu Baoye*, p. 267.

127. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 276. On Liang's initial involvement in *Shi Bao* see Ding Wenjiang and Zhao Fengtian, ed., *Liang Qichao Nianpu Changbian* [A Draft Chronological Biography of Liang Qichao] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 836-839.

logistical support to Tang Caichang's Hankou uprising of 1900 and then fled to Japan where Liang reputedly convinced him that words rather than guns were the best way to change China. In choosing Di Chuqing, however, Liang had not reckoned on his unwillingness to implement the programme of the Bao Huang Hui. *Shi Bao* soaked up much of the Bao Huang Hui's finances but did not adequately serve as its public platform. In a letter to Kang Youwei, Liang ruefully noted, "our Party [the Bao Huang Hui] has expended over one hundred thousand dollars to run this newspaper. At present, if we want to expand the the position of our Party inside the country but cannot make the paper into our organ, then what use is it [the paper] to us?"[128] Liang's more private face therefore revealed a more realistic appraisal of his purpose in publishing periodicals than his idealistic, public face suggested.

This did not prevent Liang from enshrining some of his cherished ideals about newspapers in *Shi Bao*'s opening prospectus, which Liang wrote from his exile in Yokohama. Article 1 claimed: "Our comments will be impartial (*yi gong wei zhu*)." News reporting was to be "quick (*yi su wei zhu*)", "accurate (*yi que wei zhu*)," "truthful (*yi zhi wei zhu*)" and "unbiased (*yi zheng wei zhu*)".[129] It need hardly be said that *Shi Bao* would have found it difficult to be both impartial and an organ of the Bao Huang Hui.

The wider significance of *Shi Bao* was that it was at the head of a movement which represented a direct challenge to the more conservative journalism of *Shen Bao*. *Shi Bao* was the most prominent Shanghai example of an incipient nationalist journalism which wanted the press to

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128. "Yu Fuzi Daren Shu" [Letter to the Master [Kang Youwei]], cited by Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 279. See also P'eng-yüan Chang, "The Constitutionalists," in *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-1913*, ed. Mary Clabaugh Wright (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 158, n. 45.

129. See the full prospectus in Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 204-206. A partial translation of this appears in Lin Yutang, *Press and Public Opinion in China*, pp. 105-106.

be both owned and run by Chinese. Wang Tao and his cohorts in Hong Kong had made sure that they controlled the capital and the technology of their early newspapers, but this had proved to be more difficult for Chinese to implement in Shanghai.[130]

One of the first successful Chinese-owned Shanghai newspapers which declared itself to be in direct competition with *Shen Bao* was *Zhongwai Ribao*. Founded in 1898, it was dominated by Wang Kangnian and his brother, Wang Yinian. Because of the suppression of the reform movement after 1898, Wang Kangnian expediently played down his earlier connections with Liang Qichao, and *Zhongwai Ribao* was careful to distance itself from the Kang-Liang reform group. *Zhongwai Ribao* was nevertheless in favour of the mild reformist of Wang's principal patron, Zhang Zhidong, and it was the first Chinese-owned Shanghai daily to appear in the style of modern Western broadsheets, printed on both sides of newsprint paper, a style not adopted by *Shen Bao* until 1909.[131]

Shi Bao built upon this sort of innovation, but with greater success. Its editorials were short and topical in contrast to the long, turgid commentaries of *Shen Bao*; news was structured according to international, national, regional and local categories; and there were correspondents in the major Chinese cities as well as in Japan, England, and the U.S.A. In addition, *Shi Bao* gained considerable notoriety over its strong editorial support for the 1904 railway rights recovery movement on

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130. Wang Tao and his colleagues usually purchased printing presses from missionaries or idle Chinese presses in the possession of the English language newspapers. See Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 105, 153-154; Britton, *Chinese Periodical Press*, pp. 42-46; Cohen *Between Tradition and Modernity*, pp. 75-76.

131. On *Zhongwai Ribao* see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 298-299; Lai Guanglin, *Zhongguo Jindai Baoren yu Baoye*, pp. 289-291; Bays, *Chine Enters the Twentieth Century*, p. 170, and; a less accurate account in Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 104. In 1908 Wang Kangnian sold the paper to the Shanghai Daotai, Cai Naihuang. On *Shen Bao*'s printing and paper see Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 102.

the Canton-Hankou (Yue-Han) line and the anti-American economic boycotts of 1905.[132]

Shi Bao was popular with intellectuals, Hu Shi counting himself an avid reader,[133] and the educated middle class. One key to its success was a close association with regional education circles and the advertising for school texts, literary works and cultural events in Shanghai which flowed to the paper as a result.[134]

Shi Bao was simply the leading example of the burgeoning reformist publications in Shanghai and its surrounding regions, including several vernacular journals in Hangzhou, Wuxi and Suzhou. But none of these smaller journals had sufficient resources to publish in a daily format and most of them survived only a few years.[135]

The appearance of *Shi Bao* provided the shock required for *Shen Bao* to change its ways. Throughout the latter half of the 1890s *Shen Bao* was in decline. Not only did it have to compete with *Xin Wen Bao*, but after 1898 the editors, principally Huang Xiexun, did *Shen Bao* great damage by attacking the reformist line of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao.[136] Huang allowed the paper's journalism to stagnate around the kinds of issues and news of the 1880s and was unable to appreciate the growth in the newspaper audience which the reform press serviced. Circulation declined and this led to a decline in advertising revenue. With *Shi Bao* on

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132. On *Shi Bao*'s journalistic innovations see Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, pp. 319-322, 346-350; Link , *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, pp. 104-108. On its editorial line see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 277-278; Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 187.

133. Hu Shi, "Shiqi Nian de Huigu" [A Look Back over the Past Seventeen Years], cited by Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 188-189.

134. Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, p. 424; Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 152-153.

135. On the vernacular journals see Tan Bi'an, *Wan Qing de Baihua Wen Yundong* [The Late Qing Vernacular Movement] (Wuhan: Hubei Renmin Chubanshe, 1956), pp. 12-13; Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 171-172; Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, pp. 168-170.

136. See pp. 44-45 above.

the scene, by late 1904 *Shen Bao* was approaching bankruptcy. *Shen Bao* held an emergency in January 1905. The board of directors met over two days to thrash out a new editorial policy. The changes made amounted to a complete about face as the reformers Kang and Liang were embraced and the journalistic innovations of *Shi Bao* were adapted to *Shen Bao*. A new chief editor, Jin Jianhua, was appointed together with a new editorial columnist, Zhang Yunhe, who had studied in Japan. As a conspicuous symbol of *Shen Bao*'s new direction, the editorial of February 8, 1905, as previously mentioned, drew upon Liang Qichao's writings to make its point.[137]

Shen Bao had therefore managed to save itself, but it was by no means at the forefront of Shanghai newspaper journalism and was far from its position of market dominance of the 1880s. The paper continued to be a financial burden to Major Bros. Ltd. Wishing to expand their chemical plant in Shanghai, in 1907 they decided to sell *Shen Bao* in an agreement with Xi Zipei (Xi Yufu) who had taken over as the paper's comprador upon the death of his elder brother, Xi Zimei, in 1897. Eventually Xi Zipei was able to raise funds to purchase the paper, and in May 1909 he paid 75,000 yuan for *Shen Bao*, making it a wholly Chinese-owned concern. This left *Xin Wen Bao* as the only major foreign-owned Chinese-language newspaper in Shanghai. Chinese ownership did not, however, make a great deal of difference to the fortunes of *Shen Bao*. It had an inglorious and uneventful history until it was placed under the management Shi Liangcai in 1912.[138]

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137. On these changes see Lei Jin, "Shen Bao Guan zhi Guoqu Zhuangkuang," p. 28; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 246-249. See p. 45 above on this editorial.

138. On *Shen Bao*, 1905-1912 see Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," pp. 90-92. In August 1909 Xi Zipei sold part of the paper to the Shanghai Daotai, Cai Naihuang, because of financial difficulties. With the help of Cai, Xi Zipei put his house in order and was soon able to buy back his shares. See *Shen Bao* Shi Bianxie Zubian [Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], "*Shen Bao* Qishi Qi Nian Da Shiji" [A Seventy Seven Year Chronology of Shen Bao], Draft (Beijing, 1978), p. 4. Zhang Shizhao claims *Shen Bao* was in fact the organ of Cai Naihuang during this period,

By 1909 the political scene in Shanghai had changed so radically that even the reformed, Chinese-owned *Shen Bao* could still be considered conservative. In September 1906, for instance, *Shen Bao*, *Shi Bao*, and *Zhongwai Ribao* were the main sponsors of a meeting to celebrate the Qing court's decision to launch a movement for constitutional government.[139] This was very tame stuff in comparison to the newspapers of the Shanghai revolutionaries. As early as mid-1903 Shanghai's most notorious revolutionary daily, *Su Bao*, published articles calling for the complete destruction of the Qing dynasty and advocating the murder of Manchus as a political weapon.[140] Edited by Zhang Shizhao, with contributions from such great anti-Manchu writers as Zhang Binglin, Zou Rong, Wu Zhihui and Cai Yuanpei, *Su Bao* successfully tapped the radical student movement in Shanghai. In pursuing such provocative methods *Su Bao* was in one sense pushing Liang Qichao's notion of "startling" journalism to its extreme limit. Its radical anti-Manchu crusade was, not surprisingly, short-lived. In July 1903 Chinese authorities, fearing that *Su Bao* was at the centre of a plot to stage an uprising, prevailed upon the Shanghai Municipal Council to close it down and arrest some of its members, including Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong. The details surrounding their

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although this has not been corroborated bt other evidence. See Zhang Shizhao, "'Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai' Shu Hou" [Addenda to Shen Bao and Shi Liangcai], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 23 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961), p. 244.

139. Fang Hanqi, et al., "Jindai Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye Shi Bian Nian" [A Chronological History of the Press in Modern China], Pt. 15, in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 23 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1984), p. 216; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 957-958. In an interesting but mysterious episode, in the autumn of 1906 Liu Shipei and Wang Zhongqi, two radical anti-Manchu writers, joined the editorial staff of *Shen Bao*. This was perhaps an attempt by the paper to boost sales in the revolutionary environmnet, but soon after their arrival the governor-general for the Jiangsu area, Duan Fang, pressured the paper into sacking them. One example of their anti-Manchu editorials was "Jin San Bai Nian Xueshu Bianqian Dashi Lun' [The General Intellectual Trends of the Past Three Hundred Years], *Shen Bao*, October 19-22, 1906. See Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," p. 249.

140. Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, p. 13.

subsequent trial in the Mixed Court have been dealt with by others and need not be dwelt on here.[141] One of the significant aspects of the whole affair was the publicity it gave to the revolutionary journalists. They were merely encouraged to continue to spread their message through the medium of the press and redoubled their efforts in the following years. Even while the trial of the *Su Bao* journalists was in progress, both Zhang Shizhao and Cai Yuanpei, who had escaped arrest, founded their own dailies. Zhang's *Guomin Riri Bao* (*National Daily*) appeared in August 1903, but lasted only three months before internal disputes between management and the editors led to its closure. Cai's paper, *Jingzhong Ribao* (*Tocsin*), fared slightly better, publishing from early 1904 until the Municipal Council ordered its closure in March 1905.[142]

Before 1907 the revolutionary journalists had greater difficulties than the reformists in raising sufficient funds to publish dailies. But in subsequent years it was the revolutionaries rather than the reformists who eventually attracted the support of some of Shanghai's wealthiest businessmen. Yu Youren, who joined the Tong Meng Hui (Revolutionary Alliance) in Tokyo in 1906, was particularly successful in attracting financial backing for his newspapers. *Shen Zhou Ribao*, founded in April 1907, counted Zhang Jian among its trustees.[143] *Min Li Bao*, started by Yu

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141. See John Lust, "The Su-pao Case: An Episode in the Early Chinese Nationalist Movement," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27.2 (1964): 408-429; Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, pp. 77-95; Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 230-252; Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 206-211; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 959-975; Yao Yuxiang, "Su Bao An zhi Kaozheng" [Research into the Su Bao Incident], in *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi* [A History of Journalism in China], ed. Li Zhan (Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1979), pp. 301-315.

142. On both these dailies see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 255-259.

143. Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, p. 116.

Youren in October 1910, was backed by the Shanghai banker Shen Manyun.[144]

Min Li Bao's circulation of around twenty thousand, the highest of any newspaper in China at the time, suggested that successful journalism did not depend upon making claims to impartiality. For Yu Youren was less coy than Liang Qichao about the propagandistic purpose of his newspapers. The foundation declaration of *Min Li Bao*, for instance, was full of references to "an independent people," "independent popular rights" and journalists who "should steel themselves for total devotion to the nation."[145] It said nothing about the kind of dedication to impartial comments and fair, accurate reporting which Liang Qichao had claimed for *Shi Bao*. Indeed, revolutionary journalists in general looked upon the press as a weapon in their struggle, and did not recoil from referring to their own publications as political "organs (*jiguan*)."[146]

At the same time, *Min Li Bao*'s declaration showed that Yu Youren shared with Liang and other political journalists of the day a claim to be acting in the name of "the people." The very titles that Yu chose for his newspapers, with the word "people" (*min*) prominent in his last three efforts, suggested that it was commonplace among political journalists, almost a matter of habit, to invoke the name of the people. As Qiu Jin, the radical female activist wrote: "if newspapers are not responsible for employing the power of public opinion to direct the people, then what is

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144. Zhang Yunjia, *Yu Youren Zhuan* [A Biography of Yu Youren] (Taibei: Zhongwai Tongxunshe, 1958), pp. 60-61; Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, p. 120. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 488 claims Shen Manyun invested 30,000 yuan in *Min Li Bao*.

145. "*Min Li Bao* Fakan Ci" [Foundation Declaration of Min Li Bao], in *Yu Youren Xiansheng Wenji* [Selected Works of Mr. Yu Youren] (Taibei: Guo Shi Guan, 1978), p. 8.

146. See the interesting examples of this attitude in Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 634-636, 643, n. 6. Fang argues that the revolutionary journalists might have been influenced by the example of the revolutionary press in Russia.

[responsible]?"[147] Of course, the national audience for periodical publications alone, less than four million, made such claims difficult to accept on anything but a symbolic level. Moreover, were both Yu Youren and Liang Qichao, for example, speaking and acting for the same people? If not, and the disputes between the reformist and revolutionary journalists suggest they were not, which one truly served the people? The only reasonable conclusion to make is that there was more rhetoric than substance in the claims of journalists to be representatives and servants of the people.

Min Li Bao's success nevertheless attested to the popularity among the newspaper audience of news and information about the revolutionary cause. Even in its news coverage *Min Li Bao* emphasized such events as regional uprisings and demonstrations against the Qing government.[148] In addition, *Min Li Bao* at least matched *Shi Bao* in terms of journalistic innovation. Most of its editorials were, like *Shi Bao*'s, clearly focused on the most recent events and issues.[149] Its correspodents were spread around the country and among its special features were regular contributions from correspondents in England and the U.S. A greater amount of news was being published than in the past, in a more accessible vernacular style and with clearer headlining than *Shen Bao*.[150]

Although these advances reflected the growing importance of newspaper journalism in Chinese politics and society, they did not necessarily translate into significant professional advances for working journalists. There were two main reasons for this state of affairs. First,

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147. "*Zhongguo Nü Bao* Fakan Ci" [The Foundation Declaration of Zhongguo Nü Bao], cited by Fang Hanqi, *Jindai baokan Shi*, p. 633. *Zhongguo Nü Bao* was a monthly founded in 1907.

148. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 652-653.

149. Li Liangrong, *Baozhi Wenti Fazhan Gaiyao*, pp. 40-42.

150. For these and other changes brought by *Min Li Bao* and other revolutionary journals see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 644-673.

newspapers were still relatively small-scale operations which exploited human resources to the maximum. Secondly, the leading newspapers, such as *Min Li Bao*, were less concerned with the development of journalism for its own sake than with the propagation of a political point of view. To the likes of Yu Youren journalism was a means to an end rather than an end in itself. These journalists were well rewarded come the Revolution. For those who made journalism their job the rewards were not as great and they came only slowly.

The ways in journalists were called upon to perform various tasks showed that they were part of only a primitive kind of profession. Before 1912 it was still the case that staff journalists were required to be proficient in different forms of writing. At *Shi Bao*, for example, Bao Tianxiao wrote news items, essays and short fiction. The specialist journalist or reporter who worked a particular "beat" was unknown. Moreover, the ability to write fiction was still valued more highly than journalistic writing. Bao's comparatively high monthly salary of eighty yuan consisted of fifty yuan for his fiction and thirty yuan for essays and reporting. A colleague from his home-town earnt only a base-grade journalist's salary of twenty eight yuan per month at *Shen Bao*, although this was clearly a vast improvement on the four yuan paid to correspondents in 1877. *Shi Bao* was run by a permanent staff of only a dozen people, including proof readers and translators of reports from the foreign-language press.[151] Even those referred to as foreign correspondents were often no more than Chinese overseas students.[152]

The embryonic nature of the occupation of journalism was also underlined by the fact that no attempt was made to organize a professional

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151. Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, p. 317, 318-321, 346-350, 407-408. The editor of *Shi Bao*, Chen Jinghan, was paid 150 yuan per month.

152. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

association. Only the newspaper proprietors succeeded in establishing their own representative body. In March 1909 the major Shanghai dailies came together to form the Shanghai Daily Press Association (Shanghai Ribao Gonghui). The impetus for the Association came from *Shen Zhou Ribao* after its report on an illegal incident involving an Indian policeman in the International Settlement provoked an official complaint from the Municipal Council. The major dailies thought it best to organize themselves in a show of support for *Shen Zhou Ribao*.[153]

In September 1910 a similar body on a national scale, the All China Press Association (Zhongguo Baojie Jujin Hui), was formed in Nanjing .. A total of forty three newspapers were represented. At the time, however, the forces of parochialism were stronger than those of nationalism. Following two subsequent annual meetings the Association was forced to disband due to a lack of funds (and an evident lack of interest).[154] It was not until 1919 that another attempt was made to organize a national newspaper association.

While the issue of the development journalism as a profession was left to flounder, all the running in the newspaper press was taken up by the political journalists. During the last decade of the Qing they helped to enshrine the newspaper as part of the urban political landscape in China with Shanghai as its heartland. Intellectuals of the stature of Liang Qichao lent a certain prestige to journalism, but he, too, was primarily playing the game for political stakes.

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153. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 389; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 977-980.

154. The All China Press Association held its second annual meeting in Beijing on September 22, 1911 and its third annual meeting in Shanghai on June 4, 1912 (with twenty new members, including *Min Li Bao*). The successive chairmen of the Association were Guo Dingsen (1910), Zhu Hong (1911) and Zhu Baokang (1912), though nothing appears to be known about them. See ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 373-377; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 983-984.

Indeed, on the eve of the 1911 Revolution newspaper journalism in Shanghai reflected the activities of the various players in the political struggles of the day. *Min Li Bao* was not only the most successful example of innovative, radical journalism, but also the Shanghai headquarters of the revolutionary movement led by the Tong Meng Hui. Journalists Shao Lizi and Ye Chucang and such political luminaries of the movement as Chen Qimei and Song Jiaoren were all a part of the *Min Li Bao* group.[155] Similarly, *Shi Bao* served as the focal point of the constitutional-reformist movement. The paper's manager, Di Chuqing, had set aside a room within the *Shi Bao* offices which came to be known as the "Xi Lou" (House of Rest). There the editorial staff and like-minded friends would gather to discuss issues of concern to their movement. Among the frequent visitors to the Xi Lou were Zhang Jian and Shi Liangcai himself. Shi had joined the editorial staff of *Shi Bao* in 1908.[156] Together, *Shi Bao* and *Min Li Bao* were symbolic representatives of the main political currents that led to the foundation of the Republic in 1912.

In political terms Chinese newspaper journalism had come a long way since Ernest Major's *Shen Bao.* Yet, ironically, one important habit from those days remained. For Chinese newspapers, even some of the revolutionary ones, were able to flourish in Shanghai at least in part because the International Settlement provided a buffer from the repression of the Qing government.[157] To maximise their chances of survival all the major dailies in Shanghai actively sought registration as foreign enterprises. Most of the revolutionary dailies were registered as Japanese concerns. There were nonetheless limits to the protection

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155. Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, p. 118.

156. For more on the Xi Lou group see chapter 2, p. 87.

157. On the Qing government's development of press controls in the early 1900s see Lee-hsi Hsu Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 9-12.

afforded Chinese newspapers publishing out of the International Settlement. The *Su Bao* case showed that the foreign authorities were still prepared to act against the Chinese newspapers and journalists if they were convinced such action was necessary to the maintenance of their authority in the concessions. After the *Su Bao* trial, the Municipal Council attempted to introduce tighter legislative controls over the press in the International Settlement. This effort was blocked by the diplomatic corps, but the many closures of revolutionary periodicals in the few years before 1911 (Yu Youren's *Min Hu Bao* and *Min Xu Bao* among them) demonstrated that the Municipal Council, through the Mixed Court, was still able to exercise control over Chinese newspapers. The Council was most likely to act if pressured by high-ranking Chinese officials or diplomatic representatives of the foreign powers.[158] On balance, however, Shanghai was a safer place for Chinese journalists to ply their trade than territory under Chinese control, as the years of the Republic would also demonstrate.

When the Qing fell and the Republic was proclaimed the political journalists and their newspapers reigned supreme. Thus the most influential journalists and newspapers in Shanghai were organized around political causes. They were at the forefront of journalism, while those organized around commercial causes at newspapers like *Shen Bao* had to take a back seat. But many journalists were to discover the political dimension to their occupation to their cost in the period of reaction that

158. On attempts to legislate control of the press see A. M. Kotenev, *Shanghai: Its Mixed Court and Council* (Shanghai: North China Daily News and Herald, 1925), p. 111. On the closure Yu Youren's newspapers see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 480-493, *passim*; Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, pp. 117-118. *Min Hu Bao* lasted from May 1909 to August the same year when Yu was charged with misappropriating funds from a government famine relief campaign in Gansu and slandering Chinese officials. *Min Xu Bao* appeared from September to November 1909 and was closed down upon complaints from Japanese authorities in Shanghai about allegedly anti-Japanese articles.

followed the founding of the Republic. The tables were turned as commercial causes began to dominate Shanghai newspaper journalism.

CHAPTER II

THE NEWSPAPER BUSINESS, 1912-1937

A central argument of this study is that newspaper journalism cannot be adequately understood unless it is examined against the background of wider economic and political factors which constrain its operation. This chapter will attempt to define the ways in which the economic and organizational components of newspaper journalism helped to shape the development of the principal Shanghai newspapers. Although this approach is partly informed by the view that newspapers are primarily commercial organizations which produce and distribute a form of commodity, such a view need not lapse into economic determinism as a means of explaining what was published in Shanghai newspapers.[1] The previous chapter has shown some of the ways in which early Chinese journalists fashioned their newspapers according to a complex interaction between aspects of their own publishing and cultural heritage and such "alien" influences as foreign proprietors and missionaries, English-language newspapers of the treaty ports and Western concepts of the role of newspapers and journalists in society. The *Shen Bao* of the 1880s and 1890s, for example, was primarily directed by market forces, but determining the content and character of the paper involved editorial staff in a great deal of voluntaristic decision-making.

Yet there is no escaping the fact that daily newspapers in Shanghai were subject to economic and organizational pressures which

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1. See the discussion of the theoretical foundations of this approach in the Introduction to this study.

significantly influenced their development. Any newspaper requires certain fundamental ingredients just to get into print. There must be an initial capital investment for the purchase of printing presses, paper, inks and suitable premises. Sales depend upon the establishment of a distribution network through communications infrastructure. The gathering of news and information is determined not only by journalists but also by technical facilities like the telegraph and news agencies. The particular configuration of these ingredients can in themselves reveal a great deal about the character of a newspaper. Moreover, the historical development of a newspaper is often linked to changes in one or all of these ingredients.

In particular, the way in which a newspaper is financed has a decisive impact upon its character. Most periodical publications ultimately reach a point where the costs of production cannot be fully met through sales alone without pushing the retail price to an unrealistically high level. Newspapers have commonly sought two main solutions to this problem: advertising revenue and subsidization from political sources. At times, even from the early days of the newspaper press in the West, financial support was provided by a combination of these two sources.[2] The gradual extension of the franchise in countries with parliamentary systems reinforced the interest of governments and politicians in paying subsidies to newspapers, and, in mid-nineteenth-century Britain for example, many newspapers were financed as party organs. The payment of subsidies with political strings attached continued to be part of the

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2. See the discussion of seventeenth century newspapers in England in Michael Harris and Alan Lee, ed., *The Press in English Society: From the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986), pp. 19-24, and; Michael Harris, "The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1620-1780," in *Newspaper History: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 92-97.

newspaper scene right up to World War I.[3] But the quest for ever larger markets throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century saw advertising become the predominant source of income for newspapers. In the 1890s proprietors like Lord Northcliffe in Britain and Pulitzer in the United States successfully extended commercial newspapers into a mass market. Advertising revenue, which eventually allowed newspapers to be sold at a price lower than the cost to produce them, was the key to their success. Once set upon a course of chasing a mass market, newspapers were guided by seemingly relentless commercial pressures. The opinionated, political newspapers were eclipsed by those with an emphasis on entertainment and sensationalism. Newspapers became big business and a tendency toward concentration of ownership began to emerge in the early twentieth century, laying the foundations for the present day newspaper oligopolies of the likes of Rupert Murdoch.[4]

The value to society of a newspaper press organized along such strict commercial lines has been a cause for considerable concern in some of the industrialized countries.[5] In chapter four it will be seen that some

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3. Newspapers funded by the Liberal and, to a lesser extent, Conservative Parties in the U.K. enjoyed greatest influence from the 1850s to the 1880s, but were thereafter gradually overtaken by commercially organized newspapers. Politicians continued to subsidize, and sometimes purchase, newspapers into the early twentieth century, Lloyd George perhaps being the most notorious example. See Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols. (London Hamish Hamilton, 1981, 1984), 1: 74, 410-413; 2: 326-327; George Boyce, "The Fourth Estate: The Reappraisal of a Concept," in *Newspaper History*, pp. 28-29.

4. On the history of these changes in the U.K. see Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 215-229; Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), pp. 21, 78-104; Alan Lee, "The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1855-1914," in *Newspaper History*, pp. 117-130. On the rise of the commercially organized press in the U.S. see F. L. Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 158-189. In Australia alone Murdoch's News Corporation (Murdoch is now an American citizen) controls 58% of the circulation of the daily newspaper published in the major cities. See David Bowman, *The Captive Press* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1988), p. 15.

5. In the U.K. there have been three Royal Commissions of enquiry into the press since World War II (1947-9, 1961-2 and 1974-7). See the discussion in Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, "The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1914-1976," in *Newspaper History*, pp. 147-148. Each Commission concluded that increasing concentration of ownership was not a good thing, but was not bad

Shanghai journalists expressed similar concerns about their newspaper press in the early 1930s, but for the moment it is worth considering the economic development of Shanghai newspapers to see to what extent it was comparable to the pattern of development common to newspapers in industrialized countries. This chapter will show that Shanghai newspapers faced commercial pressures which led them onto a path similar to that taken by newspapers in indutrialized countries. However, historical, social and economic factors unique to China prevented Shanghai newspapers from going all the way down that path.

Patterns of Ownership and Control: The Rise of the Commercial Newspaper

The gradual transformation from foreign to Chinese ownership and control of Shanghai newspapers was outlined in chapter one. On the eve of the 1911 Revolution all the important newspapers in the city, with the exception of *Xin Wen Bao*, were firmly in the hands of the Chinese. But the most prominent and influential newspapers were those organized around political rather than commercial causes. *Min Li Bao* and *Shi Bao* led the field in newspaper journalism while *Shen Bao* was grimly hanging on to the market it had established through the 1880s and 1890s. The Republican period brought a reversal of this trend. Although political newspapers continued to be a significant part of newspaper journalism in Shanghai right through the Republican period, a combination of government repression of the political press and the superior resources of the commercial newspapers saw a gradual erosion of the market leadership of political newspapers. By the late 1920s, as the first stage in the

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enough to warrant state intervention. For similar fears about the newspaper press in Australia, which surely must have one of the highest concentrations of media owneship of any capitalist society, see Bowman, *The Captive Press*, pp. 63-83, 215-231.

development of commercial newspaper oligopolies began to emerge in Shanghai, the days when an avowedly political newspaper like *Min Li Bao* could lead the field in journalism were apparently long gone. It required the calamities brought by Japanese military attacks in China to break this pattern of development. Polemical journalism found new life in a vigorous and popular patriotic press, led by the publications of Zou Taofen. Of course, when the Japanese military reached Shanghai in late 1937 any thoughts of market competition were swamped by concerns for survival. Further development of newspaper journalism was effectively suspended.

In the brief period between the Wuchang uprising and the Yuan Shikai's repression of the "second revolution" in 1913 there was a great flurry of newspaper publication among the main political parties. The picture was complicated by the many splits and re-organizations that plagued the parties after the formation of the Republic. Initially, however, news of the Wuchang uprising sprouted many, tabloid-sized newspapers in Shanghai, all unanimously dedicated to promoting the revolutionary cause and the need for republican government. At least twenty-eight newspapers of this sort have been noted by one scholar, most of which were backed by the Tong Meng Hui. Once the provisional government had been established in Nanjing, these newspapers were no longer published, having served their main purpose.[6]

In one sense, all of Shanghai's major pro-revolutionary newspapers were beset by a similar loss of purpose with the declaration of the Republic. Revolutionaries became the new "establishment" as they accepted senior positions in government. *Min Li Bao*, for instance, lost its key supporters, including Yu Youren, Song Jiaoren, Chen Qimei and Shen

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6. Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi* [A History of the Press in Modern China] (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 620-624.

Manyun, to government service.[7] In May 1912 the paper was handed over to a former commander of the revolutionary Iron and Blood Army (Tie Xue Jun), Fan Hongxian, but, lacking the clearly focused energy of the pre-1911 days, it experienced a gradual decline in circulation. Following the "second revolution" Yuan Shikai imposed a ban on the sale of *Min Li Bao* outside the Shanghai International Settlement and this dealt the death blow to the paper. It was forced to cease operations in early 1913 due to financial problems.[8]

Shen Zhou Ribao, Yu Youren's first newspaper, survived the transition to the Republic by adopting a flexible attitude in financing its operations. Although Yu Youren directed *Shen Zhou Ribao* for only the first eighty days of its life, it was generally supportive of revolutionary causes throughout the years leading up to the fall of the Qing. With the creation of a National Assembly under the Republic, *Shen Zhou Ribao*'s principal driving force, Wang Pengnian, went to Beijing where he became a parliamentary representative of the Republican Party (Gonghe Dang). This effectively transformed *Shen Zhou Ribao* into a moderate newspaper, for the Republican Party supported Yuan Shikai and opposed the Guomindang, the re-organized form of the Tong Meng Hui.[9] The paper was increasingly drawn within Yuan's sphere of influence until, in September 1915, it was finally taken over by Sun Zhong, one of Yuan's close associates. Sun converted *Shen Zhou Ribao* into an organ for the promotion of Yuan's monarchical ambitions, but as soon as Sun's

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7. Yu Youren became Minister for Communication; Song Jiaoren was Minister for Agriculture and Forestry under the Tang Shaoyi cabinet; Chen Qimei became military governor of Shanghai, and; Shen Manyun became Director of Finance in Shanghai. See Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 691.

8. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan*, pp. 619-620; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao" [Shanghai's Daily Newspapers], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.1 (June 1934): 277-278.

9. On the Republican Party and the Guomindang of the period see Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840-1928*, trans, and ed. Jeremy Ingalls and Ssu-yu Teng (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc., 1956), pp. 275-279.

intentions became known to the staff of the paper they all resigned in protest. Although *Shen Zhou Ribao* therefore survived in name, in order to do so it went through a complete reversal of its radical, pro-republican sentiments. By 1916 it was essentially a new face in the Shanghai newspaper scene, its original character altered beyond recognition.[10]

Several new political newspapers grew out of the party organizations that were manoevring for position in the National Assembly. These publications were too numerous to discuss in detail here, but in general they represented the two main parliamentary parties, the Guomindang and the Republican Party. The fate of such newspapers was inevitably tied to the fortunes of the parties they served.

As the political force most clearly opposed to Yuan Shikai's presidency, the Guomindang and its various organs were the primary targets of Yuan's repression. In the space of little more than a year, between mid-1912 and the latter half of 1913, at least eight Shanghai newspapers were brought to life by the Guomindang and then, like *Min Li Bao*, emasculated by government bans upon their sale and distribution outside the Shanghai International Settlement.[11]

Newspapers sponsored by the Republican Party fared better because the Party initially lent support to Yuan Shikai as President and was also opposed to the Guomindang's attempts to restrict Yuan's control of the government.[12] Although not as prolific in their publication of newspapers as the Guomindang, at various times the Republican Party was able to propagate their views through some of Shanghai's most widely

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10. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 271-272; Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 699.

11. Apart from *Min Li Bao* these papers were *Tian Duo Bao*, *Da Lu Bao*, *Taiping Yang Bao*, *Zhonghua Min Bao*, *Minguo Xinwen*, *Guomin*, *Min Qiang Bao*, and *Minguo Xi Bao*. For some information on these see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 690-693; Hu Daijing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 278-279.

12. Li Chien-nung, *Political History of China*, pp. 277-279, 283, 291.

circulated newspapers. Apart from founding at least six of their own newspapers in Shanghai, the Republican Party held sway over several of the city's established newspapers. The principal intellectual force behind the new publications created by the Party was Zhang Binglin. His *Republican Daily* (*Da Gonghe Ribao*), established in April 1912, was one of the most influential of the new crop of Shanghai newspapers.[13]

But the Republican Party's connections with established newspapers proved to be of greater significance in the longer term. It has been seen that for a brief period the Party controlled *Shen Zhou Ribao*. A more lasting impression was made at *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, a paper which, under various titles, had an undistinguished reformist ancestry dating back to 1907. The paper did not settle upon the name "*Shi Shi Xin Bao*" until April 1911. The following month Wang Yinian (Wang Kangnian's younger brother) was employed to direct *Shi Shi Xin Bao* along a path in support of the constitutional movement. This clearly bought the paper into sympathy with the views of Liang Qichao with whom, even at this early stage, it kept in close contact. By 1912 *Shi Shi Xin Bao* had been drawn into the fold of Republican Party publications.[14] In order to strengthen their position *vis-a-vis* the Guomindang, in May 1913 the Republican Party merged with several smaller parties, including Liang Qichao's Democratic Party (Min

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13. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 699-700. Other newspapers started by the Republican Party in Shanghai were *Minsheng Ribao*, *Dong Da Lu Bao*, *Bu Ren*, *Ya Yan*, and *Zhonghua Zazhi*. When Zhang Binglin founded *Da Gonghe Ribao* he was still leading his Unification Party (Tongyi Dang); however, this group formed a main part of the Republican Party when it was established in May 1912. It is very difficult to faithfully record all the various factional splits and amalgamations that went on throughout this period without becoming lost in the detail. References to the Republican Party throughout 1912 are therefore meant to convey a sense of a generic political movement rather than precise details of its composition.

14. *Shi Shi Xin Bao*'s first antecedents was *Shi Shi Bao*, founded in December 1907, and *Yulun Ribao*, founded March 1908. In 1910 these two papers amalgamated to become *Yulun Shi Shi Bao*. On April 20, 1911 the name *Shi Shi Xin Bao* was adopted. Wang Yinian had worked with his brother at *Zhongwai Ribao* until it ceased operations in early 1911. *Shi Shi Xin Bao*'s new direction was announced in its May 15, 1911 edition. See Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 586-587, 699; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 272-273. It is not known exactly how *Shi Shi Xin Bao* became a Republican Party publication.

Zhu Dang), to become the Progress Party (Jinbu Dang). This in turn provided a boost to the resources available to *Shi Shi Xin Bao* as Liang Qichao assumed direct responsibility for charting the course of the paper. In January 1916 Liang himself referred to *Shi Shi Xin Bao* as "our party's only organ for the expression of political views."[15]

Control of *Shi Shi Xin Bao* in itself amounted to a considerable degree of potential influence in Shanghai press circles, but one powerful element of the forces which eventually constituted the Progress Party also made a significant impression on *Shen Bao*. A brief but apt description of what occurred would be that the political spirit of *Shi Bao* left its body to become incarnate in *Shen Bao*.[16] As shown in the previous chapter, before the 1911 Revolution *Shi Bao*'s "Xi Lou" served as a meeting place for supporters of the constitutional movement, Zhang Jian being the most important among them. But, despite sharing a similar political outlook with *Shi Bao*'s director, Di Chuqing, Zhang Jian was in no position to control the content of the paper. *Shen Bao* offered itself as a likely alternative target when its proprietor, Xi Zipei, let it be known that he was looking for a prospective buyer. The beleaguered Xi had failed to return *Shen Bao* to the halcyon days before changes in the political climate swept away the paper's market leadership. *Shi Bao*'s spiritual transmigration to *Shen Bao* came at a price of 120,000 yuan which Zhang Jian and two of his intimate friends, Zhao Fengchang and Ying Dehong, agreed to pay in three instalments. In a final, calculating abandonment of *Shi Bao*, Chen Jinghan, the paper's chief editor, and Shi Liangcai, a senior editor, were bought across to *Shen Bao*, making up a partnership contract of five. The contract was signed

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15. "Zhi Liangchai Wo Xiong Shu" [Letter to Brother Liangchai], in *Liang Qichao Nianpu Changbian* [A Draft Chronological Biography of Liang Qichao], ed. Ding Wenjiang and Zhao Fengtian (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1983), p. 753.

16. In this chapter I am primarily concerned with tracing patterns of ownership. The detailed political background as it relates to *Shen Bao* is presented in chapter 5.

with Xi Zipei on September 23, 1912. Shi Liangcai was chosen to be *Shen Bao*'s Director-General while Chen Jinghan became chief editor. Shi set to work on October 20.[17]

Although committed to constitutional reformism, the new owners of *Shen Bao*, were instrumental in persuading Cheng Dequan, the provincial governor of Jiangsu, to declare Jiangsu's independence from the Qing after the outbreak of the Wuchang uprising.[18] This helped tip the balance in favour of the Revolution. Zhang Jian also played a leading hand in organizing the Shanghai Peace Conference which reconciled the southern revolutionaries of the Tong Meng Hui to accepting Yuan Shikai as President of the Republic.[19] In particular, Zhang Jian, Zhao Fengchang and Cheng Dequan came to represent a powerful Jiangsu element, combining commercial and political influence in the province, of the Republican and, later, the Progress Parties.[20] The political implications of Zhang Jian's ownership of *Shen Bao* are explored in chapter five. Here it need only be said that the day-to-day control of the paper was firmly in the hands of Shi Liangcai. Although Zhang Jian was a dominant figure in the Jiangsu region, his influence was primarily based upon his

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17. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao" [Historical Materials on the Initial Stage of Shi Liangcai's Management of Shen Bao], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 5 (Beijing: Xinhua Chuban She, 1980), p. 154; Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi" [A Sixty Six Year History of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai* [A New Era in the History of Journalism] (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1946), p. 92.

18. Huang Yanpei, "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng de Shengping" [The Life of Mr. Shi Liangcai], "Zhuidiao Shi Zong Jingli" [In Memory of Director General Shi], *Shen Bao Yuekan* 3.12 (Dec. 1934): 10; Huang Yanpei, "Wo Qinshen Jingli de Xinhai Geming Shishi" [Facts concerning My Personal Experience of the 1911 Revolution], in *Xinhai Geming Huiyilu* [Memoirs of the 1911 Revolution], ed. Zhongguo Renmin Zhengzhi Xieshnag Huiyi Quanguo Weiyuanhui Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiu Weiyuanhui [Committee for Research into Historical Sources, National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference], (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961-), 1: 63-64. For more details on the people associated with Zhang Jian in this period see chapter 5.

19. Liu Housheng, *Zhang Jian Zhuanji* [Biography of Zhang Jian], reprint. ed. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1985), pp. 194-196.

20. Samuel C. Chu, *Refomer in Modern China: Chang Chien, 1853-1926* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 79-82.

development of commerce and industry. Zhang's approach to politics was guided by these interests rather than direct participation in party struggles and the promotion of party platforms.[21] He tended to adopt a similar attitude to *Shen Bao* and the paper never functioned as a direct mouthpiece for the Republican or Progress Parties. Liang Qichao's reference to *Shi Shi Xin Bao* as the Progress Party's "only organ" also suggests that *Shen Bao* was not a party newspaper.

Zhang Jian's relative lack of interest in using *Shen Bao* for political purposes was underlined by the serious way in which Shi Liangcai was able to gain full control of the paper. Although Xi Zipei was kept on at *Shen Bao* in a nominal managerial capacity, he was largely ignored by Shi Liangcai and relations between the two were said to be less than cordial. In the winter of 1915 Xi Zipei employed a lawyer to launch litigation in the Mixed Court against the new owners of *Shen Bao*. Xi claimed he had not received full payment for the paper, that his salary was in arrears and that the contract of sale did not give the new owners the right to use the trademark "*Shen Bao*." The Court decided in Xi's favour and ordered the owners of *Shen Bao* to pay 245,000 taels if they wished to retain control of the paper. At this point Zhang Jian, Zhao Fengchang and Ying Dehong decided to withdraw from *Shen Bao*, but Shi Liangcai was determined to make the paper his own. He borrowed money from a friend, the local cotton merchant, Xu Jingren, and from that moment Shi Liangcai became the sole proprietor of *Shen Bao*.[22]

The two other major Shanghai dailies, *Shi Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*, retained the same ownership and management structures throughout the

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21. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China*, pp. 82-87.

22. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shi Liao," pp. 154-155; Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 92; Feng Yaxiong, "Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai" [Shen Bao and Shi Liangcai], *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 17 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961), pp. 159-160. The political background to this episode is presented in chapter 5.

transition to the Republic. Of course, *Shi Bao* suffered a loss of staff and political spirit as a result of the resurrection of *Shen Bao*, but Di Chuqing retained control of his newspaper. As the only major foreign-owned Shanghai daily, *Xin Wen Bao* was something of an anachronism in Chinese newspaper journalism. Its owner, John Ferguson, was deeply conservative. He was sympathetic to the Qing government and took a dim view of the rise of Chinese nationalism that grew out of the 1911 Revolution. In Beijing Ferguson acted as an adviser to Yuan Shikai and liased between Yuan and the foreign diplomatic community.[23] Fearing for the future of foreign enteprises in China, Ferguson in fact wanted to sell *Xin Wen Bao* in 1912. He approached *Shen Zhou Ribao*'s Wang Pengnian to see if he was interested, but Wang could not afford to pay the asking price of fifty thousand yuan.[24] *Xin Wen Bao* therefore continued operating under the management of Ferguson's comprador, Wang Hanxi.

By mid-1915, when the dust thrown up by the shuffling, re-organizing and political repression of the first years of the Republic had settled, Shanghai was left with only five daily newspapers: *Shen Bao, Xin Wen Bao, Shi Shi Xin Bao, Shi Bao,* and *Shen Zhou Ribao*. All five were politically moderate and, through connections of varying degrees of intimacy with Progress Party forces, generally supportive of Yuan Shikai's presidency. These newspapers ironically had Yuan's political repression to thank for clearing the field of competitors in the Shanghai market. Yuan had systematically forced all the publications of his political opponents, particularly those of the Guomindang, to close down.[25] This

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23. For some information of Ferguson's career see Zhang Rui, "Wo suo Zhidao de Fukaisen" [The Ferguson I Knew], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), pp. 157-167.

24. Yan Duhe, "Xinhai Geming Shiqi Shanghai Xinwenjie Dongtai" [The Attitude of the Shanghai Press During the 1911 Revolution], in *Xinhai Geming Huiyilu*, 4: 85.

25. Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1927; Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1982), pp. 240-241;

certainly worked to the advantage of *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*. They settled into a keenly contested competition for market leadership which, in terms of circulation, left all other newspapers trailing in their wake.[26] Yuan Shikai therefore ushered in the triumph of commercial newspapers over the political press.

Not content with the emasculation of his opponents' newspapers, however, Yuan Shikai wanted the remaining Shanghai newspapers to promote his plans for the restoration of the monarchy. In August 1915 Yuan's desire to have himself proclaimed Emperor was publically made clear with the formation of the Chou An Hui (Peace Planning Society) which was charged with preparing the way for a monarchical system. By September, as shown above, Yuan's monarchical faction had succeeded in taking over *Shen Zhou Ribao*. But Yuan failed to make any inroads into the other dailies, and *Shi Shi Xin Bao* even adopted a strategy of counter-attack. In economic terms this proved to be a costly decision for *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. On October 23 Yuan Shikai placed a ban on the sale and postal distribution of the paper outside the International Settlement. The ban was only lifted after Yuan's death in June 1916.[27] As Liang Qichao himself admitted, this placed an enormous financial strain on *Shi Shi Xin Bao* and the Progress Party. He revealed that the Party had to pay an additional monthly subsidy of two thousand yuan to keep the paper going. Most of the funds raised by

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Hu Daojing, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan" [The Historical Development of the Press in Shanghai], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.3 (Dec. 1934): 989-990.

26. In 1916 *Shen Bao*'s circulation was 14,000. See the Appendix. *Xin Wen Bao* claimed a circulation of 33,045 in the same year and also claimed a circulation in advance of *Shen Bao*'s throughout the warlord period. Some scepticism is warranted with all these figures, particularly with *Xin Wen Bao* which distributed many copies gratis to public offices and institutions. See Hu Daojing, "*Xin Wen Bao* Sishi Nian Shi" [A Forty Year History of Xin Wen Bao], in *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi Cankao Ziliao* [Reference Materials on the History of the Modern Press in China], ed. Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwen Xi [Department of Journalism, China People's University], 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwen Xi, 1982), 1: 194.

27. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," p. 273.

the Party around the country and overseas were soaked up by *Shi Shi Xin Bao*.[28] Soon after Yuan's death, Liang re-organized the Progress Party into the Research Clique (Yanjiu Xi). It was a tribute to his fund-raising capabilities that *Shi Shi Xin Bao* survived the Yuan Shikai era to continue as an organ of the Research Clique. Even though Liang managed to save the paper the restriction of its sale and distribution further strengthened the market leadership of *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*.

Party political newspapers were never completely suppressed, but from this moment on they were never able to emulate the dominance once enjoyed by *Min Li Bao*. For instance, two important party newspapers were founded for the express purpose of opposing Yuan Shikai's monarchical government. *Zhonghua Xin Bao*, established in October 1915, was the creation of the Political Study Group (Zheng Xue Hui) under the leadership of Gu Zhongxiu and Yang Yongtai. In January the following year Shao Lizi and Ye Chucang, members of Sun Yat-sen's Chinese Revolutionary Party (Zhonghua Geming Dang), started *Minguo Ribao*.[29] In effect these two groups represented the right and left wings respectively of the Guomindang.[30] Their newspapers were both well printed and edited. In the early 1920s even Deng Zhongxia, a leader of the Shanghai Communist Party, described *Zhonghua Xin Bao*'s coverage of Shanghai

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28. "Zhi Liangqi Wo Xiong Shu," *Liang Qichao Nianpu Changbian Chugao*, pp. 753-754.

29. On *Zhonghua Xin Bao* see Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo de Xinwen Jizhe yu Xinwenzhi* [Chinese Journalists and Newspapers] (Shanghai: Guanghau Shuju, 1930), Pt. 2, pp. 28-30; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 279-281; Wang Xinming, *Xinwen Quanli Sishi Nian* [Forty Years in Press Circles] (Hong Kong: Haitian Chubanshe, 1957), pp. 128-132, 136-141; Lai Guanglin, *Qishi Nian Zhongguo Baoye Shi* [A Seventy Year History of the Press in China] (Taibei: Zhongyang Ribao She, 1981), pp. 67-68.

30. On the Political Study Group and the Revolutionary Party see Li Chien-nung, *Political History of China*, pp. 385-387; Andrew Nathan, *Peking Politics, 1918-1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism* (Berkeley: Univesity of California Press, 1976), pp. 253-257.

news as the best in the city.[31] Yet, while *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* continued to widen their distribution networks throughout the 1920s, *Zhonghua Xin Bao*'s circulation remained around two thousand while that of *Minguo Ribao* hovered around ten thousand.[32] The Guomindang valued *Minguo Ribao* highly enough to keep funding it as a party organ into the 1930s, but *Zhonghua Xin Bao* was closed down due to financial difficulties in 1926.[33]

Because they were able to publish right through the 1920s, *Shi Shi Xin Bao* and *Minguo Ribao* must be considered exceptions to the rule as far as party newspapers were concerned. Party newspapers were a sure way of losing money. The survival of such newspapers depended upon the willingness of party leaders to sink valuable funds, as Liang Qichao's testimony clearly demonstrated, into their operation. Commercial newspapers made money by being able to offset the costs of production through advertising, and by expanding their distribution networks. Since their rationale was to generate profit, they were not constrained by the need to promote a party political line. These aspects of the newspaper business will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, but the triumph of commercial newspapers significantly affected the pattern of newspaper ownership in Shanghai.

Two major trends began to emerge in the early 1920s. First, the search for a successful formula for selling newspapers gave rise to a new breed of newspaper proprietor. They opted for more accessible, populist

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31. Deng Zhongxia, "Shanghai de Baozhi" [Shanghai Newspapers], in *Deng Zhongxia Wenji* [Collected Works of Deng Zhongxia] (Beijing: Remnin Chubanshe, 1983), p. 76.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 76. Deng wrote that "unfortunately" *Minguo Ribao*'s distribution was poor.

33. *Zhonghua Xin Bao* sold its equipment to another short-lived Shanghai newspaper, *Guomin Ribao*, which was run by left-wing elements of the Guomindang. See Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo de Xinwen Jizhe yu Xinwenzhi* [Chinese Jouranlists and Newspapers] (Shanghai: Guanghua Shuju, 1930), Pt. 2, p. 40.

styles of journalism and were inspired by the entertainment journals that first appeared in Shanghai in the late 1890s. These early journals, which specialized in light fiction, games and puzzles, and gossipy reports on Shanghai's brothels and *demi-monde*, were published by members of the new urban literati, such as Li Boyuan, who found that they could earn a living through their creative writing skills. It was this commercial adaptation of creative writing that marked the beginning of the "*xiao bao*" (or, in English, "mosquito press"), the Chinese tabloid newspaper.[34] Although the small economic and technical scale of early tabloids minimized their impact, their style of journalism was picked up in the early 1920s by commercially-minded newspaper proprietors. Such proprietors were also encouraged by the success of the tabloid journalism of Pulitzer and Hearst in the United States. Commercial development of tabloid journalism was first tried by *Shen Zhou Ribao*. The paper's life as an organ for monarchical government ended with the death of Yuan Shikai. By 1918 it had passed into the control of a certain Yu Xun who was anxious to regain *Shen Zhou Ribao*'s former popularity. He employed Wu Ruishu to edit *Jing Bao* (*The Crystal*), a thrice-weekly tabloid which first appeared in 1919 as a supplement to *Shen Zhou Ribao*. Yu Xun originally hoped that *Jing Bao* could subsidize the operation of *Shen Zhou Ribao*. But the tabloid eventually made rapid progress as a newspaper in its own right while *Shen Zhou Ribao* went into decline until it was closed down in 1927.[35] *Jing Bao*'s success spawned many imitators throughout the 1920s.[36]

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34. For details on the nature of this form of tabloid journalism and its impact on the Shanghai newspaper scene see chapter 3. Li Boyuan was one of the most successful popular writers of the day, and his well known novel, *Panorama of Officialdom* (*Guan Chang Xianxing Ji*) was first serialized in *You Xi Bao* (*Recreation*), one of his many tabloid journals, which first appeared in 1897. See E. Perry Link, Jr., *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Literature in Early Twentieth Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 141-144.

35. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 271-272.

36. See chapter 3 for a discussion of some of these tabloids.

Tabloids were not as expensive to run as the big dailies, usually appearing every three days, and they provided an important foil to the likes of *Shen Bao* without having to challenge the market dominance of the big dailies in order to succeed. *Shen Bao*'s Shi Liangcai was so impressed with *Jing Bao* that he made an unsuccessful bid to purchase the tabloid.[37]

The tabloid approach to journalism was so infectious that in October 1921 it spread to one of Shanghai's major dailies, *Shi Bao*. Once pre-eminent among Shanghai newspapers, *Shi Bao* had become something of an empty shell after the constitutionalists led by Zhang Jian transferred their allegiance to *Shen Bao*. Di Chuqing, the guiding force at *Shi Bao*, retreated more and more into his Buddhism as his health deteriorated. He sold his once great newspaper to Huang Bohui. Huang was above all a businessman with a businessman's sense of how to run a newspaper. Although he retained the broadsheet size of *Shi Bao*, in almost every other respect the paper betrayed the influence of the so-called "yellow journalism" perfected by Pulitzer in the United States. Huang had devoted a great deal of time and energy to discovering the latest developments in print technology, travelling to Japan, Germany, Britain and the United States. As a result, *Shi Bao* became a splash of colour and its journalism turned a distinctly yellow hue with an emphasis on crime, social news and scandal. Considered by some to be an eccentric, Huang kept careful watch over his modern printing presses and often repaired mechanical faults himself.[38] Huang's methods were nonetheless very effective. By the 1930s

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37. Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu* [Memoirs of the Bracelet Shadow Chamber] (Hong Kong: Da Hua Chubanshe, 1971), p. 451. Bao does not say exactly when Shi Liangcai attempted to purchase *Jing Bao*, but claims Yu Xun wanted forty thousand yuan for the paper while Shi offered only ten thousand.

38. On the sale and conversion of *Shi Bao* see Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," p. 269; Bac Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, pp. 83-92, 408-419; Xu Zhucheng, *Bao Hai Jiu Wen* [Old Tales of the Newspaper World] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 21-25. On Huang Bohui see "Zhongguo Xinwenjie Mingren" [Famous People of the Press in China], in *Zhongguo Xinwen Nianjian, 1984* [Yearbook of Journalism in China, 1984] (Beijing: Renmin Ribao Chubanhe, 1984), p. 671; Jin Xiongbai, *Xinwen Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian* [Fifty Years as a Journalist], 2 vols.

Shi Bao could boast of a circulation surpassed only by that of *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*.[39]

The sale of *Shi Bao* to Huang Bohui highlighted the second major trend in newspaper ownership: the tendency for daily newspapers to become a business activity restricted to the wealthy. The simplicity of this statement belies the complex variety of factors that lay behing the ownership and financing of a daily newspaper, but changes in the newspaper world increasingly came to be tied to changes affecting a few businessmen-proprietors. By the early 1920s, even though *Xin Wen Bao* remained in the hands of the American, John Ferguson, and all the major Shanghai dailies were still registered as foreign enterprises, the rise of wealthy Chinese proprietors was emerging as the key factor in the newspaper business.

Both Shi Liangcai and Huang Bohui, then the two most successful Chinese proprietors, were more concerned with consolidating the profitability of their newspapers than with pushing a particular editorial line. But the political changes of the day, particularly the rise of nationalism, did bring forth one Shanghai daily which attempted to act as an aggressive political voice for Chinese business. *Shang Bao* (*Shanghai Journal of Commerce*) was founded in January 1921 by Tang Jiezhi, whom Deng Zhongxia described as "an intelligent, politician-like

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(vol. 1; Hong Kong: Wuxing Jishu Baoshe, 1975; vol. 2; Taibei: Yuesheng Wenhua Shiye Youxian Gongsi, 1988), 1: 87-93, the most intimate portrait. Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 116 has mistakenly claimed that *Shi Bao* became an organ of Liang Qichao's Research Clique (Yanjiu Xi). In fact, *Shi Bao* became less and less inclined to comment on politics and by 1932 had even abandoned its editorial column.

39. Available statisitcs are not a precise guide, but in the early 1930s *Shi Bao*'s circulation was variously reported to be between 35,000 and 150,000. See Shanghai Shi Difang Xiehui [Shanghai Civic Association], ed., *Shanghai Shi Tongji* [Statistics on Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai Civic Association, 1933), p. 10; Shen Bao Guan, ed., *Shen Bao Nianjian, 1933* [Shen Bao Yearbook, 1933], Section "R," p. 3.

businessman."[40] Tang wanted to win a part of *Xin Wen Bao*'s market by providing the business world with comment and opinion rather than only publishing bland commercial and finance news. The tone and character of the paper was largely determined by Chen Bulei and Pan Gongzhan who both went on to join the Guomindang early in 1927. Through its outspoken support of the anti-imperialist May Thirtieth demonstrations and the national revolution against warlordism, *Shang Bao* represented a unique combination of commerce and political nationalism. In the end, *Shang Bao* failed to find its intended target as its nationalism attracted a readership composed mostly of students and intellectuals. Like many dailies, however, it was plagued by poor finances. In 1923 Tang declared bankruptcy and had to sell *Shang Bao* to a business associate, Li Zhengwu, although there was no change in the paper's staff. By mid-1926 Li's resources were also exhausted. His sale of the paper marked the end of its radical nationalism. The new owner, Fang Jiaobo, funded *Shang Bao* through connections with Sun Chuanfang, the local warlord then in control of Shanghai. Chen Bulei and Pan Gongzhan found it impossible to continue under these circumstances and soon left the paper. Their departure effectively deprived *Shang Bao* of its major selling point, and in December 1926 it ceased operations.[41]

Although the details of *Shang Bao*'s financial difficulties are not known, its rise and fall suggests that smaller, middle-ranking Shanghai businessmen, some of whom apparently shared radical political views, lacked the resources to fund newspapers in competition with the big commercial dailies. It was during the 1920s that the established dailies

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40. Deng Zhongxia, "Shanghai de Baozhi," p. 75.

41. The best account of *Shang Bao* is Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo de Xinwen Jizhe yu Xinwenzhi*, Pt. 2, pp. 35-40. See also Chen Bulei, *Chen Bulei Huiyilu* [Memoirs of Chen Bulei] (Shanghai: Nian Shiji Chubanshe, 1949), Pt. 2, pp. 1-9. Unsuccessful attempts were made to revive the paper in 1928 before its printing equipment was sold to the Nationalist government's *Zhongyang Ribao* (*Central News Daily*) in early 1928.

experienced their most rapid expansion and, as will be seen in the next section, much of the financial backing for this expansion was provided by bank loans. New ventures such as *Shang Bao* faced an uphill battle to tap similar resources because their owners lacked collateral and were, compared to the owners of the big dailies, politically adventerous and unorthodox. To a bank, *Shang Bao* represented a risky investment.

For the big dailies problems of survival had by the late 1920s been superseded by a preoccupation with expansion. Commercial success brought with it considerations of horizontal integration, a pattern of development pioneered by Lord Northcliffe at the turn of the century.[42] The first, tentative signs of this trend toward the development of newspaper oligopolies began to appear in Shanghai in 1927. It involved the oldest surviving party newspaper, *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. Even after the death of Yuan Shikai and the lifting of postal restrictions on its circulation, *Shi Shi Xin Bao* failed to provide the Research Clique with a return on their money. The Research Clique was known to be opposed to the policies of the Guomindang, and as the Northern Expedition moved northward toward Shanghai *Shi Shi Xin Bao*'s managing director, Lin Yanfu, thought it wise to re-organize the paper along more commercial lines. In November 1926 *Shi Shi Xin Bao* was sold to a group of local bankers (identities unkown). They, too, failed to make *Shi Shi Xin Bao* pay its way, reportedly losing four thousand yuan per month on the paper.[43] In a desperate state, they were willing to sell out at any price they were offered. In August 1927 *Shi Shi Xin Bao* was acquired by Zhang Zhuping, then still manager of Shi Liangcai's *Shen* [illegible] Zhang recruited Wang

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42. See Lee, "The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1855-1914," in *Newspaper History*, pp. 117-130.

43. Hollington K. Tong, "Developing a Modern Chinese Newspaper in Shanghai," *China Weekly Review* 46.1 (January 7, 1928): 147.

Yingbin, his assistant manager at *Shen Bao*, to be his principal partner in his new venture.[44]

Under this curious arrangement, Zhang retained his management position at *Shen Bao* while at the same time taking charge of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. Although evidence suggests that Shi Liangcai did not invest in *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, it is unlikely that Zhang could have taken such action without Shi's consent. It is possible that Shi agreed to take a share in the profits from *Shi Shi Xin Bao* in exchange for giving Zhang access to *Shen Bao*'s facilities. *Shen Bao*'s connection with *Shi Shi Xin Bao* began in 1925 when the two papers combined their telegraphic resources to form a news agency, the Shenshi Tongxun She, which was located on the third floor of the *Shen Bao* building.[45] The mysterious nature of Zhang Zhuping's involvement with both newspapers led many contemporary commentators to conclude that Shi Liangcai had in fact purchased some shares in *Shi Shi Xin Bao* and that Zhang was merely acting on Shi's behalf.[46] But relations between the two main pillars of *Shen Bao*'s success were said to be prickly, particularly after Zhang began to show most more interest in *Shi Shi Xin Bao* than in *Shen Bao*.[47] Shi Liangcai regarded Zhang's behaviour as a sign of disloyalty.[48] This would suggest that Shi had little direct control

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44. *Ibid.*, p. 147; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," p. 275.

45. Huang Zhuoming and Yu Zhenji, "Guanyu Shi Shi Xin Bao Suojian Suowen" [Things Seen and Heard about Shi Shi Xin Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 19 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chuban She, 1983), p. 185; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi* [A History of Journalism in China] (Taibei: Sanmin Shuju, 1966), p. 575; Yun Yiqun, "Da Shen Bao Shi Bianxiezu" [A Response to the Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 5 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe,1980), p. 62.

46. See, for example, Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," p. 1017; Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun* [On the Reform of Shanghai Newspapers] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Xinwen Xi, 1931), p. 21.

47. Feng Yaxiong, "Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai," p. 160-161.

48. Interview with Ma Yinliang, Residence of Sun Enlin, Shanghai, April 10, 1985. Ma, who replaced Zhang Zhuping late in 1929, claims that during the period when Zhang held concurrent responsibilities at *Shen Bao* and *Shi Shi Xin Bao* he took advantage of access to resources (advertising) of the former to build up the latter.

over Zhang Zhuping's adventure with *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. In the winter of 1929 Zhang made the final break with Shi Liangcai and resigned from *Shen Bao*. By mid-1930 his own limited liability company possessed full ownership of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*.[49]

Zhang's takeover of *Shi Shi Xin Bao* marked the beginning of a major realignment in the ownership of Shanghai newspapers. By 1929 Shi Liangcai had made *Shen Bao* into China's most successful newspaper. The scale of its operations was suggested by the fact that it employed over 450 people and its monthly expenditure amounted to about 160,000 yuan.[50] Although he might have felt betrayed by Zhang's move into *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, Shi Liangcai also wished to expand his thriving business and harboured ambitious plans of his own. In January 1929 Shi launched a takeover bid for his greatest commercial rival, *Xin Wen Bao*. In support of his bid Shi had the financial backing of two leading Shanghai bankers, Wu Yunzhai and Qian Yongming. Shi deputized Hollington Tong (Dong Xianguang), editor of Tianjin's *Yong Bao* and one of the first Chinese educated in American schools of journalism, to negotiate with John Ferguson for the purchase of *Xin Wen Bao*.[51] It will be remembered that Ferguson wanted to sell his newspaper as early as 1912 but could not find a suitable buyer. He was therefore quite willing to sell *Xin Wen Bao* when approached by Hollongton Tong in Beijing, and they drew up a contract to settle the deal. But this was only the beginning of a protracted struggle for control of the paper.

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49. There is no more precise date for his resignation. See Shen Bao Shi Bianxiezu [Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], "Shen Bao Qishiqi Nian Dashi Ji, 1872-1949" [A Chronology of Shen Bao's Seventy-seven Years, 1872-1949], Draft (Beijing, 1979), p. 7. On the takeover of *Shi Shi Xin Bao* see Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 275, 295-301; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, p. 369.

50. *Shen Bao Gaikuang*, n.p.; Sun Enlin, Notes Written for the Author, April 10, 1985, p. 1.

51. For more on Hollington Tong see chapter 3, pp. 156.

An extraordinary protest movement was mounted by the staff of *Xin Wen Bao*. They argued that the sale would effectively give Shi Liangcai a monopoly over the Shanghai daily press. Shi countered with an appeal to Chinese patriotism. He argued that if he bought *Xin Wen Bao* it would close the final chapter on foreign ownership of Shanghai's daily press. After the establishment of the Nationalist government in 1927, all the Chinese-owned dailies in Shanghai that were registered as foreign enterprises made the conversion to Chinese registration.[52] *Xin Wen Bao* remained the only newspaper among the big dailies owned by a foreigner and registered as a foreign enterprise. But Shi's appeals failed to evoke the desired response. The protest movement soon mushroomed until it included among its supporters several local merchant organizations, the local branch of the Guomindang and the staff associations of other regional newspapers. The political implications of this affair are examined in chapter six. Here it need only be said that, after more than a month of negotiating, Shi Liangcai had no choice but to surrender part of his shareholdings in *Xin Wen Bao*, reducing his stake to fifty percent ownership, and to accept an agreement which left the editorial management of the paper unchanged.[53]

The upshot was that Shi Liangcai retained financial control over China's two biggest newspapers but was prevented from exercising complete editorial control over *Xin Wen Bao*. On the one hand, Shi strengthened his press mogul status in Shanghai and cemented an

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52. Because the precise details behind this change of registration remain unclear, it is difficult to determine exactly how willingly the Chinese-owned dailies made the change. For a discussion of this issue see chapter 6 of this study.

53. For a detailed analysis of Shi Liangcai's takeover of *Xin Wen Bao* see chapter 6. The price paid for the paper was said to be 800,000 French francs. See Yan Duhe, "Fukaisen yu Xin Wen Bao" [Ferguson and Xin Wen Bao], in *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi Cankao Ziliao*, ed. Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwen Xi, p. 200. In the mid-to-late 1920s the Wang family, managers of the paper, declined to take up Ferguson's offers to sell for 300,000 and 400,000 yuan because they lacked the capital. See Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi" [My Relationship with Xin Wen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 12 (Beijing: Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), p. 140. At the time *Xin Wen Bao's* capital assests were said to be 1.2 million yuan. See Hu Daojing, "Xin Wen Bao Sishi Nian Shi," p. 189.

unassailable position in the newspaper market. On the other, as will be more clearly demonstrated in chapter six, the local Guomindang and various merchant groups rallied behind the more conservative forces at *Xin Wen Bao* to check the expansion of Shi's influence. In effect, Shi received a political message telling him that his power over the press could go no further. This example of an oligopoly in the Shanghai press was therefore reined in almost as soon as it began to emerge.

The significance of Shi Liangcai's takeover lay in the concentrated penetration of the newspaper audience that control over China's two biggest dailies gave him. In contrast, Zhang Zhuping's experiences after he left *Shen Bao* represented a case of diversification into several press establishments of a smaller scale. The sum total of the parts, however, added up to an extensive press network. The full extent of Zhang's ambitions became clear only after he had won control of *Shi Shi Xin Bao* which he used as a base from which to develop other interests. In February 1931 Zhang acquired the English-language daily *China Press* (*Da Lu Bao*). In January 1932 he launched an evening newspaper, *Da Wan Bao*, and in April the same year he gained full control of the Shenshi News Agency, moving its headquarters from the *Shen Bao* office to *Da Lu Bao*. As a final touch, Zhang applied some cosmetic corporate unity to his multi-media outlets when he set up a centralized "Joint Office of the Four Agencies" (Si She Lianhe Banshichu). Only five years after he first showed interest in *Shi Shi Xin Bao* Zhang had assembled one of the most formidable press conglomerates in China and qualified himself for the title of Shanghai's second press mogul.[54]

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54. On Zhang Zhuping's expansion into these four press establishments see Huang Zhuoming and Yu Zhenji, "Guanyu Shi Shi Xin Bao," pp. 184-186; Zeng Xubai, *Zeng Xubai Zizhuan* [The Autobigraphy of Zeng Xubai] (Taibei: Lianjing Chuban Shiye Gongsi, 1988), pp. 107-120 (Zeng was the chief editor of *Da Wan Bao*); "The Chinese Control of the China Press," *China Weekly Review* 55.13 (Feb. 28, 1931): 441-442.

Although Zhang was clearly the dominant force behind the "Four Agencies," the way in which he financed his little empire made it vulnerable to outside interference. Zhang himself held only one third of the total shares of the "Four Agencies." Among the other investors were: Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun), a former Foreign Affairs Minister in the warlord period and diplomatic representative of the Nationalist government; Zhang Xiaoruo, son of Zhang Jian and director of the Dada Shipping Company, and; Chen Linsheng, a Shanghai merchant.[55] More importantly, one of Zhang Zhuping's major creditors was the Green Gang boss, Du Yuesheng, who had close connections with Jiang Jieshi. This proved to be Zhang's Achilles' Heel. As long as Zhang's various press establishments did not oppose the Nationalist government there was little danger to their operation. But from late 1933 to early 1934 *Shi Shi Xin Bao* in particular adopted an editorial line in support of the rebel government in Fujian, led by Li Jishen and backed by the Nineteenth Route Army. The political background to Zhang's role in these affairs is explored in chapter eight; however, support of the Fujian rebels was enough to bring down a government imposed postal ban on all of Zhang's newspapers. Falling deeper into debt to Du Yuesheng, in April 1935 Zhang was eventually pressured into selling the "Four Agencies" to Finance Minister H. H. Kung (Kong Xiangxi).[56]

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55. Wang Zhongwei, "You Jingzheng you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao" [The Competition and Co-operation between Xin Wen Bao and Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 15 (Beijing: Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), p. 88. Zhang Zhuping also controlled Tianjin's *Yong Bao* and he appears to have relied on this northern connection in funding and organizing his Shanghai press agencies. Apart from Wellington Koo, who was said to have invested 100,000 yuan in the *China Press*, there was also Hollington Tong (Dong Xianguang), once editor of *Yong Bao*, who became editor of the *China Press*. See Douglas Jenkins, Consul General, Shanghai, to Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister, Peiping, "The CHINA PRESS purchased by Chinese and Others," February 24, 1931, (893.911/263), *Confidential United States State Department Central Files: China, Internal Affairs, 1930-1939* (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1984). See chapter 8 for more details.

56. Huang Zhuoming and Yu Zhenji, "Guanyu Shi Shi Xin Bao," pp. 188-190; Edwin S. Cunningham, Consul General, Shanghai, "THE CHINA PRESS: Sale of: T. B. Chang, Principal Owner," to the Secretary of State, June 10, 1935 (893.911/310), *U.S. State Department, Central Files: China, Internal Affairs.*

Zhang Zhuping's rapid rise to the status of press mogul showed him to be something of an upstart in the newspaper world. There were portents of doom in the speed with which he put together his "Four Agencies." Indeed, Zhang's even more dramatic fall highlighted the weak financial base upon which he had built his press empire. He, like may other failed proprietors, became an example of the dangers of financial vulnerability. Perhaps his only consolation was that he survived the whole ordeal.

In contrast, Shi Liangcai's impregnable financial base, notwithstanding the limits placed upon his control over *Xin Wen Bao*, protected him from the kinds of persuasion that was the undoing of Zhang Zhuping. After Shi Liangcai, through *Shen Bao*, expressed criticism of government policy toward Japan throughout 1932,[57] the Nationalists eventually decided that only action as drastic as assassination would open up cracks in Shi's empire, and so it proved to be. Following Shi's death in November 1934, *Shen Bao* was run by a conservative board of directors. Several of these directors had taken advantage of the dispute surrounding the takeover of *Xin Wen Bao* to gain a portion of the shares that Shi had been forced to surrender. These shares gave them entrée to Shi Liangcai's empire, but they were not in a position to exploit their position until after Shi's death.[58]

Shi Liangcai and Zhang Zhuping served as testimony to the expansionary energy of commercial newspaper enterprises. They demonstrated that the organization of newspapers around commercial imperatives brought with it the potential for far greater political influence than party newspapers. The employment of that potential had

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57. See chapter 7 for details.

58. The new board of directors included Shi Yonggeng (Shi Liangcai's son), Chen Jinghan, Zhang Yunhe, Ma Yinliang, Wang Xiaolai, Qian Yongming, Du Yuesheng, Zhang Xiaolin, Huang Yanpei and Hu Bijiang. See Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 101.

more to do with the character and will of the proprietor in a particular historical setting than the requirements of a party cause. Ulitmately, this was the significance of their achievement. To any government, let alone the authoritarian Nationalist government, a commercially successful proprietor represented a potential rougue elephant, a person difficult to influence or control.

Shi Liangcai certainly came closest of any newspaper proprietor in China to realizing this level of influence. In this light he made an interesting comparison with Lord Northcliffe, the model of a successful newspaper proprietor. Northcliffe, curiously enough, included a visit to *Shen Bao* as part of his tour of China in 1921.[59] There were broad similarities between the two proprietors in their approach to running newspapers. Like Northcliffe, Shi Liangcai wanted to run his newspaper at a profit instead of relying on political subsidies. To ensure success, both men effectively became their own chief editors. They made the important decisions about what went into their newspapers. As a result, in the Chinese context, (as will be seen in chapters four and five), journalists were kept in check and had little influence within the wider structures of a newspaper. With commercial success came political influence, although both Northcliffe and Shi Liangcai actively asserted that influence only in times of war.[60]

But at the point when the power of the Shanghai press moguls reached its apogee, the limitations to that power were also made perfectly clear. First, Shi Liangcai was prevented from taking complete control of *Xin Wen Bao* on the grounds that it would give him a monopoly over

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59. Xie Jiezi, "Shijie Baojie Mingren lai Hua zhe zhi Yanlun Congji ji Yu zhi Ganxiang" [My Impressions of the Speeches of World Famous Journalists in China], "Wushi Nian lai zhi Xinwen Shiye" [The Press over the Past Fifty Years], in *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian* [The Past Fifty Years], ed. Huang Yanpei (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1922), pp. 46-49.

60. On Northcliffe see the vivid description in A. J. P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972; Penguin, 1974), p. 186.

Shanghai's daily newspapers. At the top end of the market there was some credence in this claim. Only a few proprietors accumulated sufficient wealth to run a successful daily newspaper. These proprietors increasingly tended to come from the ranks of big business or were backed by bankers and commercial interests. One contemporary critic of this kind of development complained that *Shen Bao*, *Xin Wen Bao* and *Shi Shi Xin Bao* were all in the hands of Chinese bankers. It was argued that[61]

> although most readers know very well that this [development] is wrong, there are no other newspapers that can represent them, so they can only give in to the power of monopolies and endure reading newspapers they do not wish to read.

However, the trend toward a concentration of ownership exhibited by Shi Liangcai and Zhang Zhuping made only a minimal impact on the wider newspaper market. Between the two of them, Shi and Zhang controlled five Shanghai newspapers. In 1931 there were at least eighteen newspapers (eleven dailies, seven thrice weekly publications) in Shanghai, and by 1936 the number of dailies had increased to fifty-seven. In the same year 912 dailies were recorded throughout China.[62] This was a long way from the concentration of ownership found in the more industrialized nations. In 1910 in Britain, for example, the publications of three proprietors, Northcliffe, Pearson and Cadbury, accounted for one third of all dailies and eighty percent of evening newspapers.[63] From this perspective, the power of a proprietor like Shi Liangcai was limited in part because commercial expansion did not lead to a sufficiently high level of concentrated ownership.

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61. Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun*, p. 41.

62. Figures for 1931 from *Shanghai Shi Tongji*, p. 10; for 1936 from Xu Wancheng, *Quanguo Baoguan Kanshe Diaocha Lu* [A National Survey of Newspaper and Periodical Establishments] (Shanghai: Longwen Shudian, 1936), p. 1.

63. Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper: An International History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 163.

Secondly, and more importantly, in the face of the most extreme forms of government pressure neither Shi Liangcai nor Zhang Zhuping were able to exercise their political influence for more than a few years. Of course, if they had maintained their silence and not adopted a critical attitude to the government they, like Huang Bohui, the proprietor of *Shi Bao*, would have come through this period unscathed. The Nationalist government's drastic solutions to the problem of an unfavourable press underlined their fear of the political influence of press moguls. The relative underdevelopment of the press on a national scale increased the visibility and strategic importance of the few proprietors in possession of extensive press networks. Ironically, it was this relative weakness of the press which made Shi Liangcai and Zhang Zhuping more obvious targets for government repression.

By 1935 Shanghai's big dailies had returned to the political silence they practiced during the 1920s. They stayed in business and maintained circulation levels, but the assassination of Shi Liangcai and Kong Xiangxi's takeover of the "Four Agencies" stifled the critical voices in the daily press. Most of the burden of directing critical opinion at the government was shouldered by the anti-Japanese publications of the intellectual Zou Taofen. The success of his weekly magazine, *Life*, which claimed a circulation of about 150,000, brought a resurgence in polemical journalism. Zou also started a campaign to publish a daily newspaper in competition with the big dailies which he held to be more concerned with profits than opposition to the government's appeasement policy. Government repression forced him to abandon these plans. In fear of his life, in late 1933 Zou fled to Hong Kong.[64]

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64. See chapter 4 of this study; Parks M. Coble, Jr., "Chiang Kaishek and the Anti-Japanese Movement in China: Zou Taofen and the National Salvation Association, 1931-1927," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44.2 (Feb. 1985): 295 ff.

During the last few years of the 1930s, the big dailies sat tight, waiting to see how quickly the Japanese military would advance southward. In December 1937 all business ground to a temporary halt as Shanghai's newspapers were requested by the Municipal Council to submit to inspections by the Japanese. This marked the beginning of an entirely different kind of era in the newspaper business. *Shen Bao* refused to submit to these inspections. After an initial year of publication from Hankou and Hong Kong, *Shen Bao* re-emerged in Shanghai in October 1938, registered as an American company. *Xin Wen Bao* did not leave Shanghai, but in September the same year it had also taken out registration as an American company. *Shi Bao* also remained in Shanghai, but *Shi Shi Xin Bao* went west as the Chinese military forces withdrew. The Shanghai newspapers then fought a losing battle against the coersion and infiltration of the Japanese and their supporters. Market competition and commercial expansion were no longer serious considerations.[65]

Thus, the triumph of commercial newspapers in Shanghai was short-lived and was robbed of all meaning by the coming of war. During the first fifteen years of the Republic *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* demonstrated that in running a newspaper printing, distribution and advertising revenue were far more important determinants of success than party political ideas and causes. Very few newspapers were able to marshal sufficient resources to achieve success on a significant scale. In the early years of the Republic the big dailies benefited from Yuan Shikai's repression of the political press, but thereafter their main advantage over other newspapers was in the area of distribution and

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65. On this period see Shen Bao Shi Bianxieru [Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], "Shen Bao Qishi Qi Nian Shi, 1872-1949" [A Seventy Seven Year History of Shen Bao, 1872-1949], Pts. 4 and 5, "Gudao Shanghai Shiqi de Shen Bao, 1938-1941" [Shen Bao in the Period of Shanghai as the Lonely Island, 1938-1941], and "Diwei Jieduo Shiqi de Shen Bao, 1941-1945" [Shen Bao during the Japanese Occupation, 1941-1945], Draft (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Yuan, Xinwen Yanjiu Suo, 1982). See also chapter 8 of this study for more details.

access to funds to support expanded distribution. *Shen Bao*'s Shi Laingcai in particular had a head start in the newspaper business. He would not have been able to take command of *Shen Bao* if he did not enjoy the sponsorship of Zhang Jian and the generosity of Xu Jingren, the cotton merchant who, just when it seemed Shi Liangcai would have to surrender control of *Shen Bao*, came good with a loan at the vital moment. Similarly, *Xin Wen Bao* was bolstered by Ferguson's political connections in Beijing and, as seen in chapter one, the support of leading businessmen like Zhu Baosan who served as chairman of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce in the early 1920s. Once settled into a securely financed pattern of growth, it was very difficult for new arrivals to knock these big dailies off their perch. Only tabloid-style journalism met with any notable success, and this was adopted by the Huang Bohui when he bought *Shi Bao* from Di Chuqing in 1921.

Although by the early 1930s this pattern of development gave rise to two press moguls in Shanghai, Shi Liangcai and Zhang Zhuping, it did not lead to the formation of a dominant press monopoly. The underdevelopment of China's press was one factor limiting the power of Shanghai's press moguls, but politics also palyed a part. A protest movement, which included the local Guomindang, prevented Shi Liangcai taking total control of *Xin Wen Bao* in 1929. In a final, brutal blow against Shi's influence, in 1934 he was assassinated by agents of the Nationalist government. In addition, in the mid-1930s Zhang Zhuping was squeezed into selling his press conglomerate to Kong Xiangxi because his newspapers gave editorial support to the rebel Fujian government. These incidents illustrated the extreme difficulties associated with asserting anti-government influence through the press during the period of Nationalist rule. As part two of this study will show more clearly, although Shi Liangcai commanded considerable wealth and influence through his

newspapers, his demise showed that he was far from being a dominant political force.

Printing and Selling the News: Economic and Technical Aspects of the Business

Commercial newspapers have to perform a difficult balancing act between the costs of production and distribution and the income from sales advertising revenue. This is a particularly precarious operation because one of the primary aims of taking in advertising is to enable a newspaper to be sold for less than what it costs to produce. In strict economic terms a commercial newspaper is in the business of selling advertising space. Of course, a newspaper must also demonstrate that it practices a journalism which will sell and that it has the techinical facilities to reach as large an audience as possible. It has already been shown that very few Shanghai newspapers performed this balancing act well enough to stay in business over the longer-term. Those Shanghai dailies that did succeed, particularly *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*, had strong financial backing from the start and put commercial concerns above all else. For almost the first two decades of the Republic they sought to avoid becoming embroiled in political struggles fearing that to do so would inevitably damage profitability.

But even commercial decisions can have a political character. This was particularly so for Shanghai's dailies. They published out of the International Settlement and were, until the arrival of the Nationalists in Shanghai, registered as foreign commercial enterprises. Much of their advertising revenue was provided by foreign companies. Paper and printing equipment was predominantly imported. The news that was wired into and out of China was, until the early 1930s, dominated by foreign news agencies. The rise of Chinese nationalism and anti-imperialism during the Republican period soon made this commercial

dependency upon foreign countries a liability. The protests surrounding the May Fourth and May Thirtieth movements highlighted the incompatability of Chinese nationalism and newspaper dependence on Japanese and British advertisements. Similarly, the rise of Japanese militarism in China, sparked off by the Shenyang Incident in 1931, exposed the dangers of China's dependence on foreign news agencies for international press communication.

Although government-sponsored initiatives in the early to mid-1930s helped to reduce the dependence of Shanghai newspapers on foreign resources, in the end this tended to work to the advantage of the Nationalist government and its supporters. As will be seen, this process was most obvious in the government's control and expansion of the Central News Agency (Zhongyang Tongxun She).

All of these prosaic economic and technical aspects serve as an important reminder that both the content and successful marketing of a daily like *Shen Bao* were determined by more than what was in the minds of proprietors and journalists.

In the late-Qing period newspaper production was a relatively crude form of industry. As noted in chapter one, *Shen Bao* did not take on the appearance of a modern, broadsheet, with double-sided printing, until 1909. Printing presses were of the flat-bed style first invented in Europe and the United States in the early nineteenth century. Although at the time *Shen Bao* used a locally produced, coarse-grade paper, it was found to be too fragile to be suitable for use with foreign-made printing presses. *Shen Bao* and the other major dailies soon switched to imported newsprint.[66] This pattern of reliance upon foreign resources, established in the industry's infancy, was to continue right up to the 1930s.

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66. Li Songsheng, "Ben Bao zhi Yange" [The Evolution of this Newspaper], "Wushi Nian lai zhi Xinwen Shiye" [Journalism over the Past Fifty Years], in *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian* [The Past Fifty Years], ed. Huang Yanpei (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1922), p. 32; Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu* [Memoirs of the Bracelet Shadow

Rapid economic and technical change came to the newspaper business after the founding of the Republic, particularly after Shi Liangcai won control of *Shen Bao* in 1915. Market competition between *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* became the catalyst for many of the advances made in the Shanghai newspaper business over the next fifteen years. The key areas of this competition were access to capital, paper supplies, printing presses, distribution networks, and advertising revenue. *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* eventually mastered all areas, but success did not come easily.

In the early years of the Republic expansion by the commercial newspapers was a risky proposition. In 1915 Shi Liangcai had incurred heavy debts in taking sole ownership of *Shen Bao*. It will be remembered that the Mixed Court ordered him to pay 245,000 taels compensation to the former owner Xi Zipei. Shi borrowed this money from his friend Xu Jingren, a local cotton merchant. Similarly, *Xin Wen Bao*'s drive to boost circulation was financed with borrowed money. Wang Hanxi, the manager of the paper, concentrated much of his attention on purchasing imported printing presses which could turn out newspapers faster than the presses of his rivals. In 1914 *Xin Wen Bao* purchased a two-deck rotary printing press, (the first of its kind in China), capable of printing seven thousand newspapers per hour. Two years later the paper imported two four-deck and one three-deck rotary printing presses. The money for these machines came from loans that Wang Hanxi negotiated with the China Trading Bank (Zhongguo Tongshang Yinhang). Again, business connections proved to be important, for Wang was only granted the loans after two of the principal Chinese shareholders in *Xin Wen Bao*, He Danshu

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Chamber] (Hong Kong: Dahua Chubanshe, 1971), p. 441; E. Perry Link, Jr., *Mandarin Ducks and Betterflies: Popular Literature in Early Twentieth Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 95.

and Zhu Baosan, agreed to act as guarantors.[67] Not to be outdone, *Shen Bao* also imported several rotary printing presses in 1916, and again in 1918 when the paper moved into its new five-storey premises on the corner of Hankou and Shandong Roads, although the way in which Shi Liangcai financed these purchases is not clear.[68] Running up debts to finance capital equipment placed considerable pressure on the operation of these newspapers. *Xin Wen Bao*, for instance, did not return a dividend to shareholders until 1921 and did not pay back the last of its bank loans until 1923.[69]

The new printing presses bought by the two big dailies, most of them American-made, used what was known as web newsprint, rolls of unbroken paper that could be fed into the presses on a continuous basis. Before World War I the main sources of this newsprint were Hong Kong (that is, Britain) and Sweden. The period of the "Great War" effectively cut off Europe as supplier of newsprint, however, and the gap was quickly filled by Japan and, to a lesser extent, the United States.[70] Shi Liangcai was said to have made substantial savings in these year by bulk-buying Japanese web newsprint at considerably less than normal cost price.[71] The withdrawl of competition from European countries also encouraged the development of paper manufacturing in China, but few local paper mills

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67. Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi," pp. 129, 132-133; Tao Juyin, "Xin Wen Bao Fajia Shi" [The Historical Development of Xin Wen Bao], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p. 131; Hu Daojing, "Xin Wen Bao Sishi Nian Shi," p. 191.

68. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 156. This area became known as China's Fleet Street because all of the four big dailies were based there.

69. Tao Juyin, "Wo suo Liaojie de Xin Wen Bao" [The Xin Wen Bao I Knew], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 6 (Beijing: Xinhua Shuju, 1981), pp. 103, 109-110.

70. "Zhongguo de Zaozhiye" [Paper Manufacture in China], in *Zhongguo Chuban Shiliao* [Historical Sources on Publishing in China], ed. Zhang Jinglu (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1957), p. 577.

71. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 155.

were able to supply newspapers with the web paper they required. In September 1918 *Shen Bao* began to supplement its imports with paper from Shanghai's Baoyuan mill.[72] The period of relative prosperity among local paper manufacturers lasted only until about 1922 when foreign competition, having recovered from the war years, reasserted its dominance. As a result the Baoyuan mill itself appears to have fallen by the wayside.[73] Imports of Japanese newsprint gradually came to occupy the leading position in the market, despite the setbacks of a number of boycotts in the wake of the May Fourth movement.[74] By 1929 Japan accounted for about half the total value of imported newsprint. In 1931 this figure rose to 66.6 percent, making Japan far and away the dominant force in the market. Its nearest rivals were Norway with 8.9 percent and Britain with 7.3 percent.[75] Newsprint made up about seventy percent of all imported printing paper, while the daily press in China accounted for up to forty-two percent of imported newsprint. Although it is not possible to determine the exact sources of the newsprint used by the likes of *Shen Bao*, the market dominance of Japan suggests that it was very likely to have been the major supplier.[76]

There is no evidence to suggest that Japan attempted to gain political leverage out of its control over the supply of newsprint to China's newspapers. There are no recorded instances of a newspaper taking a particular editorial line under threat of the withdrawl of paper supplies.

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72. Li Songsheng, "Ben Bao zhi Yange," p. 32; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 993-994.

73. B. Y. Lee, "Modern Paper Manufacturing in Shanghai," *China Weekly Review* 47.10 (Feb. 1929): 407. The Baoyuan mill is not mentioned in this brief survey of the five major paper mills of Shanghai.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

75. Rudolf Löwenthal, "Printing Paper: Its Supply and Demand in China," *Yenching Journal of Social Studies* 1 (June 1938): 116-117.

76. Figures taken from Löwenthal, "Printing Paper," pp. 114-119.

Nevertheless, the dependence on Japanese newsprint highlighted the contradictions in the newspaper business between commercial rationality and the values of economic nationalism. The use of Japanese paper increased steadily throughout the 1920s even though the May Fourth movement triggered there a number of public demonstrations against Japanese imperialism in China. Ironically, as will be seen below, Shanghai newspapers banned Japanese advertisements following the May Fourth movement, yet imports of Japanese newsprint continued to rise thereafter. That Japanese imports peaked on the eve of the invasion of Manchuria only sharpened the irony. It was not until after this crisis that severe boycotts were imposed on Japanese paper. Canada and Germany became the market leaders over the next five years, although Japan continued to account for between ten and twenty percent of the total value of imports.[77] The local paper industry was given little encouragement until after the Shenyang Incident and by then the loss of Manchuria deprived China of its most extensive timber resources. In 1932 plans were made for a paper mill at Wenzhou in Zhejiang, to be funded jointly by the government and Shanghai's major newspapers and publishers. The project became bogged down until April 1937 when Wu Dingchang, proprietor of Tianjin's *Da Gong Bao* and the then Minister for Industry, used his connections with both the state and the press industry to raise the necessary funds. The outbreak of full-scale war with Japan put an end to these plans. In 1937 China was still producing less than fifteen percent of its paper requirements.[78]

The development of extensive distribution networks were equally as important to the success of a newspaper as the supply of newsprint. The

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77. Löwenthal, "Printing Paper," pp. 116-117.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110; Parks M. Coble, Jr., *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1980), pp. 246-247.

competition between *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* in the first decade of the Republic was, by and large, a distribution war. This was an area in which newspapers could not exercise complete control. Distribution outside Shanghai was largely dependent upon the postal service, although newspapers like *Shen Bao* established branch offices in the major urban centres to supplement the post. Within Shanghai and its suburbs ditribution was handled by "news pedlars" (*bao fan*). By the Republican period those engaged in this work had formed a union of sorts known as the Victory Newspaper Distribution Union (Jieyin Paibao Gonghui).[79]

Both the postal service and the Newspaper Distribution Union had the power to disrupt the sales of the Shanghai newspapers. Throughout the Republican period the warlord governments and then the Nationalists were able to cripple newspapers published out of the foreign concessions of Shanghai by imposing postal bans. Yuan Shikai forced many party political newspapers to close down with the use of this tactic. *Shen Bao*'s own editorial opposition to the Nationalist government was brought to a halt soon after the imposition of a postal ban in July 1932.[80]

The power of the Newspaper Distribution Union was more mysterious but as vital as the posts for the successful operation of a newspaper. It held a very tight grip on the control of distribution throughout Shanghai. Non-union members were not permitted to distribute newspapers.[81] The Union's power derived from its operation as a "racket" organized by members of Shanghai's gangs, although which particular gangs is not clear. The Union was not only the primary means

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79. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 299. The Victory Newspaper Distribution Union was first known as the Victory Association (Jieyin Gongsuo). "Jieyin" can also mean "prompt news." See Wang Zongwei, "You Jingzheng you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao," p. 78.

80. See chapter 7, pp. 343.

81. Wang Zongwei, "You Jingzheng you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao," p. 78.

of distributing newspapers in the local market, but also acted to boost sales on a commission basis, charging up to fifty percent of a newspaper's selling price. Distribution organizations of this kind became so entrenched that in the 1930s one journalist described them as "indispensable--so indispensible indeed that no newspaper can hope to survive, far less thrive, without their cooperation."[82]

In the early 1920s *Shen Bao* attempted to circumvent the Newspaper Distribution Union by setting up its own distribution organization. *Shen Bao*'s manager, Zhang Zhuping, appointed the paper's accountant to head a "delivery agency" (*disong gongsi*). Zhang bought a fleet of bicycles for the agency hoping that these would enable *Shen Bao* to be delivered for sale more quickly than rival newspapers deliverd by Union workers on foot or by bus. In an effort to break the Union's dominance Zhang also attempted to include *Xin Wen Bao* in his delivery service. But the management at *Xin Wen Bao* interpreted this as a ruse to undermine its sales. Not only did they refuse the offer, they also warned the Newspaper Distribution Union of Zhang Zhuping's activities and advised them to invest in some bicycles.[83] This less than friendly competition between the two big dailies showed that they regarded distribution as a critical part of their operations. There was no love lost because they were competing for that other vital part of the economic equation: advertising revenue.

It is a curious fact that although *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* consciously modelled themselves after the Northcliffe revolution in commercial newspapers, neither paper was willing to follow Northcliffe in

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82. Hubert S. Liang, "Development of Modern Chinese Press," *Information Bulletin* (Council of International Affairs) 4.1 (May 12, 1937): 13. It is likely that this Union was controlled by either Huang Jinrong's Red Gang (Hong Bang) or Du Yuesheng's Green Gang (Qing Bang), the two biggest gangs in Shanghai, but a firm conclusion cannot be made without further evidence.

83. Wang Zongwei, "You Jingzheng you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao," p. 78.

declaring audited circulation.[84] Audited circulation was, of course, the ultimate challenge to one's competitors. It was an unabashed declaration that the newspaper which could boast the highest sales deserved the greatest amount of advertising revenue. Both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* knew only too well that wide distribution attracted advertising. Yet their reluctance to engage in open circulation warfare in effect amounted to a confession that they both stood on unsure economic ground. This lack of confidence was well founded, for the dilemmas of economic growth in the newspaper business began to emerge in the first decade of the Republic.

The two big dailies quickly reached the threshold where their income could not sustain further increases in circulation. *Xin Wen Bao* first reached this point in 1921 when its circulation was around the fifty thousand mark. The paper operated on a general formula of five broadsheets, or twenty pages, per issue with an advertisement content of not less than sixty percent. Advertisements at *Shen Bao* exceeded fifty percent of content from April 1915 on.[85] At *Xin Wen Bao* the exact number of pages per daily issue was structured around advertising rather than news. This was very likely to have been the case at *Shen Bao* as well. Both *Xin Wen Bao* and *Shen Bao* set up a special office charged with maintaining a correct balance between advertising content, news content and the number of pages per issue. By 1921 *Xin Wen Bao* found that the cost of each additional issue beyond the fifty thousand mark, or each additional page beyond the five broadsheet limit, could not be offset through income from sales and advertising revenue. To keep the economics equation

84. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 224.

85. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 158.

balanced they actually had to limit disrtribution and control receipts of advertising.[86]

The need to control the growth of these big dailies provides an interesting insight into the relative economic weakness of the newspaper business in Shanghai. Both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* claimed to model their advertising formula after European and American rather than Japanese newspapers. This meant they published relatively cheap advertisements over a large number of pages in preference to the reverse of this approach.[87] In the industrialized societies of Europe and America, however, commodity production and the growth of the consumer economy provided newspapers with a steady supply of advertising revenue. Moreover, there was a gradual tendency toward large display advertisements for brand-name products.[88] But in the early 1920s, *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* found themselves regulating the flow of advertisements and discouraging the placement of large display advertisements.

These two big dailies discovered a way out of this dilemma by creating supplements, and local Shanghai supplements (*Benbu Zengkan*) in particular. Supplements were designed around specialized or generic advertisements. *Shen Bao*'s "Automobile Supplement" (*Qiche Zengkan*), first published in November 1921, was a typical case of catering to generic advertising. The rationale for the local Shanghai supplements was to gather together the specifically Shanghai-centred advertisements in one section of the paper. Such a supplement would not need to be distributed

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86. Tao Juyin, "Wo suo Liaojie de Xin Wen Bao," p. 108; Tao Juyin, "Xin Wen Bao Fajia Shi," p. 144; Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi," p. 134.

87. Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi," p. 133.

88. E. S. Turner, *The Shocking History of Advertising* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1952), pp. 166-225, *passim*; Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), pp. 51-103, *passim*.

outside Shanghai and would therefore represent a saving on newsprint. The local supplements contained news of the arts and literary figures, but were crowded with advertisements for the theatre and, later, the cinema. Theatre owners and various artists of the Shanghai entertainment scene were anxious to broadcast their wares with big, bold advetisements; however, the newspapers made more money from a larger number of small advertisements. To convince Shanghai arts circles to accept this practice, *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* negotiated with the gang boss Huang Jinrong. He controlled the "Great World" (Da Shijie) amusement complex, a centre of popular culture in Shanghai. The "small ads" policy was accepted, but *Shen Bao* stole a march on its rival by signing exclusive contracts which guaranteed to publish advertisements at the top rather than at the bottom of the page as was the usual practice.[89] Once they had sorted out their growing pains through measures such as these, the two big dailies were in a good position to push circulation beyond the one hundred thousand mark, the point at which *Xin Wen Bao* claimed advertising revenue of around one hundred thousand *yuan* per month.[90] Nevertheless, the fact that the circulation of both *Xin Wen Bao* and *Shen Bao* reached a plateau of around 150,000 in the 1930s suggests that by that time they had encountered a threshold in production capacity beyond which it was not possible to reach in the Republican period.

Newspaper preference for a large number of small advertisements reflected the relative underdevelopment of the consumer economy in Shanghai. Although advertisements from local Chinese commercial

89. Wang Zhongwei, "You Jingzheng you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao," p. 80; Wang Jingwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi," p. 134; Tao Juyin, "Xin Wen Bao Fajia Shi," p. 145; Zhang Zhuping, "Yu suo Jinian yu Ci Jinian Muzhe" [My Memorial on this Memorial], in "Shen Bao Er Wan Hao Jinian" [Memorial to Shen Bao's Twenty Thousandth Edition], *Shen Bao*, November 19, 1928.

90. Tao Juyin, "Wo suo Liaojie de Xin Wen Bao," p. 110.

enterprises increased rapidly after World War I,[91] few of these enterprises grew large enough to afford regular newspaper advertising campaigns. The outstanding exception was the Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company, one of the biggest advertisers in China.[92] Other advertisements for Chinese products were small-scale and irregular. A 1925 survey of newspaper advertising showed that 27.5 percent of *Shen Bao*'s advertising space was occupied by "patent medicine items." Long an established part of advertising, these quack remedies for everything from lethargy to venereal disease were gradually reduced in European and American newspapers throughout the 1920s.[93] The Shanghai dailies were not in the position to pick and choose their advertisements, so continued to publish items of this kind throughout the Republican period. As one journalist put it, "a hungry person is not choosy about food."[94] What later became known as classified advertisements (labelled "miscellaneous items" by the survey) occupied the next highest amount of space at 17.8 percent.[95] Advertisements of this kind dominated the front page of the big Shanghai dailies, in the manner of the old London *Times*, right up until the mid-1930s. Even then newspapers did not have the courage to put news on the front page, but began publishing full-page display advertisements.

Apart from the advertisements for Nanyang Brothers, the few highly valued newspaper advertising contracts were provided by foreign

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91. Tao Juyin, "Xin Wen Bao Fajia Shi," p. 132.

92. Sherman Cochran, *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1895-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 159.

93. Turner, *Shocking History of Advertising*, pp. 158-165.

94. Huan Tianpeng, "Xinwen Guanggao" [Newspaper Advertising], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiang Ji* [Collected Lectures on Journalism], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Xiandai Shuju, 1931), p. 126.

95. "An Analytical Study of Advertisements in Chinese Newspapers," *Chinese Economic Monthly* 3.4 (April 1926): 139-140, 143. *Shen Bao* was the only Shanghai newspaper among the five surveyed.

companies.[96] This was the economic aspect of the newspaper business which was politically the most sensitive. In the wake of the May Fourth movement the big Shanghai dailies, in their capacity as members of the Shanghai Daily Press Association, placed a ban on the publication of Japanese advertisements and commercial news. The significance of this ban was suggested by a random survey of the February 18, 1919 issue of *Shen Bao*. This revealed eleven Japanese advertisements and over one hundred paragraphs of Japanese commercial news.[97] Although it was impossible to detect the national origin of every advertised product, big dailies such as *Shen Bao* appear to have upheld this ban even though, as has been seen, they became increasingly reliant upon imported Japanese newsprint.[98]

Foreign advertising became a far more contentious issue at the time of the May Thirtieth movement in 1925. When a rally of workers and students marched on the International Settlement to protest the killing of a Chinese worker in a Japanese-owned factory, British police opened fire on the assembled demonstrators. Ten people were killed and more than fifty were injured. This set off a wave of anti-British protests and boycotts. The multi-national British-American Tobacco Company (BAT) was singled out as one of the chief targets of the May Thirtieth movement.[99] BAT was

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96. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 292 estimated that sixty to seventy percent of newspaper advertisements were for foreign products, although this impressionistic figure is probably too high.

97. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 998-999. See also chapter 5 of this study.

98. In his book, first published in 1927, Ge Gongzhen noted that Japanese advertisements were beginning to reappear in some newspapers, but he does not specify which newspapers. See Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 293.

99. Cochran, *Big Business in China*, pp. 177-182. It is interesting to note that during the anti-American boycott of 1905-1906 BAT was identified by the Chinese as an American company (Cochran, p. 46).

probably the largest single advertiser in China.[100] They provided a lucrative source of income for Shanghai dailies like *Shen Bao*. At the time some observers alleged that BAT advertising contracts were offered on the condition that the newspaper concerned did not adopt an anti-British line. The *China Weekly Review* claimed that BAT[101]

> for many years has had a clause in its advertising contract which forbids the publisher to print anything considered antagonistic toward the British Empire of critical of British policy toward China.

Although it is not possible to substantiate such a claim, *Shen Bao* was not as willing to surrender its BAT contracts as it had been to ban Japanese advertisements. As a symbolic protest, at the height of the anti-British boycotts *Shen Bao* did shut down the BAT neon sign, the biggest in China, at the top of the *Shen Bao* building.[102] The paper did not, however, "bec[o]me exasperated at the attempts of BAT to control [its] policies and thr[o]w out all of the BAT ads."[103] Indeed, as chapter five will show in more detail, the May Thirtieth movement cast both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* in a less than patriotic light as the nature and extent of their dependent relationship with the foreign powers was stripped bare. In any case, *Shen Bao* attempted to cease publishing advertisements for BAT and other British companies only after student demonstrators threatened to disrupt the paper's distribution and sales. Cancelling BAT advertisements, however, proved to be no easy task. As *Shen Bao* declared on June 19: "The publication of advertisements not bound by contracts has already ceased;

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100. Ping Jinya and Chen Ziqian, "Shanghai Guanggao Shi" [A History of Advertising in Shanghai], in *Shanghai Difang Shi Ziliao* [Sources on Shanghai Local History], 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Kexue Yuan Chubanshe, 1984) 3: 140; Kinglu S. Chen, "Chinese Papers as Advertising Mediums," *China Weekly Review* 46.1 (Sept. 1, 1928): 15.

101. "Some British Advertising Practices in China," *China Weekly Review* 56.12 (May 23, 1931): 409.

102. Cochran, *Big Business in China*, p. 179. The fate of this sign after the May Thirtieth movement is not known.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 409.

advertisements bound by contracts cannot be stopped because such contracts have not expired." The contracted advertisements none other than those from BAT. *Shen Bao* and the other members of the Shanghai Daily Press Association even hired a lawyer in an attempt to break the BAT contracts, but to no avail. The date of expiry was not until December 31, 1925. On July 21 *Shen Bao* announced this expiry date to its readers and added, in an apologetic tone, that from the following year the paper would show "an expression of greater progressivism corresponding to the expectations of all groups [in society]." In the meantime, BAT adopted the strategy of disguising its national origins in its advertisements. The following advertisement appeared throughout October in the Shanghai newspapers:[104]

Da Qian Men
The First Superior Cigarette
Made in China

There were some contemporary observers who claimed that the ban on BAT was ignored by Shanghai newspapers after only one year had passed or as soon as public indignation had subsided.[105] It is difficult to test this claim for all Shanghai dailies, but an exploratory reading of *Shen Bao* down to 1937 suggests that it did not publish any more BAT advertisements in those years. Unlike the ban on Japanese advertisements, which was imposed on the initiative of the newspapers themselves, for the first time in its history *Shen Bao* had been compelled by public pressure to adapt its economic organization to accommodate anti-imperialist political sentiment.

The irony in this change in advertising policy was that BAT newspaper advertisements constituted only ten percent of the company's

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104. On these episodes in the May Thirtieth period see Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 1010-1011.

105. Kinglu S. Chen, "Chinese Papers As Advertising Mediums," p. 15; Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 293; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," p. 1011.

total expenditure on advertising in China. Billboards and BAT's own assorted publicity campaigns accounted for the bulk of their advertising.[106] Newspapers, even those with the largest circulations, were considered to have only limited potential for mass market penetration. In chapter one it was argued that *Shen Bao*'s audience was limited to the wealthier elite and middle class of China's urban centres. Some advertising agencies of the day believed this to be true of the general newspaper audience. The American Carl Crow, head of one of the largest advertising agencies in China, attempted to convince sceptical clients of the value of newspaper advertising with the reassurance that "the people who can read are the only ones with money enough to be good customers."[107] Companies like BAT, however, were more interested in building a mass market for their products than in focussing on an exclusive slice of the market.

Newspapers were caught in a double-bind. Increased advertising revenue could have reduced the costs of production and even lead to a reduction is the retail price of a newspaper. The biggest advertisers in China, like the cigarette companies, wanted a mass market that the newspapers could not deliver. But the only way for newspapers to deliver a larger market was to reduce their retail price through increased advertising revenue. The inability of newspapers to make themselves affordable to prospective readers beyond the middle class was their most serious economic problem. The poverty of members of the wider potential audience excluded them from the considerations of the newspaper business. As one contemporary observer wrote:[108]

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106. Cochran, *Big Business in China*, p. 38. This figure applied to the late 1910s.

107. Carl Crow, *400 Million Customers* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1937), pp. 169-170.

108. Vernon Nash and Rudolf Löwenthal, "Responible Factors in Chinese Journalism," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 20.3 (Oct. 1936): 421.

> For this lack of purchasing power by subscribers no adequate compensation is to be found in the advertising field, so that the press largely depends upon its own resourcefulness to solve its financial problems.

An important part of the growth of newspapers in industrialized societies was the ability of proprietors like Northcliffe to reduce the retail price to very low levels. Penny and halfpenny papers were the norm.[109] Shanghai newspapers were unable to drop their retail price throughout the period 1912-1937. In 1927 *Shen Bao* cost four cents (*fen*). By 1932 the price had risen to 4.5 cents. Based upon the hourly rate of pay for Shanghai labourers in 1930, these prices were roughly equivalent to more than half an hours' wages for a male and one hours' for a female.[110] This clearly put newspapers in the class of a luxury rather than a necessity. *Shen Bao*'s management knew their paper was well out of the reach of the working class and did not attempt to stray from what they referred to as the "high-class" market.[111] This both assured them of financial success and limited their potential influence.

A far more obvious weakness of the newspaper business was in the area of news agencies. From its earliest days *Shen Bao* attempted to build up its own news network through correspondents and the establishment of branch offices throughout the country. In expanding *Shen Bao*'s news facilities, Shi Liangcai paid particular attention to the development of telegraphic correspondence and dispatches.[112] The telegraph became a more attractive medium for the transmission of news after 1912. One of Yu

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109. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 224-225.

110. Bureau of Social Affairs, the City Government of Greater Shanghai, *Cost of Living Index, Number of Laborers, Greater Shanghai1926-1931* (Shanghai: Bureau of Social Affairs, 1932), p. iv. The hourly wage rates were $0.073 for males and $0.044 for females.

111. "Advertise in the Shun Bao, You Advertise China," Advertisement in *China Critic*, October 15, 1931.

112. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jiban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," pp. 157-158.

Youren's first acts as Minister of Communication was to reduce by more than a quarter the telegraphic rates for newspapers.[113] *Shen Bao* took advantage of this reduction to develop one of the widest networks of news in China using its own resources. But the Chinese press was slow to develop news agencies of any significant scale. Reuters made its services available to Chinese newspapers in the autumn of 1912, about four years before the first Chinese news agency was established.[114] For almost twenty years thereafter Chinese news agencies could not match the news resources of their foreign counterparts, neither internationally nor nationally.

Concern over the need for China to develop its own national news agency was expressed as early as 1910. The inaugural meeting of the short-lived All China Press Association put forward a proposal to establish a news agency with national and international facilities. Like the Association itself, this proposal came to nothing.[115] The first news agency of any consequence was not set up until 1921. Hu Zhengzhi, who would later become the managing director of Tianjin's *Da Gong Bao*, founded the Guowen News Agency in Shanghai in September that year. In its first three years this news agency was subsidized by members of Duan Qirui's Anfu clique, particularly Lu Yongxiang, the militarist then in control of Shanghai. With the decline of the Anfu clique's political fortunes and Lu Yongxiang's defeat in the Jiangsu-Zhejiang war of 1924-1925, the Guowen

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113. Wang Hanxi, "Xin Wen Shiye Kunnan zhi Yuanyin" [The Reasons for Difficulties in the Press], in *Zhongguo Xiandai Chuban Shiliao* [Historical Materials on Contemporary Publishing in China], ed. Zhang Jinglu, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1954-1959), 4: 24.

114. On Reuters see Hu Daojing, *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai*, pp. 50-51; Feng Aiqun, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1967), p. 247. The first Chinese news agency was the Xinwen Bianyi She (News Translation Agency) established in Beijing in July 1916. See Zhao Junhao, *Zhongguo Jindai zhi Baoye* [The Press in Modern China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1939), p. 67.

115. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 339.

News Agency's subsidies dried up. Hu Zhengzhi managed to keep Guowen afloat by converting part of its operations into an advertising agency. When Hu joined *Da Gong Bao* in 1926, the Guowen News Agency became part of that newspaper's press network and its headquarters were moved to Tianjin. Although the Tianjin office of Guowen was active right up to the eve of the war with Japan, work at the Shanghai branch almost came to a standstill and it supplied very little news to the local newspapers.[116]

Many other Chinese news agencies sprouted up throughout the 1920s. Ge Gongzhen noted 155 agencies in 1927.[117] There were twenty-five in Shanghai alone by 1932.[118] The majority of these were small-scale, local operations which functioned as the propaganda organs for politicians or commercial interests. Many supplied information gratis.[119] The Guomin News Agency, established in June 1927, was then the largest subsidized Chinese agency in the country. It was funded by the Nationalist government and by the early 1930s most of its expenses were being met by Song Ziwen (T. V. Song), the Minister of Finance.[120] The largest commercial concern was the Shenshi News Agency, founded in 1925 as a joint venture between *Shen Bao* and *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. Shenshi, which was taken over by Zhang Zhuping in 1932, had a wide national network and was one of the few Chinese news agencies to concentrate upon the transmission of news to the foreign press.[121] During the 1920s, Shenshi,

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116. Li Zikuan, "Huiyi Guowen She" [Memories of the Guowen News Agency], in *Xinwen Daxue*, no. 4 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chuabnshe, 1984), pp. 74-76; Xu Zhucheng, *Bao Hai Jiu Wen*, pp. 82-85.

117. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 338.

118. Shanghai Municipal Police (International Settlement) Files, "List of Chinese News Agencies in Shanghai," D. 3414, July 4, 1932.

119. *Idem*, "Notes on Chinese News Agencies in Shanghai," compiled by Loh Sih Kya, D. 3414, June 29, 1932, pp. 1-9

120. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Guomin and Guowen were the only news agencies whose operations were of comparable scale to the foreign news agencies.

Apart from the British-owned Reuters, Japanese news agencies also had extensive operations in China. The first, the Eastern News Agency (Toho Tsunshin Sha), was established in Shanghai as early as 1914. Although a private agency to begin with, Toho was gradually drawn into becoming a part of the machinery of Japan's foreign policy in China. In 1920, on the heels of the post-war Peace Conference in Versailles, the Foreign Ministry of Japan sent Hata Hiroshi, a prominent journalist, to China to act as their special envoy. He made an agreement with Toho which in effect made the agency and organ of the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Toho's correspondents, located in all the major urban centres of China, were usually Japanese consular officials or journalists in close contact with Japanese consulates.

Throughout the 1920s the majority of the news agency dispatches published in newspapers like *Shen Bao*, both national and international, came from Toho and Reuters. During this period *Shen Bao* employed a system of publishing news items according to their source: pride of place was given to their own dispatches, followed by those of Toho, Reuters and other news agencies in a separate section. A Shanghai Municipal Police report of 1924 claimed that[122]

> there is hardly any newspaper in China, foreign or Chinese, which does not publish at least some of the news emanating from the Eastern News Agency whose service is almost free. It is conceivable that in a serious war in China or Japan, in which censorship, cut cables and wireless blanketing would play the usual part, that newspapers in China would be almost entirely dependent upon the Eastern News Agency for their information.

By the late 1920s this was shown to be a reasonably prescient, if exaggerated, judgement. In 1926 the Japanese Foreign Ministry moved to

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122. *Idem*, "List of Japanese News Agencies in Shanghai which supply news to the foreign and Chinese Press," compiled by Detective Inspector Givens, D. 5526, March9, 1924.

strengthen its control over the news agencies of its own nationals in China. It bought out the International News Agency (Kokusai Tsunhsin Sha), a small agency which served Japanese business interests, and amalgamated it with Toho, forming the Japan United News Agency (Nihon Shimbun Rengo Sha). This agency operated in China under the Toho name unitl 1929 when it became known generally as Rengo.[123]

Through Rengo the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was able to publish in the Chinese press mischievous and provocative reports concerning the local political scene. Many of these reports attempted to sow discord between the Nationalist government and recalcitrant militarists such as the Guangxi clique and, in particular, Zhang Xuelaing, the ruler of Manchuria who threw in his lot with the Nationalists in 1928. But the Nationalist government and some of the Shanghai newspapers eventually found Rengo's tactics to be intolerable. In April 1931 the government withdrew telegraphic, telephone and postal services from Rengo. On April 8 *Shen Bao* published a lengthy article on the inaccuracies of Rengo's reporting, accusing th Japanese agency of deliberate political provocation. Zhang Zhuping's *China Press* also published a list of Rengo's false reports.[124] Rengo's dispatches appeared less frequently in dailies like *Shen Bao* until their services were no longer used at all in the wake of the Shenyang Incident.[125]

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123. On the history of the formation of Rengo see Hu Daojing, *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai*, pp. 56-58; Huang Fuqing, *Jindai Riben zai Hua Wenhua ji Shehui Shiye zhi Yanjiu* [Research into Japan's Cultural and Social Activites in Modern China] (Taibei: Zhongyang Yanjiu Yuan Jindai Shi Yanjiu Suo, 1982), pp. 275-278; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, pp. 569-570.

124. On these events see "Nanking's Ban on the Rengo News Service," *China Weekly Review* 56.7 (April 18, 1931): 221; "A Further Chapter in the 'Rengo' News Agency Case," *China Weekly Review* 56.8 (April 25, 1931): 263-264.

125. The big dailies like *Shen Bao* were, however, monitored by journalists in the anti-Japanese movement who would call attention to any Japanese dispatches that made their way into the Chinese press. See chapter 4, p. 229.

Still, as the Japanese military invaded Manchuria, the problem for the Nationalist government and the Chinese newspapers was that they did not have a news agency of national and international standing. This had long been a cause for complaint among China's journalists. In 1927 Ge Gongzhen argued that China's weakness *vis-a-vis* the foreign powers was at least in part due to an inability to transmit its view of events to the outside world via its own national news agency.[126] He proposed the formation of an organization similar to America's Associated Press which was jointly sponsored by the major newspapers in the United States. In subsequent years other journalists echoed Ge Gongzhen's concerns. The more outspoken journalists accused foreign news agencies of acting as mouthpieces for imperialist policy in China. The need for a Chinese news agency of comparable influence to those controlled by the foreign powers was seen to be all the more urgent after the Shenyang Incident and Japan's invasion of Manchuria.[127] In 1932 the Nationalist government finally began to take steps to overcome this weak link in China's press network. The end product of their labours was not quite what journalists had in mind.

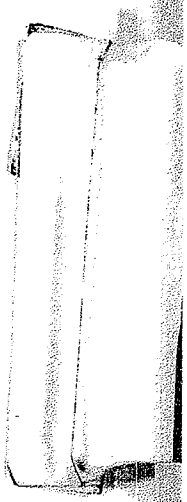
The Guomindang set up its own news agency in Canton as early as 1924. The Central News Agency (Zhongyang Tongxun She) followed the Guomindang on its campaigns northward until, along with the new government, it settled in Nanjing in 1927. It remained a small agency of propaganda in the service of the Party until May 1932 when the government decided to build it into a national agency. Over the next few

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126. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 340.

127. For just a sample of these criticisms see Huang Tianpeng (Huang Liangmeng), "Wairen zai Zhongguo Jingying zhi Tongxun She" [Foreign-controlled News Agencies in China], in *Xinwenxue Kan Quanji* [The Complete Collection of Journalism Magazine], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Guanghua Shuju, 1930), pp. 113-117; Zhou Xiaoan, *Zuixin Shiyan Xinwenxue* [Recent Experimental Journalism] (Shanghai: Shi Shi Xin Bao Guan, 1930), pp. 125-127; Du Chaobin, *Xinwen Zhengce* [Journalism Policy] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Xinwenxue Hui, 1931), p. 128; Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun*, pp. 74-75.

years the Central News Agency established offices equipped with modern telegraphic and wireless facilities all over China. By 1935 it was far and away the most extensive Chinese-controlled communications network in the country. But in the end this amounted to little more than the Nationalist government displacing the dominant position once held by the foreign news agencies. To complete this process, in early 1937 the Central News Agency negotiated the rights to directly distribute reports from Reuters, the French Havas, the American United Press and the German Wolff news agencies. Only the Japanese Domei, which succeeded Rengo in 1936, and the Russian Tass agencies failed to come to the party.[128] With this range of coverage the Nationalist government, through the Central News Agency, was in a position to control the flow of the majority of telegraphic dispatches in China. Moreover, the revised censorship laws of September 1933 stated that newspapers were to use the dispatches of the Central News Agency as a guide to their own reporting.[129] A survey of the September 20, 1934 issue of *Shen Bao* showed that about one-third of the paper's national news was supplied by the Central News Agency.[130] In subsequent years, particularly after the outbreak of war with Japan in 1937, the Central News Agency's dominance meant that it supplied up to half of all the dispatches published in the Chinese press.[131]



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128. Shanghai Municipal Police Files, Translation of report in *Jing Bao* [The Crystal], January 11, 1937, D. 3414, January 12, 1937; Hu Daojing, *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai*, pp. 48-49; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, pp. 577-579.

129. "Xinwen Shiye zhi Faling Guizhang" [Laws and Regulations on the Press], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.1 (October 1934): 171.

130. Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao" [On Shen Bao during the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management], (M.A. thesis, Fudan University, 1982), p. 43.

131. Liu Huoxuan, "Zhongguo Baoye de Yanbian jiqi Wenti" [The Evolution and Problems of the Press in China], *Baoxue* (Yanjing University) 1.1 (August 1941): 7; Sa Kongliao, *Kexue de Xinwenxue Gailun* [An Outline of Scientific Journalism] (Hong Kong: Xiang Gang Wenhua Gongying She, 1943), pp. 41-46.

In contrast, the proposals to establish a syndicated news agency among the big commercial newspapers came to nothing. *Shen Bao* relied heavily on its own correspondents, but lacked the will and the resources to organize anything larger. Journalists who expected something more than state domination of China's news agency network found that it was an aspect of the newspaper business which, like many other, could not yield to reasoning and good intentions alone.

Indeed, the issue of control over news agencies underscored the inability of the newspaper press to take command of the various economic and technical aspects which constrained its operation. A press mogul like Shi Liangcai dominated the running of his newspapers. Commercial success also gave him considerable political influence. But some of the vital areas of the newspaper business were beyond Shi's control. The logic of commercial development dictated that he exploit resources where they were most easily accessible. This meant importing the paper and machinery of the industry rather than relying upon, or developing, local resources. It meant relying heavily on advertising revenue from foreign companies and being reluctant, despite public protests at the time of the May Thirtieth movement, to surrender that revenue. Ultimately it meant being bound by the economic conditions in which newspapers were produced: the underdeveloped conumer economy, the poverty of prospective readers and the absence of a mass market. The sum of these constraints helped to shape the character and content, the very appearance of a newspaper like *Shen Bao*. This state of affairs offered little solace to those journalists who hoped for a vigorously independent newspaper press. But, as the next two chapters will show, they exercised far less control over the direction of the newspaper press than Shi Liangcai.

CHAPTER III

BETWEEN THE GUN AND THE PRINTING PRESS
JOURNALISTS AND THEIR CREED, 1912-1926

The period between the founding of the Republic and the rise of the Nationalists to power was one of stark contrasts for journalists. Politics, particularly in Beijing, became a dangerous game which sometimes ended in death by execution. For the more fleet-of-foot there was no shortage of life sustaining bribery or subsidization to be had, given a willing warlord. Through all of this, especially after the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916, there was rapid growth in the occupation of journalism. Not only did the numbers of journalists increase as the press increased its circulation and profitability, but there was also a sustained effort on the part of leading journalists to define the practices and ethics of journalism in China, and there were attempts to organize professional associations. In other words, this was the time that journalists attempted to build a profession that was, as far as possible, above politics and beyond parties.

This chapter examines the arguments that journalists developed in favour of a depoliticized profession and charts their failure to achieve such a profession. One side of that failure was the way in which journalists tended to absorb what they knew of American or derivatives of American models of journalism without questioning how appropriate such models were in their own society. Thus it was not uncommon to find journalists writing and teaching about fundamental ethics such as objectivity or impartiality while at the same time cultivating links with leading northern militarists. The problem was not necessarily that these ethics were unworthy, but were they possible? Some of China's most

influential journalists paid the highest possible price in discovering that the answer to this question was negative. There was no escape from politics.

The other side of the failure to build a depoliticized profession was the weakness of journalists within the wider structure of the newspaper press. In effect they were faced with a choice of masters: either a northern militarist or a newspaper proprietor. The militarists clearly had their own political agendas and it was possible to earn an income in the service of such agendas. Newspaper proprietors, and Shi Liangcai at *Shen Bao* was the classic example, also had their own priorities, supreme among them being to stay in business and make a profit. In following these sound business principles proprietors were themselves constrained by political forces, particularly in Shanghai where it was essential to offend neither the ruling militarists nor, more importantly, the foreign authorities who held legal jurisdiction over the territory upon which one's newspaper empire was built. These constraints in turn affected the way journalists could operate and, generally speaking, they were in no position to challenge the proprietor's approach to journalism even had they wanted to do so. For, despite the efforts of a few journalists in Shanghai, they were without a strong representative organization throughout the warlord period. This chapter is therefore a story of journalists proclaiming the need for professional independence but meandering between being propagandists for military politicos and scribes for newspaper proprietors.

"To Be a Journalist is also to do Evil:" Reporting Beijing Politics, 1912-1916[1]

1. Huang Yuanyong, "Chan Hui Lu" [Repentance], *Yuansheng Yizhu* [A Posthumous Collection of the Works of Yuansheng], 2 vols. (Taibei: Wenxing Shudian, 1962), 1: 102. The full quotation reads: "It seems to me that to be a journalist is also to do evil." Huang Yuanyong (known more widely under his pen name, Huang Yuansheng) also worked as a bureaucrat, a politician and a lawyer.

For a brief period after the establishment of the Republic journalists experienced an unprecedented freedom in their industry. The one hundred or so newspapers of ten years previous had grown to around five hundred.[2] Freedom of speech and of publication were written into the Constitution of March 1912.[3] Journalists were actually welcomed and encouraged in their work by some of the provincial leaders aligned with the Tong Meng Hui. Chen Qimei, the new military governor of Shanghai, often held press conferences with local journalists to report and discuss political developments under the Republican government. On some occasions Chen released statements assuring journalists that he recognised the value of a free and flourishing press.[4] In Beijing the State Council (Guowu Yuan) set up a journalists' reception room where press conferences were held between two and four o'clock every afternoon.[5] Those with a background in journalism figured prominently in political assemblies and local self-government institutions around the country.[6] It was clear that the new political leaders of China accepted journalists as an established and influential part of the political landscape.

In this unusually frank, rather melancholy essay he confessed to holding a low opinion of each of these professions.

2. Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* [A History of Journalism in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1927; reprint ed., Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1982), p. 240.

3. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen zhi Shi de Fazhan" [The Historical Development of the Shanghai Press], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.3 (Dec. 1934): 985.

4. For an example of Chen's press conferences see *Shen Bao*, Local News, May 30, 1912. On two occasions when Chen Qimei defended the press see *Min Li Bao*, March 8 and December 11, 1912, cited by Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi* [A History of the Modern Press in China] (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 681, 687, n. 5.

5. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 682.

6. See, for example, the prominence of journalists in Zhejiang politics described by R. Kieth Schoppa, *Chinese Elites and Political Change: Zhejiang Province in the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 70-71, 98.

Yuan Shikai also attached great importance to the influence of journalists, but he was more concerned with using them for his own purposes or bringing them within the tight rein of his control than in encouraging their freedom. His rule in China ushered in the darkest days of the Republic for journalists. In chapter two the impact on the political press of Yuan's repression was noted. During his reign the national circulation of newspapers actually fell and by late 1915 there were only five dailies left in Shanghai. Almost all the newspapers associated with the Guomindang or Sun Yat-sen's Chinese Revolutionary Party were closed down during the latter part of Yuan's rule.[7] This parlous state was the result of Yuan's intolerance toward political opposition after the "second revolution" of 1913. By steering clear of these party political struggles the commercial newspapers in Shanghai did quite well during these years, experiencing rapid increases in circulation.

Journalists began to feel the effects of authoritarian power little more than six months after the Wuchang uprising. A series of arrests and detentions began to occur around the country: in Beijing, Tianjin, Wuhan, Guangdong, where two prominent journalists were executed on the orders of the acting military governor, Chen Jiongming, and in Sichuan.[8] Even in Shanghai's International Settlement it was possible, with the co-operation of authorities on the Municipal Council, to detain journalists. In June 1912 Dai Jitao was arrested and fined by the Mixed Court, found guilty of publishing articles "harmful to public order."[9]

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7. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 240-241; Hu Daojing, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 989-990.

8. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 683-686, 688 n. 7. Chen Tingxiang and Hung Shizhong were executed in April 1912. The latter was a member of the Tong Meng Hui. On Chen Tingxiang see the report in *Shen Bao*, April 16, 1912.

9. See the report in *Shen Bao*, June 14, 1912. At the time Dai was working with *Min Quan Bao*. He was arrested on May 22 by the Municipal Police for publishing a number of articles which, among other things, criticised Yuan Shikai's loan raising activities with the foreign powers and called for the execution of Yuan, Xiong Xiling and two other government officials. Dai was lucky enough to

Of course, journalists working with the big commercial dailies in Shanghai, fortified more by the political reticence of their proprietors than by the laws of the International Settlement, came through this period relatively unscathed. The group led by Shi Liangcai was firmly ensconced at *Shen Bao*, and Chen Jinghan, as chief editor, was charting the safest possible waters for the paper.[10] This only sharpened the sense of irony in the fact that the best journalists of the day were the Beijing political correspondents employed by the big Shanghai dailies. Chief among these was Huang Yuansheng. Huang, who wrote first for *Shi Bao* and then, from December 1913, for *Shen Bao*, was in Beijing to cover the first three bleak years of government under Yuan Shikai. Through his reporting of Beijing's political affairs Huang achieved a degree of fame and set a standard for subsequent generations of Chinese journalists. Ge Gongzhen believed that Huang possessed "rare genius," while other journalists have pointed to his reporting as an inspiration and one reason for their initial attraction to the profession of journalism.[11]

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escape with a fine. See also: Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao" [Shanghai's Daily Newspapers], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.1 (June 1934): 279; Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 684; Lee-hsia Hsu Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Centre, Harvard University, 1974), p. 217, n. 88. See Hu Daojing, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," p. 986 for an example of a Beijing journalist who was arrested when Yuan Shikai was unable to trace the source of a story, published on October 9 1912, critical of his presidency, despite a search of fourteen newspapers in Beijing. A case of the consequences of journalists not revealing their sources.

10. Chen Jinghan had been brought across from *Shi Bao* along with other members of the "Xi Lou" circle which was based at that newspaper. See Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu* [Reminiscences of the Bracelet Shadow Chamber] (Hong Kong: Da Hua Chubanshe, 1971), pp. 329-333, 408, 425-426; Zhu Chuanyu, *Bao Ren, Bao Xue, Bao Shi* [Journalists, Journalism and a History of Journalism] (Taibei: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1967), pp. 20-27. Bao Tianxiao (p. 408) noted that Chen Jinghan assisted *Shi Bao* on a casual basis even after he had joined *Shen Bao*. Traditional loyalties still seemed important to Chen.

11. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 245. Zou Taofen, a journalist active in the National Salvation Movement of the 1930s and 1940s, wrote that he was inspired by Huang Yuansheng's example. See Zou Taofen, "Xinwen Jizhe de Zuopin" [Works of a Journalist], *Taofen Wenji* [Collected Works of Taofen], 3 vols. (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1955), 3: 19. Many general histories of journalism by Chinese authors acknowledge the importance of Huang Yuansheng. For just one example see the

The details of Huang Yuansheng's life remain an unfortunate mystery. Like others with outstanding literary skills, Huang first pursued the traditional path to power via the imperial examination system. By 1904, at the age of twenty, he had attained the *jin shi* degree. He was then sent by the Qing government to study law in Japan. On his return to China in 1909, Huang held various government positions before deciding to turn to journalism in 1912. It has been said that Huang became interested in journalism partly because his friend, Li Shengduo, who had been one of five scholars sent by the Qing government on a study tour of the West, said to him:[12]

> In the West those who are familiar with modern history and national affairs are all journalists. If you become a journalist you will certainly be a famous one.

Whatever his reasoning, Huang's relatively belated turn to journalism meant that he was not overly constrained by any particular view of how to practice his profession. It is not possible to know to what extent he may have been influenced by Japanese practice, nor to understand the precise impact on him of Liang Qichao's writings on journalism. For the most part Huang was finding his own way through what was still a new profession in China, and the position of political correspondent was unknown before Huang stepped into the job.[13]

Huang's journalism was therefore in many ways distinctive. His writing style was fluent, precise, forthright and a genuine antecedent to

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interesting memoir, Xu Zhucheng, *Bao Hai Jiu Wen* [Old Tales of the Press] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 41, 116-117.

12. Cited by Song Yunbin, "Minchu Ming Jizhe Huang Yuansheng" [Huang Yuansheng: Famous Journalist of the Early Republic], in *Bianji Jizhe Yibai Ren* [One Hundred Editors and Journalists], ed. Wang Zhiyi (Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe, 1985), p. 115.

13. Huang was closely associated with Liang Qichao's Progress Party (Jinbu Dang) and probably absorbed much of Liang's approach to journalism. For some of the likely influences on Huang see Zhang Zonghou, "Huang Yuansheng," *Xinwenjie Renwu* [Personalities of the Press], no. 1 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 54ff.

the *reportage* genre of literature; he mixed freely with the political elite and was familiar with the details of their inner machinations, and; he took the trouble to investigate the background to his reports.[14] More importantly, Huang personified the attempt to divest journalism of its political character. In a sense, he founded the school of "hard facts" journalism in China. This was a particularly significant moment because it marked the first stage in the development of a professional ideology which sought to separate journalists from party politics. In his most succinct statement of this form of "hard facts" journalism, Huang wrote that he and his fellow Chinese journalists[15]

> should begin to change our subjective attitudes into objective ones. We should all develop an accurate view of politics, current affairs and of all things, of everything we once believed. But we should not believe that our views are the only ones, nor should we reject other views in favour of one particular view. In examining our own views and in selecting other views, those which are judged according to the overall facts are decidedly more valuable than those developed on the basis of empty talk. If a synthesis of all the facts is still insufficient for us to make a judgement, rather than forming a presumptuous view that we will later come to regret, it is better to simply bring forth all the facts. In this way we can contribute reference material

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14. On Huang's writing style see Zhang Zonghou, "Huang Yuansheng," pp. 39-40, 41-46. Hu Shi, "Wushi Nian Lai Zhongguo zhi Wenxue" [Chinese Literature of the Past Fifty Years], in *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian* [The Past Fifty Years], ed. Huang Yanpei (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1922), p. 14 points out that although Huang's writing style followed the highly developed, semi-classical, "logical" style perfected in Zhang Shizhao's political essays, Huang realized this to be an insufficiently direct form to influence the wider population. This led Hu Shi to speculate that, had he lived, Huang would have become involved in the vernacular (*bai hua*) literature of the May Fourth period. Indeed, it could be said that vernacular styles pre-dated the May Fourth literature by at least a decade, but the press was not commercially able to spread such styles until about 1918-1921. See Li Liangrong, *Zhongguo Baozhi Wenti Fazhan Gaiyao* [An Outline of the Development of the Literary Form of Chinese Newspapers] (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 54-57; Tan Bi'an, *Wan Qing de Bai Hua Wen Yundong*[The Vernacular Movement in the Late Qing] (Wuhan: Hubei Renmin Chubanshe, 1956), pp. 12-13.

15. Huang Yuanyong, "Ben Bao zhi Shengming" [The Life of This Paper], *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 77. This was written for the Liang Qichao journal *Yong Yan*. It is interesting to note that the sentiments expressed in this article, written in 1912, appeared five years earlier than the kind of pragmatic liberalism espoused by Hu Shi's "Problem's and Isms." On the latter see Chester C. Tan, *Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Wren Publishing, 1972), pp. 59-66. Huang emphasized the practical rather than the ethical tasks of a journalist. He wrote of the "four abilities" (*si neng*) a journalist required: an ability to think, an ability to run, an ability to listen and an ability to write and research. See "Chan Hui Lu," *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 102.

> for society's use at some later date, and we do not become overly anxious about developing a viewpoint. For all of us who publish in future, deductive theories cannot match the number of conclusions that can be drawn from the facts. Present trends resolutely lead us along the path of research and discussion, and do not permit us to indulge in subjective illusions nor to prance about mouthing slogans.

Beijing politics was such a stark example of "parliamentary cretinism" that most who were associated with it were irresistibly drawn into factional struggles of one kind or another. It should come as no surprise, given this environment, that Huang's own career in journalism did not satisfy the strict standards expressed by this statement of journalistic principles. Although Huang had in effect said "let facts speak for themselves," his values spoke for themselves when he came to report on the politics of the day. Up to a point, Huang's dispatches did conform to a style of "information" journalism. His intimate knowledge of party and factional struggles has left the historian a valuable record of many of the details of Beijing politics.[16] But Huang's reports, with their descriptive narrative, made his journalism something akin to the modern feature article of the present day. Comment and opinion were woven into his narrative structure, as in the report of June 21, 1913 which follows. By that time Yuan Shikai was beginning to move against the increasingly hostile oppositional forces in the national assembly. Song Jiaoren had been assassinated in March, there had been considerable controversy in the national assembly over Yuan's unconstitutional negotiation of the Reorganization Loan with the foreign powers, and the various political parties were jockeying for position on the eve of the so-called "second revolution."[17]

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16. Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840-1928*, trans. Ssu-yu Teng and Jeremy Ingalls (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1956) relies heavily on Huang's dispatches.

17. Huang Yuanyong, "Guku Lingding zhi Zhengdang Neige Lun" [On the Lonely and Unloved Party Cabinet], *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 2: 123-127. On the events of this period see Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp. 113-123. Good examples of Huang's "information journalism" can be found in his many reports on the Reorganisation Loan controversy. See the

> The idea of reforming the cabinet began with the problem of negotiating a loan. At that time the Guomindang regarded the impeachment of the cabinet as the first step in overthrowing Yuan Shikai. The peace faction of the Progress Party also believed that there were irregularities in the government's handling of the loan, so the two parties, which were actually connected though they appeared to be split, decided to negotiate with each other. Later, the two parties again separated, and were then again connected. All of China's problems are like this.... As for Yuan Shikai, he has never supported a party cabinet. He does not want the Guomindang and disapproves of the Progress Party. In Yuan's view, the talented people of recent times are not good enough to handle national affairs. Those among the parties who wish to be the centre of Yuan's attention must be qualified in both the old and the new ways. Those who have only studied overseas, or other new types, are in Yuan's eyes useful only for education, commerce, agriculture or the judiciary. The famous party personalities that President Yuan prefers to use, such as Shen Bingkun, Wang Zhixiong, Tang Shaoyi and Xiong Xiling, are qualified in both the old and the new....This is the fundamental difference between President Yuan and the new party types. As a witness to the groundless and empty big-talking of today's politicians, this reporter does not dare say that Yuan's old, outmoded views are incorrect.... In my opinion, President Yuan's greatest defect is that he does not understand the present through studying the past. The politicians see for a thousand miles but do not see their own eyelashes. This is a far more serious weakness than President Yuan's.

With reporting of this kind Huang clearly did more than "simply bring forth all the facts." It is a telling piece, revealing both the typical features of Huang's style and his attitude to Yuan Shikai. Huang harboured doubts about Yuan's motives, but was, like many others of the time, relatively forgiving of Yuan's faults because he felt there was little alternative and in Yuan lay the best hope of achieving national political unity. His own political naïvety meant that he held on to this hope long

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following in *Yuansheng Yizhu:* "Da Jiekuan Bozhe Xiangji" [Details of the Twists and Turns of the Great Loan] (May 12, 1912), 1: 131-133; "Jiekuan Limian zhi Mimi" [Secrets about the Loan"] (May 18, 1912), 1: 138-141; "Jiekuan Neimai zhi Jiepou" [Dissecting the Veins of the Loan] (July 9, 1912), 1: 164-174; "Tongku zhi Xinnian" [A Bitter New Year] (Jan. 9, 1913), 2: 35-41; "Naihe Qiaoshang zhi Da Jiekaun" [What can be done about the Loan?] (Jan. 27, 1913), 2: 45-55. Of course, "information journalism" cannot be accepted at face-value. The loans affair highlighted the weakness of China in the face of the foreign powers which had imposed a series of political conditions on the granting of loans. The Reorganisation Loan worked in Yuan's favour as the foreign powers condoned his decision not to submit it to the national assembly for ratification, and Yuan then used part of this money to bribe delegates of the assembly to gain their support for him as President. See Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, pp. 122-129. By choosing to focus many of his reports on this affair, Huang was making an indirect political statement about the crisis in China's political sovereignty.

enough to be seriously compromised by Yuan's attempt to build a dictatorship and thereafter declare himself emperor. As early as December 1912 Huang wrote that "President Yuan can prop up personal power, but is incapable of implementing state authority."[18] Despite this awareness of the authoritarian nature of Yuan's power, Huang never supported the idea of overthrowing Yuan as President. Instead, he believed Yuan could be persuaded to follow a more progressive path:[19]

> At present everybody knows the danger of completely pushing Yuan aside, but how is the state to be established if we are completely dependent upon him? It is therefore my hope that the various parties will advise Yuan in a fair and open manner to welcome the dawn of a new future; otherwise he will be overturned. If Yuan is rejected, then in turn supported [as President], and those who have supported him then turn around and hurl abuse, accusing him as being a usurper, people will think that the country is simply infantile. But because Yuan's supporters become dependent on him they come to regard him as sacred. If President Yuan says a horse is a deer, I will dare not say that it is a horse. If President Yuan believes that shit is fragrant, I will dare not say that it stinks. This is no use to anyone except those who are Yuan's slaves and stooges. There is no lack of patriots throughout this country, but most people either regard Yuan as childish or they are his slaves. I do not understand it at all. It is the habit of our people to harbour two contradictory attitudes: they become arrogant and ridicule power because they are removed from it, or; they sacrifice everything and toady to power because they are close to it.... My aim is to have Yuan make some concessions for the good of the nation, and to urge him to progress a little further, not to completely push him aside.

Huang, who had acquired an unshakeable faith in the rule of law as he had come to know it through his studies in Japan, also hoped that Yuan could be encouraged to respect the laws of the land.[20]

Even though Huang therefore aimed most of the barbs in his reporting not directly at Yuan Shikai but at the prevailing corruption of national politics, there were occasions when, particularly after the assassination of Song Jiaoren, his disgust with Yuan's political methods was

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18. Huang Yuanyong, "Geren Shili yu Guojia Quanli zhi Bie" [The Difference between Personal Power and State Authority], *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 13.

19. *Idem*, "*Shaonian Zhongguo* zhi Zibai" [*China Youth*'s Self-Vindication], *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 10.

20. *Idem*, "Dun Jiashu Zhuanmen zhi Yuan Zongtong" [The Great Escape Artist, President Yuan], *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 7.

made perfectly clear. When the delegates of the national assembly gathered in Beijing in June 1913, Huang reported the bribery that occurred in buying delegates' votes in support of Yuan as President. This had, he wrote, "already become an open and public affair." He calculated that, at the going market rate of ten thousand yuan per vote, "for four to five million yuan it is possible to buy the sovereign right to represent the entire country." The restaurants, clubs and brothels around Beijing were, he added, doing a roaring trade as money and favours were handed out to delegates willing to be bought.[21]

> Recently there have been some politicians from the south who have advised President Yuan: "Be sure not to simply adopt a strategy of counterattack in dealing with politicians. Politics only needs to be fair and clean for others to welcome you. The most important thing is not the manipulation of the national assembly and the political parties, but the affect of daily political changes which arouse hopes in the people." But President Yuan is strenuously opposed to this. In my opinion the situation certainly cannot be redeemed by the President's innumerable proclamations on respecting Confucian thrift.

It was only a month after Huang wrote this report that the so-called second revolution broke out and, in retaliation, Yuan Shikai's "orgy of repression and bloodletting" was unleashed.[22] The Guomindang and its organs were the main victims of repression. In Shanghai all of the Guomindang's newspapers were closed down.[23] Nor did journalists escape the persecution. One estimate claims that at least twenty four journalists were executed while more than sixty were imprisoned.[24] Huang had been aligned with members of the Republican Party (Gonghe Dang) and, later, the Progress Party, but in the wake of the second revolution he was concerned to present a public face of non-alignment. He even went so far

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21. *Idem*, "Kuhai Shenyin Lu" [Moaning in a Sea of Bitterness], Pt. 2, *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 2: 134-135.

22. This phrase comes from Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, p. 142.

23. Hu Daojing, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," p. 987; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 277-280.

24. Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 720.

as to place a declaration of his independence in the local newspapers, stating that his name would never be linked with any party.[25] Amidst the atmosphere of terror which hung over Beijing politics, Huang, who had at times revealed a contempt for party politics, withdrew into a more cautious view of the world. He found that there was little left to report and even less that could safely be said about Yuan Shikai. By June 1914, when Yuan had established a firm grip on central government, Huang admitted that political struggles had been so thoroughly stifled there was little left for him to do except "have a chat with the reading public." "Parties and newspapers were," he continued,[26]

> becoming more and more quiet, more and more peaceful, and the so-called factions have disappeared (actually, they have not really disappeared). Apart from events recorded in the *Zhengzhi Gongbao* (*Political Gazette*), there is nothing left for we professional rumour-mongers to report. It is peaceful, really peaceful.

Huang Yuansheng continued as political correspondent for *Shen Bao* until September 1915. Yet his attitude to Yuan Shikai's government following the second revolution is still buried within the mud of history. There is evidence which suggests that Huang's public face was at times a mask for his private thoughts. At the end of July 1913 Huang secretly wrote to Yuan Shikai advising him on ways to control the press. He proposed that the police set up a special bureau to investigate newspapers opposed to the government (virtually a censorship bureau). Newspapers considered dangerous to the government would be dealt with according to the law, and information concerning personnel in the opposition press would be

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25. Huang had himself spoken of his life as a "politician" in his "Chan Hui Lu," *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 100-101. In his "Introduction" to *Yuansheng Yizhu* Huang's friend, Lin Zhijun, wrote that most of Huang's close friends were Republican Party members, but that Huang became dissatisfied with this political group when it was transformed into the Progress Party. It was Lin who mentioned Huang's newspaper declaration, and also claimed that Huang was opposed to the Guomindang. See p. 5 of Lin's "Introduction." For other claims that Huang was a member of the Progress Party see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 742; Zhang Zonghou, "Huang Yuansheng," p. 54.

26. Huang Yuanyong, "Tan Xie" [Trivia] (June 1, 1914), *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 2: 238.

collected as evidence should arrest become necessary.[27] Although the government did not act directly upon Huang's suggestions, that he could write such a letter seriously undermined his declarations of independence and fairness.

The pressure on Huang Yuansheng to embrace the leadership of Yuan Shikai grew more intense in August 1915. Yuan created the Chou An Hui (Society to Plan for Peace) in an effort to promote the value of restoring the monarchy, and thereby made public his ambition to become emperor. Yuan had unsuccessfully attempted to buy Liang Qichao's stamp of approval for a monarchy, and he employed the same tactic with Huang Yuansheng.[28] For whatever reason, whether it was the possible coercion and threats of Yuan Shikai, or a certain weakness of character, Huang succumbed, putting brush to paper for the cause of a monarchy. The deed was done, but not without Huang's realization of the implications for his reputation as a journalist. It has been said that he hesitated for several days over the article in question, even showing the finished product to his

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27. Zhang Keming, "Huang Yuanyong shifou Dizhipai" [Was Huang Yuanyong part of the Monarchical faction?], *Lishi Dangan* [Historical Archives], no. 1 (1982): 128. Part of the text of this letter reads: "The oppositon parties are good at surprise attack; they give false reports specifically to confuse and mislead. The traitors in various places, who are completely unreliable, are the most dangerous. The most crucial thing at present is to strengthen [the government's] momentum through a [national] news link. A tentative plan would [have to consider the following]: 1) The views of newspapers are today of prime importance, and newspapers of the opposition parties are an especially good example. If the personnel and details associated with the newspapers in places claiming to be independent [from the government] were recorded, it would be sufficient material to track people down and make arrests. The Police Department should organise a special body to take charge of: a) censoring opposition newspapers and intervening according to the law; b) gathering detective material on the personnel and editors of opposition newspapers. 2) A news agency should be organized to put in order the various views and reports [of the press]; this would have several functions."

28. On Liang Qichao see Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, pp. 230-231; Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 721, 725, n. 11. On Huang Yuansheng see "Liand Shuming Xiansheng Tan Huang Yuansheng" [Mr. Liang Shuming Talks about Huang Yuansheng], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao* [Research Material on Journalism], no. 28 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1984), p. 114. It is said that Liang was offered 200,000 yuan while Huang was offered 100,000 yuan. See also Zhu Chuanyu, *Bao Ren Bao Xue, Bao Shi*, p. 34. Huang's son denies that his father ever accepted this bribe. See Huang Xiqun, "Zhuiyi Xianfu Huang Yuansheng" [In Memory of My Father, Huang Yuansheng], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 28, p. 106

friend, Lin Zhijun, to reassure himself that it could not be interpreted as lending unequivocal support to the idea of a monarchy. Yuan Shikai was dissatisfied with Huang's article and insisted that Huang re-write it. At this point Huang, not willing to become the "emperor's" dupe but aware of the danger if he did not, decided to leave Beijing.

When Huang arrived in Shanghai on September 5 he noticed that *Shen Bao* had published a declaration denying it had received subsidization from any quarter, and registering its disapproval of the plans for a monarchy. The next day *Shen Bao* and *Shi Shi Xin Bao* published Huang's own declaration in which he stated that he no longer worked for *Shen Bao* or any other Shanghai newspaper, and that he agreed with *Shen Bao's* sentiments concerning monarchical government. But Yuan Shikai's Shanghai newspaper, *Yaxiya Bao*, repeatedly named Huang Yuansheng as its principal contributor. Again, Huang made several announcements, in *Shen Bao* and elsewhere, denying any connection with *Yaxiya Bao*. He argued that he had agreed to be an editor for the paper before it was published and before he became aware of the movement for a monarchy. Huang pointed to the fact that he first declared he had severed relations with Shanghai newspapers on September 6 while *Yaxiya Bao* did not appear until September 10.[29]

Huang found the pressure so unbearable that he left China in October, staying briefly in Japan before going on to the United States. It was here, on Christmas day in San Fransisco, that he was murdered. To this day it is unclear whether he was killed because he was thought to be a supporter of Yuan Shikai's monarchical movement, or, because he reneged

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29. On these events see Lin Zhijun, "Introduction," *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 2-3; Han Guocui, "Huang Yuansheng Gongkai Fandui Dizhi de Yixie Ziliao" [Some Evidence of Huang Yuansheng's open Opposition to a Monarchy], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 28, pp. 125-127. At that time Yuan Shikai had sent an envoy to Shanghai in an attempt to buy Shanghai newspaper support for a monarchy, hence *Shen Bao's* denial of subsidisation when Huang arrived in Shanghai. When bribery failed, Yuan then established *Yaxiya Bao*. See Hu Daojing, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 988-989.

on a commitment to deliver his services as a journalist to the aims of that movement.[30] Either way, Huang had allowed himself to be drawn into the political machinations of Yuan Shikai; his professed independence had been seriously compromised. Huang was like a small fish that had swum too close to a dangerous political net.

Huang had been acutely aware of the corruption and decadence of the Beijing political scene and of the part that journalists played in feeding that scene. He once wrote, in an oblique and mordant way, of his own "decadence" and weakness. He was frank about the unscrupulous side of his profession and believed his life to be plagued by a "battle between reason and desire." Huang appeared to confess that he had been unable to extricate himself from the degeneracy of the age and all that was left to him was self-pity:[31]

> I feel that of all the so-called professions in my life [bureaucrat, journalist, politician and lawyer] I have not been suited to a single one. One reason is that my qualifications are insufficient, another is that my personal resistance to [the diseases of] society has been too weak....For [these reasons] I have not achieved anything. In short, my sickness has been due to a battle between reason and desire.

Two months before his death Huang wrote of his resolve to "repent for the decadent crimes of my years in Beijing."[32] Only Huang knew the precise nature of his "crimes," but his maudlin confessions vividly depict the moral pitfalls of being a journalist in his day. Huang Yuansheng was

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30. For the view that Huang was mistakenly thought to be in league with Yuan Shikai see Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 242; "Liang Shuming Xiansheng Tan Huang Yuansheng," p. 114. Lin Zhijun, "Introduction," *Yuansheng Yizhu*, pp. 2-3 suggests that it might have been Guomindang agents who killed Huang. For the correct dating of Huang's death see Huang Xiqun, "Zhuyi Xianfu Huang Yuansheng," p. 113. I tend to believe that Huang was killed for having reneged on his initial agreement to assist Yuan Shikai's monarchical movement, although there is still insufficient evidence to be conclusive about his death.

31. Huang Yuanyong, "Chan Hui Lu," *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 1: 103. This was one of Huang's last published works. It offers a valuable insight into a journalist's deeply felt disillusionment with the age and with his own profession.

32. *Idem*, "Zhi *Jiayan Zazhi* Jizhe" [Letter to a Journalist for *Jiayan Magazine*] *Yuansheng Yizhu*, 2: 361. The journalist was Zhang Shizhao, formerly editor of *Su Bao*.

surely a world away from "hard facts" journalism. His attempt to remove politics from journalism had come to a tragic end.

The importance of the Beijing correspondent did not end with Huang's death. Other journalists were willing to step into the role he had pioneered. Xu Lingxiao replaced Huang as correspondent for *Shi Bao* and *Shen Bao*, and thereafter went on to make a name for himself as a drama critic. Zhang Jiluan, later to be chief editor of *Da Gong Bao*, was the correspondent for *Xin Wen Bao*. In June 1916 Shao Piaoping replaced Xu Lingxiao as correspondent for *Shen Bao*, and achieved the same degree of national fame as Huang Yuansheng.[33] These correspondents could be grateful to Huang Yuansheng for helping to bring to the position the prestige which warranted a monthly salary of two hundred yuan, a reward which partly compensated for the dangers of the job.[34] Shao Piaoping in particular was to become an important part of the attempt by Chinese journalists to further define the nature of their profession in the May Fourth era.

Defining the Profession, 1916-1926

With the death of Yuan Shikai in June 1916, the strict, organized control and suppression of journalists fell apart, but the concern not to offend the military rulers of Beijing persisted, even among the commercial dailies in far away Shanghai. Rather than risk attracting

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33. Xu Lingxiao adopted the pen name Xu Binbin. On his career see Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 745-746; Xu Zhucheng, *Bao Hai Jiu Wen*, pp. 47-49. On Zhang Jiluan see Lai Guanglin, *Zhongguo Jindai Baoren yu Baoye* [Journalists and the Press in Modern China], 2 vols. (Taibei: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1980), 2: 574ff; Xia Xiaolin, "Zhang Jiluan," *Xinwenjie Renwu*, no. 1, p. 109. It is difficult to say how long Zhang remained political correspondent for *Xin Wen Bao*; certainly no longer than 1918 when he was imprisoned for offending Duan Qirui in the Beijing edition of *Zhonghua Xin Bao*. Zhang wrote under the pen name Yiwei. A chronology of Shao Piaoping's life can be found in Yan Yang, "Shao Piaoping Shengping Shilüe" [A Short Biography of Shao Piaoping], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 10 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 131-140.

34. Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu*, p. 349.

government imposed postal bans by editorializing about the political situation, the Shanghai newspapers, especially *Shen Bao*, began to increase the number of telegraphic dispatches from around the country. Telegraphic news reports of political events in Beijing dominated *Shen Bao*'s columns.[35] This meant that most journalists were simply a small part of a larger, mechanistic formula for printing the news. The big Shanghai dailies therefore contributed very little to the professional advancement of journalists in the early warlord era. Largely left to their own devices, journaiists in both Beijing and Shanghai tended to rely on the most primitive sources of news: hearsay, gossip and tid-bits they could pick up around the local courts, tea houses and opium dens. They became known as "pipe-smoking reporters" (*laoqiang fang yuan*) because most of them were said to be opium addicts. In Shanghai, reporters were actually hired in groups of three to five which would then split-up to individually scout news. This news was then supplied to most of the major newspapers. As a result, the local Shanghai news conformed to a particular pattern and was often repeated from paper to paper.[36] This was the working reality for the majority of journalists, and everything from their methods of reporting to their social standing were a world away from such successful journalists as Shao Piaoping.

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35. Increasing telegraphic dispatches was a deliberate policy of Shi Liangcai at *Shen Bao*. See Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban *Shen Bao* Chuqi Shiliao" [Historical Material on Shi Liangcai's Early Management of *Shen Bao*], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 5 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1980), pp. 157-158; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi* [A Histroy of Chinese Journalism] (Taibei: Guoli Zhengzhi Daxue, 1966; reprint ed., San Min Shuju, 1984), p. 335. It is worth noting that *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, one of the big dailies, had a postal ban imposed on it from October 1915 until after Yuan's death in June 1916, and for that time could only be sold within Shanghai. See Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," p. 273.

36. Pan Gongbi, "Wang Ping Jie zhi Huiyi" [Reminiscences of Wang Ping Street], *Bao Xue* 1.1 (June 1951): 146; Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian* [Fifty Years of Life as a Journalist], 2 vols. (vol. 1; Hong Kong: Wuxing Jishu Baoshe, 1957; vol. 2; Taibei: Yuesheng Wenhua Shiye Youxian Gongsi, 1988), 1: 65-66. Before about 1920 most local news in Shanghai came from the courts and was supplemented by news from the crimes reported at the police department and reports of local fires and the like. It is curious that such human disasters are still the staple diet of much reporting today.

Shao Piaoping was also something of a slave to the telegraph; he sent his own dispatches down the wire every day at almost twice the volume that Huang Yuansheng had been able to achieve.[37] Through his outstanding reporting talents, however, Shao was able to make his voice clearly audible above the chatter of telegraphic machinery, and he played an important part in boosting the circulation of *Shen Bao* in the two years that he was the paper's Beijing correspondent.[38]

Correspondents like Shao were among the few journalists with the privilege of their own by-line. Shao had already stamped his name on Chinese journalism before he began to work for *Shen Bao*, and he was able to go on to form one of China's first news agencies as well as his own newspaper organization . In July 1916 Shao established the Xinwen Bianyi She (News Translation Agency), in an attempt to reduce the dependence of Chinese newspapers on foreign news agencies. Two years later, in October 1918 he began *Jing Bao*, which became one of the most innovative forces in Beijing journalism.[39]

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37. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Lingcai Jieban *Shen Bao* Chuqi," p. 158.

38. Xu Zhucheng, *Bao Hai Jiu Wen*, pp. 41-42, 116-117 claims that Shao's writing was even more appealing than that of Huang Yuansheng, and that those who read *Shen Bao* would usually turn to Shao's reports first. See also Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 56. *Shen Bao's* circulation went from 14,000 in 1916 to 20,000 in 1917, and was 30,000 by 1920. Despite his obvious value, both Di Chuqing at *Shi Bao* and Shi Liangcai thought Shao was a risky proposition because, much like Huang Yuansheng, he mixed freely with Beijing politicians and, as will be seen, came too close to some of them for his own good. See Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu*, p. 349.

39. Shao Piaoping was just thirty four years of age when he began his own news ventures. He began writing dispatches from Hangzhou for *Shen Bao* as early as 1908. In 1912 he was an editor for a Hangzhou newspaper called *Hanmin Ribao* and at that time his support for Liang Qichao shifted to Sun Yat-sen. He was arrested three times under Yuan Shikai's government; on the third occasion *Hanmin Ribao* was closed down and on his release from prison in 1914 Shao went to Japan. It was then that he formed the Tokyo News Agency (Dong Jing Tongxun She) with Pan Gongbi to provide news of Japan's relations with China to Chinese newspapers. He returned to China in 1916, writing articles for *Shi Bao* and *Shi Shi Xin Bao* which attacked Yuan Shikai's monarchical ambitions. Thus Shao was a well established journalist by the time he became Beijing correspondent for *Shen Bao*. See Yan Yang,"Shao Piaoping Shengping Shilüe," pp. 131-133; Sun Xiaoyang, "Guanyu Shao Piaoping de Jidian Kaozheng" [A Few Points of Textual Research on Shao Piaoping], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 22 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 168-175 which corrects the view that Shao's own news

Journalists with the stature of Shao Piaoping were anxious to move their occupation beyond its rather primitive state and to achieve the trappings of the professional standing enjoyed by their counterparts in the more developed countries. This concern was set against the background of the May Fourth era,[40] and the important cultural and political changes of the day flowed into the occupation of journalism. Journalistic ethics were developed, journalism became part of university curricula and some journalists attempted to form their own professional organizations. This process carried forward the attempt to remove politics from journalism. But the corruption of warlord politics in Beijing continued to infect the ranks of journalists and the cause of professional journalism fared little better in reality than in Huang Yuansheng's time.

To the extent that advances toward professional journalism were made, they tended to occur at an academic and theoretical level. Very few journalists in the early Republic had been specifically trained and educated to their profession. They were able to manage with a good literary mind and a fluent turn of phrase. The most successful, such as Huang Yuansheng and Shao Piaoping, also drew heavily on close relations with the political elite. In their lack of specialized training Chinese journalists did not differ substantially from Western, particularly British journalists. Notions of "craft" grew up around journalists which hindered the development of formal education for journalism.[41] Journalism arrived

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agency began in 1918; Fang Hanqi, "Jinian Shao Paioping" [In Memory of Shao Piaoping], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 29 (Beijing: Zhongguo Xinwen Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 106-109. Almost every general history of Chinese journalism presents some information about Shao's activities.

40. By the phrase "May Fourth era" I mean the period 1915-1924, or from the time of *Xin Qingnian* (New Youth) to the eve of the May Thirtieth Incident. The actual May Fourth Incident can be seen as a sudden explosive expression of the sentiments behind the broader changes that were occurring in this period.

41. On this notion of craft see Peter Golding, "Media Professionalism in the Third World: The Transfer of an Ideology," in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woolacott (London: Edward Arnold,

on American university campuses in the first decade of this century and flourished thereafter. In China, journalism moved centre stage as a part of formal university education during the high tide of intellectual ferment in the May Fourth era.

Shao Lizi was the first Chinese to specialize in journalism, beginning in 1907 as a student in Japan.[42] Japanese journalism was the primary source of inspiration for China's first generation of journalists, from Liang Qichao to Shao Piaoping.[43] Japanese journalism had itself been influenced by American models, and China began to gain first-hand experience of American training in journalism from the 1910s. Hollington Tong (Dong Xianguang) began studying journalism at the University of Missouri while Xu Baohuang took up both journalism and economics at the University of Michigan.[44] American journalism held sway as a model in China for the next decade.

Beijing University was the centre of intellectual developments in the May Fourth era, so it is no surprise to find that, soon after his return

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1977), p. 295. Even today in Britain and Australia journalism has failed to become part of university syllabi, being confined to more technically oriented colleges along with all the other "crafts."

42. Fu Xuewen, "Shao Lizi Shengping Jian Shi" [A Short History of Shao Lizi], *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 67 (Beijing: Wenshi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1965), p. 95; Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, p. 747.

43. An early account of Japanese journalism can be found in Hanazono Kanesada, *Development of Japanese Journalism* (Osaka: Osaka Mainichi Shimbun, 1924). Shao Piaoping believed American journalism to be the most powerful force in journalism and argued that it profoundly influenced Japanese newspapers. See Shao Piaoping, "Zhongguo Xinwenxue bu Fada zhi Yuanyin ji qi Shiye zhi Yaodian"[Reasons for the Underdevelopment of Chinese Journalism and Key Points of the Industry], in *Xinwenxue Ming Lunji* [A Collection of Famous Essays on Journalism], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Shanghai Lianhe Shudian, 1929), pp. 62-63.

44. Hollington Tong was, in his own words, "China's first American trained journalist." He claimed that he "had determined to make it my life work to introduce modern American journalistic practice into China." After graduating from Missouri, he entered the first class of the Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University. In the early Republic he worked for some of Sun Yat-sen's papers, then built up a career in Beijing and Tianjin newspapers before becoming editor of Wu Tingfang's English language newspaper, *China Times*, in Shanghai. See Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China* (New York: Rockport Press, Inc., 1950), pp. 3-5.

from the United States, Xu Baohuang established China's first course in journalism at Bei Da in October 1918. The university students had already been involved in journalism through their own university paper. Some of these students worked on a casual basis with Shao Piaoping's news agency and his newly established *Jing Bao*, and they prevailed upon Shao to assist in placing journalism on the university syllabus. Shao wrote to Cai Yuanpei, then chancellor of the university, seeking his support. After Cai had agreed to this venture, Xu Baohuang and Shao Piaoping then came together to form the nucleus of the Journalism Research Association (Xinwenxue Yanjiu Hui) at Bei Da. Despite the Association's brief two year life, it was particularly important in the formative years of professional journalism in China. Xu Baohuang published the first Chinese tome on journalism based upon his lectures for the Association. This book, simply titled *Journalism* (*Xinwen Xue*), laid the theoretical groundwork for the practice of Chinese journalism.[45] Though it could not by any means be regarded as a profound piece of work, Xu's slim book was a model of utilitarian journalism which later journalists failed to improve upon or supplement in any substantial way.

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45. Xu Baohuang's book, *Xinwen Xue* (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Xinwenxue Yanjiu Hui, 1919), was first published as a series of articles in *Dong Fang Zazhi* under the title "Xinwenxue Da Yi" [An Outline of Journalism]. See *Dong Fang Zazhi*, July to September issues, 1918, vol. 15, nos. 9-11, pp. 87-98; 91-98; 95-105 respectively. On the Journalism Research Association see Lu Binliang, "Woguo Di Yige Xinwenxue Yanjiu Tuanti: Beijing Daxue Xinwenxue Yanjiu Hui Shimo" [Our First Journalism Research Organisation: Beijing University's Journalism Research Institute], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 4 (Beijing; Xinhua Chuban She, 1979), pp. 124-129; Zhang Zhihua, "Shao Paioping: Woguo Xinwen Jiaoyu de Tuohuang" [Shao Piaoping: Our Pioneer in Education for Journalism], *Xinwenxue Lunji*, no. 9 [Essays on Journalism] (Beijing: Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 262-263; Liang Jialu et al., *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 128-131; Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 348-349. Ge points out (p. 354, n. 2) that a school of journalism had first been proposed in 1912 by the All China Press Association. Many who attended the lectures given by the Journalism Research Association attained positions of great power in later life. Among these were Mao Zedong, Chen Gongbo and Luo Zhanglong. One of the student leaders of the May Fourth demonstration, Gao Shangde, also attended lectures. See the name list in Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 749-750, citing *Beijing Daxue Rikan*, October 17, 1919. The Association dissolved following the resignation of Cai Yuanpei from Beijing University, the departure of Shao Piaoping and the general impact of the May Fourth Incident on the university.

Xu followed the American emphasis on the provision of "news" as the fundamental duty of the journalist. His definition of news was couched in the vaguest possible utilitarian term: news had to be the "latest events" which would "attract the attention of the majority of readers." When it came to specifying precisely what kind of news would perform this task, Xu offered examples of that pillar of American journalism, "news interest" (*xinwen zhi jingcai*). His list of those things likely to evoke "news interest" included "famous people," "unusual events," loss of property or life, famous organizations such as government ministries or political parties, and what he termed "moving events."[46] Xu also wrote of what was meant by "news value," though, not surprisingly, he seemed to have difficulty defining this intrinsically vague concept.[47] With another nod toward American journalism, he spelt-out the golden rule of news reporting: the what, where, when, who, why and how of an event.[48]

Xu Baohuang also pursued further the notion of "hard facts" reporting that Huang Yuansheng had espoused over five years earlier. "The reporter's *moral duty* to readers," wrote Xu, was to "furnish factual news."[49] He did not deny that there should be opinion in a newspaper, but, like many Western editors, insisted that opinion had its proper place:[50]

> The fundamental duty of a newspaper is to supply news, but it can also do its best to guide public opinion. A newspaper's opinion, whether it be conservative, progressive, approving or disapproving, is published in the daily editorial column.

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46. Xu Baohuang, "Xinwenxue Da Yi," *Dong Fang Zazhi* 15.9 (Sept. 1918): 87-91.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

48. Xu Baohuang, "Xinwenxue Da Yi," *Dong Fang Zazhi* 15.10 (Oct. 1918): 92.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 91. The emphasis is mine. It is a significant moment in Chinese journalism when reporting the facts becomes a moral duty.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Xu then went on to exorcise politics from news journalism in an even more forceful manner than Huang Yuansheng:[51]

> It is of course difficult to completely separate news and opinion. Although a policy of brazenly concocting a story to coerce others might be seen by political parties as a useful instrument in a political movement, the view of all the press is that there is absolutely no place for such a policy and it must be eliminated. Because a newspaper presents factual news to its readers in its news columns, sacrificing this valuable space to print concocted, coercive words might satisfy the duty of guiding public opinion, but it abandons the fundamental duty of providing news. It need hardly be said that this is illogical.

To complete this patchwork of American journalism, Xu wrote of the need for a news report to place an "extract" (*zui yao*) of the features of a story at the beginning with details following on below. This "extract" would grasp the essential "news interest" and present it in brief so as to attract the attention of readers.[52]

Xu Baohuang's approach was therefore that of the practical journalism of the marketplace. He believed there were those with time to spare who would read any newspaper from cover to cover, while there were others with less time to spare whose attention the journalist had to attract. For Xu knew only too well that "one more person attracted to the news of a particular paper increases the circulation of that paper by one, so the style of news can actually benefit a newspaper."[53] It seemed that, for Xu, journalists would be technicians writing to a formula rather than, as Liang Qichao had seen them, guides to the people.[54] By 1918, with *Shen Bao* established in its new five storey colossus, filling its pages with telegraphic dispatches, demands of the market did appear to be pushing the journalist to the margins of the commercial newspaper.

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51. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 93.

54. See chapter 1 of this study.

On the level of theory there was a general acceptance of Xu Baohuang's basic tenets on journalism; at least other journalists of the day who wrote on the subject merely underscored what Xu had written. There was agreement that "facts" were here to stay and that they should be kept apart from opinions. Ren Baishou, who had worked as a correspondent for *Min Li Bao* and *Shi Bao* before studying in Japan, reiterated Xu Baohuang's emphasis on the need for factual reporting written in a way which captured the reader's attention. Ren cited Huang Yuansheng's correspondence as an example for other journalists to follow. Although he admitted that Huang's journalism was laced with subjective judgements, Ren argued that because such judgements were made from the viewpoint of the "third person" (*di sanzhe*) they should be considered objective.[55] Some journalists, it appears, were becoming acrobatic in their search for theoretical justifications to their claims of impartiality. Shao Piaoping, in his book *Practical Applied Journalism* (*Shiji Yingyong Xinwenxue*), which became a standard text for students of journalism, also favoured the "third person" variety of objectivity. Echoing Xu Baohuang, Shao wrote that "a journalist's duty is to only provide news, opinion is the work of the editor;... in reporting the news a journalist simply presents an objective survey of the situation, not a subjective opinion."[56] Finally, also like Xu, Shao espoused a vague utilitarian approach to news journalism, claiming

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55. I have not seen a copy of Ren Baishou's work *Yingyong Xinwenxue* [Applied Journalism] (Shanghai: Yadong Tushuguan, 1922), but part of it is discussed in Huang-Fu Hewang, "Zhongguo Xinwen Xiezuo de Yanjin" [The Evolution of Journalistic Writing in China] *Bao Xue* 7.1 (Dec. 1983): 70-71. Biographical information on Ren from "Zhongguo Xinwenjie Mingren Jieshao" [An Introduction to Famous Chinese Journalists], in *Zhongguo Xinwen Nianjian, 1984*, ed. Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Yuan Xinwen Yanjiusuo (Beijing: Renmin Ribao Chubanshe, 1984), p. 667.

56. Shao Zhenqing, *Shiji Yingyong Xinwenxue* (Beiping: Beiping Zhaoming Yinshuju, 1923), p. 157. On the "third person" see Shao Zhenqing, *Xinwenxue Zonglun* [Collected essays on Journalism] (Beiping: Jing Bao Guan, 1924), p. 37.

that the best news was that which "evokes the greatest interest in the greatest number of people."[57]

It is worth pausing to consider the implications of the acceptance of this form of journalism in China, since it became the received wisdom into the 1930s. The rejection of political journalism that Huang Yuansheng had begun was, at least on a theoretical level, completed by journalists of the May Fourth era. It has been shown that the three fundamental principles of this professional creed were: a separation of fact from opinion; an objectivity or impartiality which meant, in effect, eschewing political bias, and; a structuring of news so that it attracted the attention of readers. Xu Baohuang had, perhaps unwittingly, uncovered the essential logic beneath this creed when he suggested the marriage between journalism and the marketplace. Of course, as Chinese journalists never seemed to tire of mentioning, the economic and social conditions of China were so vastly different to those in Europe in America that, as self-appointed matchmakers, Chinese journalists had set themselves a thankless task.[58] They subscribed to a professional creed born in conditions alien to their own historical setting, and this made their initial acceptance of that creed all the more extraordinary.

The history of the fundamental principles of marketplace journalism in Europe and America was by no means exemplary, largely due to vague character of its central principles and the difficulty in realizing those principles. As one scholar has noted:[59]

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57. Shao Zhenqing, *Xinwenxue Zonglun*, p. 78.

58. Chinese journalists complained more bitterly about the differences between social conditions of their own and Western societies in the 1920s and 1930s, but for early complaints see Xu Baohuang, "Xinwenxue Gailun," *Xinwenxue Kan Quanji*, pp. 8-18; Shao Piaoping, "Zhongguo Xinwenxue bu Fada zhi Yuanyin ji qi Shiye zhi Yaodian," pp. 51-54.

59. Anthony Smith, "The Long Road to Objectivity and Back Again: The Kinds of Truth we get in Journalism," in *Newspaper History: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), p. 154.

> The professional codes of essayists and journalists have never become those of a fully-fledged profession. The journalist has always enjoyed the wavering status of the court follower who is never quite accorded the full status of the courtier.

The "codes" of journalism were set in place in Britain and the United States during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The big newspaper proprietors were beginning to seek larger markets for their papers and were restructuring the economic base of the press so that advertising revenue became the principal source of income. Up to a point, proprietors and their senior staff demanded that journalists and reporters become efficient processors of news which could be quickly sold to as wide an audience as possible. The development of telegraphic dispatches and news agencies that serviced a variety of clients with different interests and concerns increased the pressure to make news bland in its accuracy.[60] Nevertheless, technical aspects like the telegraph merely facilitated changes to journalism. It was essentially the desire for economic expansion in the industry which drove these changes. From about the 1870s on, fairly rigid practices of news reporting were drilled into aspiring young journalists by senior editors who did their proprietor's bidding. In Britain, C. P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian* from the 1870s and one of the most influential journalists at the time, became known for his apothegm "comment is free, but facts are sacred."[61] Across the Atlantic, American reporters were brow-beaten with the same

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60. This was, of course, a complicated process that cannot be adequately captured in a few lines, but for some notion of this process see Phillip Elliott, "Professional Ideology and Organisational Change: The Journalist Since 1800," in *Newspaper History*, pp. 172-92; Anthony Smith, "The Long Road to Objectivity," in *Newspaper History*, pp. 153-172. Michael Schudson, "Origins of the Ideal of Objectivity in the Professions: Studies in the History of American Jornalism and American Law, 1830-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976), pp. 173-186; Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 215-229.

61. Cited by Elliott, "Professional Ideology and Organisational Change," p. 183.

message. Julius Chambers recalled his apprenticeship with the New York *Tribune* in the 1870s, being fed on a formula of[62]

> Facts; facts; nothing but facts. So many peas at so much a peck; so much molasses at so much a quart. The index of forbidden words was very lengthy, and misuse of them, when they escaped the keen eye of a copyreader and got into print, was punishable by suspension without pay for a week, or immediate discharge. It was a rigid system, rigidly enforced.

Although it is not possible to reach firm conclusions about the historical development of this kind of journalism, it may make better sense to see it as a business strategy imposed on journalists from above rather than a code of ethics created by journalists independently of their proprietors. Another American journalist, Theodore Dreiser, who later established himself as a writer in his own right, remembered starting work in the early 1890s at the New York *World* :[63]

> I looked about the great room, as I waited patiently and delightedly, and saw pasted on the walls at intervals printed cards which read: Accuracy, Accuracy, Accuracy! Who? What? Where? When? How? The Facts--The Color--The Facts! I knew what those signs meant: the proper order for beginning a newspaper story. Another sign insisted upon Promptness, Courtesy, Geniality! Most excellent traits, I thought, but not as easy to put into execution as comfortable publishers and managing editors might suppose.

These journalists grudgingly accepted reporting methods of this kind despite themselves and their more poetic inclinations. They came to believe that accurate reporting of "the facts" provided its own moral direction, or, as Xu Baohuang would have it, "moral duty." They shared a self-confidence "unattuned to the ways in which their own values shaped their perception of 'the facts.'"[64] Yet this attitude suited the operational

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62. Julius Chambers, *News Hunting on Three Continents* (New York: Mitchell, Kennedy, 1921), p. 7, cited by Schudson, "Origins of the Ideal of Objectivity," p. 174.

63. Theodore Dreiser, *Newspaper Days* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1922), p. 467, cited by Schudson, "Origins of the Ideal of Objectivity," p. 175. Similar signs and messages were hung in the offices of the *Chicago Tribune*.

64. Schudson, "Origins of the Ideal of Objectivity," p. 182. Schudson has referred to this attitude as "naïve empiricism" in that it holds that facts of themselves can lead to correct thought and action, but does not confront the saturation of facts by human values, does not question the context of facts (pp. 24-26, 167-175).

strategies of the big daily newspapers. Proprietors and senior editors were able to maintain strict control over editorial comment and enforce an almost mechanical method of reporting among their journalists.

At the same time, this did not necessarily bring journalists and the newspapers for which they worked any closer to impartiality and objectivity. In Britain, right up to World War I and beyond, politicians continued to cultivate and subsidize the press and its journalists, particularly Lloyd George who had included Northcliffe and his brother Rothermere, as well as Beaverbrook, in his government.[65] In the United States the proprietors of the big dailies were not as intimately connected to government politics, but this did not stop them from taking political stands. The New York *Times*, self-styled paragon of American journalism at the turn of the century, prided itself on a conservative decency and favoured Republican candidates for government in both its editorials and news coverage.[66] Both Pulitzer, the inventor of the journalistic crusade with the New York *World*, and Hearst, his fierce competitor at the *Morning Journal*, were Democratic in their allegiances, and Hearst himself had a short and largely unsuccessful political career.[67] Thus, even the most commercially-minded proprietors did not keep their newspapers away from politics. The significance of their influence was that they embodied the potential to be political without necessarily having to be party political. This was the underlying meaning of Stanley Baldwin's

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65. See Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981, 1984), 2: 326-327. A. J. P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972; reprint ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 177-214.

66. Schudson, "Origins of the Ideal of Obectivity," pp. 216-217.

67. Ibid., pp. 192-193; George Juergens, *Joseph Pulitzer and the New York World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 98-105, 193-196; W. A. Swanberg, *Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst* (London: Longmans, 1961), pp. 327-383.

denunciation of the press barons for seeking "power without responsibility, the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages."[68]

But the most important feature of newspaper journalism in Britain and the United States at the turn of the century was that its practices were structured around perceptions of the most effective ways of expanding into wider markets. The *Times*, both the London and the New York species, maintained an air of respectability in serving the elite market, but Northcliffe (who bought the *Times* in 1908), Pulitzer and Hearst were the masters of invention in beginning mass market journalism. The so-called "new journalism" that they fostered, with its unabashed sensationalism, invented news and invented stories as a form of entertainment for "the masses."[69] They simply took commercial journalism to its logical conclusion.

In China the newspaper press was ions away from assuming mass market proportions. Why, then, did China's leading professional journalists subscribe to the journalistic creed that had grown up in Britain and the United States? Huang Yuansheng certainly did not have to contend with a proprietorial regimen which proclaimed the sanctity of "fact; facts; nothing but facts." Neither he, nor Xu Baohuang, nor Shao Piaoping had to satisfy a market of diverse customers eager for accurate information. Xu Baohuang, aware of the connection between journalism and the marketplace, was one of the few journalists of the period to openly espouse the cause of commercial journalism. In his work there is a clue to the reasons for the Chinese journalist's search for an apolitical

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68. Cited by Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper: An International History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp. 161-163. Baldwin did have a point, however, as politicians were, at least in theory, responsible to their constituency.

69. Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* did not hit the million mark in circulation till World War I, but his magazine, *Tit-Bits*, and other similarly racy magazines, approached that mark in the late 1890s. Pulitzer's *World* peaked at about one million circulation in 1898 when it advocated war with Spain, but its average circulation in that period was around 370,000. See Smith, *The Newspaper*, pp. 156-161.

professional creed. He pointed to the need to develop advertising as the economic base of newspapers so that subsidies from political organizations would be unnecessary. Only in this way, he thought, could newspapers develop fair, impartial comment, and journalists might be shielded against the dangers of political struggles.[70] But Xu recognized the comparative underdevelopment of commerce in China and expressed his concern to see newspapers assist commerce through the promotion of advertising and the use of columns devoted to commercial news.[71] He was, like his American counterparts, untroubled by doubts about "the facts" and their susceptibility to infection by values. The political charactersitics of commercial journalism in Britain and the United States did not seem to occur to him. Xu Baohuang therefore took on board a professional creed which was not only born in conditions alien to China, but which also frequently failed to realize its own principles in the countries which gave it birth.[72] Journalists like Huang Yuansheng had already served as testimony to the difficulty of practicing an apolitical journalism. The difference was that in China, as distinct from Britain and the United States, the penalties for crossing the invisible line into politics were sometimes the most severe imaginable.

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70. Xu Baohuang, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Jianglai" [The Future of the Press], in *Xinwenxue Gangyao* [The Essentials of Journalism], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Xiandai Shuju, 1930), p. 201.

71. *Idem*, "Xinwenxue Gaiyao" [Outline of Journalism], in *Xinwenxue Kan Quanji* [The Complete Collection of *Journalism*], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shnaghai: Guanghua Shuju, 1930), pp. 3-8.

72. In its basic form, however, the professional journalism which emphasizes "facts," objectivity and the structuring of news to attract attention or evoke interest has been transported around the world. See Peter Golding, "Media Professionalism in the Third World: The Transfer of an Ideology," pp. 292-304. Golding points out that communication processes are wedded to social and political processes and reflect those processes in both traditional and modern societies. He argues that the transfer of professional ethics to Third World countries ends up being imitation carried out under the guidance of foreign experts. He contrasts this to the school of thought which sees that professional ideologies of objectivity are a prerequisite for "modernization," for example, Lucien Pye, ed., *Communications and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 78-79. The sad irony is that, as I have attempted to show, professional ethics often do not live up to their promises in their countries of origin.

The process by which Chinese journalists attempted to develop a professional creed did, however, involve more than an imitation of foreign models. The distinctive character to the Chinese view of professional journalism during this period, at least in terms of an ideal, was that it was valued for its potential as a social service. Shao Piaoping in particular envisaged an educative, social service role for working journalists and was less comfortable with the idea that newspapers were primarily commercial ventures. Shao spoke of the newspaper's responsibility in guiding and educating the people, referring to newspapers as "public organs of society" (*shehui gongong jiguan*) and "representatives of public opinion" (*guomin yulun daibiao*). Similarly, he labelled journalists "citizens of society" (*shehui zhi gongren*).[73] In this sense, Shao was something of a radical populist. In contrast to Xu Baohuang, he expressed fears about the nature and tendencies of commercial journalism:[74]

> Today, journalism has also fallen into the whirlpool of capitalism. Journalists are workers who labour with their spirits, but the oppression of capitalism disrupts their lives and deprives them of their dignity.... As the flavour of capitalism grows stronger day by day, journalists who work with their spirits cannot but become slaves to capitalism.

The extraordinary sentiments of this statement, written in 1924, were to be given more forceful expression by journalists working in the early 1930s.

Shao Piaoping was less than clear about precisely how a journalist could be of service to society, but the central focus of his writing had more to do with attempting to raise the status and importance of journalists than with providing plans for action.[75] He particularly emphasized the

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73. Shao Zhenqing, *Xinwenxue Zonglun*, pp. 7-8, 11, 20-21, 27.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 250. See also Shao Piaoping, "Zhongguo Xinwenxue bu Fada zhi Yuanyiu ji qi Shiye Yaodian," p. 47 where news is referred to as a "commodity."

75. Shao referred to reporters as "*waijiao jizhe*," literally, "outside associating reporter," giving the sense of the reporter searching news on the "beat," away from the newspaper office. This term was clearly invented to cope with a new occupational type in Chinese journalism.

working methods and ethical responsibilities of reporters. Shao argued that reporters had to win the trust of the public; distorting news for a particular, partisan purpose would quickly lose them that trust.[76] But Shao's prescription for the model reporter left his readers in no doubt that he was setting his sights optimistically high. The model reporter had to be almost superhuman, possessing, among other qualities: a thorough knowledge of both local and overseas affairs; familiarity with at least one foreign language; an ability to mix with all sections of society; an understanding of human psychology which, thought Shao, was essential in conducting interviews; an independence which could not be swayed by any partisan interests, and a restless energy with which to hunt down a story.[77]

Few journalists could have measured up to these requirements, so it was only to be expected that Shao would not find much to please him when he cast his eye toward fellow Chinese. He crowned his colleagues "journalism's children" because they had not been exposed to formal education for journalism.[78] This attitude probably led Shao to become involved in promoting journalism at a university level of education, and the time was ripe, for in the period 1920-1926 there was a rapid sprouting of schools and departments of journalism in China. Eight major universities included journalism as part of their curricula within those years.[79] At the most important schools the American influence was again

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76. Shao Zhenqing, *Xinwenxue Zonglun*, pp. 15, 20, 29, 33-34.

77. See Shao Zhenqing, *Shiji Yingyong Xinwenxue*, pp. 11-54; Shao Zhenqing, *Xinwenxue Zonglun*, pp. 27-47; Sun Xiaoyang, "Shao Piaoping," in *Xinwenjie Renwu*, no. 1, pp. 94-97; Guo Gen, "Shao Piaoping Lun Xinwen Caifang' [Shao Piaoping on News Reporting], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 10 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 117-130.

78. Shao Zhenqing, *Shiji Yingyong Xinwenxue*, p. 70; Shao Piaoping, "Zhongguo Xinwenxue bu Fada zhi Yaunyin ji qi Shiye Yaodian," p. 54.

79. On Shao Piaoping's role in education see Zhang Zhihua, "Shao Piaoping: Woguo Xinwen Jiaoyu de Tuohuang," pp. 264-271. Journalism was established at the following universities:

dominant. The key schools of journalism were those at Yanjing and St. John's universities. The school at St. John's was founded by Don Patterson in 1920 while Roswell Britton and Vernon Nash established the Yanjing school in 1924. An unusually influential connection was cultivated by the University of Missouri's school of journalism. This was achieved mainly through the efforts of Dr. Walter Williams, who had started the United States' first school of journalism in 1908. Williams first visited China in 1921. He presented a lecture at Beijing University, with Hu Shi acting as interpreter, and also visited Shanghai for three days in mid-December that year, meeting local journalists and members of the commercial and educational elite. Williams also called on *Shen Bao* and Shi Liangcai, registering approval of Shi's vast operations and expressing the hope that Shi could do even more to cultivate talent among Chinese journalists.[80] Many Chinese journalists were trained at Williams' Missouri school of

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1920, St. John's University, Shanghai.
1921, Xiamen University (Ceased 1923)
1923, Beijing Pingmin University. Established by Xu Baohuang and Shao Piaoping.
1924, Beijing Minguo University; Yanjing University.
1925, Shanghai Nanfang University. When this ceased operations in 1926, staff moved to Shanghai Guomin University. Staff included Ge Gongzhen, Pan Gongzhan, Pan Gongbi and Chen Bulei.
1926, Fudan University began classes in journalism, but did not form a school unitl 1929.

See Xu Peiting, "Zhongguo Zaoqi de Xinwen Jiaoyu" [Early Education for Journalism in China], *Xinwen Daxue* [Journalism University], no. 1 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), p. 119; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, pp. 673-682; Hu Daojing, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 1018-1023; Huang Tianpeng, "Xinwen Jiaoyu Ershi Wu Nian de Huitou"[A Look Back at Twenty Five Years of Education for Journalism], *Bao Xue* 1.5 (March 1953): 5-12; Bu Shaofu, "Tan Xinwen Jiaoyu" [Discussing Education for Journalism], *Xin Zhonghua* 2.4 (new series) (April 1934): 60-63.

80. On the travels of Dr. Williams see Xie Ranzhi, "Zhongguo Xinwen Jiaoyu de Yange" [The Evolution of Education for Journalism in China], in *Zhonghua Minguo Xinwen Nianjian, 1961*, p. 2; Xie Jiezi, "Shijie Baojie Mingren lai Hua zhe zhi Yanlun Congji ji Yu zhi Ganxiang" [My Impressions of the Speeches of World Famous Journalists in China], in *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian*, pp. 48-51. It is interesting to note that Northcliffe, the great master of popular journalism himself, visited *Shen Bao* in November 1921. See Xie Jiezi, pp. 46-48. On both these visits see Sun Enlin, Notes written for the author, Shanghai, April 10, 1985, p. 1.

journalism, Dong Xianguang (Hollington Tong) being the most prominent among them.[81] When the school of journalism at Yanjing ceased operations in 1927 due to funding difficulties, it was Williams who supported Vernon Nash in raising $50,000 from various newspaper proprietors and journalists in the U. S. to enable the resurrection of the school in 1929. A program of exchanges between Yanjing and Missouri began in the same year.[82] Missouri had also been active in Shanghai. So many of its graduates were resident there that in 1926 they formed an alumni association.[83] Williams' impact on China was so great that in the early 1930s he was considered as a candidate for the position of Minister to China.[84]

Yanjing and St. John's helped to cement a lasting American predominance in the teaching of journalism in China. Together with other schools of journalism they lent an air of respectability and importance to an occupation which had been struggling to justify its self-professed importance in society. But the links between institutional journalism in the universities and the practice of journalism in the newspaper world were as tenuous as the links between the theory and practice of journalism's professional creed. Many well established journalists became teachers of their profession in the schools; however, it was not necessarily the case that many of their pupils became working

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81. Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, pp. 3-5.

82. "A School of Journalism for China," *China Critic*, April 18, 1929, pp. 307-308; E. K. Moy, "A School of Journalism for China in Beiping," *China Weekly Review* 48.12 (May 18, 1929): 519, 524; Liu Huoxuan, "Yan Da de Baoxue Jiaoyu" [Education for Journalism at Yanjing University], *Baoxue Luncong* [Collected Essays on Journalism] (Chongqing: Yi Shi Bao She, 1946), p. 90.

83. Hu Daojing, "Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 1020-1023. Maurice Vatow, also from Missouri, began lecturing at St. John's in 1924. The University of Missouri could also boast of connections through American journalists such as J. B. Powell, Thomas F. F. Millard and, later, Edgar Snow. See John Maxwell Hamilton, "The Missouri News Monopoly and American Altruism in China: Thomas F. F. Millard, J. B. Powell and Edgar Snow," *Pacific Historical Review* 55 (1986): 27-48.

84. Hamilton, "The Missouri News Monopoly," p. 30.

journalists.[85] Indeed, it is impossible to determine exactly how many journalism students went on to become journalists. Yanjing University claimed that many of its graduates in journalism found work with newspapers in Beijing and Tianjin, particularly *Da Gong Bao*.[86] But the big commercial dailies in Shanghai preferred to rely on more traditional methods of employing staff. *Shen Bao* tended to take in local people known to, or recommended by friends of, the chief-editor and other senior staff.[87] None of the chief local news reporters working with the "big four" Shanghai dailies in the 1920s had received a formal education in journalism.[88] Junior reporters might have presented a different story, but there is no available evidence on their background. There was a strong sense that university journalism and newspaper journalism were in many ways two different worlds which did not easily come together.

Some journalists made quite an art of earning a living built almost entirely around institutional journalism. Huang Tianpeng, a Waseda University journalism graduate, survived comfortably as a teacher and a purveyor of wisdom on the nature of journalism. His publications alone constituted at least half of the total body of Chinese material on journalism available during the 1920s and 1930s. Huang so dominated this aspect of

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85. Among the journalists who taught their profession were: Shao Piaoping, Ge Gongzhen, Pan Gongbi, Pan Gongzhan, Chen Bulei, Dong Xianguang, Wang Yingbao (*Shen Bao* editor), Cheng Shewo (active in Beijing, especially *Shijie Ribao*) and Zhang Yunhe (*Shen Bao* editor). The less prominent remain unknown to us.

86. Huang Xianzhao, "Yanjing Daxue Xinwenxue Xi Gaikuang" [A Survey of Yanjing University's Journalism Department], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiu*, ed. Yanjing Daxue Xinwenxue Xi (Beiping: Yan Da Xinwenxue Xi, 1932), p. 8.

87. Sun Enlin, Notes Written for the Author, Shanghai, April 2, 1985, p. 4.

88. These reporters were: Jin Huating (*Shen Bao*); Gu Zhizhong (*Xin Wen Bao*); Ye Ruyin (*Shi Shi Xin Bao*) and; Jin Xiongbai (*Shi Bao*). Between them they were said to have formed a "news net" (*xinwen wang*) in Shanghai. Two have left us memoirs: Jin Xingbai, *Jizhe Shengyan Wushi Nian*, 2 vols. (Hong Kong and Taibei, 1957 and 1988), and; Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi* [Memoirs of the Newspaper World] (Beijing: Zhongguo Wenshi Chubanshe, 1986). Jin Huating had some practical experience in that he had established the Far East News Agency (Yuan Dong Tongxun She) in Shanghai before joining *Shen Bao* in 1926. See "Zhongguo Xinwenjie Mingren Jieshao," *Zhongguo Xinwen Nianjian, 1984*, p. 685. Nothing is known of Ye Ruyin.

journ...m in China that he felt compelled to answer criticism that he was publishing in quantity rather than quality in an attempt to establish himself as a "dictator" in the field.[89] In any case, Huang demonstrated that a "journalist" could more than make ends meet without having to go near a newspaper. This clear distinction between the trained, "professional" journalist and the working journalist would remain a problem into the next decade.

Conditions for working journalists did nonetheless improve throughout the 1920s. Newspaper proprietors might not have paid much heed to Shao Piaoping's textual elevation of the role of the reporter, but the position of full-time reporter became an essential part of newspaper journalism in this period. These were the reporters who were sent out during the day to chase down stories that would be edited and printed for the next morning's paper.

A combination of factors was responsible for the unequivocal arrival of the reporter at the big dailies. Newspapers such as *Shen Bao* were becoming very big business: in 1925 *Shen Bao* employed 350 people.[90] It was therefore possible to expand the reporting facilities of a newspaper

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89. Huang Tianpeng, "Wo Congshi Xinwen Xueshu Yundong de Jingguo" [The Course of My Involvement with Academic Journalism], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiang Ji* [A Collection of Lectures on Journalism] (Shanghai: Shanghai Xiandai Shuju, 1931), pp. 184-186. Huang noted that the texts that most influenced him were: Xu Baohuang, *Xinwenxue* (1919); Matsumoto Kimihei's work translated into Chinese as *Xinwenxue* [Journalism] (translated in 1902), and; Edwin L. Shuman, *Practical Journalism* (an American text translated into Chinese in 1913). This was probably the case for most Chinese students of journalism at that time. Researchers should be grateful for Huang's productiveness, but I am inclined to agree with the criticism levelled at Huang's work. His major textbook, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye* (Shanghai: Lianhe Shudian, 1930), virtua... reproduces the information available in works by Xu Baohuang, Shao Piaoping and Ge Gongzhen. Huang began a career as a working journalist before turning to academic journalism partly because of his sense of frustration with the political authoritarianism of Beijing in the warlord era. For his own account of this experience see *Zenmoyang Zuo Yige Xinwen Jizhe* [How to be a Journalist] (Shanghai: Lianhe Shudian, 1931), pp. 99-119.

90. Shen Bao Guan, ed., *Shen Bao Gaikuang* [A Survey of Shen Bao] (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1935), n.p. In 1929 *Shen Bao's* total monthly expenditure was said to be about 160,000 yuan. See Sun Enlin, Notes Written for Author, Shanghai, April 10, 1985, p. 1.

and take in reporters as full-time rather than hired employees as in the past.

More significant was the arrival of a "new journalism" as a commercially viable option among the newspaper press. "New journalism" as practiced by Pulitzer and Hearst had helped to consolidate the local news reporter's position in the press because it relied so heavily on stories of local scandal, crime and corruption.[91] In China, a "new journalism" crept in on several fronts, from a growth in scandal sheets to changes in the practices of the big dailies. The key to these developments was that Shanghai itself became the focal point for news gathering.

The arrival of the more sensationalist tabloid journalism, as part of the rise of commercial newspapers, has been noted in chapter two. Huang Yuansheng himself described the proliferation of tabloid-style publications in the first years of the Republic.[92] Indeed, it would be wrong to dismiss this form of journalism as being without its own peculiar tradition in China. As chapter two showed, the *xiao bao* (known in English as the mosquito press) first appeared in Shanghai at the turn of the century. These gossipy and sensationalist publications were in closer touch with the popular, street-level culture of Shanghai than the big dailies, but they lacked the big dailies' ability to distribute to a wide audience.[93]

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91. Schudson, "Ideal of Objectivity in the Professions," pp. 195-199.

92. Huang Yuanyong, "Kuhai Shenyin Lu," p. 134.

93. On this fascinating but little known early popular press see Zhang Junliang, "Haishang Xiao Bao Fanlun" [A General Discussion of Shanghai's Mosquito Press], in *Shi Nian*, ed. Shen Shi News Agency (Shanghai: Shen Shi Tongxun She, 1934), pp. 173-174; Qian Xingcun (A Ying), *Wan Qing Wenyi Baokan Shulüe* [An Account of Late Qing Literary Periodicals] (Shanghai: Gudian Wenxue Chubanshe, 1958), pp. 53-58; Yao Jiguang and Yu Yifen, "Shanghai de Xiao Bao," *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 8 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 223-224; David Chi-hsin Lu, "Gems from the Mosquito Press," *Tien Hsia* 6.1 (Jan. 1938): 7-8; Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu*, p. 445; E. Perry Link, Jr., *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, pp. 141-144. Link points to a possible British influence, through the use of games and puzzles, on these magazines, though one must wonder about the extent of knowledge about British magazines at that time. Li Boyuan serialized his famous novel *Guan*

Part of the function of the early *xiao bao* was appropriated by the literary pages of the big dailies, for example, *Shen Bao*'s *Ziyou Tan* (*Free Talk*) which appeared in August 1911.[94] These supplements were not merely literary pages but carried on the *xiao bao* tradition of publishing entertainments and gossip garnered from Shanghai circles of popular culture.[95] It was out of this fashion for supplements that the most successful *xiao bao* were born. *Jing Bao* (*The Crystal*) began a life of its own in 1920 after an initial phase as the supplement to *Shen Zhou Ribao* in 1919. In 1923 *Jin Gang Zuan* (*The Diamond*) appeared on the streets, peddling the same kind of sensationalist journalism as *Jing Bao*. Many other *xiao bao* followed. For most, poor organization and insufficient resources made life short; for a few, like *Jing Bao* and *Jin Gang Zuan*, and also *Fuermosi Bao* (*The Holmes News*) founded in 1926, success was such that they constituted a popular alternative to the bland sterility of the big dailies. Several *xiao bao* soon achieved circulations of around 10,000, and in 1933 *Jing Bao* itself was claiming a circulation of 30,000.

The popularity of the *xiao bao* was due in part to their willingness to publish scandal about prominent political and intellectual figures. One of the most famous stories of the day, covered by *Jing Bao*, concerned the attempt by Huang Jinrong, a local gang leader, to make a Shanghai actress his mistress. In another exposé, *Jing Bao* reported that Hu Shi was seen

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novel *Guan Chang Xian Xing Ji* (*Panorama of Officialdom*) in one of his many *xiao bao*, *Recreation*.

94. On *Ziyou Tan* see Yuan Xingda, "Shen Bao Ziyou Tan Yuanliu" [The Origins and Development of *Shen Bao*'s *Ziyou Tan*], *Xin Wenxue Shiliao*, no. 1 (1978): 247. *Shi Bao* had been the innovator with this form of literary supplement, and *Xin Wen Bao* could not afford to be left behind, so in 1914 it refined its light fiction and entertainment columns into the regular supplement *Kuai Huo Lin* (*The Happy Set*). On *Shi Bao* see Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Huiyilu*, pp. 349-350; on *Xin Wen Bao* see Hu Daojing, *Xin Wen Bao* Sishi Nian Shi, 1893-1933" [A Forty Year Histroy og *Xin Wen Bao*], in *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi Cankao Ziliao* [Source Material on the History of the Modern Press in China], ed. Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwenxue Xi (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwenxue Xi, 1982), p. 192.

95. Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, p. 118.

visiting a local brothel.[96] The *xiao bao* clearly filled a gap in Chinese journalism that had been left by the timidity of the big dailies. To be sure, some of the *xiao bao* engaged in extortion and went to extreme lengths in sensational reporting in their quest for profit. The appearance in 1926 of *Huang Tang Shijie* (*Dissolute World*), "a notoriously sexy journal," began the "scandal era" in which *xiao bao* of this kind flourished.[97] Other *xiao bao* were used by warlords or local politicians in slanging matches with their opponents. But these curious little publications, which were usually sold every three days, were not cheap, costing more per copy than the dailies. Though they might have, as some journalists claimed, reached an audience among the lower middle-classes, shopkeepers, clerks or even rickshaws and the like, it is likely that the wealthier readers of the daily press were also avid readers of the *xiao bao*.[98] In any case, the *xiao bao* phenomenon created pressure from "below" for the larger commercial dailies to adapt to the popularity of a "new journalism" in Shanghai.[99] Indeed, it has been seen in chapter two that in October 1921 tabloid-style journalism claimed as one of its victims one of Shanghai's big dailies, *Shi Bao*. That paper's conversion to the more sensationalist and lurid styles of reporting ensured new journalism of a firm foothold in the Shanghai newspaper world.[100]

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96. On these stories see Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, pp. 449-450.

97. Lu, "Gems From the Mosquito Press," p. 8; Zhang Junliang, "Haishang Xiao Bao Fanlun," p. 174. Papers of this kind were known as "heng bao" (horizontal press) because they were printed horizontally across the page, and perhaps because "heng" has connotations of something unrestrained.

98. Xu Zhuchneg, *Bao Hai Jiu Wen*, pp. 57-62 claims these *xiao bao* reached a petty bourgeois audience consisting of rickshaws, shop assistants, petty clerks and the like.

99. For further information on *xiao bao* see Zhang Junliang, "Haishang Xiao Bao Fanlun," pp. 174-180; Yao Jiguang and Yu Yifen, "Shanghai de Xiao Bao," pp. 223-245; Lu, "Gems From the Mosquito Press," pp. 8-17; Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Huiyilu*, pp. 445-451; Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, pp. 119-123.

100. See chapter 2, p. 92 for the conversion of *Shi Bao* to new journalism.

New journalism could, of course, mean different things to different people, depending upon their place in the world of journalism. In 1922 Dong Xianguang, one of China's most enthusiastic converts to American journalism, argued that "news of human interest and information about the common people" was pointing the way to a "new era" for Chinese journalism. He wrote that "politics and the doings of those 'higher up' have both become wearisome to the progressive Chinese journalist."[101]

> Hitherto the Chinese newspaper has been a portrayer of scheming politicians and barbarian militarists, and a recorder of their intrigues and counter intrigues of the most foul kind for money and power. Its columns have been full of telegrams of the Tuchuns and the division commanders expressing either approval or disapproval of certain acts of the government or of the cabinet members. Ton after ton of such nonsensical telegraphic messages have been annually flooding the newspaper offices since the establishment of the Republic in 1912.

This could easily have been a description of *Shen Bao*'s journalism, but the alternative that Dong Xianguang envisaged, a sort of populist social news, was merely a sanitized version of the yellow journalism that the new *Shi Bao* had begun to pursue. Social news could mean the most scurrilous form of yellow journalism, "human interest" stories, or reports on the major social issues and problems of the day. Lurid reports of rape could just as easily be labelled "social news" as reports on the feminist movement. It was a matter of selection and emphasis. Dong Xianguang did not wish to promote the more sensational features of social news, but the ambiguous nature of this form of news removed some of the complications from the job of gathering and reporting it.

As one example of the "new tendency" in Chinese journalism Dong Xianguang singled out Shanghai's *Shang Bao* (*Shanghai Journal of Commerce*), which appeared in January 1921. Along with the flourishing *xiao bao*, *Shang Bao* represented a challenge to the established dailies.

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101. Hollington K. Tong, "The New Tendency of Journalism in China," *China Weekly Review* 20.6 (February 11, 1922): 454, 455-456.

Shang Bao presented itself as the "young Turk" of the Shanghai business world, attempting to infuse commerce with some of the reformist flavour of the May Fourth era. As such, it confronted *Xin Wen Bao*, the bible of Shanghai commerce, head on. *Xin Wen Bao* felt sufficiently threatened by its new rival that it allegedly sent employees to buy up the first issues of *Shang Bao* to throw them into the Huangpu River.[102] The distinctiveness of *Shang Bao*'s journalism came from Chen Bulei's anti-warlord editorials, Pan Gongzhan's systematic editing and organization of telegraphic dispatches, and a concentration on local news and commercial affairs. The expansive coverage of its feature page *Shangye Jinrong* (*Commerce and Finance*), which included editorials, was unmatched by any other newspaper. *Xin Wen Bao* introduced a similar feature in April 1922, while *Shen Bao* did not follow suit until October 1926.[103] Although it failed to threaten the market leadership of these two giants, *Shang Bao*, like the *xiao bao*, attempted to steal readers away from the big dailies by exploiting news of local Shanghai affairs.[104]

Thus the impact of market competition through the arrival of the more aggressive commercialism of a "new journalism" helped to consolidate the position of the reporter in the big dailies. The "pipe-smoking reporter" as a manifestation of the structure of Chinese journalism (if not as a description of personal habits) was becoming a thing of the past in commercial journalism.[105] Although *Shi Bao* was the

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102. Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, p. 347, n. 45.

103. *Ibid.*, pp. 324-325, 331. *Shi Shi Xin Bao* had introduced a column called *Gong Shang zhi You* (*Friend of Industry and Commerce*) in January 1920, but it was not as extensive as that started by *Shang Bao*.

104. On *Shang Bao* in general see Zhang Jinglu, "Yi Shang bao" [In Memory of Shang Bao], *Zhongguo de Xinwen Jizhe yu Xinwenzhi* [Journalists and Newspapers in Chinal (Shanghai: Guanghua Shuju, 1930), Pt. 2, pp. 35-40; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," p. 269; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, pp. 329-332. On the ownership of *Shang Bao* see chapter 2.

105. Pan Gongbi, "Wang Ping Jie zhi Huiyi," p. 146 also points to *Shi Shi Xin Bao*'s use of a permanent court reporter and the need to cover the "Far Eatern

only one among the four big dailies to openly embrace yellow journalism and the voyeurism of some social news, the others realized that to cover the news of their city and to maintain their market position it was necessary to employ full-time city reporters. The chief local news reporters of the "big four", Jin Huating (*Shen Bao*), Gu Zhizhong (*Shi Bao*, then *Xin Wen Bao*), Ye Ruyin (*Shi Shi Xin Bao*) and Jin Xiongbai (*Shi Bao*), all started work in the period 1923-1926.[106] As a reflection of the growing importance of reporting the city, the dailies began introducing local news supplements. *Shen Bao* 's local supplement (*Benbu Zengkan*) was published daily and distributed along with the paper in the Shanghai region, beginning in February 1924. It contained news of commercial development, cultural activities and other miscellaneous Shanghai events, as well as theatre and movie reviews. *Xin Wen Bao* published a similar local supplement, but this did not appear until April 1926.[107]

Despite this consolidation of their position in the newspaper world, the journalists and reporters working with the commercial dailies did not show much interest in organizing their profession. As had been the case in the years preceding the 1911 Revolution, it was the politically active journalists who displayed the most initiative in this area.

Conference", held in Shanghai in 1920, as factors which consolidated the position of the reporter. It is, however, likely that *Shen Bao* had a more or less permanent court reporter around the turn of the century. See my discussion on treaty port journalism in chapter 1.

106. See note 88 above. Gu Zhizhong has noted that when he started at *Shi Bao* in 1923 he was mainly occupied with the gathering of "social news" from the courts, police department and so on in the International Settlement. One of his qualifications for the job was that he was able to conduct interviews and communicate with local authorities in English. This was, no doubt, one of the qualifications required by journalists working in the peculiar environment of Shanghai. See Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 4-8.

107. On *Shen Bao*'s local supplement see Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi" [A History of Shen Bao's Sixty Six Years], *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai* [A New Era in the History of Journalism] (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1946), pp. 93-94; on both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* see Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, pp. 335-336. For further discussion on supplements published in the wake of the May Fourth era see chapter two and chapter five.

In 1917 about twenty journalists and writers in Shanghai came together to form the Shanghai Journalists' Club (Shanghai Jizhe Julebu). Among this group were: Ye Chucang, Shao Lizi and Cheng Shewo from *Min Guo Ribao*, and; Wu Zhihui, Chen Baixu and Wang Xinming from *Zhonghua Xin Bao*. *Minguo Ribao* was then the only newspaper in Shanghai directly controlled by the Guomindang. *Zhonghua Xin Bao* formed a small cell of the Political Study Group (Zheng Xue Hui) under the leadership Gu Zhongxiu and Yang Yongtai.[108] In a sense, these groups represented two of the many parts of the Guomindang as both Gu and Yang had been members of the Guomindang before the "second revolution" of 1913. Both groups had established their respective newspapers in order to oppose the regime of Yuan Shikai, but what they shared went beyond this antipathy toward Yuan and was sufficient to bring many of them together under the Nationalist government established in 1927. The journalists' club that they formed was clearly just that: a small group of journalists with common interests. But their horizons were not confined to Shanghai. The national and international political climate on the eve of the actual May Fourth Incident helped to inflate their ambitions to larger proportions.

One of the key political issues of the day was China's standing *vis-a-vis* the foreign powers. The government in Beijing since the death of Yuan Shikai had been racked with struggles between Li Yuanhong, who succeeded Yuan Shikai, Feng Guozhang, Li's deputy, Zhang Xun, who attempted a restoration of the Xuan Tong Emperor in July 1917, and Duan

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108. On the journalists' club see Wang Xinming, *Xinwen Quanli Sishi Nian*, p. 163. Cheng Shewo was working on the *Minguo Ribao* feature *Minguo Xianhua* (*Republican Chat*); see Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo de Xinwen Jizhe yu Xinwenzhi*, Pt. 2, p. 30. On *Minguo Ribao* see Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo de Xinwen Jizhe yu Xinwenzhi*, pt. 2, pp. 28-30; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 280-281; Lai Guanglin, *Qishi Nian Zhongguo Baoye Shi* [A Seventy Year History of the Press in China] (Taibei: Zhongyang Ribao, 1981), pp. 67-68. On *Zhonghua Xin Bao* see Zhang Jinglu, *Zhongguo de Xinwen Jizhe yu Xinwenzhi*, pp. 28-30; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," pp. 279-280; Wang Xinming, *Xinwen Quanli Sishi Nian*, pp. 128-132, 136-141. On the Political Study Group see Andrew Nathan, *Peking Politics, 1918-1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 253-257.

Qirui. To add to this disunity, the warlords of the southern provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan, together with Sun Yat-sen, had declared their independence from Beijing and formed a military government in Guangzhou. By 1918, with a new parliament convened, there was a feeling among Beijing's political leaders that the impending post-war Versailles Peace Conference presented an opportunity for China to regain some of the concession areas lost to the foreign powers or at least prevent any further encroachment on China's territory. To achieve these ends it was felt that China had to present itself to the world as a unified nation. Throughout the latter months of 1918 the new President, Xu Shichang, had been making progress in creating this sense of unity. In February 1919 Xu succeeded in bringing together the warlords of the northern and southern provinces for what became known as the Shanghai Peace Conference.[109]

It was against this background of concern for national unity that members of the Shanghai Journalists' Club promoted the idea of a national press association. They contacted their colleagues in Guangzhou who then sent a cable to the Shanghai Daily Press Association, part of which read:[110]

> The European war is over; there is a ceasefire between the south and the north; the world situation and the internal peace of our country concern our survival as a nation and the well-being of our people. The national press should make no boundaries within its ranks, eliminate party bias, consider the correct views and take a consistent stand. Overseas, we can give backing to our special envoy to the Peace Conference; at home, we can guide the representatives of the southern and northern groups. A prerequisite for this to occur is the agreement of colleagues in your Association to unite the national press to form an association in Shanghai....

After the Shanghai Daily Press Association sent its approval of this plan to Guangzhou, representatives of over eighty newspapers gathered in

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109. On these events see Nathan, *Peking Politics*, pp. 128-129, 138-155.

110. Cited by Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 377.

Shanghai where the National Press Association (Quanguo Baojie Lianhehui) was founded on April 15, 1919.

Though little is known of the activities of this Press Association, its members, like the members of the press association of 1910, eventually failed to overcome the parochial and partisan forces within their ranks. The agenda of the first meeting was concerned with apparently noble causes: 1) China's attitude to foreign countries; 2) The problem of foreign loans; 3) Support for freedom of speech; 4) Reducing postal and telegraphic charges; 5) Continuing to publish at the end of the lunar year, and; 6) Refusing to publish Japanese advertisements.[111] But the time set aside for discussing the first item was almost entirely occupied by accusations that a certain staff member of the Nanyang Brothers' Tobacco Company was favouring the use of Japanese products in manufacturing cigarettes. On the second day of the meeting, Wu Tiecheng, representing Guangzhou newspapers, exposed these accusations as a ruse on the part of four Association members to blackmail the Nanyang employee.[112]

In addition to this internal squabbling over spurious patriotic causes, the predominance of Guomindang members among the Shanghai Journalists' Club carried over into the National Press Association. Ye Chucang's election as chairman of the Association was indicative of the strength of Guomindang membership. In the concessions areas of Shanghai the Guomindang were perceived to be little more than organized "thugs" (*bao tu*). The Guomindang's high profile in the Press Association made the "gentry" (*shen shi*) of the Shanghai press, *Shen Bao*, *Xin Wen Bao* and *Shi Bao*, reluctant to become members of the new Association. One view has it that these newspapers took no part in the Association, but it is

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111. *Ibid.*, pp. 377-378.

112. Wang Xinming, *Xinwen Quanli Sishi Nian*, pp. 164-165.

most likely that they did not become involved after attending the first meeting.[113]

Although the absence of the nation's biggest newspapers deprived it of a certain amount of status, the second annual meeting of the National Press Association, held in Guangzhou in May 1920, could boast an expanded membership of over 120 press organizations. The agenda ranged over an increased number of issues, including the problem of the Japanese presence in Shandong, the need for an international news agency and a proposal to investigate the internal conditions of government ministries in Beijing. This expansion of the Press Association and its horizons belied certain internal tensions. Any apparent unity began to unravel when two factions emerged for reasons which remain unclear. The third annual meeting was set down for May 1921 in Beijing, but members of the Association suddenly split into groups led respectively by *Beijing Ribao* and *Chen Bao*. *Chen Bao* was the Beijing sister publication of *Shi Shi Xin Bao* and therefore aligned with the Research Clique. *Beijing Ribao* was one of the oldest Beijing dailies, founded in 1904, but little is known about it and there is no apparent reason why it should form the other faction.[114] In any case, this split proved to be the undoing of the Press Association. The two sides held their own meetings in Beijing, each hurling abuse at the other. They both resolved to have a fourth annual meeting, the *Beijing Ribao* faction in Fuzhou and the *Chen Bao* group in Hankou; however, the various members were by now at a total loss as to what course to pursue. The National Press Association thus petered out amidst the

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113. *Ibid.*, p. 167 claims that these three papers never took part in the Association, whereas Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 378. claims the "principal Shanghai newspapers" were not part of the second annual meeting.

114. *Beijing Ribao*, originally known as *Beijing Bao*, was founded by Zhu Qi in August 1904. Zhu had been a member of Sun Yat-sen's Xing Zhong Hui in Guangzhou, but was suspected of revealing secrets and was not trusted so retreated to Beijing. Here he was said to have become a constitutionalist. See Fang Hanqi, *Jindai Baokan Shi*, pp. 584, 593, n. 10; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi*, pp. 264-265.

confusion of its own making.[115] What had begun on a note of high principle ended in low farce.

The Press Association, like its predecessor of 1910, was unable to break the parochialism of the press in China, and the fact that the big Shanghai dailies which approached a national circulation and influence were dubious about joining the Association indicated a continuing reticence among the commercial press to take any concerted political action. It was also indicative of the continuing political weakness of journalists that this National Press Association was organized around newspapers establishments rather than working journalists. The group centred on *Minguo Ribao* and *Zhonghua Xin Bao* in Shanghai, which were in effect germinating cells of the Guomindang, did not possess sufficient influence on a national scale to extend their bailiwick beyond Shanghai.

At the local level, Shanghai journalists fared slightly better in organizing their profession, although in the years leading up to 1927 the associational life of journalists did not reach beyond the status of clubs. A small group of about ten journalists who worked for the commercial dailies came together in 1921 to form the Lang Hu Hui (Lion and Tiger Association). The most prominent journalists in this informal group were Ge Gongzhen, Yan Duhe (*Xin Wen Bao*) and Zhou Shoujuan (*Shen Bao*). The name chosen for the group hinted at a certain levity among its members: it was derived from the phrase *lang tun hu yan*, literally meaning to wolf down one's food, and suggested the journalists' proclivity for congregating in restaurants.[116]

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115. For a brief history of the National Press Association see Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 377-382. This remains the only source of information on the Press Association.

116. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 79. Yan Duhe and Zhou Shoujuan worked as editors for the literary supplements of their respective newspapers, and their prominence in this club-like association suggests that the distinction between working journalists and a sort of commercial literati was still unclear. See Yan Zuqi, "Yan Duhe he Xin Wen Bao Fukan" [Yan Duhe and Xin Wen

This "clubby" familiarity soon spread to other journalists in Shanghai, resulting in the formation of an organization with a larger membership. The nature of the activities of the Shanghai Journalists' Social Club (Shanghai Xinwen Jizhe Lianhuan Hui), founded on August 17, 1924, and open to both Chinese and foreign journalists, was betrayed by the title given to the organization. Even though this Club grew out of a concern about the low status of journalists within newspaper establishments, it was never much more than a watering hole for the weary.[117] There were at least half a dozen similar clubs formed in Shanghai in the years before the rise of the Nationalists; some, such as the Sincere Association of Chinese and Japanese Journalists (Zhong-Ri Xinwen Jizhe Kenqin Hui), were probably intended to help smooth over the rifts between China and the foreign powers.[118] Ge Gongzhen himself held a low opinion of these early journalist associations:[119]

> When one looks at their constitutions [these associations] all claim to be highly righteous; however, on examining their content they are shown to be very corrupt. Internally, unless there are a few people to take control of such associations, their members look upon them with disdain. Looking from the outside, there are associations which big-note themselves under a false name, which receive subsidies or which exist in name alone, and none of these associations is respected by society.

Short on rectitude and political will though they might have been, the clubs played an important role in developing a sense of a particular

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Bao's Supplements], in *Bianji Jizhe Yi Bai Ren*, pp. 329-332; Yuan Xingda, "Shen Bao Ziyou Tan Yuan Liu," p. 248.

117. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 393-395; Huang Tianpeng, *Zenmoyang Zuo Yige Xinwen Jizhe*, pp. 67-68, which claims that, according to Zhang Jinglu (of *Shang Bao*), the Social Club was at least partly founded to protect the reputation and standing of journalists; Shi Junbo, "Xinwen Jizhe Zhiye de Baozhang" [Professional Security of Journalists], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.4 (August 1935): 55-56. See also the report of the first meeting of this Club in *Shen Bao*, August 18, 1924, p. 14, which lists Ge Gongzhen and Pan Gongzhan among the leaders.

118. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, p. 390, mentions this club without giving any other details.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 390.

occupational identity among the journalists. By the mid-1920s journalists clearly liked to think of themselves as constituting a profession; the problem was persuading not only "society" but also their employers to accept such a view.

A major hurdle for aspiring professional journalists to overcome was the pall of corruption that had been cast over all of Chinese journalism by the nefarious habits of the Beijing press. The cause of professional journalism, difficult enough to realize in Shanghai, hindered by the corrupt practices suggested by Ge Gongzhen, faced a Sisyphean task in Beijing. To the extent that their proprietors had succeeded in achieving financial independence, journalists working with the big commercial dailies in Shanghai were partially shielded against a dependency on bribes or subsidies. In contrast, journalists working in Beijing had grown accustomed to living with what had by the 1920s become institutionalized subsidization of the press, and this state of affairs tainted the reputation of journalism as an occupation.

There were various methods used by the warlord governments to buy the support of journalists in Beijing. Some journalists actively coveted sinecures and gratuities. The simplest method of gaining a journalist's support was to hand over money. All the northern warlords engaged in this practice. Cao Kun bribed not only members of parliament but also journalists to assist his election to the presidency in 1923. Duan Qirui oiled the palms of so many journalists that bribery assumed the character of official policy. In the summer of 1925, when Duan Qirui organized a Restoration Conference (*Shanhou Huiyi*) in the hope of recreating a national constitution and retrieving a unified republic, three hundred journalists were said to have received payments of three to four hundred yuan or, for the more influential journalists, six hundred yuan per month. Duan also employed a strategy of creating fictitious official positions for journalists; they were paid up to one or two hundred yuan per month

under the title of consultant, counsellor or special secretary. It is hardly surprising that those earning their living by such means became known as "piglet journalists" (*zhuzai baoren*).[120] Bribes and subsidies had become such an established form of income that on commencing employment at the smaller newspapers some journalists were not paid a regular salary but given a free hand to seek out remuneration from any source that was willing to pay.[121] On one occasion, during the Mid-autumn Festival (*Zhongqiu Jie*) of 1925, about fifty journalists occupied the offices of the Finance Ministry demanding that they be paid gratuities. They left only after a thirteen hour vigil and an offer to pay them a total of three thousand yuan.[122]

Journalists in Beijing had therefore become an established part of the corrupt political system; or, as one observer has written, they "not only connived at, but even abetted, corruption."[123] The various warlords had come to believe that manipulation of a public image was a necessary part of governing, but the ways in which they used journalists merely served to discredit both themselves and journalists.

No lesser figure than Shao Piaoping, who in his pioneering works on journalism repeatedly stressed the need for reporters to be independent and uncorruptable, also allowed himself to be drawn into the political struggles of the warlords. Amidst the shifting sand that was politics in Beijing, Shao's agile footwork was eventually no match for the speed with which the warlords could make and break alliances.

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120. On these claims see Wang Xinming, *Xinwen Quanli Sishi Nian*, pp. 296-297. This information has also been reproduced in Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China*, pp. 58, 213 n. 48, and; Lai Guanglin, *Qishi Nian Zhongguo Baoye Shi*, pp. 52, 55. On the Restoration Conference see Nathan, *Peking Politics*, p. 6.

121. Wang Xinming, *Xinwen Quanli Sishi Nian*, p. 297.

122. *Idem*, "Xinwen Quanli Manyou Lu" [Meanderings in Press Circles], *Bao Xue* 1.5 (Oct. 1953): 84

123. Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China*, p. 61.

From the beginning of his career in journalism, Shao had made enemies of some of the most powerful figures in Beijing. In August 1919 his newspaper, *Jing Bao*, was closed down by Duan Qirui because of Shao's editorial opposition to the government's conciliatory attitude to Japan.[124] Shao then fled to Japan, returning to resurrect *Jing Bao* in September 1920 only after the defeat of Duan's Anfu Clique at the hands of the combined forces of the Zhili Clique (led by Cao Kun and Wu Peifu) and Zhang Zuolin's Fengtian Clique.[125] An opium addict who reputedly enjoyed high living, it has been said that Shao was able to finance his cavorting thanks to subsidization paid by the victorious Zhang Zuolin.[126] In any case, in the early years of the 1920s Shao again thrust his newspaper into the spiders' webs of political intrigue in Beijing.

Discerning a pattern to his allegiances is difficult. The only consistent thread running through Shao's career was a sympathy for the radical nationalism of which Sun Yat-sen was then the figurehead.[127]

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124. Shao had also adressed the student meeting held at Beijing University on the eve of the May Fourth demonstration. He spoke on the Shandong problem. See Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960; reprint ed., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 101; An Yang, "Shao Piaoping Shengping Shilüe," p. 134.

125. On this short battle see Odoric Y. K. Wou, *Militarism in Modern China: The Career of Wu P'ei-fu, 1916-1939* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1978), pp. 30-32.

126. This negative view of Shao Piaoping can be found in Guan Yixian, "Beijing Baozhi Xiao Shi" [A Short History of Beijing Newspapers], in *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Fazhan Gaikuang* [A Survey of the Development of the Modern Press in China], ed. Yang Guanghui et al. (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1986; originally published in *Xinwen Jicheng*, vol.6, 1943), p. 426. The most damning case has been put by Gong Debai in *Gong Debai Huiyilu* [Reminiscences of Gong Debai], 2 vols. (Taibei: Xinwen Tiandi She, 1964), 1: 89-90, 125-126; *Si Yu Ji* [Four Foolish Volumes], 4 vols. (Taibei: Zhuanji Wenxue She, 1969), 1: 143-147; 4: 19-27. This has been repeated in Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China*, pp. 59-60 which has also drawn on Hu Zhengzhi, "Ai Piaoping" [In Memory of Shao Piaoping], *Guowen Zhoubao* [National News Weekly] 3.17 (May 9, 1926): 4-6. The circumstances surrounding Shao's acceptance of bribes remain unclear, particularly in relation to Zhang Zoulin. As will be seen, the political atmosphere in which monies were given and received made Shao's position far more complex than these easy denunciations of him would suggest.

127. This might explain Shao's initial connection with Zhang Zuolin. In the first Zhili-Fengtian war of April-May 1922 Sun Yat-sen supported Zhang Zuolin's

Shao was increasingly drawn toward the left in politics, particularly by an interest in post-revolutionary Russia about which he had published a book in 1920.[128] He also published many articles on the theory and practice of communism in the pages of *Jing Bao*, especially after August 1922, when the Communists began to join with the Guomindang, and the enlistment of official Russian support, beginning in January 1923, for the cause of a united front.[129] Above all it was Shao's apparent loyalty to the dual causes of a united front and Russian-backed strategies in north China which brought about his demise.

The situation in the north after Zhang Zuolin's defeat in the first Zhili-Fengtian war of April-May 1922 was particularly complex. Although Sun Yat-sen had backed Zhang Zuolin in the war, politicians in Beijing, including the Communists led by Li Dazhao, held high hopes for a co-operative alliance with Wu Peifu, and they wanted to persuade Sun to join such an alliance. The Russians were also content to see the defeat of the pro-Japanese Zhang Zuolin and cautiously optimistic about bringing Wu and Sun together.[130] In this period it is possible that, as some observers have claimed, Shao Piaoping swayed with the political winds of the day and shifted support from Zhang Zuolin to Wu Peifu.[131] This was merely

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Fengtian forces. See Hsi-Sheng Ch'i, *Warlord Politics in China, 1916-1928* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 209-213.

128. This book was *Xin E Guo zhi Yanjiu* [Research on the New Russia], written and probably published in Japan. See Xiao Zhaoran and Lu Binliang, "Shao Piaoping: Zaoqi Xuanchuan Ma-Liezhuyi he Fandi Fanfengjian Yundong de Wu Wei Zhanshi" [Shao Piaoping: A Fearless Soldier in the Spread of Marxism-Leninism and the Anti-Imperialist, Anti-Feudal Movement], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 10 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 99-103.

129. Xiao Zhaoran and Lu Binliang, "Shao Piaoping," pp. 103-108. On the formation of a united front see Lyman P. Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp. 14-18.

130. See Wou, *Militarist in Modern China*, pp. 205-212 for a good summary of this period.

131. Guang Yixian, "Beijing Baozhi Xiao Shi," p. 426 claims that Shao supported the Zhili Clique after Zhang Zoulin's defeat, while Gong Debai, *Huiyilu*, 1:

consistent with Russian initiatives and, to a lesser degree, Sun Yat-sen's inclination in the final months of 1922. Wu Peifu's crushing of the labour movement on the Beijing-Hankou railway in February 1923 and Cao Kun's own presidential ambitions combined to sink any hopes of an alliance government.[132] Shao Piaoping was once more forced to reassess his position as his political mentors pursued new strategies. The Zhili Clique again became the bogey man to the united front forces, particularly Sun Yat-sen who, being blocked by Cao Kun's usurpation of the presidency, found himself joining forces with Zhang Zoulin. At the same time, Wu Peifu's military strength could not be ignored and the Russians, who were more fearful of Zhang Zoulin gaining control of the north, continued to court Wu, culminating in the Sino-Soviet treaty of May 1924.[133]

Another dimension was added to the picture by the presence of Feng Yuxiang. In October 1924 Feng suddenly deserted his master, Wu Peifu, during the second Zhili-Fengtian war and seized Beijing. This left Zhang Zoulin as the most powerful militarist in the north, and both the Russians and the Guomindang-led united front were anxious to bolster Feng's strength lest he be overwhelmed by Zhang's superior forces.[134] At this point Shao Piaoping cultivated close links with Feng Yuxiang, acting as a go-between for members of the Guomindang, encouraging Feng to throw

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89, 125 claims Shao took bribes in turn from Zhang Zoulin, Wu Peifu's Foreign Minister, Wellington Koo (in 1924 during the negotiation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty), and Feng Yüxiang.

132. See Wou, *Militarism in Modern China*, pp. 212-229.

133. The best account of the background to negotiations which led to the Sino-Soviet Treaty is Sow-Theng Leong, *Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917-1926* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1976), pp. 251-275.

134. On Feng Yüxiang's position in northern politics in this period see James E. Sheridan, *Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yü-hsiang* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 133-147, 163-176 in which Sheridan argues that Feng's seizure of Beijing was done with Japanese knowledge and approval, and that Feng was by no means as pro-Russian as contemporary observers believed.

in his lot with the united front and giving favourable publicity in *Jing Bao*to Sun Yat-sen.[135] An intriguing possibility is that Shao had become a secret member of the Communist Party by May 1924 and that he was also in close touch with Luo Zhanglong, then the highest ranking Communist in Beijing.[136] The precise details of Shao's clandestine activities do not matter as much as his intricate involvement in the political causes of the united front forces. Shao was playing politics and playing it with the very highest stakes.

Although Feng Yuxiang troops controlled Beijing by November 1924, Duan Qirui, the aging Anfu leader, was wheeled out to be chief-executive of the government as a compromise between Feng and Zhang Zuolin. Through his own political manoevres Shao Piaoping had effectively placed himself under the protective wing of Feng Yuxiang. This was an inherently dangerous position because, as all those assisting Feng knew, it was only a matter of time before Zhang would attempt to gain full control of Beijing.[137] The danger escalated for Shao Piaoping when he gave editorial support to Guo Songling's revolt (against his leader, Zhang

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135. It has been said that Shao was visited by Guomindang members, was a significant influence on Feng Yüxiang, and attempted to convince Feng to visit the Soviet Union. See An Yang, "Shao Piaoping Shengping Shilüe," p. 136; Sun Xiaoyang, "Shao Piaoping," p. 76.

136. There is little doubt that Shao lent assistance to the Communist Party as part of the united front movement. *Jing Bao* was probably the most prominent forum of socialist, particularly Russian socialist, ideas in Beijing by 1924, and had carried advertisements for the Communist Party's *Xiangdao Zhoubao* (Guide Weekly) since 1923. The claim that Shao actually joined the Party was first put by Luo Zhanglong, for example, in "Yi Beijing Daxue Xinwenxue Yanjiu Hui yu Shao Zhenqing" [Recollections of Beijing University's Journalism Research Association and Shao Zhenqing], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 4 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1980), pp. 119-123, 142. The argument in support of Shao as a memeber of the Communist Party is put in detail by Fang Hanqi, "Guanyu Shao Piaoping shi Gongchandangyuan de Ji dian Kanfa" [A Few Points of View on Shao Piaoping as a Communist Party Member], *Xinwenxue Lunwenji*, no. 9 (Beijing: Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 237-250. In November 1984 Shao's life was commemorated at a large ceremony held at People's University in Beijing, signifying an acceptance of his credentials as a journalist with his heart in the "right" place. See "Shao's Words of Wisdom," *China Daily*, November 12, 1984.

137. Sheridan, *Chinese Warlord*, p. 171; Leong, *Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations*, p. 277.

Zoulin) of November 1925. Guo's desertion was the result of a scheme worked out between himself and Feng Yuxiang. Unfortunately for Shao, he had chosen to support the losing side.[138] By the beginning of 1926 Feng was confronted with the combined opposition of Zhang Zuolin and Wu Peifu, who had settled their differences to tackle a common enemy. In mid-April Feng withdrew to the north-west and relinquished control over Beijing. Shao Piaoping stood alone, unprotected as the troops led by Zhang Zongchang and Zhang Xueliang, under Zhang Zuolin's command, marched into Beijing. Shao took refuge in the foreign legations quarters, but was lured out under false pretences, allegedly by a "friend" who had been bought over by Zhang, and was arrested on April 22. Despite the pleading of several local journalists, Shao Piaoping was executed on April 26. Hestood accused of spreading "red propaganda" and "collaboration with Red Russia."[139] Ironically, though the details of Shao's secretive political allegiances remain unclear and he denied being a member of any party, there was a superficial truth to these allegations.[140] Shao had clearly

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138. Shao's *Jing Bao* was particularly scathing to Zhang Zoulin and his supporter Zhang Zongchang during the time of Guo Songling's revolt. In the December 7, 1925 issue photographs of the two appeared with the captions "Zhang Zuolin: this generation's great exterminator and betryer of the people," and; "Zhang Zongchang: public enemy of the Shandong people." Cited by Sun Xiaoyang, "Shao Piaoping," p. 69. All sources, both positive and negative in their attitude, cite Shao's support of the Guo Songling revolt as playing a major part in his demise. On the negative side see Gong Debai, *Huiyilu*, 1: 90; for one of the more positive see Geng Yunzhi, "Shao Piaoping," in *Minguo Renwu Zhuan* [Biographies of Republican Figures], ed. Li Xin and Sun Sibai, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju,

139. See the following articles by Sun Xiaoyang: "Guanyu Shao Piaoping de Jidian Kaozheng," pp. 173-174, which corrects the view that he was executed on April 24, and; "Shao Piaoping," pp. 99-101. Both the latter source and Gong Debai, *Huiyilu*, 1: 125 claim Shao's "friend" Zhang Hanju had been bought over by the Fengtian Clique.

140. On April 22, 1926 *Jing Bao* published a declaration by Shao in which he denied membership of any party. See Sun Xiaoyang, "Shao Piaoping," p. 99 for part of this declaration. Gong Debai's view in *Huiyilu*, 1: 84, 89-90, 125-126 (and in his other works cited above) that Shao's fate was due to his corruption alone must be treated with great caution. Gong was opposed to Feng Yüxiang, was strongly anti-Communist and had at one time worked for a foreign-controlled Beijing journal (*Dongfang Shi Bao*) which was funded by Zhang Zoulin. The view that Shao was executed largely because he took bribes from all sides does find some support, however, in Yao Fushen, "Guanyu Shao Piaoping zhi Si" [On the Death of Shao Piaoping], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 22, pp. 175-181.

thrown in his lot with the united front. Like Huang Yuansheng before him, Shao had not been punished for pursuing professional journalism but for playing politics. That he failed to fulfil the ethics of professional journalism, ethics which he had espoused, should not come as a surprise. It was the severity of his punishment, as had also been the case with Huang Yuansheng, that was alarming.

The politically motivated execution of Shao Piaoping was both a stark demonstration of the dramatic changes in the national political climate and a spur to advocates of commercial journalism. Shao had identified himself with the growing forces of radical nationalism which were to dominate the urban political scene in China into the 1930s. Shao's own *Jing Bao* had actively promoted the two greatest expressions of anti-imperialist nationalism of his day, the demonstrations of May 30, 1925 in Shanghai and of March 18, 1926 in Beijing. There is no need here to elaborate on the first, but Shao's support and promotion of the aims of the second demonstration earnt him a place on a blacklist drawn up by Duan Qirui, then the chief-executive of the government. When about two thousand demonstrators marched on the cabinet offices in Beijing demanding the abrogation of the "unequal treaties," forty seven people were killed by government guards. Among other things, Shao insisted that Duan and other government leaders be subjected to public trial for, in his view, active collaboration with the imperialist powers.[141] Few journalists were as willing as Shao Piaoping to become involved in political struggles and, faced with the example of Shao's fate, it is little wonder that such journalists as Xu Baohuang insisted that newspaper journalism be placed

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141. On the March 18 Incident itself see the brief account in Wilbur, *The Nationalist Revolution in China*, p. 44. The demonstration grew out of a demand, presented to Duan Qirui on March 16, by the eight Boxer Protocol powers to remove all obstacles to communication between Beijing and the sea. On Shao's reaction through *Jing Bao* see Xiao Zhaoran and Lu Bingliang, "Shao Piaoping: Zaoqi Xuanchuan Ma.Liezhuyi he Fan Di Fan Fengjian Yundong de Wuwei Zhanshi," pp. 113-114.

on solid commercial foundations.[142] Indeed, when Ge Gongzhen reflected on the development of newspaper journalism through the warlord period, he concluded that political and commercial pressures existed in a form of antagonistic symbiosis. Journalists sought subsidies to stay in business but in doing so they became dependent on a political patron whose fortunes could wax and wane with alarming speed. The instability of political patronage in turn created pressure for commercial journalism, a journalism structured around formulas for making money independently of political sources.[143] These dual themes of politics and money were to dominate journalism for the next decade. Ge Gongzhen knew that even in making money journalism was being political.

142. Xu Baohuang, *Xinwenxue Gangyao*, p. 201. It is worth noting that in August 1926 another prominent Beijing journalist, Lin Baishui, was the victimn of a political execution. Like Shao Piaoping, Lin suffered from a somewhat capricious political temperament. He had once been in close contact with the Anfu Clique, but switched support to Feng Yüxiang when the latter controlled Beijing. Although he was clearly anti-Communist, his opposition to the forces of Zhang Zuolin was enough to bring about his arrest and execution. I have not given as much attention to Lin simply because Shao Piaoping was at one stage connected to the Shanghai press and Shao's influence on the development of journalism in China was of far greater significance. On Lin Baishui see Liu Qingyun, "Lin Baishui," in *Xinwen Jie Renwu*, no. 4 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 52-58; Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China*, pp. 60-61.

143. Ge Gongzhen, "Baozhi zhi Jianglai" [The Future of Newspapers], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiang Ji*, ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Xiandai Shudian, 1931), pp. 67-68.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS OVERTAKES THE PROFESSION, 1927-1937

There is some irony in the fact that expressions of the radical nationalism for which Shao Piaoping had been killed reached a peak when the big daily newspapers in Shanghai were experiencing unprecedented commercial success. The thirst for news of the progress of the Northern Expedition, which was officially launched in July 1926, helped to push the circulation of *Shen Bao* to a new high of over 140,000.[1] For a brief period in newspaper journalism there was a confluence between market demands and a poltical movement. But the victory of the Nationalists in 1927 carried the Shanghai journalists into a much more intimate relationship with politics than they had known in the past. For instance, when the Nationalist government set up censorship apparatus soon after they took Shanghai, politics literally came to the editorial office in the form of the censor himself.

The majority of journalists looked upon both the victories of the Nationalists and the increasing profits of their employers from a safe distance, satisfied with their lot and determined not to do anything which might jeopardize their positions. They had ways of coping which did not involve them in political struggles. If they displayed any political inclinations at all they tended to be favourable toward the Nationalists. A few key individuals threw in their lot with the Nationalists at the high tide of the Northern Expedition and thereafter assisted the government in its

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1. This was the annual average circulation for 1926. In the following year the disruptions of the Nationalist occupation of Shanghai drove down circulation to just over 100,000. See the Appendix.

own propaganda battles. There were also some journalists, a small but influential minority, who began to re-examine their role in society and to question the character of journalism in China. This process of re-examination occurred within an increasingly complex political climate. As the Nationalists came to power riding the anti-imperialist nationalism of the Northern Expedition, what many journalists believed to be a monopolistic tendency in the ownership of the Shanghai press began to emerge.[2] Against this background some journalists turned away from foreign models and, feeling constricted by what they perceived to be the "capitalist press," called for a journalism more attuned to the needs of their own society. This critical analysis of the profession marked the first step toward attempts to create a more radical journalism, a journalism not controlled by "capitalist" proprietors.

The Shenyang Incident and, soon after, the Japanese attack on Shanghai provided the shock which served as an enormous fillip to journalists who called for a radical journalism, a journalism they thought to be more appropriate to China. These calamities, and the determination of the Nationalist government to eliminate internal threats from the Communists before engaging the Japanese forces, brought widespread disillusionment with the government not only from within the ranks of the journalists but also from diverse groups across the political spectrum of China. The scene was set for a political struggle within journalism, the intensity of which had not been seen in China since years leading up to the 1911 Revolution.

As part of their attempt to control or stifle opposition to their Japan policy, from 1933 on the Nationalists penetrated the professional organizations of the journalists. This tactic, in addition to strict censorship

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2. As I have shown in chapter 2, this tendency was, at most, only a partial monopoly, but there was a strong feeling at the time (1929) that Shanghai's dailies were falling into the hands of a single capitalist, Shi Liangcai.

and the threat of imprisonment or, in some cases, the use of violence effectively silenced the outspoken journalists of the commercial dailies.[3] If they wished to continue to express their opinions, these journalists had no choice but to step outside the commercial newspapers of Shanghai and to join their more radical colleagues in an effort to publish their own newspapers.

This chapter shows that the events of the decade before the outbreak of full-scale war with Japan represented a challenge to the fundamental assumptions of the apolitical professional journalism espoused by journalists during the warlord period. Journalists of the warlord era failed to realize the standards they had set themselves partly because the various northern militarists exercised financial as well as political control over the press. The crisis of the Japanese attacks on China convinced some journalists that, in direct contrast to the assumptions of the warlord era, the commercial journalism of the marketplace, and its inescapable political context, had become their master rather than their saviour. Working for a commercial newspaper could not provide the journalist of the 1930s with any guarantee of free expression. Indeed, journalists who wanted China to confront the Japanese military came to believe that the realities of their work reflected quite the opposite: a newspaper journalism cajoled and pressured into silence by, in the end, an overwhelming concern with commercial priorities.

The Years of Uncertainty: Adjusting to the Nationalists, 1927-1930

Shao Piaoping was, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, one among the few prominent journalists willing to declare support for the

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3. For a case study of the government's coercian of the Shanghai dailes see chapter 7.

radical nationalism of the united front. There was no equivalent to Shao in Shanghai. There were only the organs of the Guomindang and the Communists respectively, *Minguo Ribao* and *Xiangdao Zhoubao*. Although journalists working with these publications clearly identified themselves with party causes (polemical journalism was expected of them), the complexity of the composition of these parties injected an element of uncertainty into the political direction of the united front. *Minguo Ribao* itself became something of a battleground for the various factions of the united front forces. *Minguo Ribao* recruited a number of Communist Party journalists to its staff, and their influence was especially clear in the radical supplement "*Juewu*" (*Consciousness*).[4] In November 1925, however, a number of anti-communist members of the Guomindang met in Beijing to form the Western Hills faction (Xi Shan Pai). Both Shao Lizi and Ye Chucang, the original mainstays of *Minguo Ribao*, had by this time already journeyed south to become part of the united front government in Canton. Members of the Western Hills faction were then able to take over *Minguo Ribao* in Shanghai as part of their wider attempt to usurp radical elements of the united front in Shanghai.[5] Thus when the Northern Expedition set off from Canton in mid-1926 the political press of Shanghai itself reflected the uncertain political direction of the united front camp. This uncertainty in turn affected the journalists at the big Shanghai dailies, most of whom were not prepared to go out on a political limb in the manner of Shao Piaoping.

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4. See Fang Hanqi et al., *Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye Jianshi* [A Brief History of the Press in China] (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 119-120; Li Longmu, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye Shigao* [A Draft History of the Press in China] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 148-149, 156-157.

5. Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun* [Reforming Shanghai's Newspapers] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Xinwen Xi, 1931), pp. 24-25; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao," *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.1 (June 1934): 281; C. Martin Wilbur, *The Nationalist Revolution in China, 1923-1928*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 31. The Canton government severed connections with, and financial support of, *Minguo Ribao* in mid-1926.

Attempting to tease out the political outlook of journalists at the big commercial dailies at the time is therefore not an easy task. Gu Zhizhong, then the social news reporter with *Shi Bao*, was perhaps being a little too ingenuous when he claimed that in the wake of the May Thirtieth demonstrations he developed a negative attitude toward the British in Shanghai. Gu added that he lost interest in gathering news from the courts, gaols and fire department of the International Settlement and gradually moved away from the reporting of any social news.[6] According to Jin Xiongbai, the local news reporter for *Shi Bao*, most of Shanghai's journalists were sympathetic to the causes of the national revolution as embodied in the Northern Expedition, but were not committed to, nor fully aware of, the Guomindang's political agenda. In this spirit, the Shanghai Journalists' Club proposed sending representatives to Nanchang to express their support for the armies of the Northern Expedition, and Jin was himself chosen as one of the two representatives. In the end, nothing came of this proposal as both Jin and his colleague thought better of being seen to be trumpeting political causes. In summing up the feeling among journalists, Jin wrote that:[7]

> To be frank, at that time, apart from *Minguo Ribao*, all the newspapers carried foreign registration; there was not a single newspaper nor a single person with a shred of Guomindang pedigree. We did not even know much about the Three People's Principles (*San Min Zhuyi*) and the Five Power Constitution (*Wu Quan Xianfa*). The Guomindang itself did not even pay any attention to carrying out propaganda and united front work [among the press]. We were simply dissatisfied with the corruption of warlord government and disturbed by our national humiliation at the hands of foreigners. We therefore held a spontaneous concern for the [fate of the] Northern Expedition and our writing sometimes betrayed a surprising sympathy and support for it. The proposal of the Journalists' Club to send representatives to Jiangxi to greet the troops reflected this kind of feeling.

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6. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi* [Memoirs of the Newspaper World] (Beijing: Zhongguo Wenshi Chubanshe, 1986), p. 7.

7. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian* [Fifty Years of Life as a Journalist], 2 vols. (vol. 1; Hong Kong: Wuxing Jishu Baoshe, 1957; vol. 2; Taibei: Yuesheng Wenhua Shiye Youxian Gongsi, 1988), 1: 105-106; 79. Jin claims he could not remember the name of the colleague in question.

While this account conveys an accurate picture of the amorphous political attitudes of Shanghai journalists, it neglects the important intermediary role played by Guomindang journalists such as Shao Lizi. Shao had frequent contacts with fellow journalists not only on professional and social levels, but was also instructed by the Guomindang to keep the Shanghai press informed of the progress of the Northern Expedition. He made several trips back to Shanghai from Canton for this purpose.[8] In addition, the Guomindang had derived considerable benefit on the propaganda front from two of Shanghai's leading journalists, Chen Bulei and Pan Gongzhan. From the time of the May Thirtieth demonstrations on, they had developed *Shang Bao* into Shanghai's most vocal "non-party" advocate of the national revolution and the Northern Expedition.[9] Chen Bulei in particular achieved a degree of fame and recognition in press circles based almost entirely on his editorials written in support of the national revolution.[10] In the winter of 1926 both Chen and Pan journeyed to Nanchang where they formally declared their hand and soon after joined the Guomindang.[11] Among the Shanghai journalists there was, therefore, greater awareness of a Guomindang presence than Jin Xiongbai's account would suggest.

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8. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78; Chen Yongping, *Chen Bulei Xiansheng Zhuan* [A Biography of Chen Bulei] (Taibei: Xinwen Jizhe Gonghui, 1973), p. 62.

9. Some of Chen's editorials were re-published in the Communist Party journal *Xiangdao* [Guide]. See Chen Bulei, *Chen Bulei Huiyilu* [Memoirs of Chen Bulei] (Shanghai: Nian Shiji Chubanshe, 1949), Pt. 2, pp. 6-7.

10. See, for example, "Chen Bulei Xiansheng de Shengping" [The Life of Chen Bulei, *Shenghuo Zhoukan* [Life Weekly] 3.17 (March 11, 1928): 187 where Chen is described as "our country's first-ranking political commentator." Pan Gongbi has noted that Chen's editorials were the only ones from among the commercial newspapers sympathetic to the Guomindang and that these editorials served the Guomindang well in its push northwards. See Pan Gongbi, "Zhongguo Baoye zhi Baomu" [The Nursemaid of Chinese Journalism], in *Xinwenxue Lunji* [Essays on Journalism], ed. Dong Xianguang et al. (Taibei: Zhonghua Wenhua Chuban Shiye Weiyuanhui, 1955), pp. 224-225. It could be said that Chen was in effect serving the Guomindang even though he had not yet become a Party member.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 79; Chen Yongping, *Chen Bulei*, p. 62.

By the time the Northern Expedition had arrived at Shanghai's doorstep it had become very difficult for journalists to even report news of its progress. In early January 1927 Sun Chuanfang had closed down the Guomindang headquarters in the French Concession and *Minguo Ribao* had to cease publication[12] At a tense and threatening press conference Li Baozhang, the Shanghai garrison commander, instructed local journalists not to report any form of news or "propaganda from Red parties and rebel groups," code words for the united front parties, and asked them to sign an undertaking to that effect.[13] The day before this meeting Xie Fusheng, a journalist with the English-language *China Courier*, had been arrested over the publication of a photograph of Sun Chuanfang accompanied by a caption which read "The setting Sun."[14] In this atmosphere journalists were not about to risk open displays of any possible sympathy toward the advancing forces of the Northern Expedition. As Jin Xiongbai discovered, simply venturing onto the streets to gather news of the February clashes between the striking workers of the General Labour Union (Zong Gong Hui) and the troops of the garrison command entailed a certain amount of danger. He was detained, questioned and frisked by troops armed with broadswords before being told to leave the area.[15]

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12. See chapter 6 for details.

13. See "Benbu Xinwen" [Local News], *Shen Bao*, January 7, 1927; Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 114. Jin claims that the signing of such an undertaking (not reported in the press) was unprecedented in the history of Shanghai journalism.

14. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 8-9. Fu was released after some pleading from senior journalists.

15. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 111-112, 115. Jin noted that the troops who detained him seemed not even to understand the meaning of the term "*xinwen jizhe*" (literally, "news reporter). A detailed account of the brutal methods of these troops during this February uprising is given in Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, 2nd. rev. ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), pp. 134-135. See chapter 6 for an account of Shanghai's daily press, as distinct from its individual journalists, during this period.

Following a second round of strikes and insurrection led by the GLU on March 21, "all of Shanghai, with the exception of the International Setlement and French Concession, was in the hands of the workers."[16] With the benefit of hindsight it is possible to detect hints of what was about to come on April 12, but there is no indication that the journalists were anything other than surprised by the bloody purge of Communists and left-wing Guomindang members that began that day.[17] In the days leading up to April 12 Jin Xiongbai still ventured out to the two main strongholds of the pickets, the Huzhou Guild and the Commercial Press building, seeking news protected only by a white armband with the words "*xinwen jizhe*" (news reporter) written on it. Perhaps still buoyed up by his relative youth and a sense of adventure, Jin described this period as the "golden age" of reporting.[18] Gu Zhizhong, who had by then become the chief local reporter with *Xin Wen Bao*, was engaged in potentially more dangerous activities, though he appeared not to be fully aware of this at the time. Gu cryptically admitted that, at the request of[19]

> two Communist Party comrades with whom I was familiar,...every evening after ten o'clock I went to their paper's office to edit some local news. Because there were few hands to do the work and at times not everyone would turn up, I also acted as an editor of manuscripts and news dispatches. I continued in this way for about two weeks. On the evening of April 11 I left the *Xin Wen Bao* building and walked to the office of the other paper to help them out as usual. When I entered the editorial section I found it deserted....Eleven o'clock came and still I was alone. My colleagues had left telegraphic dispatches,

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16. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 140-141.

17. See chapter 6 on the newspaper announcements of Bai Chongxi's Eastern Route Army which in effect signalled the impending purge. The Guomindang had, of course, made an agreement with the Green Gang to allow the latter to move in and eliminate the pickets and their Communist leaders, and many left-wing Guomindang members were also targeted. See Brian G. Martin, "The Green Gang and 'Party Purification' in Shanghai: Green Gang-Kuomintang Relations, 1926-1927" (Symposium on the Nanking Decade, 1928-1937: Man Government and Society, Hong Kong, August 15-17, 1983), pp. 33, 44-45; Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 175-186

18. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 122-128. Jin was 21 years old at the time.

19. Gu Zhizhong, *Baohai Zayi*, pp. 12-13.

> correspondence and manuscripts for me to edit and I busily put pen to paper until I had finished everything. Still I was alone, but I did not pay much heed to this abnormal situation....I thought that [my colleagues] were attending some sort of meeting and were therefore unable to come to work. It never occurred to me that that evening would see the unfolding of such a momentous event.

Although Gu recorded neither the publication nor the personnel on the receiving end of his generous assistance, his story presents an extraordinary case of a journalist employed by a commercial daily working hand-in-hand with Communist journalists.

Any liasons of this kind were abruptly ended by the purge that was revealed to Gu Zhizhong the next morning. Gu was understandably worried that his associations with Communist journalists would be exposed, but in the end he managed to preserve his secret.[20] In the days that followed Gu was approached on two occasions to assist in the release of friends who had been caught-up in the purge of Communists, left-wing Guomindang members and anyone suspected of being allied with these groups. With the help of colleagues at *Xin Wen Bao* Gu was able to convince Chen Qun, who was in charge of conducting the purge in Shanghai, to free the people concerned.[21] The dramatic change in the direction of Shanghai politics was driven home to Gu by such incidents and by Chen Qun's declarations to journalists of the Communist body-count.[22] Once again, caution became the order of the day among Shanghai journalists, or, as Jin Xiongbai has put it: "while the Party big-shots were busy making revolution, we were busy making ends meet."[23]

From this period on the dominant players in the new Shanghai political scene began penetrating the ranks of the journalists, though some had more success than others. An interesting bargaining process

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20. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

23. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 141.

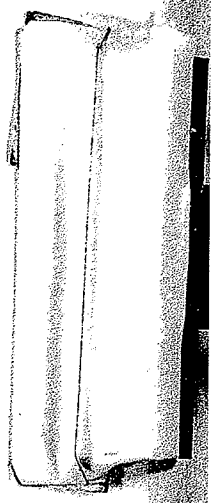
went on between Chen Dezheng, head of the propaganda department of the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang, and editorial staff at *Xin Wen Bao*. Chen, who was one of the most vigorous Guomindang activists in Shanghai, threatened to close down *Xin Wen Bao* if the editorial staff did not agree to re-organize its ranks according to Chen's wishes. The editorial staff then agreed to take in one of Chen's trusted associates, Xu Tianfang. But the *Xin Wen Bao* journalists knew it was very unlikely that Chen could close down the newspaper, which was actually registered as a United States' company, because he would have been required to argue his case according to American law. They therefore decided to deflect Xu's potential influence by assigning him to the education supplement *Xue Hai* (*The World of Learning*). Xu himself was not especially keen on being a Party activist and was happy to accept an arrangement whereby he drew a salary but worked largely from home. For his part, Chen Dezheng was apparently satisfied that he had at least managed to place a confidant inside one of the major Shanghai dailies as he made no further demands of *Xin Wen Bao*'s editorial staff.[24]

Since the April 12 *coup* the Green Gang had emerged as an increasingly important part of Shanghai politics, and it also wanted to ensure itself of a presence among the journalists. As the principal power brokers and "compradors of violence" in Shanghai the Green Gang naturally wanted to exercise some control over information about their

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24. Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu *Xin Wen Bao* de Guanxi" [My Relationship with *Xin Wen Bao*], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 12 (Beijing: Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), p. 145; Tao Juyin, "*Xin Wen Bao* Fajia Shi" [The Historical Development of *Xin Wen Bao*], *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p. 135; Huang Tianpeng [Tian Lu], "Shanghai Xinwen Zahua" [Some Words about Shanghai Journalism], *Xinwenxue Kan Quanji* [The Complete Collection of *Journalism* Magazine] (Shanghai: Guanghua Shuju, 1930), p. 430. For one claim that "*Xue Hai*" was actually very anti-Communist and served the Guomindang see Liang Jialu et al., *Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1984), p. 275. Not having seen this supplement myself, I cannot make a judgement about its content.

activities.[25] Green Gang members were sent to become part of the staff at *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*, the city's most important newspapers. A certain Tang Shichang worked at *Shen Bao*, handling all matters to do with Du Yuesheng's press relations and acting upon Du's direct instructions. Tang would pass on Du's instructions, whether they be to publicise his settlement of strikes or to omit references to the strong-arm methods of the gangsters, to the relevant local news editors or reporters. A combination of threats and gratuities was used to keep the journalists in line, and none were prepared to resist a representative of Shanghai's most powerful gang boss. A similar role was performed by one Hang Shijun at *Xin Wen Bao*, although he was a representative of Huang Jinrong, a gang boss whose place in the gangster hierarchy had declined at the expense of Du Yuesheng's rise. Other senior journalists known to have been associated with the Green Gang, largely through its loosely structured club, the Heng She (Constant Club), were Zhao Junhao (*Shen Bao* editor) and Chen Dazai (*Xin Wen Bao* local news editor). Many other journalists, who remain nameless to the historian, were gang members or, at the very least, on the payroll of Shanghai's gangsters. Jin Xiongbai claims that he refused to accept gratuities from the Geen Gang but, in order to avoid trouble, complied with editorial instructions as the word came down from



25. The quoted phrase comes from Brian G. Martin, "The Pact with the Devil': The Relationship Between the Green Gang and the French Concession Authorities, 1925-1935," Paper prepared for the Conference on Shanghai History, Shanghai, September 7-14, 1988, p. 6. (Cited with permission of the author).

Du Yuesheng as to what could or could not be reported.[26] Shanghai's gangster organisations were therefore more successful at infiltrating the journalists' ranks than the local Guomindang.[27]

Jiang Jieshi on the other hand did achieve some early success for the Guomindang by being able to position Chen Bulei in among the leading Shanghai journalists. Soon after Chen had met Jiang in Nanchang, Chen was approached by the manager of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, Lin Yanfu, who was keen to bring the popularity of Chen's editorial writing to the paper. By March 1927 Lin had managed to secure Chen's services for a monthly salary of three hundred yuan.[28] This arrangement lasted only two days. Lin was not willing to give Chen the freedom to write as he wished, and Chen could not tolerate being instructed by Lin as to the most appropriate subjects for his editorials.[29] In April Chen was appointed by the recently installed National Government (Guomin Zhengfu) to the position of Zhejiang minister for education, but soon after Chen was seconded to be

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26. On journalists' relations with gangs see Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 155-157; Jin Xiongbai [Zhu Zijia], *Huangpu Jiang de Zhuolang* [The Dross of the Huangpu River] (Hong Kong: Wuxing Jishu Baoshe, 1964), pp. 75-76; Zhongguo Renmin Zhengzhi Xieshang Huiyi Shanghai Shi Weiyuanhui [Shanghai Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of China], ed., "Heng She Sheyuan Lu" [Membership List of the Constant Club], *Jiu Shanghai de Banghui* [Old Shanghai's Gangs] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1986), pp. 369-382; Xu Zhucheng, *Du Yuesheng Zheng Zhuan* [The True Story of Du Yuesheng] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), p. 80. On the relative positions of Du Yuesheng and Huang Jinrong in Shanghai's gangster organizations see Martin, "The Pact with the Devil'," pp. 8-10, 11-12. I am grateful to Brain Martin for alerting me to sources on journalist-gangster connections and for sharing much of his knowledge on the politics of Shanghai gangsterism with me. Scholars in the field can look forward to his forthcoming doctoral thesis on the subject.

27. Ma Yinliang, who entered *Shen Bao* in August 1929 and was general manager 1930-1941, claims that the senior staff at the paper knew which journalists were gang members and were able to deflect their influence in the manner that Chen Dezheng's influence at *Xin Wen Bao* was deflected. But the balance of evidence indicates that the Green Gang was able ot manage its relations with journalists and the press very effectively. Ma Yinliang, interview held at Sun Enlin's residence, Shanghai, April 10, 1985.

28. Cheng Cangbo, "Bulei Xiansheng yu Xinwen Shiye" [Mr. Bulei and the Press], in *Xinwenxue Lunji*, ed. Dong Xianguang, pp. 219-220.

29. Pan Gongbi, "Zhongguo Baoye zhi Baomu," pp. 225-226. Chen Bulei, *Huiyilu*, Pt. 2, p. 12, where Chen claims only that he refused to work at *Shi Shi Xin Bao* because of "the complex internal situation."

Jiang Jieshi's private secretary. In October, while still maintaining intimate links with the Party and government, Chen made an agreement with Pan Gongbi at *Shi Shi Xin Bao* which enabled Chen to write three articles per week for the paper. These articles were concerned with Party affairs and were sometimes directed against the left-wing of the Party under Wang Jingwei's leadership.[30] Chen's *de facto* relationship with *Shi Shi Xin Bao* was finally formalized early in 1928 when, with the approval of Jiang Jieshi, he became the paper's chief editorial writer. Chen's role at *Shi Shi Xin Bao* was part of a strategy to extend the Party's message to non-Party sectors.[31] This amounted to quite a *coup* for the central Guomindang, and particularly for Jiang Jieshi who now had a close confidant situated at the heart of Shanghai's press.

Yet Chen did not have things all his own way. He had the support of one editor, Wang Xinfu, who was also a member of the Guomindang, and another, Cheng Cangbo, who was to join the Guomindang some years later, but several other senior journalists wanted nothing to do with party politics. Two editors, Zhao Shuyong and Zhou Xiaoan, were described by Chen as being "strongly opposed to our Party," while others were said to have had "no faith in the revolution."[32] Despite their protestations, there was apparently little these journalists could do to eject Chen from their ranks. Chen remained as chief editorial writer for over a year until, in August 1929, he was again given the position of minister for education in his native province of Zhejiang. He resigned from *Shi Shi Xin Bao* feeling that most of his colleagues resented the fact that he was so intimately

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30. Chen Bulei, *Huiyilu*, Pt. 2. pp. 12-13; Pan Gongbi, "Zhongguo Baoye zhi Baomu," pp. 225-226.

31. Chen Bulei, *Huiyilu*, Pt. 2, pp. 14-16; Chen Yongping, *Chen Bulei*, pp. 63-64; Pan Gongbi, "Zhongguo Baoye zhi Baomu," p. 226.

32. Chen Bulei, *Huiyilu*, pp. 15-16; Pan Gongbi, "Zhongguo Baoye zhi Baomu," pp. 226-227.

involved with the Guomindang.[33] Chen was never again directly associated with the daily press, but played an important role in the Guomindang structure as Jiang Jieshi's pen and mouthpiece.

The push and pull of Chen Bulei's relationship with his fellow journalists at *Shi Shi Xin Bao* presents an enlightening portrait of the general relationship between the Guomindang and the Shanghai journalists in the first years of Nationalist government. Chen was not given a warm reception by his colleagues at *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, but they had to accept the decision of those running the paper who thought it wise not to upset the leaders of what was still largely a military government. In spite of the tension that his presence had created, Chen was still able to perform a significant propaganda role for the Guomindang.[34]

The Shanghai journalists were also able to reach a working accommodation with the newly appointed censors without too much difficulty. Although there are few precise details about the initial years of the censorship system in Shanghai, the big dailies, in the words of one observer, "appear to have submitted voluntarily to this censorship."[35] Strictly speaking, this was an infringement of the Municipal Council's authority over the administration of the International Settlement, but the Nationalist government was in a position to threaten the dailies with postal bans, restricting their circulation to inside the Settlement, and this was a considerable inducement to "voluntary" co-operation with the censors. The level of co-operation between the two sides was demonstrated by the fact that the office of the Censorship Bureau was initially located in the

33. Chen Bulei, *Huiyilu*, p. 16; Chen Yongping, *Chen Bulei*, pp. 64-65.

34. Chen's editorials in support of the Nationalist government's strategy had a significant impact in the Shanghai press. See Chen Bulei, *Huiyilu*, Pt. 2, pp. 13-14.

35. *Report of the Hon. Mr. Justice Feetham, C.M.G., to the Shanghai Municipal Council*, 4 vols. (Shanghai: North China Daily News and Herald, 1931-1932), 1: 234.

Shen Bao building.[36] All journalists, of course, prefer to operate in freedom; however, the Shanghai journalists accepted the censor's presence and carried on without raising too much rancour beyond the confines of the newspaper office. Jin Xiongbai has given a telling description of the relationship between journalists and censors in the early period of Nationalist rule.[37]

> Initially, one person each from the municipal government, the Shanghai Party branch and the Shanghai garrison command were sent to each newspaper and these three would handle [censorship] together. Of course, the [International Settlement] had not been returned to China and the [Nationalist] government's authority was to some extent still inferior to that of the [International Settlement]. Even though we could therefore have refused to accept censorship, in order to express support for the government we set aside a special desk in the editing section to allow these three people to carry out their inspection....The standard of most censors was, frankly speaking, not very high and they had only limited knowledge of journalism. At times they would adopt a high-handed attitude and treat us as if they were uncrowned emperors....Thus every evening a dispute would break out. With neither side willing to give ground endless debate would suddenly turn to the slamming of fists on tables and the hurling of abuse at each other. They [the censors] had only three people, but all of us in the editing section were able to form a pack and put in our bit in support of each other. This often caused the delays in publishing and also greatly hindered the censors in the performance of their official duties.

This account would suggest that journalists did not in principle object to having to deal with Guomindang appointed censors, but they sometimes found it difficult to accept what they thought to be the ill-informed, erratic judgements of these censors.[38]

On a more mundane level, the day to day routine of the journalist's life was also changed by the new political order. To scout out political news Shanghai reporters found that they had to do the rounds of the various factional leaders, an unexciting but nevertheless telling reflection

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36. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

37. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 136. The *Report of the Hon. Mr. Justice Feetham*, p. 233 claims that a representative of the Nanjing government made up a fourth member of the Censorship Bureau.

38. For similar complaints see "The Futility of the Press Censorship," *People's Tribune* (new series) 2.9 (May 31, 1932): 240.

of the divided nature of the Guomindang. Jin Xiongbai made visits to the Shanghai representatives of Jiang Jieshi, Wang Jingwei and the Guangxi Clique led by Bai Chongxi. Shao Lizi and Chen Lifu were the main sources of information concerning Jiang, while Li Jishen supplied journalists with news of the Guangxi Clique. The Wang Jingwei faction, which had been one of the main targets of the purge in April 1927, was less receptive to Shanghai journalists.[39]

All in all the majority of the journalists at Shanghai's commercial dailies adjusted in a passive manner to the sometimes violent changes in the political scene. They tended to "hold firmly to stillness."[40] This reflected the continuing weakness of the journalists as part of the complex structure of the press. Even had they wished to challenge the ways in which their work was compromised by the infiltration of Guomindang and Green Gang members (a very risky undertaking in any case), the journalists were without an effective voice of their own. They were still struggling to build the most rudimentary professional organization as a vehicle for their own interests. In the first few months of Nationalist rule there were some encouraging signs. On April 29, 1927 the Shanghai Journalists' Association (Shanghai Xinwen Jizhe Lianhehui) held its inaugural meeting and, though little is known of this organization, it was an advancement on the Journalists' Club which it replaced.[41] Within the constitution of this Association there were vague references to "promoting the power of public opinion" and "upholding the interests of the public,"

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39. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1:141-142. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 20-22 claims that he was very wary of Chen Lifu, who tried to exploit journalists for his own purposes, and former journalists such as Shao Lizi, Ye Chucang, and Yu Youren lest he be suspected of associating too closely with Guomindang members.

40. From Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. D. C. Lau (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 72.

41. See "Jizhe Lianhehui Jinri Kaicheng Li Hui" [Journalists' Association Hold Inaugural Meeting Today], *Shen Bao*, April 29, 1927. No details of the proceedings of the meeting were given in this report.

but there was nothing of a political nature to arouse the attention of the new government. On the other hand, there was belated recognition of the value of solidarity. The Association declared that it aimed to "safeguard the life of journalists" and "assist unemployed members."[42] In its first few years the Association was, according to one account, quite active on behalf of its members and it did win them some benefits.[43] This indicated that the journalists were far better organized than they had been in the past, but there was no escaping the hard reality of their lack of political strength *vis-a-vis* their employers and the government. The manner in which journalists had been neutralized (it would be exaggerating to say their unequivocal support had been bought) by the new political powers in Shanghai made a mockery of any claims of professional independence.

Some journalists felt that their precarious position within the Shanghai press was further undermined by what they believed to be a monopolistic tendency in the ownership of the press. The principal cause of their anxiety was Shi Liangcai's takeover of *Xin Wen Bao* in January 1929.[44] Although the Shanghai journalists did not take a united stand on this issue, there was a commonly held view that the daily press and the journalist's position within it were controlled by members of Shanghai's capitalist class. It was this kind of view, in combination with the increasingly interventionist nature of the rulers of Shanghai, that led

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42. For extracts of the constitution of the Shanghai Journalists' Association see Huang Tianpeng [Tian Lu], *Zenmoyang Zuo Yige Xinwen Jizhe* [How to be a Journalist] (Shanghai: Lianhe Shudain, 1931), pp. 66-67.

43. Shi Junbo, "Xinwen Jizhe Zhiye de Baozhang" [Professional Security for Journalists], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.4 (August 1935): 55-56. Shi gives an initial membership of 82 for the Shanghai Journalists' Association. He does not specify what benefits the Association won for its members.

44. For a detailed analysis of this takeover see chapter 6. It should also be noted that at the time there was a common but mistaken assumption that in early 1927 Shi Liangcai had bought at least some of the shares of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. This assumption was perpetuated by, for example, Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.3 (December 1934): 1017; Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun*, p. 40.

many journalists to question the nature of their press and to critically re-examine the received wisdom of their profession.

By 1930 Shao Piaoping's extraordinary prediciton of 1924 that journalists would become "slaves to capitalism" no longer seemed so unusual. As early as 1927 Ge Gongzhen, in his seminal work *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi*, had been critical of journalists for lacking unity, and he pointed to a conflict of interests between "idealistic journalists" and commercial newspapers.[45] This was a gentle hint of what was to come. Late in 1929 another Shanghai journalist lambasted the newspaper press for their "neutral attitude" and apathetic approach to their work which he, in a flourish, claimed was[46]

> partly due to their proprietors who are mostly compradores, mandarins, and militarists, and partly due to the incompetent journalists, as well as to their location in the [International] settlement, the den of imperialism.

A more radical interpretation of the position of journalists was offered by Tao Lianghe, a lecturer at Fudan University's School of Journalism which had been established in 1929. Tao described journalists, in a manner reminiscent of Shao Piaoping's words, as "spiritual labourers, standing in a similar position to the working class." He continued:[47]

> Looking at the history of progressive nations and at present day developments in our own country, we see that capitalists [of the press] oppress workers in the same way that factory owners [oppress workers]. The journalist's pen serves the despotic power of the proprietor, and journalists are subjected to the proprietor's unreasonable commands. In spirit, journalists have already lost their dignity as they have virtually become mechanistic clerks of the capitalists. If there happens to be an item of news sympathetic to the workers which is not beneficial to the capitalists, then there is no freedom of publication for such news. Editoral comments are the same; slavishly dependent on the will of the capitalists, they tend to

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45. Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* [A History of Journalism in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1927; reprint ed., Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1982), p. 454.

46. W. Y. Ma, "A Criticism of the Shanghai Press," *China Weekly Review* 51.2 (Dec. 14, 1929): 68.

47. Tao Lianghe, *Zuixin Yingyong Xinwenxue* [The Latest in Applied Journalism] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Xinwen Xuehui, 1930), pp. 77-78.

> follow the lead of the proprietor. When journalists have reached this stage they have already become semi-degenerates, so much so that in order to preserve their iron rice bowl they fawn upon their masters...and play up to officials. And the proprietors employ their despotic power in using others to advance their own earnings. They frequently sack employees without good reason and according to a sudden whim, thereby causing once gainfully employed people to feel the misery of unemployment and forcing them to take a degenerate path in life.

Tao then went on to make a strong plea for the organization of an independent, professional body which could protect journalists against the abuses of their "capitalist" proprietors.[48]

Although the class analysis in Tao's description was unusual, complaints about a capitalist ownership of the press were not so uncommon. Some journalists expressed a fear that it was against the wider interests of society to allow the press to fall into the hands of capitalists.[49] Others couched their criticism in terms of the "commercialization" (*shangyehua* or *yingyehua*) of the press.[50] The prevailing critical opinion was that the major dailies and their journalists had lost sight of society and the public because they were locked into a quest for profits. As one observer concluded, the press was seen to have "become a positive social liability."[51]

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48. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-84.

49. Wu Tiansheng, "Zhongguo zhi Xinwenxue" [Chinese Journalism], in *Xinwenxue Lunwenji* [Collected Essays on Journalism], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Guanghua Shuju, 1930), pp. 20-21.

50. Cheng Shewo, "Zhongguo Baozhi zhi Jianglai" [The Future of China's Newspapers], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiu*, ed. Yanjing Daxue Xinwen Xi, pp. 5-7. Cheng also referred to "selfish capitalists" as owners of the press. See also Liu Gai, "Xinwen Jizhe yu Daode" [Journalists and Morality], in *Xinwenxue Lunwenji*, pp. 281-284 which was critical of journalists for reporting on prostitutes, rape and other staple fare of yellow journalism; Luo Zhibu, "Jinri Zhongguo zhi Xinwenjie" [The Press of Present Day China], in *Xinwenxue Lunwenji*, pp. 190-192. It is worth noting that almost every article in *Xinwenxue Lunwenji* paints a negative picture of the press and its journalists.

51. Durham F. S. Chen, "What Ails the Press of Shanghai," *China Critic*, March 6, 1930, p. 225. For similar comments see Lin Yutang, "My Experience in Reading a Chinese Daily," *China Critic*, March 13, 1930, pp. 245-246, 248. See also Hu Zhongchi, "Shanghai de Xinwenjie," in *Xinwenxue Lunwenji*, pp. 202-203 where *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* are accused of being the worst offenders in terms of seeking profit above all else.

In this climate of disillusionment some of the fundamental principles of professional journalism that had been developed in the previous decade were subjected to greater scrutiny. Past assumptions about the role of the journalist in society became harder to accept. Tao Lianghe, like most journalists, argued that journalists provided the essentail "facts" upon which newspapers reflect or guide public opinion. But public opinion was no longer considered to have an unmediated, objective existence that could be written down in a reporter's notebook. Tao spoke of "true public opinion" (*zhenzheng de yulun*) as if there could also be untrue public opinion. He also pointed to the ambiguity in attempts to actually "represent" (*daibiao*) public opinion in a world where the expression of opinions aimed to change government policy and not vice-versa, where opinions might be expressed on a vast range of issues, including local, national and international affairs.[52] Tao did not deny that public opinion was still the focal point about which newspapers and journalists turned, but he doubted the ability of a commercially organized press to effectively grasp "true public opinion." The way forward, according to Tao, was to reverse the trend toward monopoly ownership and to encourage the development of newspaper "syndicates" (*qiye de zuhe*) as an alternative.[53]

A searching re-examination of the idea of public opinion was also undertaken by one Yi Le. He began by arguing that in China the opinions of newspaper journalists seldom coincided with public opinion because press circulation was so small. No "intelligent writer" could guarantee that they were reflecting public opinion.[54] Nor did Yi consider that some kind

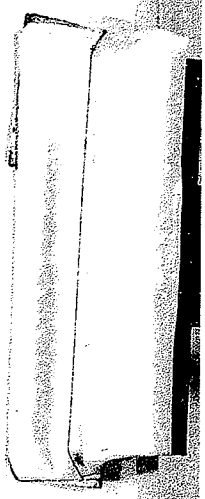
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52. Tao Lianghe, *Zuixin Yingyong Xinwenxue*, pp. 22-24.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

54. Yi Le, "Yu Lun" [Public Opinion], in *Xinwenxue Ming Lunji* [A Collection of Famous Essays on Journalism], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Lianhe Shudian, 1929), pp. 249-252.

of absolute majority opinion represented public opinion. He pointed to the dismissal of three government ministers during the May Fourth Movement as a manifestation of public opinion even though it could not have been said to be based upon the opinion of the absolute majority. Public opinion, he concluded, should be the freely expressed "majority opinion of the unorganized mass of citizenry."[55] This was very much the consensus approach to public opinion. The various public authority figures form a dialogue with the "unorganized citizenry" until a consensus opinion emerges as a guide to political action. Yi noted that such opinion can sometimes involve a degree of "blindness and mediocrity" because it represents the "average" rather than the "best" opinion at any given time.[56] These views added up to something like the doubts that Walter Lippman had expressed in one of his greatest works, *Public Opinion*, published in 1922. Instead of seeing public opinion as, in the conventional view, moral judgements based upon a set of facts, Lippman argued that "in the present state of education, a public opinion is primarily a moralized and codified version of the facts."[57] Nevertheless, like Tao Lianghe, Yi had not lost faith in the idea of public opinion as a basis for government; he simply bemoaned the absence of public opinion as an influential factor in the Chinese political scene.



It is impossible to say how many Shanghai journalists shared such revisionist views of the most basic principles of journalism. Many registered their criticisms of the state of their profession, but few were prepared to deny themselves a potential role in reflecting, guiding or

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55. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 265, 267.

57. Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), p. 125. There is no evidence to my knowledge of a direct connection between Lippman's ideas and those of any Chinese journalist during this period. In general, Chinese journalists did not show many signs of keeping abreast of the latest "Western" theories of journalism and perhaps because of their laxity there is a great poverty of theory in Republican period journalism.

shaping "public opinion." In his textbook of 1930 Huang Tianpeng (who published a total seven books in 1930 alone) reiterated the social service view of journalism that had been popularized by Shao Piaoping. Newspapers and their journalists were seen to have an important part to play in developing public opinion, educating the general public and adding to the "spiritual" life of the people.[58] These generalized ideals were shared by most journalists who wrote on the subject.[59] One view held that the apathy and dearth of comment within Shanghai newspaper journalism was due not only to political suppression but also to the press' failure to grasp the potential power of public opinion in overcoming such suppression.[60]

There was even one journalist who set out the Guomindang's rationale on ways in which journalists and the press should guide the public. The Guomindang, he argued, was attempting to avoid the "weaknesses" of Western-style democracy. The main problems with Western systems were said to be a tendency toward capitalist domination, "extreme individualism," and the fact that people are, as Rousseau pointed out, only free on election day. To assist the Guomidang toward its own vision of democracy journalists had a vital role in guiding the people through the period of tutelage government because "newspapers...are the only authoritative director of social life."[61] "Thus," he concluded, "the press should join with the Party and assist the government in realizing its

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58. Huang Tianpeng, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye* [The Press in China] (Shanghai: Lianhe Shudian, 1930), pp. 3-7, 11.

59. See for examples: Wang Yingbao, "Zhongguo Baoye Ying you zhi Juewu" [The Appropriate Consciousness for the Chinese Press], in *Xinwenxue Lunwenji*, pp. 32-34; Wu Tiansheng, "Zhongguo zhi Xinwenxue," pp. 15-29; Yan Duhe, "Xinwen Jizhe zhi Xiuyang yu Yishu" [The Craft and Cultivation of Journalists], in *Xinwenxue Ming Lunji*, pp. 188-190.

60. Hu Zhongchi, "Shanghai zhi Xinwenjie," p. 200.

61. Lu Shenong, "Xunzheng Shiqi zhi Xinwen Bianji Fangji" [Editorial Policy in the Period of Tutelage Government], in *Xinwenxue Ming Lunji*, p. 230; see also pp. 219-225.

plans for the tutelage period."[62] Although this was clearly an argument in favour of party political journalism, it was merely an extreme example of the journalist's compelling attraction to the notion of guiding public opinion. In short, not even the most critical journalists were prepared to deny themselves a potential political role in society.

It was no accident that by far the most severe critics of the condition of Chinese journalism were the academic journalists. This highlighted the continuing division between the practices of working journalists and the ideals of those who taught the profession. Most of the comments outlined above came from journalists who were not linked with any particular newspaper. Tao Lianghe and Huang Tianpeng were associated with Fudan University's School of Journalism. Since its establishment in 1929 this School had become a centre for the critical re-appraisal of Chinese journalism. The Head of the School, Xie Liuyi, was a strong supporter of education for journalism and even campaigned to have journalism taught at middle-school level.[63] Yet he expressed the frustration commonly felt by academic journalists when he wrote of a conversation between himself and the manager of one of Shanghai's big dailies (probably from *Shen Bao*, as Xie referred to a paper with "over fifty years' history"). Xie asked the manager why newspapers never seemed to reform their practices. Xie claims he received the following reply:[64]

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62. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

63. Xie Liuyi, *Xinwen Jiaoyu zhi Zhongyao jiqi Sheshi* [The Importance of Education for Journalism and its Implementation] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Xinwen Xuehui, 1930), p. 3. For other sources on the Fudan School of Journalism see Huang Tianpeng, "Xinwen Jiaoyu Ershi wu Nian de Huitou," *Bao Xue* 1.5 (March 1953): 5-7; "Xinwen Jiaoyu Jiguan Gaikuang" [A Survey of Organizations of Education for Journalism], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.3 (March 1935): 115-116; Xu Peiting, "Zhongguo Zaoqi de Xinwen Jiaoyu," *Xinwen Daxue* no. 1 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 119-120; Zhang Yumei, "Fudan Xinwen Xi Diyi ren Xi Zhuren--Xie Liuyi" [Xie Liuyi: The First Head of Fudan's School of Journalism], *Xinwen Daxue* no. 3 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), pp. 115-117.

64. Xie Liuyi, *Chahua Ji* [The Tea Party Collection] (Shanghai: Xin Zhongguo Shuju, 1931), pp. 179-180.

> Why should we undergo reform? We continue to make money through long established practices. Our shareholders are happy with greater profits and staff members are very satisfied if at the end of each year they receive the equivalent of two to three months' wages as a bonus. It is easy to talk of reform, but would it not be terrible luck if after reforming [the paper] our readership fell and as a result our advertising [revenue] also fell? So we are not game to take on journalism students who have studied overseas, and even if we take in one or two we limit them to the advertising section. As for the editorial section, well, we certainly would fear using people who understood the study of journalism there because if one of them was not careful they could destabilize the whole paper. Our present editors are all older men who have worked for the paper for forty or fifty years. They are like apprentices in the native banks; very honest and reliable. For instance, an apprentice in a native bank starts out by filling the master's bowl with rice and later moves on to calculations with an abacus, keeping accounts and mastering the art of judging [real] silver. Every day all he knows is to bury himself in his work and he is only too happy to be of use to his master. If a native bank invited a student with a doctorate in banking who has returned from the United States to work with them, he would try to change Chinese methods of accounting to Western styles. What a nuisance that would be! Our paper is somewhat like a native bank. Reform is what we fear most. Even if we wanted to reform the paper it would require a great deal of money. What is the need of reform if we are already able to make money every year? If we reform the paper and then make a loss, well, sir I ask you, what would you think? Do two and two make five? That is not shrewd business sense.

This vignette, however embellished in the re-telling, attested to the stubborn conservatism of journalism as it was practiced among Shanghai's big dailies. In any commercial operation a primacy was placed on stability and Shanghai's dailies were no exception to this rule. Above all else this was what influenced the way journalists worked, and the organizational weakness of the journalists ensured that changes in their profession were largely determined by the will of their proprietors.

Under these circumstanses there were very few discernable voices of complaint eminating from the ranks of working journalists. Zhou Xiaoan, one of the editors at *Shi Shi Xin Bao* who had been unhappy about working with Chen Bulei, published one of the few textbooks by a working journalist which was critical of the conservatism of newspaper journalism. He argued that there needed to be a "revolutionary movement" (*geming yundong*) in the practices of journalism to keep pace with the political revolution in China. He was not particularly clear about what such a journalistic revolution would mean, but he invoked the ideas of

John Dewey in an attempt to demonstrate the folly of conservatism and the merits of changing with the times.[65] Not surprisingly, Zhou worked part-time as a lecturer in journalism at Fudan University and later helped to found the Shanghai University of Correpondence Journalism.[66]

Similarly, Ge Gongzhen, who had been at *Shi Bao* since 1913, felt so frustrated by both his inability to influence newspaper practices and his employer's devotion to a form of yellow journalism that, with the added inducement of advance payments on his book *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi*, he resigned from *Shi Bao* in the winter of 1926 and embarked on a tour of the world's press at the beginning of 1927.[67]

Thus, on the eve of Japanese military incursions into Chinese territory there were rumblings of discontent among certain sections of Shanghai journalists. The more "idealistic" journalists, to borrow Ge Gongzhen's phrase, were beginning to realize that they could achieve very little in their profession given their organizational weakness, their ultimate subservience to their "capitalist" proprietor's notions of newspaper journalism, and the interventionist nature of the complex political forces making up the new Chinese rulership of Shanghai. The clearest voices of discontent were, by and large, isolated from the newspaper press, restricted to the groves of academe. The actions of the Japanese military in China would not only intensify the views of those journalists who were critical of the newspaper press, they would also stir

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65. Zhou Xiaoan, *Zuixin Shiyan Xinwenxue* [The Latest in Experimental Journalism] (Shanghai: Shi Shi Xin Bao Guan, 1928; 1930 revised edition), p. 412.

66. Zhou was a lecturer at Fudan from 1929, but there is some doubt about when the Shanghai University of Correspondence Journalism was founded; probably 1931. See "Zhongguo Xinwenjie Mingren," *Zhongguo Xinwen Nianjian, 1984* [Journalism Yearbook of China, 1984] (Beijing: Renmin Ribao Chubanshe, 1984), p. 698; Bu Shaofu, "Tan Xinwen Jiaoyu" [Discussing Education for Journalism], *Xin Zhonghua* (new series) 2.4 (April 1934): 63.

67. Gu Zhizhong, "Wo yu Ge Gonzhen" [I and Ge Gongzhen], *Xin Guancha* no. 20 (1985): 30-32; Wang Fengchang, "Xinwen Mingjiang Ge Gongzhen" [Ge Gongzhen: Great Soldier of the Press], *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 5 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981): 76-77; Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 61-62.

some of Shanghai's most influential working journalists into efforts to re-create their profession. To such journalists this meant an attempt to define a radical journalism more attuned to the needs of Chinese society and the final abandonment of an apolitical professional creed in favour of direct political action.

Patriotism Before Profit: Journalists Take a Stand, 1931-1937

The Japanese invasion of Manchuria that began with the Shenyang (Mukden) Incident of September 18, 1931 induced a total reshuffling of the various political forces with a stake in China's future. Similarly, the bombing of Shanghai on January 28, 1932 merely served to drive the shock of Japanese militarism right home to those with a stake in the future of China's economic heart. The Nationalist government's decision to deal with the Communists before turning its attention to Japan opened the way for otherwise divided groups to present something of a patriotic popular front in opposing not only the government's conciliatory policy toward Japan but also the Guomindang's authoritarian domination of government power. Throughout the years leading up to the outbreak of full-scale war with Japan the Nationalist government faced a barrage of criticism: the Communist Party; Hu Hanmin, Sun Ke (Sun Fo) and the Canton faction of the Gumindang; some of Shanghai's leading capitalists; patriotic writers and intellectuals such as those in the League of Left-wing Writers; and even key newspapers such as the hoary old *Shen Bao* itself, all challenged the government under Jiang Jieshi's leadership to open its doors to those outside the Guomindang and to take an aggressive anti-Japanese stand.[68] What were the journalists, as self-proclaimed purveyors of public opinion, to do in this period of crisis? A few collaborated with the Japanese, the

68. For the role of *Shen Bao* and Shanghai's leading capitalists in these events see chapter 7.

majority kept their heads down and played it safe, but there was a significant group of journalists that attempted to infuse their work with a patriotic and nationalistic character, to create an activist journalism that they believed to be an accurate reflection of public opinion.

Shanghai journalists, and even their more conservative employers, had in the past shown a willingness to take action against Japanese interests in China. As early as the May Fourth Movement the placement of Japanese advertisements in the Shanghai press had been banned by the Daily Press Association.[69] Gu Zhizhong joined the League for Severing Economic Relations with Japan (Dui Ri Jingji Juejiao Datongmeng) a few months before the outbreak of the Jinan Incident.[70] Nevertheless, even Gu Zhizhong described the generally cordial relations between Chinese journalists and their Japanese counterparts prior to the Shenyang Incident.[71] The outbreak of hostilities in Shenyang therefore triggered a breakdown in relations between the Shanghai journalists and the Japanese that was far more serious than anything that had come before. More importantly, Japanese militarism in China sharpened the focus of attacks on Shanghai journalism eminating from disillusioned journalists.

By the end of 1931 Shanghai newspapers in particular were beginning to be condemned by critics for no longer performing a useful social function, a situation that was thought to be intolerable in a time of national crisis. One journalist, who complained that he was unable to publish articles which were critical of the foreign powers, described Shanghai newspapers as "opiates to knowledge" (*zhishi de yapian*) which "deaden our strength." Such newspapers, he continued, depended upon

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69. See chapters 2 and 5.

70. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, p. 16. Gu also claims that a member of the Japanese Consulate in Shanghai, Ikeda Ayoshi, attempted to pursuade Gu to leave this association.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

"evil remnants of feudalism" and "corrupt bureaucratism" which in effect made them representatives of imperialism. He castigated members of his profession, saying that "Shanghai reporters are unconscionable." In support of this view he offered the example of a report on a family which, in escaping a fire in their home, ran naked into the streets; the report headlined their state of undress rather than their unfortunate loss.[72]

Though expressed with a degree of radical ferocity, these opinions were merely at the extreme end of a spectrum of similar critiques of Shanghai newspaper journalism. The dominant themes running through these critiques were: a more vituperative denunciation of capitalist ownership of newspapers than in the past; attacks on the increasing tendency toward the commercialized, yellow journalism favoured by Chinese tabloids (*xiao bao*), and, in connection with this; criticisms of the low moral standards of journalists engaged in yellow journalism.

Guo Zhenyi, another journalist associated with the Fudan School of Journalism, devoted a book-length study to the faults of Shanghai newspapers and ways in which the situation might be improved. She, like others, believed that the ownership of Shanghai newspapers was becoming concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists who employed whichever style of journalism reaped the greatest profit. Yet Guo reached a much more sombre conclusion than past critics. She wrote that "commercialization will be the death of our press."[73]

The attack on the yellow journalism of the tabloids was particularly widespread, although there was more to this than meets the eye. It was, after all, easy to take the high moral ground about the "experts" in yellow

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72. Fan Zhongyun, "Zhongguo Baozhi zhi Piping" [A Crtique of China's Newspapers], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiang Ji* A Collection of Lectures on Journalism], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Xiandai Shuju, 1931), pp. 56, 58, 59., 61. Nothing is known about Fan's background, but his critique was one of the most radical of the day, and comes close to what could reasonably be called a Chinese Marxist view of the press.

73. Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun*, pp. 31, 34.

journalism, the "mosquito press" (*xiao bao*) with their concentration on the salacious, the gossipy and the exposure of private lives. Some observers confined their criticism to the adverse moral impact of this press, arguing that "yellow journalism is but a symptom of something which lies deeper,"[74] or that it demonstrated that the "moral integrity of the average journalist is still very low."[75] There had in fact been a rapid expansion in *xiao bao* journalism since the late 1920s. A 1928 report commissioned by the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Education (Jiaoyu Ju) discovered over ninety *xiao bao* throughout the city, most of them consisting of only one printed sheet and run by anonymous fly-by-night journalists. Yet there were other critics who saw a political dimension to the proliferation of yellow journalism. Although the investigation into *xiao bao* carried out by the Bureau of Education (which was led by the Guomindang's Chen Dezheng) stated that its main intention was to clean up the "vulgar" (*cusu*) examples of this kind of journalism, there clearly was a political agenda as well. It declared that publications found to be opposed to the Party would be closed down. Indeed many of Shanghai's *xiao bao* which had a political as well as a scandalous character folded as a result of

74. "Purging the Press," *China Critic*, November 9, 1933, p. 1095.

75. "What's Wrong with the Press in China," *People's Tribune* (new series) 3.2 (August 1, 1932): 16.

this investigation.[76] Thus, from the Guomindang's point of view the danger of *xiao bao* journalism was not so much in its moral impact as in its unmanageable political impact. Over the next few years, however, sections of the Guomindang, particularly the Social Affairs Bureau (Shehui Ju) under Pan Gongzhan's leadership, bowed to the inevitable and subsidized journalists to run *xiao bao* on their behalf.[77]

In contrast, some of the more outspoken reformist journalists lambasted the big Shanghai dailies for imitating the sensationalism rather than the political pungency of *xiao bao* journalism.[78] This was considered to be symptomatic of the political timidity of the journalists running the big dailies. One critic attributed the absence of "analysis of political relations" to "newspaper editors who are governed by a feudalist mentality."[79] The epithet "feudalist mentality" had by the end of 1931 become a form of shorthand applied to conservative journalists who were "concerned only with themselves, [knew] nothing about society and

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76. Shanghai Tebie Shi Zhengfu Jiaoyu Ju [Bureau of Education of the Shanghai Special Municipal Government], ed., *Xiao Bao Shencha* [An Ivestigation of the Mosquito Press] (Shanghai: Bureau of Education, 1928), pp. 1-4; Tang Bingzheng, "Xiaoxing Bao de Quedian Jiqi Gaishan" [The Faults of the Tabloid Press and how to put them Right], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.4 (August 1935): 13-14; "Kan Shanghai de Xiao Bao" [Reading Shanghai's Mosquito Press], in *Zhongguo Xiandai Chuban Shiliao* [Historical Sources on Publishing in Modern China], ed. Zhang Jinglu, 4 vols. (Shanghai: Xinhua Shudian, 1954-1959), 4: 192, which claims that many *xiao bao* that spoke out against the Guomindang were silenced in this period; David Chi-hsin Lu, "Gems from the Mosquito Press," *Tien Hsia* 6.1 (Jan. 1938): 9, which claims that *Ying Bao* was one *xiao bao* forced to close in 1929 "because it dared to crtiicize public figures." It is interesting to note that even *Shi Bao*, Shanghai's most prominent example of yellow journalism, was called to task by the Central Ministry of Propaganda (Zhongyang Xuanchuan Bu). According to Jin Xiongbai, at the Third Party Congress in March 1929, some members of the Guomindang wanted to ban the paper. Instead they settled on giving the paper's manager and Jin himself a warning and a thorough dressing down. See Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 140-141.

77. See Shanghai Municipal Police (International Settlement) Files, Report, Chief Detective Inspector Prince, "Mosquito Newspapers: 'Petty News' and 'Shanghai Daily News,'" D. 4096, January 17, 1933; S.M.P. Files, Report, Clerical Assistant Loh Sih Kya, "New Trend in Mosquito Publication," D. 9121, December 7 and 18, 1935.

78. Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun*, pp. 81-83; Dong Sheng, "Fengjian Shili zai Baozhishang" [The Influence of Feudalism in Newspapers], in *Zhongguo Xiandai Chuban Shiliao*, 4: 186 (originally published 1931).

79. Dong Sheng, "Fengjian Shili zai Baozhishang," p. 185.

[knew] even less about the masses."[80] In other words, it was a pejorative tag which enabled an oblique *political* distinction to be made between different kinds of journalists, between conservative and socially committed journalists, between those who allegedly did not care for changing society and those who set themselves an agenda of reform. Drastic solutions were being called for:[81]

> Now, when the mopping-up of feudal power and the task of constructing a democracy are staring us in the face, what are we to do? The first step is for writers to boldly declare that newspapers which are based upon feudal power should be smashed!

This somewhat vague notion that the work of journalists should be linked with "society," "the masses," and the struggle for "democracy," a notion reminiscent of Shao Piaoping's radical social service journalism, marked the beginning of a search for an activist journalism, the "first step" of the *engagé* journalists.

A further "step" was taken by Ge Gongzhen. He had returned from his world tour at the end of 1928 and was given a job at *Shen Bao*. Although one of the most respected and competent journalists in China, Ge Gongzhen fitted the anonymous Shanghai newspaper manager's description of the reformer who "understood the study of journalism." This meant that he was kept away from editorial positions for fear that he might want to tinker with "long established practices." His main stumbling block when he first arrived at *Shen Bao* was the cautious chief editor, Chen Jinghan. Ge was made deputy head of planning in the management section (Zong Guanlichu Shejibu). He therefore had to accept being confined to relatively minor administrative reforms, such as developing an effective newspaper clipping system. Even as late as 1930, when Chen Jinghan had been removed, Ge was given the task of creating a

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80. *Ibid.*, p. 186. Dong Sheng (probably a pen-name) also sardonically noted (p. 84) that he had formed the habit of "reading" *Shen Bao* for the advertisements and *Shi Bao* for the photographs.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

pictorial supplement, a speciality which, whether he liked it or not, he was known to have pioneered at *Shi Bao*.[82] Though he had expressed doubts about the social value of commercial newspapers as early as 1927, and the frustrations he encountered at *Shen Bao* intensified these misgivings, Ge Gongzhen did not develop a more radical outlook until the outbreak of Japanese military action in Shenyang and the national crisis that followed. It was about this time that Ge put forward his alternative vision for the future development of Chinese newspaper journalism. When he surveyed general trends in newspaper journalism around the world (he could boast of first-hand knowledge of Japan, the U.S., England, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and France), Ge claimed that only the Soviet Union had overcome capitalist domination of the press. The Soviet Union had a form of "collective" (*tuantihua*) ownership such that the main groups in society, peasants and the urban populace for example, ran their own newspapers. This was a form of newspaper, wrote Ge, "already much better than commercialized, capitalist newspapers" because collective ownership at least allowed the interests of large social groups to be represented. Ge then argued for nothing less than the ideal of a socialized (*gongyouhua*) newspaper press in China. Newspapers were of similar importance to society's well-being as such public utilites as water and electricity so they should be managed in the same way. Editors and senior journalists should also be selected by members of society to run such newspapers.[83] Ge's vision therefore involved a model of development somewhat like an historical materialism of the newspaper press:[84]

> China's newspapers have already reached the stage of commercialization and capitalist formation is beginning to appear. I

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82. Gu Zhizhong, "Wo yu Ge Gongzhen," *Xin Guancha* pp. 30-31; Ge Baoquan, "Huiyi Wo de Shufu Ge Gongzhen," pp. 29-30.

83. Ge Gongzhen, "Baozhi zhi Jianglai" [The Future of Newspapers], in *Xinwenxue Yanjiang Ji*, pp. 69-71.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

believe that the change to collectivization (*tuantihua*) will not be far away; however, the realization of socialization (*gongyouhua*) remains a distant possibility.

Although there were other journalists who spoke of a form of socialized newspaper journalism,[85] views of this kind were obviously too extreme for those involved in running "capitalist" newspapers to accept. Any journalistic practices based upon such radical notions therefore had to be developed outside the established system. Indeed, the first attempt to form an organization committed to the creation of a radical alternative was initiated not by journalists but by a group which had links with the League of Left-wing Writers (Zhongguo Zuoyi Zuojia Lianmeng). On October 26, 1931, little more than a month after the Shenyang Incident, the formation of the Journalism Research Association (Xinwenxue Yanjiu Hui) was announced in the weekly journal *Wenyi Xinwen* (*Arts News*). *Wenyi Xinwen* was started in March that year by a young writer, whose identity remains unknown, upon his return from a period of study in Japan. Although little is known about the personnel behind *Wenyi Xinwen*, it is interesting to note that Xie Liuyi and Huang Tianpeng, the key figures at Fundan's School of Journalism, attended a good-will meeting for launching the journal.[86] The anonymous founder of *Wenyi Xinwen* had published about six editions when he was joined by an old friend, Lou Shiyi. It was through Lou's connections with the League of Left-wing Writers that *Wenyi Xinwen* became a forum for the League's causes, and the journal was later described as one of the League's "peripheral" (*waiwei*) publications.[87] The journal quickly gained a reputation for publishing

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85. See for example Guo Zhenyi, *Shanghai Baozhi Gaige Lun*, p. 111 which speaks of a"socialization [or literally, societization] of the press" (*xinwen shiye shehuihua*). For an example of a journalist committed to the development of an aggressively self-reliant Chinese journalism see Du Chaobin, *Xinwenxue Zhengce* [Journalism Policy] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Xinwenxue Hui, 1931), pp. 120-142.

86. *Wenyi Xinwen*, March 16, 1931, pp. 1-2.

87. Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng Shilue" [A Brief History of the Chinese League of Left-wing Journalists], in *Zhongguo Chuban*

news of demonstrations, strikes and the fate of political prisoners which the big dailies, in their caution, chose not to publish. The story of the five "martyrs" from the League of Left-wing Writers, which was never made public by the Guomindang authorities in Shanghai, [illegible] appeared in *Wenyi Xinwen* along with photographs of the five who had been executed.[88] Thus the Journalism Research Association's debut from under the wings of *Wenyi Xinwen* clearly, if not necessarily publicly, identified it as a symbol of leftist journalism.

Despite its name, achieving a political rather than a "research" profile within Shanghai journalism was the main aim of the Journalism Research Association. This marked a new direction among Shanghai journalists, for an overt political agenda had never before been the rationale for their existence. Journalists from *Shen Bao*, *Xin Wen Bao*, and *Shi Bao*, along with academic journalists from Fudan and the Democratic School of Journalism (Minzhi Xinwen Xueyuan), were said to be among the members of the Association, although, again, it is difficult to discover their identity.[89] Under the headline "Dissatisfaction with Past Journalism, No

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Shiliao [Historical Materials on Publishing in China], ed. Zhang Jinglu (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1957), p. 307.

88. The five executed, on February 7, 1931 at the Longhua garrison command, were: Li Weisen, Rou Shi, Hu Yepin, Feng Keng and Yin Fu. Nineteen Communists were executed in Longhua on the same day. See Ma Liangchun and Zhang Daming, ed., *Sanshi Niandai Zuoyi Wenyi Ziliao Xuanbian* [Selected Sources on Left-wing Arts in the Thirties] (Chengdu: Sichuan Renmin Chubanshe, 1980), pp. 54-55; Tsi-an Hsia, "Enigma of the Five Martyrs," *The Gate of Darkness: Studies in the Leftist Literary Movement in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 146-163; Lou Shiyi, "Ji *Wenyi Xinwen*" [Notes on Wenyi Xinwen], *Dushu yu Chuban* 2.1 (1947), republished in *Zhongguo Chuban Shi Liao*, pp. 312-314.

89. Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng," p. 307. It is only possible to make informed guesses as to who these journalists might have been. Xie Liuyi and Huang Tianpeng (from Fudan) had shown some interest in *Wenyi Xinwen*, though there is no evidence to say that they were directly involved with any leftist associations. Other possible members could have been Gu Zhizhong and Lu Yi (both worked at *Xin Wen Bao* and in 1929 helped to establish the Minzhi Xinwen Xueyuan), but Gu has made no mention of leftist asscistions in his memoirs. Firmer conclusions on this matter require more evidence. On the Minzhi Xinwen Xueyuan see Gu Zhizhong, "Shanghai Minzhi Xinwen Zhuanke Xuexiao de Yansheng yu Chengzhang" [The Birth and Growth of the Shanghai Democratic School of

Faith in Today's Press," the Association's inaugural declaration presented a sweeping denunciation of the state of the profession of journalism in China and a plea for a form of socialist journalism.[90]

> The word "journalism" has only come to be known in the Chinese sphere of learning over the past ten years or more. In the history of this ten year period it--journalism--has, like many other new areas of learning in China, had no noticeable impact....Although in terms of books published it is possible to find more than ten works on journalism, these all tend to be outlines so that, apart from allowing people to know the meaning of the word "journalism," they cannot tell us anything in detail about journalism....Although it is possible to point to three or more universities which have established special courses in journalism, such courses [are run by people who] completely ignore Chinese cultural processes and the Chinese social background; instead, they foolishly pursue the glittering [example of] the United States and accept purely capitalist education for journalism which has nothing to do with the real needs of China. Such people worship as the pioneers in the field editors who are paid by newspapers to sit on their backsides, or tabloid journalists and the literary giants of the Saturday school. The former are like dogs created by the imperialists to be obedient in carrying out the invasion of Chinese culture and the poisoning of Chinese society. So that they may propagate themselves into posterity, the latter adopt the old remnants of feudalism and patriarchy. Such are the realities of our journalism at present!...News grows out of the fundamentals of social life, and the entirety of social life is based upon the oppression of the broad masses of society. Thus, apart from devoting ourselves to scientific, scholarly research into journalism, we must exert even greater effort in propagating scientific theories of journalism based upon socialism. "News value" is primarily defined according to the likes and dislikes of the majority of the people; those who work with the news must also...comply with the interests of the majority of the people....
>
> For the reasons outlined, we must not simply concentrate all of our attention on the national political news from the cities. It is more important to look at regional news and news from the villages, the schools, the factories, and other areas related to the masses of society. We must venture into the wilderness and open up new paths....Volunteers and journalist friends! We look forward to warmly welcoming you as companions, to uniting with you! We are waiting to shake your hands.

Journalism], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 10 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 192-212.

90. "Zhongguo Xinwenxue Yanjiu Hui Fabiao Chengli Xuanyan Quanwen" [The Complete Inaugural Declaration of the Chinese Journalism Research Association], *Wenyi Xinwen*, October 26, 1931, p. 2. The head of the Association is listed here as being Zhang Yijun.

The declaration was dated "one month and three days after Japan's occupation of the three provinces of Manchuria," leaving no doubt as to the political context within which the Research Association was created.[91]

With *Wenyi Xinwen* as its main platform for the propagation of this new, radical journalism, the Research Association was able to gain recruits in the major cities of China and branches of the Association were established in some of these cities. As a working example of the Association's approach to journalism, in early 1932 *Wenyi Xinwen* started a feature page known as "*Jina*" ("Journalism"), an invented phrase intended to signify a new direction in the profession.[92] These were humble beginnings compared to the huge organizations of the Shanghai daily press, but the very existence of such a radical alternative to commercial journalism was indicative of the changes in the political climate since the Shenyang Incident.

Sorting out the exact political allegiances of the Journalism Research Association is a thorny problem. Although not intimately invovled with this form of radical journalism, Communist Party members such as Qu Qiubai and Deng Zhongxia gave some directional support to the Research Association in the initial stages of its formation.[93] At the same time, the Research Association's co-operation with the League of Left-wing Writers was based upon shared ideas rather than a shared organizational structure. It would therefore be an exaggeration to say that the Research Association was a Communist Party front organization. A more accurate description of the Research Association would be that it represented the

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91. On April 12, 1932 (after the bombing of Shanghai) the Journalism Research Association released a much stronger call for journalists to unite in support of the "masses," arguing that the critical point in China's survival as a nation had arrived. See "Xi Quanguo Xinwen Jizhe" [A Call to Journalists throughout the Nation], in *Zhongguo Xiandai Chuban Shiliao*, 2: 129-131.

92. Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng," p. 307. "*Jina*" derived from the invented word *jinazhuyi*, meaning journalism.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

patriotic response of a small group of radical Shanghai journalists to Japanese militarism and as such it must be creditied as having a life of its own. In one sense, it marked the beginning of popular front-style organizations among the journalists, and could be seen as a part of the second united-front in embryonic form.

The ground broken by the Journalism Research Association helped to prepare the way for the establishment of the League of Left-wing Journalists (Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng) on March 20, 1932. Although members of the Research Association helped to bring the Left-wing Journalists into being, the two organizations maintained separate profiles. Together these leftist journalists served as alternatives to, and watchdogs of, the journalism of the big dailies. For instance, after the dailies declared that they would refuse to publish Japanese telegraphic dispatches, *Wenyi Xinwen* made a point of exposing those which did.[94] For its part the League of Left-wing Journalists set up their own news agency in March-April 1932. Located at the Avenue Joffre in the French Concession, the International News Agency (Guoji Xinwen She) sent out the League's version of anti-Japanese activities, some of which were not reported by the established press.

In general, the League and the Research Association were uncompromising in their attitude to the established Shanghai newspapers, and they seized opportunities to struggle against them in word and in deed. None of these newspapers measured up to the requirements of what the leftist journalists considered to be socially aware journalism. Even *Shen Bao*, which had by 1932 become Shanghai's most prominent advocate of resistance to Japan, was damned with faint praise. In mid-June *Wenyi Xinwen* described *Shen Bao* as taking a "leftist position," but facetiously

94. See "*Shen Bao* Wuzai Riben Xiaoxi" [Shen Bao Mistakenly Publishes Japanese News], *Wenyi Xinwen*, October 19, 1931.

added, "this means that though it takes the same stance as the rulers, it is somewhat opposed to the *present* rulers."[95] Once again the blame for this form of journalism, journalism which failed to "reflect the interests of the masses," was laid at the feet of the "capitalist" ownership of the press. By this time a concentration in the ownership of the Shanghai newspaper press had indeed become more pronounced. Not only had *Shen Bao*'s Shi Liangcai taken over *Xin Wen Bao* in 1929, but by mid-1932 Zhang Zhuping, former general manager of *Shen Bao*, controlled *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, the English-language *China Press* (*Da Lu Bao*), the evening newspaper *Da Wan Bao*, and the Shenshi News Agency.[96] *Wenyi Xinwen* argued that Zhang Zhuping was hell-bent on driving his old master, Shi Liangcai, out of business and that as a result of this competition between two capitalists the standards of Shanghai journalism were being dragged down to a level that was harmful to wider society.[97] One consequence of increased competition was seen to be the strike by printers in early June that year. Printers from the four big dailies stopped work in sympathy with fellow workers at *Shi Shi Xin Bao* who had been laid off for refusing to print an evening edition of that paper.[98] *Wenyi Xinwen* gave extensive coverage to the strike and members of the League of Left-wing Journalists even participated in leading the struggle of the printers' union.[99]

The leftist journalists were nonetheless judging their counterparts at the "capitalist" newspapers by excessively rigid standards, for the situation was not as simple as they appeared to believe. *Shen Bao*'s

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95. Tian Yuan, "Kan! Shanghai de Bao" [Shanghai Newspapers: Take a Look!], *Wenyi Xinwen*, June 20, 1932, pp. 6, 3. For details of *Shen Bao*'s stand in this period see chapter 7.

96. For details see chapter 2 and chapter 8.

97. Tian Yuan, "Kan! Shanghai de Bao," p. 3.

98. See chapter 2.

99. Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Jizhe Lianmeng," p. 311; *Wenyi Xinwen*, June 7, 1932, p. 4.

outspoken opposition to the government's non-resistance policy already marked quite a departure from its conservative past and no other major Shanghai daily was prepared to take a similar stand. In addition, there were a number of journalists working at the big dailies who, at considerable risk to themselves, did their best to report news which would assist the cause of resistance to Japan. Soon after the Shenyang Incident Gu Zhizhong went to Manchuria to investigate the situation for *Xin Wen Bao*. Upon his return to Shanghai in October 1931 Gu joined up with Shanghai students who commandeered a Nanjing-bound train in order to take their protests to the central government.[100] During the war in Shanghai Gu and other reporters journeyed to the frontlines in groups to seek out news, often having to avoid gunfire and bombing along the way. At times these reporters ventured into such remote places that they had to rely on carrier pigeons to send in their reports. They also resolved to do what they could to support the efforts of the Nineteenth Route Army which offered stiff resistance to the Japanese forces. Flushed with patriotic fervour, Gu even claims that he asked Cai Tingkai, a commander of the Nineteeth Route Army, to allow him to take part in the fighting. Cai was amused by this request, but told Gu to take up the fight with words as his weapon.[101] When the Lytton Commission came to China to investigate the state of play between China and Japan, Gu Zhizhong was seconded to the Commission as one of the representatives (Ge Gongzhen was the other) of the Chinese press.[102] There were therefore a number of journalists within "capitalist" newspapers willing to take up the challenge presented by Japanese militarism in China.

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100. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 39-43.

101. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48, 51.

102. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-58.

The leftist journalists' most potent argument against the "capitalist" newspaper was merely a kind of radical echo of a concern that had been expressed by many journalists. This was the view that a "capitalist" newspaper "existed only for business."[103] By late August 1932, for instance, *Shen Bao*'s outspoken opposition to government policy on Japan had been stifled through the simple tactic of imposing a postal ban.[104] The commercial vulnerability of daily newspapers was again shown to be their Achilles' Heel, and journalists like Gu Zhizhong were in no position to change the situation. Journalists at the big dailies were, in the end, powerless within the larger structures of a newspaper and the political forces which governed it. Yet, contrary to what the leftist journalists believed, this was more a reflection of the inability of the likes of Shi Liangcai to run their newspapers independently of political forces than of the "capitalist" proprietor's tyrannical control over his journalists.

Indeed, for many journalists the "capitalist" proprietor was not the only authority to which they had to answer. Bribery was still very much a part of life in newspaper journalism. Attempts to buy the support of journalists were not restricted to the Guomindang and the Green Gang in the first years of Nationalist rule. After the Shenyang Incident Japanese consular authorities in Shanghai engaged in similar practices. In the murky world of collaboration it was sometimes easy to point an accusing finger, but, particulalry in the period before the establishment of the Wang Jingwei puppet government in 1940, the evidence does not allow firm conclusions to be drawn. Certain journalists have nonetheless been singled out as collaborators in the pre-1940 period, based largely upon their later support of Wang Jingwei. Gu Zhizhong claims that his own reports for *Xin Wen Bao* on the situation in Manchuria were revised by

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103. Tian Yuan, "Kan! Shanghai de Bao," p. 3.

104. See chapter 7 for details.

Chen Dazai to appear less anti-Japanese. Chen, along with *Shen Bao*'s Zhao Shuyong and *Shi Bao*'s Jin Xiongbai, were, according to Gu, cultivated by Japanese consular officials long before they declared support for Wang Jingwei.[105]

One of the most notorious cases of bribery in this period occurred when Zhang Xueliang visited Shanghai after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Zhang's own bailiwick. Afraid that the loss of Manchurian territory would be seen as a sign of his desire to appease the Japanese, Zhang made what was then alleged to be the largest bribery pay out in the history of Shanghai journalism in an attempt to stifle potential critics. Before Zhang had even arrived in Shanghai the payments were made through the assistance of Du Yuesheng. This large pay out was said to have "increased the press' appetite" for bribery.[106]

Thus the position of journalists at the big dailies was mediated by more complex forces than any simple domination of the press by "capitalists." Journalism that directly challenged government policy on Japan was a virtual impossibility by the latter part of 1932, as the leftist journalists discovered for themselves. *Wenyi Xinwen* was closed down by Guomindang authorities in Shanghai at the end of June. The International News Agency run by the League of Left-wing Journalists was closed down by the authorities in the French Concession just over four months after it began operations.[107] In the view of the Shanghai Municipal Police, which kept brief records of all the major Shanghai press establishments, this news agency was "alleged to be pro-Communist," although there is no evidence to suggest that it was at the time formally connected with the

105. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 37-38, 41.

106. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, p. 157.

107. Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng," p. 308.

Communist Party.[108] For all its weaknesses, from the point of view of the leftist journalists, *Shen Bao* kept on publishing.

Although the leftist journalists had been able to present a radical alternative to the big dailies they lacked the resources themselves to publish a daily newspaper. This greatly minimized their potential influence. There were other journalists who felt there was a genuine need for a daily newspaper which paid greater attention to the movement to resist Japan. The idea for such a daily was first raised in a letter to *Shenghuo Zhoukan* (*Life Weekly*), a journal that had been edited by Zou Taofen since 1926. Zou had also taken up the challenge of Japanese militarism by transforming *Life* into a forum of anit-Japanese opinion, although his stance was not as radical as that of the leftist journalists and there is no evidence of any links between the two. The popularity of Zou's anti-Japanese stand was demonstrated by the fact that *Life* achieved a circulation of about 150,000 by mid-1932, more than any other Chinese periodical and on a par with the giant daily *Shen Bao*.[109] The letter calling for a new daily newspaper appeared in *Life* on January 30, 1932. It reiterated the common criticism of the big Shanghai dailies: they were "of a commercial nature and, like comprador newspapers, lacking in any concern for national salvation," although Zou Taofen did add in parenthesis, "recently many of *Shen Bao*'s editorials have been good."[110] Zou claimed that he and a few friends had been discussing the possibility

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108. S.M.P. Files, Special Enquiry, Chief Detective Inspector Prince, "Extracts from Notes on News Agencies," D. 3414, May 28, 1932.

109. Parks M. Coble, Jr., "Chiang Kai-shek and the Anti-Japanese Movement in China: Zou Taofen and the National Salvation Association, 1931-1937," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44.2 (February 1985): 295.

110. "Ni Qing Shenghuo Zhoukan She zai Shanghai Chuangban Ribao zhi Liyou ji Lüe Zuzhi Fa Shuoming" [Reasons for inviting Life Weekly to establish a daily newspaper in Shanghai and explaining initial Organization], *Shenghuo Zhoukan* 7.4 (Jan. 1932): 83-84. See chapter 7 on Zou Taofen's connections with *Shen Bao*.

of a daily paper when this letter arrived at his desk.[111] By March Zou had decided to set the ball rolling by calling for interested parties to contribute money toward the creation of *Shenghuo Ribao* (*Life Daily*).[112] One of the key figures in this venture was Ge Gongzhen who, after making no progress toward editorial responsibilities at *Shen Bao*, developed close links with Zou Taofen. Ge went on to Geneva in the autumn of 1932 to fulfil his responsiblities as part of the Lytton Commission, but maintained regular correspondence with Zou Taofen concerning the development of funding for *Shenghuo Ribao*.[113] By October more than 100,000 yuan had been raised in support of the creation of *Shenghuo Ribao*, but Zou was being singled out by the Guomindang for very close attention. In August his weekly journal, *Life*, had been subjected to a postal ban and, though this setback was partially overcome by distributing the journal through personal networks, it must have affected Zou's income. On October 22 Zou announced that he had no alternative but to call off the campaign to form *Shenghuo Ribao*. "Over the past few months," he wrote, "*Life* has suffered from repression and each day has been a struggle to break free."[114] This proved to be the end of attempts to form an alternative daily newspaper in

111. Ge Baoquan, "Zou Taofen, Ge Gongzhen yu Shenghuo Ribao," in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 2 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1980), p. 85.

112. See *Shenghuo Zhoukan*, 7.11 (March 19, 1932): p. 151.

113. Some of the correspondence between Ge and Zou has been published in "Zou Taofen Tongzhi deng Xiegei Ge Gongzhen de Xin" [Letters from Comrade Zou Taofen and others to Ge Gongzhen], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 2, pp. 107-111. Others associated with the attempt to form a daily newspaper were Li Gongpu, Chen Binhe (editorial writer for *Shen Bao*), and Du Zhongyuan (Zou's assistant at *Life*). See "Zheng zai Jiji Choubei zhong de Shenghuo Ribao" [In Active Preparation for Life Daily], *Shenghuo Zhoukan* 7.13 (April 2, 1932): 183-185.

114. "Shenghuo Ribao Xuangao Tingban Fahuan Gukuan Qishi" [Annoncement on the Cessation of Shenghuo Ribao and the Return of Funds], *Shenghuo Zhoukan* 7.42 (October 22, 1932): 845.

Shanghai. It was not until June 1936 that Zou was able to breathe life into *Shenghuo Ribao*, and then it was published in Hong Kong.[115]

The struggles of the various patriotic journalists were not over, but the Guomindang tightened its surveillance and control of journalists over the next few years. Several prominent journalists joined the League for the Protection of Civil Rights (Minquan Baozhang Tongmeng) in early 1933. Zou Taofen was one of the most active members, but journalists from the mainstream newspapers included Gu Zhizhong and his colleague Lu Yi from *Xin Wen Bao*, and Qian Hua from *Shen Bao*.[116] The League was forced into an abrupt dissolution by the assassination of Yang Xingfo (Yang Quan) on June 18, 1933. Fearing that his name was on a Guomindang hit-list, Zou Taofen fled to Hong Kong.[117]

The eagle eye of the Guomindang also became much more sharply focussed upon professional journalists when in 1933 regulations were introduced requiring the Shanghai Journalists' Association to accept a Party member within its ranks.[118] From that time on a Party member attended each meeting of the Journalists' Association and was invited to address those present.[119] In addition, in March 1933 the Guomindang

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115. Ge Baoquan, "Zou Taofen, Ge Gongzhen yu Shenghuo Ribao," pp. 86-87; Coble,"Chinag Kai-shek and the Anti-Japanese Movement in China," pp. 302-303.

116. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, p. 58.

117. See Zou Taofen's letter to Ge Gongzhen, July 1, 1933, in "Zou Taofen Tongzhi deng Xiegei Ge Gongzhen de Xin," p. 109.

118. Pan Juemin, "Woguo Xinwenjie Xiezuo Yundong de Huitou he Qianzhan" [A Look at the Past and Future of Co-ordinated activities in our Press], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.1 (October 10, 1934): 71-72; Shi Junbo, "Xinwen Jizhe Zhiye de Baozhang," p. 56. The balance of evidence from these two sources does not allow a more precise date than 1933 for the beginning of Guomindang participation in the Journalists' Association. On September 1 the Nationalist government issued a regulation concerning the "protection of members of the press," and though the details of this remain unclear it might have coincided with regulations governing the conduct of the professional organizations of journalists. See Wang Wenbin, "Guomindang Tongzhi Shiqi Baoye Zaoshou Pohai de Ziliao" [Materials on the Persecution of the Press in the Period of Gumindang Rule], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 6 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1981), p. 276.

119. See for example "Shi Jizhe Gonghui Zuo Kai Sanjie Chunji Dahui" [Shanghai Journalists' Association held Third Spring Meeting Yesterday], *Shen Bao*,

upgraded the Shanghai Censorship Bureau and centralized its operations at an office in Nanjing Road. Instead of censors going to newspaper offices to carry out their work as they had in the past, copies of the various newspapers were sent to the Bureau's central office for inspection.[120] Still, at least according to Jin Xiongbai, relations between the censors and professional journalists were relatively cordial. Despite continuing arguments about what news should or should not be censored, journalists often mixed socially with the censors. As Jin wrote:[121]

> judging by our outwardly intimate appearance, nobody could tell that the previous night we were rolling up our sleeves and shaking our fists at one another so furiously that it would seem impossible for us to be friends.

Nevertheless, government regulation of the sort used by the Guomindang effectively crippled any potential organizational power of the mainstream professional journalists. Their weakness was reflected in the sundry nature of matters dealt with by the general meetings of the Journalists' Association. These seldom ventured beyond administrative details such as electing new members, adjusting statutes on the composition of its executive committee and the like. At the May 1934 meeting of the Association's executive committee a motion on the need for job security was put forward; however, in a move which illustrated the perfunctory character of the Association, the motion was rejected on the grounds that a clause on job security was already part of the Association's

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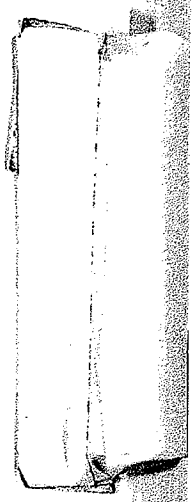
Local News, April 15, 1934. Both a Shanghai Party member, Mao Xiagan, and a member of the municipal government, Chen Kecheng (who was appointed chief censor in Shanghai in March 1933) attended this meeting. In the spring of 1932 the Chinese name of the Journalists's Association was changed from Shanghai Xinwen Jizhe Lianhehui to Shanghai Xinwen Jizhe Gonghui.

120. There were set times when newspapers were supposed to be delivered to the Censorship Bureau. See *Shanghai Shi Nianjian, 1936* [Shanghai Yearbook, 1936], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1936), 2: Section T, pp. 47-48.

121. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 137.

constitution.[122] Though many journalists still complained about their low professional and social standing, they themselves seemed incapable of improving the situation through their own representative organization.[123]

This weakness made the expression of political opinion a very remote possibility, although the Journalists' Association did sometimes take action to protect their own. When Cheng Shewo, who ran *Min Sheng Bao* in Nanjing, was arrested on July 24, 1934 the Shanghai Journalists' Association sent a telegram to the government in Nanjing demanding that Cheng be released.[124] Cheng had attracted the ire of Wang Jingwei by exposing the embezzlement of one of Wang's underlings in the construction of a new building for the Executive Yuan.[125] But such incidents of solidarity among the members of the Journalists' Association were rare in the few years before the outbreak of full-scale war with Japan. On some occasions the Journalists' Association sent telegrams to the central government complaining about censorship regulations, but this was usually only after declarations by Jiang Jieshi purporting to allow greater press freedom. In February 1935, for instance, after Jiang had made a speech about relaxing censorship in December 1934, the Journalists' Association complained not about the severity of censorship



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122. "Jizhe Gonghui Zuo Kai Shouci Zhiweihui" [Journalists' Association held First Executive Meeting Yesterday], *Shen Bao*, Local News, May 8, 1934. For other examples of meetings of the Journalists' Association see the Local News in *Shen Bao* for April 10, 14, 1934; December 26, 1934; May 10, 1935; June 1, 2, 19, 1935; December 22, 1935. The Association held a Spring and Autumn meeting each year. By 1934 it had 256 members.

123. See for example Liu Zucheng, "Guanyu Xinwen Jizhe Zhiye Diwei Queli Wenti" [The Problem of Establishing the Professional Standing of Journalists], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.1 (October 10, 1934): 59; Shi Junbo, "Xinwen Jizhe Zhiye de Baozhang," pp. 57-58.

124. "Jizhe Gonghui Zuo Dian Zhong Xuan Hui Yingjiu Cheng Shewo" [Journalists' Association Yesterday sent Telegram to Central Propaganda Minsitry to Rescue Cheng Shewo], Local News, *Shen Bao*, July 27, 1934.

125. Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China*, pp. 93-94. Cheng was released in September 1934 on agreement never to publish another newspaper in Nanjing.

but about its lack of clear definition and the failure of the government to stick to its own regulations.[126] One journalist saw these protests as indicative of a "growing solidarity among the members of the Fourth Estate," but his was a charitable interpretation.[127] A similar protest was made by the Shanghai Journalists' Association in December the same year under a similar set of circumstances.[128] A strongly worded attack on censorship was made in January 1936, but by journalists such as Gu Zhizhong, Lu Yi, Xie Liuyi and Qian Hua acting independently of their representative organization.[129] Most of the members of the Journalists' Association tended to keep to themselves, their caution being reinforced from time to time by shocks such as the assassination of Shi Liangcai in November 1934.

The leftist journalists, though forced to operate almost like an underground movement, continued to carry forward their cause as best they could. In January 1934 the League of Left-wing Journalists founded a new periodical as a vehicle for their radical journalism. *Jina Pipan* (*Critique of Journalism*) replaced *Wenyi Xinwen* and was suggested by that periodical's *Jina* feature page. The second issue of *Jina Pipan* contained the Left-wing Journalists' programme for action which was expressed in tones much more radical than their previous statements. It spoke of the need to "smash newspaper trusts and the various bureaucratic militarist running dog press and journalists controlled by the fascist

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126. See Local News, *Shen Bao*, February 16, 1935.

127. Hubert S. Liang, "Some Significant Trends in Chinese Journalism," *China Critic*, August 22, 1935, p. 178.

128. "Jizhe Gonghui Qiuji Dahui Lizheng Yanlun Ziyou" [Spring Meeting of Journalists' Association Strives for Free Speech], Local News, *Shen Bao*, Dec. 23, 1935.

129. For the complete list of journalists involved in making this declaration see "Shanghai Xinwen Jizhe wei Zhengqu Yanlun Ziyou Xuanyan" [A Declaration by Shanghai Journalists on the Struggle for Free Speech], in *Zhongguo Xiandai Chuban Shiliao*, 2: 133-136.

Guomindang."[130] With invective of this sort it is not surprising to discover that *Jina Pipan* was banned after only four issues had been published. Another publication, *Hua Bao*, begun soon after, was closed down by order of the Municipal Police of the International Settlement. Having little success with their publishing ventures, in the summer of 1934 the Left-wing Journalists formed a front organization known as the Shanghai Journalists' Friendship Association (Shanghai Jizhe Lianyi Hui). This, too, was short-lived as one of the Association's meetings was raided by Municipal Police and all those present were arrested. By this time the League of Left-wing Journalists was clearly being supported by the Communist Party and it had no choice but to go underground. It concentrated its efforts on attempting to publish news and articles through largely secret connections with journalists working in the more conventional corners of the press. The *Da Mei Wan Bao*, for instance, a Chinese-language edition of the American owned *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, was a prime target. On August 30, 1934 *Da Mei Wan Bao* began a weekly supplement called *Jizhe Zuotan* (*Journalists' Symposium*). This supplement was actually the publishing vehicle for an association of journalists, printers and others employed in the newspaper industry which also referred to itself as the Journalists' Symposium. The inaugural declaration of the Symposium resembled the leftist journalists' call to unite and to re-create Chinese journalism but with none of the leftist polemics about "running dogs of the fascist Guomindang." Members of the League of Left-wing Journalists were nevertheless able to publish in the Symposium's weekly supplement articles with a radical perspective which,

130. "Zhongguo Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng Xingdong Gangling ji Zuzhi Gangling" [Programme for Action and Organization of the Chinese League of Left-wing Journalists], in *Zhongguo Chuban Shiliao*, pp. 304-306. See also "Women de Shiming" [Our Destiny], *Jina Pipan* First Issue (January 7, 1934), in *Zhongguo Chuban Shiliao*, pp. 303-304.

for example, praised newspaper systems in the Soviet Union but attacked those in "capitalist" countries.[131] They continued to employ similar tactics, making use of sympathetic journalists in the mainstream press, until the League was disbanded in May 1936 when it was felt that a wider movement toward a united front was taking shape.[132]

Although the leftist journalists were a small group whose impact on their professional colleagues was minimal, the basic thrust of their strategy, which combined a denunciation of the journalism of the big Shanghai dailies with an appeal to patriotic, anti-Japanese sentiments, was shown to be particularly effective in the coming years in uniting radicals like the Communist Party with independent patriotic movements led by the likes of Zou Taofen. Zou published a string of periodicals from 1932 to 1936, all hounded by the Nationalist government and all motivated at least in part by a desire to provide a popular anti-Japanese alternative to the Shanghai daily press. Stirred into action by the student movement of December 9, 1935, Zou was one of the motive forces behind the formation of the Shanghai National Salvation Association (Shanghai Jiuguo Lianhe Hui) in the same month.[133] Gu Zhizhong was one of the more than two hundred people who joined the National Salvation Association. He was given responsibility for passing on information about the Association's activities to foreign correspondents in Shanghai. Gu was able to keep secret his participation in the Association until one of its leaders, Shen Junru, asked

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131. Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zouyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng," p. 311; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 1026-1029. Leftist writers also successfully penetrated the movie supplements of newspapers such as *Shen Bao, Shi Shi Xin Bao, Da Wan Bao* and even the C.C. Clique's *Chen Bao*. See Xia Yan, "Zai 'Ershi--Sishi Niandai Zhongguo Dianying Huigu' Kaimushi shang de Jianghua" [Some Opening Remarks about a Look Back on Chinese Movies from the 1920s to 1940s], *Xin Wenxue Shiliao* no. 22 (1984): 25.

132. Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng," p. 312.

133. Coble, "Chiang Kai-shek and the Anti-Japanese Movement in China," p. 301-302. On the December 9th student movement see John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 111-156.

him to head-up an anit-Japanese demonstration at Shanghai's northern railway station on June 21, 1936. Though this exposure did not affect his employment at *Xin Wen Bao*, Gu claims it made it difficult for him to work effectively within the national salvation movement.[134] It is not possible to say how many Shanghai journalists followed Gu Zhizhong's lead, but by the time the National Salvation Association had grown into a nation-wide organization in May 1936 much of its propaganda success was due to the large number of journalists and writers within its ranks.[135]

By early 1937, after staving off an open revolt by Guangdong and Guangxi and being kidnapped in Xian, even Jiang Jieshi accepted a united front with the Communists. What the League of Left-wing Journalists had started in 1932 proved to be a dress rehearsal for united front politics in the war and post-war environment as the independent groups and the Communist Party were drawn closer and closer together in their opposition to the Nationalist government under Jiang Jieshi.

As the Japanese military pushed relentlessly southward from July 1937 on, all the fine theories about professional journalism were swept aside. One journalist wrote a book on the need for "emergency newspapers" (*feichang shiqi de baozhi*) and argued that journalists should be given strict military training.[136] Gu Zhizhong decided upon patriotic resistance. He and his colleague Lu Yi became members of anti-Japanese journalist associations after the Japanese attack on Shanghai in August 1937. Gu almost paid for his convictions with his life as in August 1940 agents of the Wang Jingwei puppet government made an unsuccessful

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134. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 61-63, 66-67.

135. Lyman P. Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 70.

136. Wu Cheng, *Feichang Shiqi de Baozhi* (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1937), pp. 29-35, 52.

assassination attempt.[137] The *Shen Bao* journalist Jin Huating was not so lucky; agents of the puppet government killed him in February 1942.[138] Others decided it was better to accommodate the Japanese presence. Lu Yi, for example, resigned from *Xin Wen Bao* because his reports on the battle for Shanghai in August 1937 were doctored by Chen Dazai who later supported the Wang Jingwei government.[139] Jin Xiongbai, who spent some time working with Guomindang newspapers before giving up journalism and becoming a lawyer, also went over to the puppet government. He would by no means have felt lonely.[140]

The devastating national crisis afflicting China caught up with most of Shanghai's journalists before they thought about catching up with it. In this tragic historical setting did the ideal of the objective journalist whose only duty was to report "the facts" have any meaning? If truth is the first casualty of war, then Shanghai newspaper journalists were such a weak profession that by August 1937 truth did not stand a fighting chance.

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137. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 81-91, 99-100. In 1938 Lu Yi was one of the founding members of the Young Chinese Journalists' Study Association (Zhongguo Qingnian Jizhe Xuehui), a patriotic anti-Japanese organization . See Gu Zhong, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Xinwen Jizhe Lianmeng," p. 316.

138. "Xinwenjie Mingren Jieshao," *Zhongguo Xinwen Nianjian, 1984*, p. 685.

139. Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, p. 81.

140. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 2: 29-35, 61-64. Other alleged "traitors" from among the journalists were Zhao Shuyong (*Shen Bao*), Hang Shijun (*Xin Wen Bao*) and, the most mysterious of all, Chen Binhe who wrote *Shen Bao*'s anti-Japanese editorials in early 1932. See Gu Zhizhong, *Bao Hai Zayi*, pp. 37-38, 41. For a discussion of Chen's position see chapter 8.

PART II

SHI LIANGCAI AND THE *SHEN BAO* ERA

A POLITICAL HISTORY, 1912-1937

CHAPTER V

PROFIT BEFORE PATRIOTISM, 1912-1925

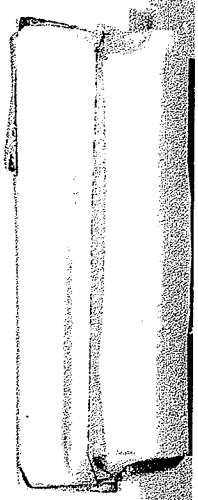
Although Shi Liangcai became one of Shanghai's most prominent and influential citizens, little is known of his own personal history. Said to be a quietly determined, practical man, he left behind only a few fragments of writing and these are of little historical value.[1] Yet the story of Shi Liangcai's rise to the status of press mogul had more to do with the connections he developed with the commercial elite of Jiangsu and Shanghai than with his individual character. Enough is known about these aspects of his life to enable the drafting of an outline sketch. Moreover, once Shi Liangcai had taken control of *Shen Bao* vital clues to his political outlook are to be found in the paper itself. For even though throughout this period *Shen Bao* was reluctant to adopt a clear politcal line, the way in which it responded and adjusted to the major political events betrayed certain preferences and attitudes. In particular, in this initial period of Shi Liangcai's control of *Shen Bao*, the paper, guided by commercial priorities above all others, displayed what could be referred to as a selective anti-imperialism. This meant that it was generally supportive of the anti-Japanese May Fourth movement, but far less willing to offend the British, the dominant power in Shanghai's International

1. On Shi Liangcai's character see Ma Yinliang, "Yiwei Aiguo de Xinwen Shiyejia: Jinian Shi Liangcai Xiansheng Mainan Wushi Zhou Nian" [A Patriotic Newspaper Proprietor: In Memory of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Shi Liangcai's Sacrifice], *Xinwen Jizhe* [The Journalist], Nov. 1984, pp. 12-13. Shi's extant published works consist of prefatory remarks to *Shen Bao*'s various monographs such as the yearbooks and *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian*, ed. Huang Yanpei (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1922). Ma Yinliang, the manager of *Shen Bao* after 1929, was compiling a chronological biography of Shi Liangcai, but this was confiscated and destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

Settlement, at the time of the May Thirtieth movement. Though *Shen Bao* was to play a leading role in the patriotic anti-Japanese movement of the early 1930s, its behaviour during the first thirteen years under Shi Liangcai's control showed that it tended to put profit before patriotism.

Shi Liangcai's Path to *Shen Bao*

Shi Liangcai was every inch a native of Jiangsu. Although his native place was Jiangning (near Nanjing), Shi was born in the town of Sijing, south-west of Shanghai, in 1879. His father, Shi Chunfan, had moved to Sijing during the Taiping Rebellion. For the rest of his life Shi Liangcai seldom ventured beyond this region. He was given a thorough classical education, a local Confucian scholar being appointed as his tutor. He was destined to follow the traditional path, via the imperial examination system, to an official career when the shock of China's defeat in the 1894-1895 war with Japan and the subsequent reform movement of 1898 convinced him to take up a more practical education. He began to learn Japanese and studied physics and chemistry. In 1901 Shi entered the Hangzhou Sericultural College. This marked the beginning of his involvement with the promotion of "new learning" in Jiangsu. During the winter vacations, Shi returned to Sijing and, with financial support from his father's rice trading business, established a primary school in the town. He completed his studies in Hangzhou in 1903 and was immediatley offered positions to teach physics and chemistry at various Shanghai schools. The following year Shi founded the Women's Sericultural College in Gaochang Chao, a suburb of Shanghai. He had become something of an expert in the promotion of this branch of education, and the sericultural industry around the Taihu region was developed largely under his auspices. From this moment Shi Liangcai never looked back.[2]



2. On Shi's early life see Huang Yanpei, "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng zhi

Shi's first big step into the Jiangsu elite came in 1903 when he was one of the key figures responsible for setting up the Jiangsu General Association of Education (Jiangsu Xuewu Zonghui). Huang Yanpei, one of the most active promoters of "new learning" in Jiangsu, was the primary force behind this Association, but it also had the support of Zhang Jian, the influential gentry-industrialist. Through his contact with Huang Yanpei and Zhang Jian, Shi Liangcai became part of a local struggle over funding for the construction of a railway from Suzhou to Ningbo via Hangzhou. In 1898 a British syndicate won the contract to build this line, but they were delayed by the Boxer Rebellion and financial difficulties. Following these delays, the contract was handed over to a local commercial-gentry company in 1905, headed by Tang Shouqian. In 1907, when the British contested the rights of the Chinese company to build the railway a new contract was drawn up which allowed the Chinese to continue with the construction, but only on the condition that funding would be in the form of a £1,500,000 British loan. This sparked an immediate protest from the Chinese company and they started a movement to raise their own funds. Apart from Tang, Zhang Jian was one of the main sponsors of the movement, and Shi Liangcai also lent vigorous support. When the Chinese company was re-organized Shi Liangcai was rewarded for his efforts by being made a director. The company's protests dragged on, but ended in disaster when, in 1910, Tang Shouqian was dismissed from the project and replaced by Sheng Xuanhuai who was in favour of funding the railway with the British loan.[3]

Shengping" [The Life of Mr. Shi Liangcai], in "Zhuidiao Shi Zong Jingli" [In Memory of Director General Shi], *Shen Bao Yuekan* 3.12 (Dec. 1934): 10; Howard L. Boorman and Richard C. Howard, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, 4 vols. (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967-71), 3: 126-127. (The latter is slightly innaccurate).

3. On these events see Mary Backus Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang Province, 1902-1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 197-198. On Shi's part in the movement

In 1908, while he was serving on the commercial-gentry railway company, Shi Liangcai began working as a part-time editorial columnist for *Shi Bao*. Although the cirumstances surrounding his employment at the paper are unclear, Shi's connection with Zhang Jian was again probably a key factor. By this time, as shown in chapter one, *Shi Bao* had become a focal point for the constitutionalist movement in Shanghai. Zhang Jian, Huang Yanpei and the principal members of *Shi Bao*, the proprietor Di Chuqing, chief editor Chen Jinghan, and Shi Liangcai, would often meet at the "Xi Lou" (House of Rest) in the *Shi Bao* building to exchange views and plan strategies on the development of constitutional government.[4] The personnel that gathered at the Xi Lou was very much the same as that behind the Jiangsu General Association of Education and there was some overlap with those involved in the local railway movement.[5]

Zhang Jian, perhaps the most successful gentry-industrialist in Jiangsu, was also that province's leading proponent of constitutional government. In 1909 he was made chairman of the Qing-sponsored Jiangsu provincial assembly.[6] An influential figure in his own right, Zhang's greatest power was strategic. He had contacts with both the revolutionaries and members of the Qing government which placed him in

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against the British loan see Huang Yanpei, "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng zhi Shengping," p. 10.

4. Bao Tianxiao, *Chuan Ying Lou Huiyilu* [Memoirs of the Bracelet Shadow Chamber] (Hong Kong: Dahua Chuabanshe, 1971), pp. 329-333; Huang Yanpei, "Wo Qinshen Jingli de Xinhai Geming Shishi" [A Factual Account of My Personal Experience of the 1911 Revolution], in *Xinhai Geming Huiyilu* [Memoirs of the 1911 Revolution], ed. Zhongguo Renmin Zhengzhi Xieshang Huiyi Quanguo Weiyuanhui Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiu Weiyuanhui [Committee for Research into Historical Sources, National Committee of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961-), 1: 62-63.

5. Bao Tianxiao, *Huiyilu*, pp. 351-352.

6. Samuel C. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China: Chang Chien, 1853-1926* (New York and London: Columbia University Press), pp. 66-68.

a position to hold the balance between the two.[7] This proved to be the case in the wake of the Wuchang uprising in October 1911. Once again, a small group of like-minded people that gathered around Zhang Jian influenced the direction of subsequent events. Apart from Zhang himself, this group included two of his closest friends, Zhao Fengchang and Ying Dehong, and Shi Liangcai was also an active member. After the October uprising Zhao Fengchang made his residence available for the group's meetings. Zhao's home, in similar fashion to the "Xi Lou" at *Shi Bao*, soon became known as the "Xi Yin Tang" (Lunar Pavillion). It was here that the constitutionalists held important meetings with the revolutionary forces to plan an orderly end to the Qing government and to negotiate an agreed tranistion to a republican system. In particular, Zhang Jian, Zhao Fengchang, Ying Dehong and Shi Liangcai persuaded the Jiangsu governor general, Cheng Dequan, to declare Jiangsu's independence from the Qing in November 1911.[8] Actions of this sort helped to seal the fate of the Qing. In negotiations to determine the composition of the new government of the Republic, this same Xi Yin Tang group played a vital role during the Shanghai Peace Conference in securing Yuan Shikai as President.[9]

The precise nature of Shi Liangcai's role in the 1911 Revolution is not clear. Apart from his close association with Zhang Jian's group, at the time of the Wuchang uprising Shi was also in touch with some of the local revolutionaries. Zhang Zi, head of the Jiangsu branch of the Tong Meng Hui, wanted to use Shi's Sericultural College as a base from which to attack

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7. P'eng-yüan Chang, "The Constitutionalists," in *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-1913*, ed. Mary Clabaugh Wright (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 148, 179-182.

8. Huang Yanpei, "Shi LIangcai Xiansheng zhi Shengping," pp. 10-11; Huang Yanpei, "Wo Qinshen Jingli Xinhai Geming de Shishi," pp. 63-64; P'eng-yüan Chang, "The Constitutionalists," p. 182, n. 134.

9. Liu Housheng, *Zhang Jian Zhuanji* [A Biography of Zhang Jian], reprint ed. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1985), pp. 194-196. Little is known of Zhang's cohort Ying Dehong, but on Zhao Fengchang's rise through official ranks thanks to the patronage of Zhang Zhidong, see Liu Housheng, *Zhang Jian Zhuanji*, pp. 93-94.

the Qing's Shanghai arsenal. Shi considered the risk of fire was too great and the plan was abandoned.[10] But it was Zhang Jian's patronage above all that brought Shi to the wings of the national political stage. The rewards that flowed from this connection increased after the founding of the Republic.

In the first year of the new government a number of important local administrative positions came Shi Liangcai's way. First, he was given responsibility for setting in order the organization of Shanghai's customs revenue. Secondly, after Zhang Jian assumed ministerial responsibility for reforming salt administration in the Jiangsu region, Shi was put in charge of the Songjiang Salt Bureau. Both these positions were an important part of the Republican government's search for urgently needed funds.[11] Disappointed with the Beijing government's lack of interest in his reforms, Zhang Jian resigned his post in October 1912.[12] In the meantime, Zhang had developed an interest in acquiring *Shen Bao*, presenting Shi Liangcai with his greatest opportunity to date.

When Xi Zipei let it be known that he was anxious to sell *Shen Bao*, it presented Zhang Jian and his cohorts with a chance to realize a hope they had nurtured for several years.[13] Zhang's influence at *Shi Bao* before the 1911 Revolution was significant but indirect. Di Chuqing, who had managed to frustrate the attempts of no lesser figure than Liang Qichao to make *Shi Bao* a party organ, was firmly in control of his paper. *Shi Bao*

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10. Feng Yaxiong, "Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai' [Shen Bao and Shi Liangcai], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 17 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961), p. 158.

11. Huang Yanpei, "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng zhi Shengping," p. 10; Zhang Shizhao, "'Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai' Shu Hou," p. 244.

12. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China*, p. 135.

13. This is the view presented in Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Langcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shi Liao" [Historical Sources on the Initial Period of Shi Liangcai's Management of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 5 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1980), p. 154.p. 154.

offered little hope to outsiders wishing to make it their public platform. In contrast, *Shen Bao* was a perfect target. Already well established, with basic equipment in place and an extensive network of branch offices, it was a prize purchase. But the hunt for someone to run the paper did not lead straight to Shi Liangcai. He was second choice. The principal investors in *Shen Bao*, Zhang Jian, Ying Dehong and Zhao Fengchang, went first to Zhang Shizhao. Zhang Shizhao edited *Su Bao* in its most notorious anti-Manchu period in 1903. Although not a member of the Tong Meng Hui, Zhang became drawn toward their camp during the 1911 Revolution. He was approached twice by Ying Dehong with an offer to manage *Shen Bao* and refused both times. Zhang had already agreed to take up editorial duties at *Min Li Bao*. It was only then that the plumb job of general manager of the resurrected *Shen Bao* fell to Shi Liangcai.[14] *Shi Bao*'s Chen Jinghan was then bought across to be chief editor, making up the new ownership and management quintet of the paper.[15]

Whether or not Shi Liangcai invested some capital of his own in *Shen Bao* remains unclear. One view has it that the contract signed between the news owners and Xi Zipei on September 23 did not require capital investment from either Shi Liangcai or Chen Jinghan. It is suggested that they were taken onboard for their managing and editing skills and this was considered sufficient to give them equal status with Zhang Jian, Ying Dehong and Zhao Fengchang.[16] There are other views which claim that Shi did invest in the paper, but their colourful narratives

14. Zhang Shizhao, "'Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai' Shu Hou," p. 244-245.

15. Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi' [A Sixty Six Year History of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai* [A New Era in the History of Journalism] (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1946), p. 92; Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 154.

16. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 154.

on the source of his capital require that they be treated with caution.[17] In any case, beginning on October 20, 1912, Shi assumed control of one of the country's most important newspapers.

By the time Shi Liangcai had moved into *Shen Bao* Yuan Shikai had consolidated his position as President of the Republic. The Republican Party connections of the new owners of *Shen Bao* has been noted in chapter two. This inclined *Shen Bao* toward support of Yuan Shikai, but not in a way which would suggest that the paper was merely a tool for a party cause. Shi Liangcai was particularly circumspect when it came to the expression of political opinion in *Shen Bao*. In general, the editorial column avoided party politics like the plague. Chen Jinghan, whose editorials at *Shi Bao* earned him a reputation as an incisive critic of the Qing government, was restricted to the writing of short prose pieces and miscellaneous essays at *Shen Bao*.[18]

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17. Feng Yaxiong, who taught at the same school as Shi Liangcai when the latter first went to Shanghai in 1903, has provided a rather fanciful account of the source of Shi's capital investment in *Shen Bao*. He claims Shi came by a windfall thanks to a Shanghai prostitute, Shen Qiushui. Shen's patron was said to be Tao Baojun, a Qing military official. During the 1911 Revoution Tao allegedly misappropriated several hundred thousand yuan from the salaries of the troops under his command in Nanjing and hid this money in Shen's brothel. Tao also allegedly had palns to attack Zhenjiang and make himself governor of the region. As a ruse to lure him out of Shanghai, Chen Qimei, then military governor of that city, invited him to go to Zhenjiang to discuss his prospects. But Tao was executed soon after his arrival. Shen Qiushui, in fear of her safety and left with Tao's misappropriated funds, sought help from Shi Liangcai. He agreed to offer refuge to both her and her money. See Feng Yaxiong, "Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai," p. 158. This story has been refuted by Zhang Shizhao, the man first approached to be manager of the new *Shen Bao*. He claims that although Shi Liangcai knew Tao Baojun's family, he had nothing to do with Shen Qiushui and did not receive any money from her. Zhang argues that Shi was familiar with one of the subordinates of Cheng Dequan (former governor general of Jiangsu). When this (un-named) person went to north China to take up an official military position, he asked Shi to take care of his wife. After Shi had consented to this arrangement, this woman (again un-named) moved into Shi's household, bringing 8,000 ounces of silver with her. See Zhang Shizhao, "'Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai' Shu Hou," pp. 244-245. There is, however, another suggestion of Shi Liangcai's connection with Shen Qiushui. Qian Zhisheng, "Shi Liangcai bei Ansha An Zhenxiang" [The True Story of Shi Liangcai's Assassination], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources], no. 18 (Beijing: Xinhua Shudain, 1961), p. 160, claims that Shi's "second wife," Shen Qiushui, was one of the passengers in the car in which Shi Liangcai was assassinated. It is unlikely that these details will ever be settled one way or the other unless further evidence comes to light.

18. Little is known about Chen Jinghan, but see Zhu Chuanyu, *Baoren.Baoshi.Baoxue* [Journalists, the History of Journalism, and Journalism]

Although Shi Liangcai in effect wrapped *Shen Bao* in a cocoon of political caution, the paper's political character was conveyed in a less direct manner than via an editorial soap-box for a particular party. On occasions Zhang Jian was not averse to instructing *Shen Bao* to run a campaign on behalf of commercial or industrial causes which were of particular concern to him. In October 1912, for instance, Zhang wrote to Zhao Fengchang arguing that the next meeting of the National Agricultural Federation, which was due to meet in late October, had to be delayed. Zhang claimed he would be in a better position to influence proceedings at a later date, and he asked Zhao to have Shi Liangcai promote in *Shen Bao* the idea of a delayed meeting.[19] This provides a clue to the way in which Zhang used *Shen Bao*. He would exercise his influence on issues which most directly affected his commercial and industrial concerns. In addition, it must be borne in mind that even though he was less than satisfied serving the government under Yuan Shikai, Zhang held various ministerial positions throughout Yuan's rule. He served continuously as Minister of Agriculture and Commerce from October 1913 to December 1915.[20]

A more important sign of *Shen Bao*'s political character was the special byline given to Huang Yuansheng, the paper's first Beijing political correspondent. Like Chen Jinghan, Huang was first employed by *Shi Bao*, but *Shen Bao* managed to secure his services in December 1912. Bylines were all too rare in newspapers like *Shen Bao* which relied so

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(Taibei: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1967), pp. 20-28; Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo Baoxue Shi* [A History of Journalism in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1927; Taibei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1982), pp. 188-189.

19. Zhang Jian, Letter to Zhao Fengchang, October 5, 1912, cited by Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao" [On Shen Bao During the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management], (M.A. thesis, Shanghai, Fudan University, 1982), p. 4.

20. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China*, pp. 82-87.

heavily on the anonymity of the telegraphic dispatch. But Huang raised the level of political reporting in China to such a high standard that his column became a favourite with the newspaper audience and he achieved considerable fame as a result.[21] Up until the time of Yuan Shikai's suppression of the "second revolution" Huang associated with the same group of politicians as Zhang Jian and his cohorts at *Shen Bao*: the Republican/Progress Party forces, particularly, in Huang's case, those gathered around Liang Qichao. Huang then disassociated himself from party political movements, although he was drawn more and more toward Yuan's dangerous political machinations. As chapter three demonstrated, Huang was an acerbic critic of dictatorship, but believed there was no appropriate alternative to President Yuan's rule. His byline reflected this view of national politics. In effect, Huang's reporting functioned as a *de facto* editorial column for *Shen Bao*.[22]

This situation changed dramatically once Yuan Shikai's monarchical intentions were made clear in 1915. Yuan then embarked on an aggressive campaign to gain the support of the press through coercian or bribery. In September Huang Yuansheng fled Beijing in order to escape becoming a pawn to Yuan Shikai's plan to declare himself emperor. Similarly, on September 3 *Shen Bao* felt moved to make a public declaration reassuring its readers that it did not accept subsidies from any organization or individual. The declaration concluded:[23]

> At a time of relentless foreign aggression, when a republican system has brought a little stability to our civil strife, the views of the Peace Planning Society (Chou An Hui) on changing the state system can only do unnecessary harm. It is really difficult to endorse [their

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21. Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi* [A History of the Press in Modern China] (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), p. 741; Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 158.

22. For details on Huang's party affiliations and his political views see chapter 3, pp. 143-145

23. "Shen Bao Guan Qishi" [An Announcement by Shen Bao], *Shen Bao* September 3, 1915.

views] in the age of a Republic.

Yuan Shikai was anxious to have Shanghai newspapers on-side because of their influence on the national political scene. In chapter two it was shown that he managed to take control of *Shen Zhou Ribao*, but Yuan failed to penetrate the four big dailies (*Shen Bao, Xin Wen Bao, Shi Shi Xin Bao* and *Shi Bao*). A few days before *Shen Bao* published its unprecedented announcement, Yuan sent a special envoy to Shanghai to meet with the major newspaper proprietors. This envoy was given the task of buying the favour of the major newspapers. Shi Liangcai was allegedly approached and asked to name his price, whether it be monetery or an official position. Shi was said to have berated the hapless envoy with an indignant refusal.[24]

At the same time, Shi Liangcai knew that open opposition to Yuan Shikai was a risky path to take. He only had to look at the example of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. Its attacks upon Yuan's resotoration of a monarchical system brought a ban on its sale and its distribution through the post. This placed a heavy financial burden on the Research Clique in order to keep *Shi Shi Xin Bao* in print.[25] *Shen Bao* therefore made sure that it was not seen to be openly flouting Yuan Shikai's ambitious plans.

Shen Bao preferred to use mild forms of protest to signal its displeasure with the direction in which Yuan was taking national politics. A good case in point was the response of the big dailies to Yuan's order in January 1916 that all newspapers adopt a dating system based upon the imperial title of his reign, Hong Xian. The year 1916 was to be designated as the first year of the Emperor Hong Xian (Hong Xian Yuan Nian). When this order reached Shi Liangcai at the end of December 1915, he convened a meeting of the Shanghai Daily Press Association in order to formulate a

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24. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 157.

25. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de Ribao" [Shanghai's Daily Newspapers], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.1 (June 1934): 273. See also chapter 2, pp. 89-90.

united stand on the issue. Fearing that they, like *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, could be subjected to postal bans if they reacted too strongly, the various members of the Association agreed upon a symbolic registration of disapproval. At the top of the page they printed the date according to the Julian calendar; below that came the date by the Chinese lunar calendar; below that again, in smaller print, came the date of the Hong Xian reign. They also published the order that required them to change their dating together with an apology to their readers. By late March 1916, after Yuan abandoned his monarchical system, the dates of the Republic returned to the pages of the newspapers.[26]

The behaviour of *Shen Bao* and the other big dailies over this issue demonstrated the political limits beyond which they were not prepared to venture. The decision reached by the Daily Press Association represented a classic compromise. They made their point without ever endangering their sales and distribution.

Indeed, in Shi Liangcai's case the biggest menace to survival at the end of 1915 was not the dictatorship of Yuan Shikai but litigation launched by *Shen Bao*'s former owner, Xi Zipei, in the Mixed Court of the International Settlement. Xi had been kept on at *Shen Bao* in a nominal managerial capacity. He was largely ignored by Shi Liangcai and had no noticeable impact on the direction of *Shen Bao*. Xi's litigation made three claims: he had not been paid the full amount of the purchase price of *Shen Bao*; the contract of sale did not give the new owners the right to use the "*Shen Bao*" trademark, and; the payment of his salary was in arrears. The details of this case are unclear, but in the end Xi Zipei was able to claim a major victory. The owners of *Shen Bao* were ordered to pay 245,000 taels

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26. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan" [The Historical Development of the Press in Shanghai], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.3 (Dec. 1934): 990-991; Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 157.

compensation, otherwise *Shen Bao* would be returned to Xi.[27]

Shi Liangcai's failure to fend off this litigation served as a potent reminder that a newspaper publishing out of the International Settlement had to stay on the right side of foreign as well as Chinese authorities. For Zhang Zhuping, *Shen Bao*'s manager, later claimed that the Mixed Court was prejudiced against the case for the defence. Before the outbreak of World War I *Shen Bao* was registered as a German enterprise. Although this was renounced as soon as China entered the war against Germany, according to Zhang Zhuping, Xi Zipei was still able to take advantage of this German connection to discredit the owners of *Shen Bao*. In addition, Zhang claimed that the Court believed a cartoon published by *Shen Bao* to be an insult to the fighting spirit of the *Entente* countries.[28] It has also been suggested that Wang Hanxi, *Xin Wen Bao*'s comprador, used his frienship with a Chinese judge on the Mixed Court in an attempt to influence proceedings in favour of Xi Zipei. Although it is difficult to substantiate anecdotes of this kind, Wang would certainly have been happy to strike a blow against his main competitor.[29]

In any case, the Court's decision was a great financial blow to *Shen Bao*'s owners. Zhang Jian, Ying Dehong and Zhao Fengchang, their interest in politics on the wane, decided that enough was enough and withdrew from the paper. Shi Liangcai was more determined. His problem was finding the money to settle up with Xi Zipei. The burden might have

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27. Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 92; Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shi Liao," p. 155; Wang Zhongwei, "You Jingzheng you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao" [The Competition and Co-operation between Xin Wen Bao and Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 15 (Beijing: Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), p. 77.

28. Zhang Zhuping, "Yu suo Jinian yu Ci Jinian Rizhe" [My Memorial on this Memorial Day], in "Shen Bao Er Wan Hao Jinian" [Memorial to Shen Bao's Twenty Thousandth Edition], *Shen Bao*, November 19, 1928.

29. On Wang Hanxi's alleged involvement in this case see Tao Juyin, " Xin Wen Bao Fajia Shi" [The Historical Development of Xin Wen Bao], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Materials], no. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p. 137.

been reduced by splitting the payment between the five owners of *Shen Bao*, but still Shi Liangcai had to come up with sufficient funds to cover his share. Moreover, if he was to take sole ownership of the paper, he had to buy out the other partners. Shi turned to Xu Jingren, a cotton merchant who had grown wealthy during the wartime period in the absence of foreign competition. The two had become friends when they worked together at the Songjiang Salt Bureau in 1912. Xu provided the all important loan which enabled Shi Liangcai to take full control of *Shen Bao*.[30]

Shi therefore accumulated a considerable debt in making the transition to *Shen Bao*'s proprietor. The full financial details behind this transition remain undisclosed and it is not clear how Shi managed to overcome his debt. By October 1918 *Shen Bao* had done sufficiently well for it to be moved to a large five storey building at the corner of Hankou and Shandong Roads. The construction of this building was said to cost a further seventy thousand taels. Although *Shen Bao*'s circulation was over twenty thousand in 1918 (a threefold increase over 1912), it was unlikely that profits from the paper alone were enough to pay off Shi's debt and finance *Shen Bao*'s new home. It has been suggested that *Shen Bao*'s annual net profit in these years was around twenty to thirty thousand yuan; certainly short of the kind of money Shi Liangcai had spent up to 1918.[31] It is possible that, like Wang Hanxi at *Xin Wen Bao*, Shi Liangcai borrowed money from the banks, but there does not appear to be any

30. Ma Yinliang and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 155. Gong Debai, a journalist active in northern China, claimed that Shi Liangcai was given the necessary funds by the Japanese government on the condition that he did not criticise Japan's China policies. This extraordinary account is not supported by *Shen Bao*'s subsequent political attitude to Japan nor by other evidence. Gong Debai's memoirs often appear to be inaccurate and must be treated with great caution. See Gong Debai, *Si Yu Ji* [Four Foolish Collections], 4 vols. (Taibei: Zhuanji Wenxue She, 1969), 4: 34-36.

31. On the issue of Shi Liangcai's debts and profits see Ma Yinlaing and Chu Yukun, "Shi Liangcai Jieban Shen Bao Chuqi Shiliao," p. 155.

evidence on this apsect of his extraordinary success during this period.

Shi Liangcai's rise to newspaper proprietor was thus a story of some skill and determination on his own part and extraordinary good fortune in gaining the patronage of associates and friends. Shi's wealth was neither inherited nor entirely self-made, but rather the result of several helping hands along the way. In particular, his involvement with the commercial and political campaigns of Zhang Jian brought great rewards. From this auspicious beginning Shi Liangcai was able to go on to achieve success in his own right, carving out an influential position for himself in business and society, and cultivating contacts with Shanghai's leading capitalists.

Adapting to the Rise of Anti-Imperialism: Reactions to the May Fourth and May Thirtieth Movements

It has been noted that one of the keys to the commercial success of *Shen Bao* was Shi Liangcai's determination to steer clear of party political struggles. *Shen Bao* survived the repression of Yuan Shikai's rule while party newspapers were forced out of business one after the other. Survival was achieved at the expense of critical political comment. Even *Shen Bao*'s resistance to Yuan Shikai's resurrection of the monarchy was expressed in a very gentle manner. Shi Liangcai was not about to change this cautious approach once he had won full control of *Shen Bao*. But editorial silence was no guarantee of insulation from the wider political changes of the day. *Shen Bao*, which shunned the role of political leader, soon found itself being overtaken by political changes which were largely beyond its control. In particular, the fact that newspapers like *Shen Bao* were dependent on foreign resources and the good will of foreign authorities in Shanghai made them politically vulnerable. For *Shen Bao*'s dilemma was that it had to operate within two political arenas, one dominated by foreigners and the other by Chinese, whose interests often came into open conflict; especially so in the period from the May Fourth

era to the May Thirtieth movement. In such circumstances *Shen Bao* could not please both sides, but which one was it to choose? During this period the answer was that, some foreign powers were easier political targets than others. *Shen Bao* therefore willingly joined in the May Fourth movement against Japan, but was very reluctant to offend the British authorities of the International Settlement in the May Thirtieth period, and even published the British side of events. On both occasions *Shen Bao* was primarily guided by commercial priorities. It made an astute choice on the first occasion; a disasterous one on the second occasion.

Shen Bao's cautious nature meant that it was far from being an innovative political or cultural force. In the intellectual revolution of the May Fourth era, in the realm of political ideas, culture and literature, the lead was clearly taken by periodicals such as *Xin Qing Nian* (*New Youth*) and *Xin Chao* (*New Tide*).[32] Before the outbreak of the May Fourth Incident, *Shen Bao* showed no signs of being influenced by this intellectual revolution. But they responded quickly and energetically as soon as they became aware of the May Fourth Incident itself. This took the form of a demonstration by several thousand Beijing students protesting against the decision of the Versailles Peace Conference to hand over the German concessions in Shandong to Japan.[33] Fairly detailed reports of the demonstration began to appear in *Shen Bao* from May 6. Over the next few days it published the declarations of various Shanghai institutions protesting the arrest of the student demonstrators and demanding that the Chinese delegation at Versailles refuse to sign the Peace Treaty. The declarations of schools, merchants and the Shanghai Daily Press

32. *Xin Qing Nian*'s circulation was said to be around 16,000. It, and other similar publications, were very popular among intellectuals and students, but probably made little impact beyond this educated elite. See Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp. 41-58, 174-182.

33. On the event itself see Chow, *May Fourth Movement*, pp. 84-117.

Association itself were published in the major newspapers. The Daily Press Association asked that the arrested students be released and warned the government not to "ignore the dramatic changes in public opinion."[34] *Shen Bao*'s editorials also described the Beijing government's handling of the affair as a "suicidal policy."[35]

The May Fourth Incident soon mushroomed into a widespread urban-based movement against Japanese imperialism and the conciliatory attitude of the Beijing government toward the Shandong problem. When the movement spread to Shanghai, *Shen Bao* swung its weight behind the boycotts of Japanese products. On May 14 *Shen Bao* and all of Shanghai's major daily newspapers announced that they would no longer carry advertisements for Japanese companies nor publish Japanese commercial news.[36] As shown in chapter two, this was not an insignificant gesture on the part of the big dailies as much of their advertising revenue came from Japanese sources. Against this must be balanced the damage that could be done to an enterprise considered by the boycott movement to be tainted with Japanese connections. The Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company, for instance, actually lost ground in this period to its foreign competitor, the British-American Tobacco Company, because of the Japanese affiliations of Nanyang's owners.[37] If newspapers like *Shen Bao* did not ban advertisements for Japanese products, students and others involved in the

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34. "Benbu Xiaoxi" [Local News], *Shen Bao*, May 7, 1919. The members of the Shanghai Daily Press Association were *Shen Bao, Xin Wen Bao, Shi Shi Xin Bao, Shi Bao, Minguo Ribao, Shen Zhou Ribao* and *Zhonghua Xin Bao*. They also published this declaration.

35. "Shi Ping" [Editorial], *Shen Bao*, May 8, 1919. Unless otherwise stated all *Shen Bao* references are to its editorial column.

36. "Shen Bao, Xin Wen Bao, Shi Bao, Shen Zhou Ribao, Shi Shi Xin Bao, Zhonghua Xin Bao, Minguo Ribao Gong Qi" [A Public Announcement by Shen Bao, Xin Wen Bao, Shi Bao, Shen Zhou Ribao, Shi Shi Xin Bao, Zhonghua Xin Bao and Minguo Ribao], *Shen Bao*, May 14, 1919.

37. Sherman Cochran, *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 103-122.

boycott movement might have disrupted newspaper sales and distribution.

Protests surrounding the May Fourth Incident intensified in Shanghai in early June. The hard line of the government led to further arrests of student demonstrators in Beijing. This brought forth renewed support from the Shanghai dailies for the Beijing students and their objectives. On June 5 the Shanghai Daily Press Association sent a cable to the Beijing authorities arguing that, for the good of the country, all arrested students should be released and Cao Rulin, Lu Zongyu and Zhang Zongxiang, the three pro-Japanese cabinet ministers, should be dismissed, as demanded by the student protesters.[38] There was a hint in this cable of a concern to bring an end to the disruption caused by the May Fourth protest movement. But over the next few days widespread strikes broke out among Shanghai students, merchants and, in their first political strike, industrial workers.[39] Concern about disruption grew into a fear about the direction of this unprecedented level of political activity among the various levels of Shanghai society, particularly among the industrial workers. The major Shanghai dailies counselled caution. *Shi Shi Xin Bao*'s editorial of June 6 called for the "preservation of order." It supported the strikes, but argued that they would not achieve their objectives if not conducted in an orderly manner.[40] Similar sentiments were expressed by *Xin Wen Bao* and *Shi Bao*. Ge Gongzhen's *Shi Bao* editorial of June 9 declared:[41]

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38. Local News, *Shen Bao*, June 6, 1919.

39. Chow, *May Fourth Movement*, pp. 151-158; C. F. Remer, *A Study of Chinese Boycotts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), ch. 7; Jean Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919-1927*, translated from the French by H. M. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 152-156.

40. *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, June 6, 1919, in *Wu Si Yundong zai Shanghai Shiliao Xuanji* [Selected Historical Sources on the May Fourth Movement in Shanghai], ed. Shanghai Shehui Kexue Yuan Lishi Yanjiu Suo [Shanghai Academy of Social Science, Institute of Historical Research] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1961), p. 669.

41. "Jing Gao Gongren" [A Message to Workers], *Shi Bao*, June 9, 1919, in *Wu Si*

> It really is admirable that industry, merchants and students can move forward together with a unanimous patriotic spirit. But it must be said that those who provide the essential services of daily life are a separate category. If these services grind to a halt throughout the city, there must be chaos. This could invite foreign intervention which would not help matters at all. Patriotic workers should think very carefully about this.

Even the Guomindang's *Minguo Ribao* suggested that workers should be more selective about their strike action and consider "what kind of strike is of most benefit to China" and "what kind of strike harms businessmen in Shanghai who are from friendly nations."[42] *Shen Bao* did not openly criticise striking workers, but, about a week after the first round of strikes, it referred to the "real patriots" among the workers who were "able to control their feelings of rage."[43]

Opinions of this sort were expressed around the time that the Beijing government, under enormous pressure, relented and gave in to the demands of the May Fourth protest movement. On June 10 they released all incarcerated students and dismissed the three pro-Japanese cabinet ministers.[44] When this became public knowledge in Shanghai, the strikes that were still going on around the city became an issue of considerable controversy within newspaper circles. On the same day that the Beijing government announced its decision the Daily Press Association published a declaration inviting "merchants of in the north and south [of the city] to reopen for business as an expression of the victory of popular will."[45] Dissension surfaced the following day when *Shi Shi Xin Bao* published an

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Yundong zai Shanghai, p. 674. For a similar message in *Xin Wen Bao* on June 10 see *Wu Si Yundong zai Shanghai*, p. 675.

42. "Gongjie Jiuguo yao you Yige Fenbie" [A Distinction must be made for Labour in Saving the Nation], *Minguo Ribao*, June 11, in *Wu Si Yundong zai Shanghai*, p. 677.

43. *Shen Bao*, June 18, 1919.

44. Chow, *May Fourth Movement*, pp. 162-163.

45. "Shanghai Ribao Gonghui Qishi" [An Anouncement by the Shanghai Daily Press Association], *Shen Bao*, June 10, 1919.

announcement of its withdrawl from the Daily Press Association. It believed the Association's declaration had taken a piece of news and given it the force of an editorial in an unwarranted attempt to persuade merchants to resume trading. Such attempts to influence affairs, *Shi Shi Xin Bao* believed, should not be expressed outside the editorial column. Furthermore, *Shi Shi Xin Bao* contended that the decision to publish the declaration was not carried by a majority of Association members.[46] The Daily Press Association countered with another announcement which claimed that a *Shi Shi Xin Bao* representative had been present at the Association's meeting and had voted to go ahead with its publication.[47] *Shi Shi Xin Bao* made a rebuttal,[48] but the issue petered out in a stalemate. *Shi Shi Xin Bao* nonetheless exposed a raw nerve, for the wider issue was whether or not the Daily Press Association had the right to attempt to influence the course of a strike. Their haste in publishing the declaration betrayed a certain sense of panic and a feeling that the strikes had gone far enough.

Although most strikes in Shanghai were in fact called off throughout the latter half of June,[49] *Shen Bao* and the other members of the Daily Press Association had shown considerable anxiety over the potentially crippling power of strike action. This was particularly so after workers from both Chinese and foreign factories joined in the strikes. There was a concern to limit strike action to areas which would harm neither Chinese business interests nor those of "friendly nations." Seen in

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46. "Shi Shi Xin Bao Tuoli Ribao Gonghui" [Shi Shi Xin Bao Leaves the Daily Press Association], *Shen Bao*, June 11, 1919.

47. "Shanghai Ribao Gonghui duiyu Shi Shi Xin Bao Tuoli Gai Hui Guanggao de Shengming" [A Statement by the Shanghai Daily Press Association on Shi Shi Xin Bao's announcement of its Withdrawl from this Association], *Xin Wen Bao*, June 12, 1919, in *Wu Si Yundong zai Shanghai*, p. 666.

48. "Shi Shi Xin Bao Da Ribao Gonghui" [Shi Shi Xin Bao answers the Daily Press Association], *Shen Bao*, June 13, 1919.

49. Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 154.

this light, the behaviour of *Shen Bao* and the other big dailies in banning Japanese advertisements and lending support to the demands of the student demonstrators hardly reflected a radical anti-imperialism. At most it was a selective anti-imperialism with an eye always focused on advancing the interests of Chinese commerce and industry. Moreover, as suggested in chapter two, the fact that imports of Japanese newsprint increased rapidly in the years following the May Fourth movement underlined the limits to the anti-imperialism of the Shanghai newspapers.

Apart from banning the publication of Japanese advertisements and commercial news, *Shen Bao*'s approach to newspaper journalism was largely unaffected by the May Fourth Incident. It did not respond to the new cultural and intellectual trends in China. In the wake of the May Fourth it was the major party newspapers in Shanghai, *Shi Shi Xin Bao* and *Minguo Ribao*, that took up the challenge in these areas. Both played an important part in the introduction of Western political ideas to China. *Shi Shi Xin Bao*'s supplement, *Xue Deng* (Lamp of Learning), which appeared as early as March 1918, published many translated works on liberalism, socialism and communism, including articles by Marx, Engels and Lenin. *Minguo Ribao*'s supplement, *Juewu* (*Consciousness*), created in June 1919, performed a similar function.[50] In June 1920 *Shen Bao*'s belated response to these sorts of changes was to introduce a supplement called *Chang Shi* (*General Knowledge*). This was designed more out of a concern with elevating the sensibilities of its readers than with transmitting politically-charged ideas. It presented information on economics, science, health and

50. On *Xue Deng* and *Juewu* respectively see "Xue Deng--Shehuizhuyi Yanjiu--Shanghai 'Shi Shi Xin Bao' Fukan" [Research into Socialism by Shi Shi Xin Bao's Supplement, Xue Deng], and "Juewu--Shanghai Minguo Ribao Fukan" [Juewu--Shanghai Minguo Ribao's Supplement], in *Wu Si Shiqi Qikan Jieshao* [An Introduction to Periodicals of the May Fourth Period], ed. Zhong Gong Zhongyang Makesi, Engesi, Liening, Sidalin Zhuzuo Bianyi Jushi [Group for the Editing and Translating of the Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party], 3 vols. (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1958-1959), 3: 270-288; 1: 182-221.

local political administration. It was aimed at what could be called a well-read public rather than a community of politically conscious intellectuals and students.[51]

This supplement was in many ways representative of Shi Liangcai's priorities during the early 1920s. Although *Shen Bao* was firmly ensconced in its new five storey colossus, it was unlikely that Shi Liangcai was out of the woods in terms of debt. Contributing to the public's knowledge of socialism was hardly likely to have occupied much of Shi Liangcai's time. Indeed, he was far more concerned with consolidating *Shen Bao*'s financial base. In 1921 he took an important step which helped to achieve that end. In that year the Nanyang capitalist, Huang Yizhu, was looking for a suitable investment in Shanghai. Huang knew of Shi Liangcai through Huang Yanpei. Shi Liangcai's association with Huang Yanpei, as noted above, went back to the pre-1911 days of the Jiangsu General Association of Education. After he had consulted with Shi Liangcai, Huang Yizhu decided that he would entrust Shi with 7.5 million yuan for the purpose of establishing a a bank in Shanghai. Shi invested some of his own capital as well, and then invited Hu Bijiang to be manager of the bank. Thus the Zhong-Nan Bank was established, and Shi Liangcai himself, though not the dominant partner, became one of its directors. It is difficult to determine the precise nature of Shi Liangcai's relationship with the Zhong-Nan Bank; that it strengthened his financial standing is clear, but there is no evidence which indicates to what extent he drew upon its resouces in support of *Shen Bao*. Some years later the Zhong-Nan Bank became one of the members of the Bei-Si Yinhang (Four Northern Banks), one of the largest banking conglomerates in China.[52]

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51. Zhe, "Duiyu Chang Shi Zengkan Hou zhi Ganxiang" [Some Impressions after the Publication of the General Knowledge Supplement], "Wushi Nian lai zhi Xinwen Shiye" [The Press over the Last Fifty Years], in *Zuijin zhi Wushi Nian*, p. 44; Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," pp. 93-95.

52. Huang Yanpei, *Bashi Nian Lai* [The Past Eighty Years] (Beijing: Wenshi

Nevertheless, Shi's entry into banking clearly did extend his personal connections with Shanghai commercial circles. This was of vital importance in shaping Shi's relationship with the Shanghai capitalists in the early 1930s.

It was also in 1921 that Shi Liangcai diversified his investments, branching out into several different enterprises. He helped to resurrect the Zhonghua Book Company which was to become the largest publisher in Shanghai after the Commercial Press. He was also one of the founders of the Minsheng Cotton Mill and the Wuzhou Dispensary.[53] These investments, though perhaps not huge in scale, extended Shi Liangcai's sphere of influence and intensified his interest in the wider commercial development of Shanghai.

In the wake of the May Fourth movement protecting and enhancing the commercial development of Shanghai became one of the major preoccupations of local business and industrial leaders. It has been seen that as early as mid-June 1919 expressions by the daily press of a patriotic desire to see Chinese business prosper in the face of foreign competition gave way to fears about the possible harmful effects of widespread strike action by Shanghai workers. The strikes called by the workers at that time were, according to Chesneaux, mobilized in the interests of "other social classes."[54] Over the next few years this was not to be the case, as the number of strikes increased and workers began to organize their actions according to their own interests.[55] In this atmosphere the leaders of

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Ziliao Chubanshe, 1982), pp. 94ff.; Feng Yaxiong, "Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai," pp. 162-163; Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao," pp. 28-29. The Bei-Si Yinhang consisted of the Zhong-Nan Bank, the Jincheng Bank, the Salt Industry Bank (Yanye Yinhang) and the Continental Bank (Dalu Yinhang).

53. Huang Yanpei, "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng zhi Shengping," p. 11.

54. Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 153.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-169.

Shanghai's business and industry promoted notions of industrial harmony between labour and capital. Marie-Claire Bergère has noted the prevalence of ideas of co-operation, social harmony and mutual progress among members of the Shanghai bourgeoisie in this period.[56] Similar ideas were reflected in the daily press. At the time of the first Labour Day rally on May 1, 1920, *Shen Bao* displayed a sympathy for the conciliatory attitude adopted by those involved in the celebration.[57] *Shi Shi Xin Bao* devoted a considerable amount of attention to issues of this nature. This was because its principal editors, Zhang Dongsun and Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang) had, under the influence of Bertrand Russell's ideas, developed an interest in guild socialism. They held great hopes that this political philosophy could unite labour and capital for the national good, and they used the paper's supplement, *Xue Deng*, to promote their views.[58] *Shen Bao*, did not go so far as to formulate a theory for the harmonious development of capitalism, but it shared a reformist outlook that was anxious to avoid conflict between employers and workers.

But the fears of *Shen Bao* and others were not allayed in the years leading up to the May Thirtieth Incident of 1925. The entire political scene in Shanghai became far more complex. The competition for power intensified within commercial circles, political parties and the labour

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56. Marie-Claire Bergère, "The Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911-1937," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, pt. 1, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 766-768. See also Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, pp. 161-162.

57. *Shen Bao*, May 2-4, 1920. See also Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 162. Bergère, "The Chinese Bourgeoisie," p. 768 claims that *Shen Bao* (which she somewhat inaccurately describes as "the great liberal organ") was in favour of giving workers wage rises and attempted to convince shareholders that this would not harm their interests. Although this might well have been the case, she has not stated when *Shen Bao* expressed these sentiments, and a cursory survey of *Shen Bao* for 1920 and 1921 has failed to turn up the editorials to which she alludes.

58. *Wusi Shiqi Qikan Jieshao*, pp. 270-288, *passim*. These views were later attacked by Communist Party members writing for the *Minguo Ribao* supplement, *Juewu*, during the first united front period.

movement. Recent research suggests that in the wake of the May Fourth movement a group of middle-level merchants emerged which was more committed than big business to anti-imperialist nationalism. This group was represented by the Commercial Federation (Shangjie Lianhehui) and street unions and lent some support to the local Guomindang.[59] Among Shanghai workers, the labour movement became more active and was better organized than in the past. According to Chesneaux, strikes reached a peak in 1922 before subsiding over the next two years due to government pressure, heavy job losses and the rise of moderate unions.[60] A new element was injected into the scene by the formation of the Communist Party in July 1921 and the creation of the first united front between the Communists and the Guomindang in 1923. It was also in 1923 that Chinese business and industry began to suffer a downturn while foreign competitors, particularly the Japanese, expaned their activities in the market.[61]

Taken together, these changes were a recipe for a resurgence in the labour movement and the anti-imperialism that had found expression in the May Fourth period. There was, however, considerable competition within the united front forces for control over the direction of the labour movement. The moderate wing of the Guomindang was reluctant to encourage strikes at Chinese factories, for example Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company, while the left-wing of the Guomindang and Communists such as Deng Zhongxia were anxious to carry on the struggle on all fronts. These divisions were played out in the pages of *Minguo Ribao* and *Xiangdao Zhoubao* during the course of a series of strikes and boycotts at Nanyang

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59. See Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Political Power in Shanghai, 1890-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), pp. 55-57 ff., ch. 3.

60. Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, pp. 194-195, 214-220, 223-227.

61. Bergère, "The Chinese Bourgeoisie," pp. 788-791; Cochran, *Big Business in China*, pp. 163-170.

from September 1924 to January 1925.[62]

Strikes in foreign-owned, particularly Japanese, factories caused far less acrimony among the various Chinese politcal players in Shanghai. The frequency of strikes in Japanese cotton mills steadily increased over the latter half of 1924, reaching a peak in early 1925.[63] The first big wave of strikes came in early February at the Naigai Wata factories. According to Deng Zhongxia, the strikes resulted from the sacking of some workers and attempts by management to break up the representative organizations of the workers. Strikes spread to almost all the other Japanese factories in the city.[64]

All the big dailies in Shanghai gave extensive coverage to these strikes, but some expressed greater editorial support for the workers than others. *Minguo Ribao* showed none of the reticence it had expressed during the strike at Nanyang Brothers. The *Juewu* supplement, which included members of the Communist Party on its staff, was particularly outspoken in its denunciation of Japanese imperialism. An article in the February 12 issue described the construction of Japanese factories as "a vicious method of invading China and condemning the Chinese people to death."[65] *Shen Bao* made little editorial comment, but adopted a typically cautious attitude. It argued that widespread strikes harm both labour and

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62. Cochran, *Big Business in China*, pp. 172-176. On the militants and moderates see Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labour Movement*, pp. 249-253.

63. Deng Zhongxia, *Zhongguo Zhigong Yundong Jianshi* [A Brief History of the Labour Movement in China] (Hong Kong: Wenhua Ziliao Gongying She, 1978), pp. 132-139.

64. Deng Zhongxia, *Zhigong Yundong Jianshi*, pp. 132-134. Fo further background on the conditions in these factories see Richard W. Rigby, *The May Thirtieth Movement: Events and Themes* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980), pp. 1-23.

65. *Juewu, Minguo Ribao*, February 12, 1925, in *Wusa Yundong Shiliao* [Historical Sources on the May Thirtieth Movement], ed. Shanghai Shehui Kexue Yuan Lishi Yanjiu Suo [Shanghai Academy of Social Science, Institute of Historical Research], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1981, 1986), 1: 423. See also the articles of February 15, 17 and 23, pp. 424-428. Much of the material in this collection has been gleaned from the daily press.

capital.[66] *Xin Wen Bao* expressed similar sentiments and added that the widening division between management and the workers was "a very unfavourable phenomenon."[67] *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, still the organ of the Research Clique, indicated opposition to what they believed to be Japan's economic imperialism, but claimed that the striking workers were being manipulated by Communist Party agitators. Their main objection was, they declared, to a Communist Party dominated by Moscow, not to communism as such. "Most workers are uneducated; they do not know the meaning of communism and imperialism, but are merely the exploited victims of other people," concluded one editorial.[68]

There was therefore nothing in the line adopted by the most of the big dailies to upset the foreign authorities of the Municipal Council. But the more outspoken denunciations of Japanese imperialism were unacceptable to the Council. Under pressure from the Japanese consulate and Japanese members of the Council, legal action was taken against some of the more radical newspapers. On February 25 *Minguo Ribao*, *Zhonghua Xin Bao*, and *Shang Bao* (*Shanghai Journal of Commerce*) were fined by the Mixed Court on charges of anti-foreignism. Another of the charges against the newspapers in question was that they published a manifesto of one of the unions involved in the strikes.[69] Shao Lizi was the most prominent figure brought to trial. He was an editor of *Minguo Ribao* and also chancellor of Shanghai University which was a centre of anti-

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66. *Shen Bao*, Feb. 21, 1925.

67. *Xin Wen Bao*, Feb. 21, 1925, in *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 1: 429.

68. *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, Feb. 21, 1925, in *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 1: 431.

69. A. M. Kotenev, *Shanghai: Its Municipality and the Chinese* (Shanghai: North China Daily News and Herald, 1927), pp. 196-199; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 1007-1008; Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 5, 1925; *Minguo Ribao*, February 24, 1925, in *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 1: 372-373; Lee-hsia Hsu Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1974), p. 72. *Zhonghua Xin Bao* and *Shang Bao* were fined ninety yuan while *Minguo Ribao* was fined 330 yuan.

imperialist student activism.[70] Both *Minguo Ribao* and *Zhonghua Xin Bao* were affiliated with the Guomondang, although, as shown in chapter two, they represented the left and right-wings of the Party respectively. *Shang Bao* was not a party organ, but Chen Bulei's editorials gained a reputation as being among the most fervent expressions of support for the anit-imperialist movement.[71]

Although none of these newspapers was closed down by the Municipal Council, this kind of censorship recalled the last years of the Qing when the Council attempted to curtail the activites of the pro-revolutionary press. The Council's actions of February 1925 were based upon the Publication Law (Chuban Fa) promulgated by Yuan Shikai in December 1914. Since about 1915, when anti-Japanese feeling began to rise in China, the Council had made several unsuccessful attempts to introduce its own regulations licensing the press. In March 1916 the Council tried to amend existing bylaws such that it would have the power to refuse, suspend or withdraw publication licenses at its own discretion. The licensing of the press was repeatedly rejected by the foreign constituency (ratepayers) of the International Settlement and Consualr officials in Shanghai, largely because they wanted only the Chinese press to be subject to licensing. The Council put forward the licensing amendments every year from 1919 to 1925 and each time was frustrated by ratepayers and consular officials.[72] It therefore fell back upon Yuan Shikai's old Publication Law, which had long been disregarded by Chinese authorities, to execute prosecutions. Article 11 of this Law itself gave the courts wide discretionary powers. It prohibited the publication of any writing, drawing or picture which undermined public order, aimed to change the

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70. On Shanghai University's role in the anti-imperialist movement see *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 1: 260-270.

71. On *Zhonghua Xin Bao* and *Shang Bao* see chapter 2, pp. 92-93.

72. Ting, *Govcernment Control of the Press in China*, pp. 67-72.

form of government, impaired public morals, or revealed secret government documents.[73]

The Municipal Council was nevertheless anxious to push on with its own bylaws governing the press, particularly since the wave of strikes in February. The anti-Japanese momentum was kept going with a similar round of strikes in Qingdao in early April.[74] It was then that the Municipal Council decided that their Printed Matter Bylaws should again be put to the vote of their ratepayers. The bylaws required all Chinese publications to be licensed with the Council or a relevant foreign Consulate in Shanghai. In the past these bylaws had been brought up and rejected without attracting much attention. But on this occasion, even before a vote was taken, they provoked an immediate and hostile reception from Chinese residents of the International Settlement. The whole issue was seen by the Chinese as being part of the general abuse of their national sovereignty. Of course, it was the more radical newspapers, such as *Minguo Ribao*, which were most outspoken in their opposition. Yet these radical voices were joined by that august representative of big business, the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce (Shanghai Zong Shang Hui).[75] The bylaws affair was later described as one of the main contributing factors to the outbreak of the May Thirtieth movement.[76]

Despite the protests against the Municipal Council's attempts to control the press, the fines imposed on newspapers in February produced the desired effect with *Shen Bao*. It reported further strikes at the Naigai

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73. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13; Liang Jialu, et al., *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi: Gudai zhi Yijiusijiu Nian* [A History of the Press in China: From Ancient Times to 1949] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 117-118.

74. Reports on these strikes can be found in *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 1: 486-503.

75. See *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 1: 515, 518-522, 525-536; Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 14, 1925.

76. Deng Zhongxia, *Zhigong Yundong Jianshi*, p. 182; Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 262; Rigby, *May Thirtieth Movement*, pp. 25-30, *passim*.

Wata factories in early May, but also published Japanese reports from the Shanghai *Mainichi Shimbun* which presented an optimistic picture of labour relations in the Japanese factories.[77] Moreover, *Shen Bao*'s scant reporting of the death of Gu Zhenghong on May 15 presented the paper at its timid worst. Gu was killed as a result of a fight with a Japanese foreman at one of the Naigai Wata factories, and his death was one of the reasons that students organized the anti-imperialist demonstration on May 30. *Shen Bao* shared this timidity with *Xin Wen Bao*, and Hu Yuzhi, then a contributing editor to *Dongfang Zazhi* (*Eastern Miscellany*), argued that, in their silence, these two big dailies helped to precipitate the tragic demonstration. He wrote that[78]

> There was a direct relationship between Shanghai's newspapers and the outbreak of the May 30 tragedy. Because the Shanghai newspapers operate within the International Settlement and do not suffer under the regulations of Chinese officials, they can comment with relative freedom on internal matters. On the other hand, [newspapers] are subject to the unseen oppression of the authorities of the International Settlement and are frequently unable to freely state opinions. If any of Shanghai's daily newspapers happens to print comment which is offensive [to the foreign authorities], such newspapers are often fined or their editors are subject to arrest. When the first strikes occurred in the Japanese cotton mills, there were a number of newspapers who were fined because they published the manifestos of the unions. Thus, when the second wave of strikes broke out Shanghai newspapers carried only a few fragmentary, sober reports and were afraid to publish justifiable opposition to the atrocities committed at the Japanese factories. At the same time, Shanghai university students (students have been relatively sympathetic to the workers) regarded as unjust the illegal killing of Gu Zhenghong by the Japanese and the total nonintervetion of the Chinese courts. Moreover, because of the despondency of the newspapers, students were dispatched to speak in the streets to convey the true nature of Gu Zhenghong's death, and this attracted the attention of all levels of society....

Even after the May 30 demonstration, in which British police fired upon the assembled crowd of over three thousand students and workers, killing ten and injuring more than fifty people, the big dailies reported

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77. Local News, *Shen Bao*, May 13, 1925.

78. Hu Yuzhi, "Wu Sa Shijian Jishi" [A Factual Record of the May Thirtieth Incident], "Wu Sa Shijian Linshi Zengkan" [A Special Supplement on the May Thirtieth Incident], *Dongfang Zazhi* 22.13 (July 1925): 6.

only the bare details of events without any editorial comment.[79] It is not possible to know whether or not the Municipal Council applied covert pressure to the newspaper press at the time of these events, although Hu Yuzhi's statement suggests that they did. In any case, this was far from *Shen Bao*'s finest hour and the worst was yet to come.

Soon after the events of May 30 all levels of Shanghai society became involved in an anti-imperialist movement directed mainly at Japan and Britain. City-wide strikes were called and commercial circles supported boycotts of British and Japanese products. *Shen Bao*'s response to this movement, the complexities of which cannot be dealt with here,[80] represented one of the most conservative in the whole of Chinese Shanghai. It did nothing to encourage the various strikes and boycotts. Instead it became a target of the movement.

As shown in chapter two, in mid-June *Shen Bao* found itself being compelled by pressure from the student movement to cancel its British advertising contracts as the boycott of British products reached its doorstep.[81] This reluctance contrasted sharply with the paper's willingness to ban Japanese advertisements during the May Fourth movement. Highly prized advertising contracts with a company like British-American Tobacco were evidently worth too much to *Shen Bao* to simply surrender. With the Municipal Council's action against the press in February fresh in its mind, *Shen Bao* might also have been unwilling to upset the dominant British members of the Council. *Shen Bao*'s extraordinary behaviour in mid-July lends some support to this view.

As the May Thirtieth movement spread throughout Shanghai,

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79. See Local News, *Shen Bao*, May 31, June 1, 1925; Local news, *Xin Wen Bao*, May 31, 1925, in *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 1: 702-704. *Shen Bao* reported four deaths, while *Xin Wen Bao* reported nine.

80. See Rigby, *May Thirtieth Movement, passim*; Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labour Movement*, pp. 262-272; Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites*, ch. 3.

81. See chapter 2, pp. 121-123.

bringing the city to a standstill, as part of their counter-offensive the British authorities on the Municipal Council began a propaganda campaign of their own. Planning for this operation began in late June. The main thrust of the Council's propaganda was to attack "Bolshevism" and to circulate their own version of the causes of the May Thirtieth movement. Because they were to spread the word in the Chinese language, the Council encountered problems finding any Chinese printers willing to do the job. Eventually they had to do much of the printing at one of Shanghai's prisons. In July the Council contracted the American advertising agency run by Carl Crow to prepare a series of pamphlets to be circulated throughout the city. Entitled *Honest Words* (*Cheng Yan*), these pamphlets were widely distributed, displayed on bill-boards in the streets and in Shanghai's trams. Outwardly, *Honest Words* appeared to be solely the work of Crow's agency as the Municipal Council was careful to remain in the background.[82] On July 11, in a display of the poorest possible judgement, *Shen Bao* published one issue of *Honest Words* as an advertisement. *Xin Wen Bao* did likewise. They were the only Chinese newspapers in Shanghai to publish it.[83] The content of this particular issue was a speech by Sir Austin Chamberlain to the British Parliament concerning the recent events in Shanghai. Although the precise reasons behind the decision to publish *Honest Words* cannot be known without further evidence, it is possible that both newspapers felt compelled by pressure from the Council to do so. *Xin Wen Bao*'s decision was less surprising given the conservative views of its American owner, John Ferguson. But there was no good reason for *Shen Bao* to so obviously lay itself open to charges of complicity with an imperialist power, charges

82. On the background to the publication of *Honest Words* see "Shanghai *Cheng Yan* Fandong Chuangdan Yinfa Shimo" [The Story of the Printing and Distribution of the Reactionary Pamphlet Honest Words], *Lishi Dang'an* [Historical Archives], no. 7 (1982): 45-58.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

which came crashing down on its head within a day.

On July 12 the Shanghai Student Union published its own announcement which promised to disrupt the sales and distribution of both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* and appealed for the co-operation of all newspaper readers in carrying out their campaign. It also stated that both newspapers had to meet five demands before the students would cease their disruptive tactics. First, they had to publish an advertisement rejecting *Honest Words*. Secondly, they had to reject *Honest Words* in their editorials. Thirdly, they were to publish an apology to the nation. Fourthly, they had to print ten thousand pamphlets denouncing *Honest Words*. Finally, they were asked to contribute one hundred thousand yuan toward the lossess suffered by striking Shanghai workers. For the first time in their history Shanghai's two biggest newspapers found themselves giving in to the demands of student demonstrators. Both newspapers met all conditions except the final one. They asked to be permitted to determine the size of the contribution they would make toward the striking workers' fund. On July 17 the appropriate retractions and apologies were published and the papers went on sale as usual.[84]

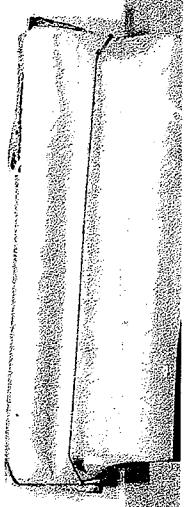
This unprecedented humiliation of *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* was a stark demonstration of how their dependence upon foreign resources and the good will of foreign authorities constrained their political development to the point where they trailed badly behind public opinion. Even as a wholly Chinese-owned enterprise which had removed the Japanese economic presence from its pages, *Shen Bao* found it difficult to throw off the constraints imposed by its relationship with the British economic and political presence in Shanghai. It was literally forced to do so by public pressure and, in the end, a concern for its survival as a

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84. Ge Gongzhen, *Baoxue Shi*, pp. 292-293; Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan," pp. 1008-1009; *Wu Sa Yundong Shiliao*, 2: 483-486; Ting, *Government Control of the Press in China*, p. 73; Rigby, *May Thirtieth Movement*, p. 73.

newspaper business.

Shi Liangcai was himself content with survival during the warlord era. In 1928, when he reflected on *Shen Bao*'s development over this period, Shi claimed that "there was not a single day when we were not censured by others, not a single day when we were not sanctioned by some law." He added that his greatest "worry" was that *Shen Bao* would be "toppled" or that it would be "swamped by disaster."[85] That *Shen Bao* was not "toppled" was perhaps Shi Liangcai's greatest achievement. Yet Shi's strategy involved an abdication of political responsibility. He did not want to lead public opinion, and his newspaper lagged behind it. But by the May Thirtieth movement dramatically altered the political scene, with students and workers emerging as decisive factors, and in the end *Shen Bao* had little choice but to adapt to these changes. Though Shi Liangcai preferred to avoid politics, politics was beginning to overtake him and his newspaper.



85. Shi Liangcai, "Shen Bao Faxing Er Wan Hao Jinian" [In Memory of the Publication of Shen Bao's Twenty Thousandth Edition], "Shen Bao Er Wan Hao Jinian" [Memorial to Shen Bao's Twenty Thousandth Edition], *Shen Bao*, November 19, 1928.

CHAPTER VI

THE NATIONALISTS IN SHANGHAI, 1927-1929

Shen Bao's decision to cast off some its "imperialist" habits in the wake of the May Thirtieth movement showed that it could no longer operate without the influence of the radical nationalist movement entering into its calculations. *Shen Bao* did not become a convert to the causes of the students, the workers and the forces of the united front, but it could not afford to openly offend those causes nor be seen to be offering support to the foreign authorities in Shanghai. In the following years Shi Liangcai again opted for editorial silence as a way out of this dilemma, and as a result *Shen Bao* became an increasingly passive player in the Shanghai political scene.

Throughout 1926, when the local warlord Sun Chuanfang was in control of the city, it was relatively easy for *Shen Bao* to carry on as usual, avoiding political struggles, holding on to a kind of splendid isolation. But the radical nationalism that emerged during the May Thirtieth movement did not subside. Its political focus shifted to Canton where in July 1926 the united front of the Guomindang and the Communists launched a campaign, known as the Northern Expedition, against warlordism and imperialism. The Northern Expedition aimed to unite China under a national government led by the Guomindang.[1] Meanwhile, in Shanghai, despite Sun Chuanfang's repression of the union movement, the politicization of labour remained as one of the most potent legacies of the May Thirtieth

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1. On the background to the formation of the Northern Expedition see Donald A. Jordan, *The Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976), pp. 13-67.

era. The Shanghai General Labour Union (Zong Gong Hui) in particular, which was led by Communist Party members, continued its role as the principal organizational force behind strike activity in Shanghai, even though it was forced to operate in a clandestine way.[2] As supporters of the united front and the Northern Expedition the Communist leaders of the General Labour Union were ostensibly subordinate to the command of the Guomindang. But within the united front forces a bitter struggle ensued over the control of the labour movement and the role it should play as part of the Northern Expedition. Militant members of the united front, the Communists and left-wing members of the Guomindang, came under attack from the right-wing of the Guomindang, the Western Hills (Xi Shan) faction, which was stridently anti-Communist and was anxious to put the lid on strike activity. Attempting to concentrate power in his own hands, Jiang Jieshi, who was made commander of the Northern Expedition, acted to reduce the influence of the militants while at the same time keeping the more extreme members of the Western Hills faction at arms length.[3]

At the beginning of 1927 these same political struggles exploded in Shanghai and there was no way that *Shen Bao* could escape the fall-out. It was not an active participant in these struggles, but each of the main players, first Sun Chuanfang and then the Nationalist forces and the General Labour Union, attempted to manipulate *Shen Bao* to suit their particular needs. None managed to invade the editorial column, but in its caution *Shen Bao* found ways of obliging each one in turn and then waiting to see which way the wind would blow. When the Nationalists

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2. On the GLU see Jean Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement , 1919-1927*, translated from the French by H. M. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 264-265, 280-284.

3. There are different views on Jiang's precise standing in relation to the militant and right-wing factions of the united front. Jordan, *Northern Expedition*, pp. 42ff. argues that Jiang was a "centrist." Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, pp. 310-312 characterizes Jiang as a memebr of the right-wing. Jiang was certainly not a supporter of the left-wing forces, but apparently felt he could not completely eradicate their influence during the Canton phase of his leadership.

gained the ascendency after their bloody April purge of the militant left-wing of the united front, *Shen Bao* gradually began to show guarded support for both the new government and the completion of the Northern Expedition. Expressions of good will reached a peak in the wake of the Jinan Incident of May 1928. But once the Nationalists settled into the task of governing, its interventionist nature placed considerable strain on its relations with *Shen Bao* and with the press in general. Indeed, *Shen Bao*'s good will was exhausted by the beginning of 1929 when the local Guomindang frustrated Shi Liangcai's attempt to take full control of *Xin Wen Bao*. This was a prelude to *Shen Bao*'s open opposition to the Nationalist government in the early 1930s.

Shen Bao and the Shanghai Insurrection

The National Revolutionary Army of the Northern Expedition achieved rapid and remarkable military success after it set out from Canton in July 1926. By the end of 1926 they had overwhelmed Wu Peifu's forces in Hunan and Hubei and won control of Jiangxi and Fujian from Sun Chuanfang.[4] Sun was, however, still in control of Zhejiang and the Shanghai region. In conjunction with military assaults on Sun's forces in Zhejiang, co-ordinated campaigns against Sun's rule in Shanghai were carried on from October to December. The Shanghai campaigns involved the Communists, the Guomindang, the General Labour Union and such members of the Chamber of Commerce as Yu Xiaqing. The armed uprising that they planned on October 24 was quickly put down by Sun's troops. But a similar political alliance, which demanded "autonomy" for the three provinces of Jiangxi, Zhejiang and Fujian, kept up the pressure against Sun Chuanfang throughout November and December.[5] The uneasy

4. Jordan, *Northern Expedition*, pp. 67-99.

5. Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, 2nd. rev. ed.

alliance of united front forces was therefore managing to hold itself together and by January 1927 represented a serious challenge to Sun Chuanfang's control over Shanghai.

In response to the growing threat of the forces of the Northern Expedition to his territory, Sun began to suppress the Nationalists in Shanghai. On January 5 the Garrison Command acted to close the Guomindang's Shanghai branch in the French Concession.[6] The following day Li Baozhang, Sun Chuanfang's garrison commander, called a press conference with all the major newspapers. Li's spokesman warned journalists representing these newspapers that any newspaper which published any dispatches, manifestos or reports concerning what was referred to as "Red parties and rebel groups" would face closure or the imposition of postal bans. The assembled journalists were asked to sign an undertaking to this effect on behalf of their newspapers.[7] These were not idle threats. In chapter four it was shown that the day before this meeting Xie Fusheng, editor of the English-language *China Courier*, was arrested over the publication of a photograph of Sun Chuanfang with a caption that declared: "The setting Sun."[8] Over the next few days several papers were affected by the uncompromising attitude of the garrison command. *Shimin Gongbao* and *Zhongnan Wanbao*, two of the many small-scale newspapers in the city, were closed down.[9] *Minguo Ribao*, which was then operated by members of the Western Hills faction, was also forced to cease

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(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), pp. 130-131; Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, pp. 341-342.

6. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Jan. 5, 1927.

7. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Jan. 7, 1927. See also Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*[Fifty Years of Life as a Journalist], 2 vols. (vol. 1; Hong Kong: Wuxing Jishu Baoshe, 1975; vol. 2; Taibei: Yuesheng Wenhua Shiye Youxian Gongsi, 1988), 1: 113-114. See also chapter 4, p. 198 of this study.

8. See chapter 4, p. 198.

9. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Jan. 10, 1927.

publication.[10]

Shen Bao was not about to break the censorship imposed by the Garrison Command, but where possible it followed the progress of the Northern Expedition, reporting events with due caution. The prevailing censorship ensured that *Shen Bao* would refrain from making any editorial comment on the united front forces. There were, however, oblique appeals for a calm appraisal of the Nationalist revolution. On January 9 Chen Jinghan's editorial argued that though the revolution had brought many worthwhile changes there had also been many disturbances. "Though there are people good at forecasting," he wrote, "they are unable to examine how things will change in future."[11] At the end of January one editorial appealed for "patience" and "calm" in the face of uncertainty.[12] There was a sense of an impending upheaval and a concern for the instability that this would bring to Shanghai.

This concern was amplified by the increasing number of troops, both Chinese and foreign, that were spilling into Shanghai and its surrounding areas. The foreign powers brought in thousands of troops throughout January and February in case the forces of the Northern Expedition should contemplate taking back the foreign concessions by force. The British were particularly worried since they had already withdrawn from their concessions at Hankou and Jiujiang as a result of public protests sparked off by the arrival of the Northern Expedition in those cities.[13] In mid-Feruary *Shen Bao* reported that over 4,000 fresh British troops had arrived in Shanghai.[14] Although this was a small

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10. "Minguo Ribao Qishi" [An Announcement by Minguo Ribao], *Shen Bao*, Jan. 11, 1927.

11. *Shen Bao*, Jan. 9, 1927.

12. *Shen Bao*, Jan. 26, 1927.

13. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, 2nd., pp. 123-124.

14. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Feb. 13, 1927.

number compared to the number of foreign troops that were to be stationed in Shanghai by April (16,000 British troops alone), *Shen Bao*'s reports reflected the paper's fears for the future. Matters were made worse, in *Shen Bao*'s view, by the arrival of Zhang Zongchang's troops which had been called in to lend support to Sun Chuanfang.[15] The paper's fears were even given space in *Shen Bao*'s editorial column.[16] Moreover, in support of its own feelings, on February 17 *Shen Bao* reported that five Chinese banking organizations issued a joint declaration expressing similar concerns about the increased number of British troops in Shanghai.[17] Stability was all important. Yet *Shen Bao* was to find no peace throughout the coming months as Shanghai experienced some of the most dramatic changes in its history.

By February 17 a vanguard of Nationalist troops was poised only twenty miles outside Shanghai at Songjiang. The General Labour Union, led by Communist Party members, called for a city-wide strike on February 19. Soon, over 300,000 workers had answered the call to strike.[18] On February 20 *Shen Bao* carried initial reports of the strike, but noted rather cryptically that "although the paper had received this news two nights ago, because of the gravity of events [we] were unable to go to print. The general strike had already begun yesterday."[19] It was very likely that *Shen Bao* had been prevented from reporting the call to strike by the censorship of the garrison command. But this was only the beginning of a range of political pressures that were brought to bear on the press in this

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15. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 131-132. Isaacs also claims that Shanghai capitalists feared that Zhang Zongchang would force them to accept "worthless" paper currency in return for handing over specie payment.

16. *Shen Bao*, Feb. 15, 16, 1927.

17. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Feb. 17, 1927.

18. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, p. 133.

19. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Feb. 20, 1927.

period.

Indeed this episode was a sign that the big daily newspapers were themselves being drawn into the covert political struggle for control of the city, although the detailed background to this process might never be known. There is evidence that suggests the main dailies, *Shen Bao*, *Xin Wen Bao*, *Shi Bao* and *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, came under pressure to publicize the victories and propaganda of those associated with the united front and the organization of the city-wide strike. Jin Xiongbai, chief local news reporter for *Shi Bao*, claims that the main source of pressure was the General Labour Union and its leader, Wang Shouhua. According to Jin it was common practice for the Union to telephone newspapers each night and demand that the Union's declarations be published in the next morning's edition. Jin also claims that on one occasion Wang Shouhua invited some journalists to a "secret" banquet where he made veiled threats to call a printers strike if the newspapers did not co-operate with the campaign against Sun Chuanfang. Finally, at the time of the February strike, Wang reputedly sent three of his representatives, armed with pistols, to negotiate with the major newspapers. The newspapers were told to sign a co-operative agreement and to publish a denuciation of Sun Chuanfang. Initally the newspapers felt they had no choice but to comply with these demands. But then, in the middle of the night, before printing the next edition, *Shi Bao* contacted the other newspapers to sound out their response to a proposal to suspend publication. Although *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao* were worried about the loss in advertising revenue from such a suspension, all the big dailies eventually agreed not to go to print.[20] As a result, Shanghai's major newspapers did not appear on the streets for

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20. Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 117-119. Some support for Jin's account of these events can be found in Wang Zhongwei, "You Jingzheng you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao" [The Competition and Co-operation between Xin Wen Bao and Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 15 (Beijing: Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), pp. 85-86, although Wang claims that the pressure came from the Nationalist Army stationed just outside Shanghai.

about a week.

This extraordinary avoidance strategy again underlined the weak political character of Shanghai's big dailies. In *Shen Bao*'s case, the paper was not foolish enough to repeat its mistake of the May Thirtieth period. It did not publish the propaganda of unpopular political leaders like Sun Chuanfang as it had done for the British authorities in 1925. But it was not about to risk attracting Sun's wrath by co-operating with the political forces that were working to bring him down. Not yet being able to predict which side would be the victor, *Shen Bao* chose to bury its head in the sand until the storm passed. The grisly spectacle of Li Baozhang's broadsworded troops dispensing summary justice to the strikers merely convinved *Shen Bao* of the need to withdraw. When *Shen Bao* re-appeared on February 27, for instance, it published graphic reports of people involved in the strike who were "beheaded on the spot."[21] The severed heads were then placed on top of bamboo poles to serve as a warning to others.[22]

In the period of *Shen Bao*'s absence the Communists staged an uprising in the city and hoped to convince the Nationalist troops outside the city to lend support. Those who participated in the uprising developed their own communications network in an attempt to reassure residents, both Chinese and foreign, that their primary aim was the removal of warlord government in Shanghai.[23] But the Nationalist support did not arrive and the brutal suppression of strikers and insurgents continued. The uprising had failed and most strikers returned to work by February 24.[24]

When the second, ultimately successful uprising began on March 21,

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21. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Feb. 27, 1927.

22. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 134-135.

23. Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 355.

24. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 134-135.

Shen Bao found that it did not have to beat a retreat. Even though more than half a million workers left their jobs, the paper published continuously throughout the uprising.[25] Almost overnight the newspapers became the primary medium by which the various players involved in the taking of Shanghai publicized their causes. *Shen Bao* became something of a political billboard. In contrast to the February uprising, when *Shen Bao* was unsure which way the wind would blow, the rapid victory of the General Labour Union and Sun Chuanfang's departure from the scene meant that the newspaper press would not have to worry about reprisals if they began to publish news and declarations of the united front forces.

The defeat of the troops of Sun Chuanfang and Zhang Zongchang paved the way for a renaissance of the Nationalist presence in Shanghai. On March 22 *Minguo Ribao* announced that it was again operational.[26] Bai Chongxi, commander of the Eastern Route Army which had been camped outside Shanghai during the February uprising, began publishing a continuous flow of announcements in the newspapers. The General Labour Union was just as active in this department, and separate news columns devoted to union organizations began to appear.[27]

Shen Bao was somewhat perplexed by these sudden and radical changes in Shanghai politics. Chen Jinghan's editorial of March 23 asked each side to "declare their wishes." He added that[28]

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25. This figure from Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, p. 137. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 22, 1927, reported 800,000 strikers.

26. "Minguo Ribao Qishi" [An Announcement by Minguo Ribao], *Shen Bao*, March 22, 1927. See also Local News on the same date for *Shen Bao*'s report of the taking of Shanghai by united front forces.

27. See the announcements of these two groups in *Shen Bao*, March 23, 24, 1927. At first these were mainly of a celebratory nature, but, as will be seen, they gradually changed to reflect the growing tension between the workers and the right-wing Nationalists.

28. *Shen Bao*, March 23, 1927.

> in an age of deceit, if it is not the powerless who are not able to declare their wishes, then it is the powerful who conceal their wishes as if they were taboo. With dressed-up pretexts [the two] contend with each other. Thus, in an age of deceit there is always hypocricy and never any progress.

The "wishes" of the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi were to be made clear in less than a month. In the meantime, Nationalist leaders began holding press conferences to allay the fears of the foreign community in Shanghai. On March 23 Bai Chongxi told reporters that the Nationalists wanted to overcome imperialism and capitalism, and to establish "mutual equality" with the foreign powers, but they would not in any way threaten foreign property in Shanghai.[29] The attacks on the British when Nanjing fell to Nationalist troops on March 24 only served to heighten the fear of Shanghai's foreigners.[30] The General Labour Union and its armed pickets were in control of large areas of Shanghai and had set up headquarters inside the premises of the Commercial Press in Zhabei. A *Shen Bao* report from a rally of 500,000 workers at the Union's headquarters described a "clear, sunny day with red flags everywhere flapping in the breeze."[31] The more conservative elements in Shanghai, Chinese and foreigners, were nervous about the lingering presence of armed pickets. More press conferences followed and the General Labour Union asked all its members, except the armed pickets, to return to work and maintain order.[32] *Shen Bao* itself appealed for the "elimination of panic," arguing that the entire city needed to be demilitarized; unneccesary militias had to be disbanded and weapons put away.[33] Jiang Jieshi arrived in Shanghai on March 26 and told reporters that some "ruffians" (*liu mang*) were responsible for

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29. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 23, 1927.

30. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 144-145.

31. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 24, 1927.

32. See front page announcements by the General Labour Union and Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 24, 1927.

33. *Shen Bao*, March 26, 1927.

the attacks on foreigners in Nanjing. When questioned about the armed pickets, Jiang answered that as long as they were "orderly and disciplined" and acted "according to Party duty" they could take up arms for self-defence. He added that in a military campaign the pickets should accept military restraints.[34] Jiang then repeated similar statements before foreign journalists at the end of March. He emphasized that the pickets were under instruction from military commanders.[35]

But around the time of Jiang's arrival in Shanghai the sharp divisions between his leadership and the militant Communist and left-Guomindang forces could be read between the lines of various newspaper reports. This was particularly so in relation to the Shanghai Provisional Municipal Government. A provisional executive committee charged with the task of setting up such a government was formed soon after the March 21 insurrection. This was the creation of the Communists, with Lin Jun and Wang Shouhua playing leading roles, but, in the spirit of the united front, the majority of places on the committee were offered to either leading capitalists such as Yu Xiaqing and Wang Xiaolai, and members of the Guomindang such as Yang Xingfo and Niu Yongjian.[36] Initially, some of the Communist union leaders of the committee made statements to the newspaper press which reflected the more radical demands of the militants. Among the slogans reported were "victory to the workers' revolution," "reclaim the concessions" and "overthrow imperialism."[37] Two days later the General Labour Union published an announcement which was critical of its members who called for a return of the

34. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 27, 1927.

35. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 31, 1927.

36. For the full membership of this committee see Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 24, 1927. See also Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 144, 166-168.

37. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 24, 1927.

concessions areas to Chinese hands.[38]

Similarly, members of the proposed Provisional Municipal Government issued a draft document on treatment of the press which promised an unprecedented freedom. This stated that all restrictions on freedom of the press would be abolished and that journalists would not be bound by military law. In addition journalists would be given free travel on public transport and, in gathering their reports, allowed free access to all public places and offices.[39] This was all very well, but the Provisional Municipal Government never achieved any effective power. Jiang Jieshi was concerned about its Communist members, even though they were in a minority. When Jiang Jieshi made it clear that he would not recognize the authority of this government, its capitalist and Guomindang members gradually declined to take up their postions. Jiang eventually ordered the government to cease operations on March 30.[40]

The increasing number of press conferences marked the beginning of a closer relationship between the press and the new Nationalist government, but in a manner which increasingly came to mean exploitation of the press to publicize the causes of the right-wing Nationalists. In particular, the tenor of messages eminating from Bai Chongxi's Eastern Route Army headquarters betrayed a vision of the future in sharp contrast to the early idealism of the left-wing forces of the united front. On March 25 the political department of the Eastern Route Army proposed that a press organization be formed to furnish newspapers with information about its activities.[41] Ominous signs of the future for

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38. See the front page announcement, *Shen Bao*, March 26, 1927.

39. Hu Daojing, "Shanghai Xinwen Shiye zhi Shi de Fazhan" [The Historical Development of the Press in Shanghai], *Shanghai Shi Tongzhiguan Qikan* 2.3 (Dec. 1934): 1015.

40. See Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 27, 29, 30, 1927.

41. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 25, 1927.

newspapers and journalists under Nationalist rule came in a press conference called by the Eastern Route Army on March 29. Journalists were told that[42]

> the Shanghai press is the centre of the nation's public opinion and is responsible for guiding the masses. The only demand of the masses is for the National Revolution. To promote civil rights we must first smash the feudal system; only then can we institute democracy. Even if the Party is going through a period of militarism, the relations between the Party and the press is an intimate one. In future we hope the press will conscientiously lead the oppressed masses with the modern trend of thought. We stand as one on the revolutionary united front. We know that the survival of the entire people depends upon the success of the National Revolution rather than the interests of a minority.

Similar statements were made by the local and provincial Party branches of the Guomindang, and a *Guomindang News* column had by the beginning of April become a regular addition to *Shen Bao*.[43]

With the benefit of hindsight it is clear that soon after his arrival in Shanghai Jiang Jieshi began making alliances and plans that would enable him to wipe out the militant wing of the united front in Shanghai, with the armed pickets being the main target. It is not possible to discern the attitude of Shi Liangcai and *Shen Bao* to these plans. It is by now well known that many prominent Shanghai capitalists formed a new commercial organization, the Shanghai Commercial Federation (Shanghai Shangye Lianhehui), which provided considerable financial support to Jiang and solicited the backing of others in commercial circles.[44] Although Shi Liangcai had considerable financial and commercial interests apart from his newspaper, there is no evidence to suggest that he joined this, or any other, representative commercial organization.[45]

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42. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 29, 1927.

43. Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 1, 1927.

44. Perhaps the best account to date of this Federation is Jospeh Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Political Power in Shanghai, 1890-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), pp. 117-123.

45. Neither Shi Liangcai nor any of his various commercial interests were

Several members of the Commercial Federation, for instance, Wang Xiaolai, Yu Xiaqing, Qian Yongming and Qin Runqing, were to have close contacts with Shi Liangcai in the years to come, but it would be misleading to suggest that they formed a unified clique ot interest group. Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that Shi Liangcai was an active supporter of Jiang Jieshi.

Passive, or *de facto* support of the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi was a different matter. As noted, on the day of Jiang's arrival in Shanghai *Shen Bao* expressed its concern to see the disbanding of militia and a reduction in arms throughout the city. This is not to say that *Shen Bao* necessarily supported the way in which the purge of April 12 was carried out, but it is unlikely that the paper was unaware of the ominous gathering of forces hostile to the militants and the armed pickets. To some extent the story unfolded in *Shen Bao*'s news coverage and in the many political announcements which flooded its own front pages.

To begin with, the General Labour Union began echoing the views of the Nationalist leaders. It repeatedly denied that it represented a threat to the foreign concessions and, not without some irony, stressed that the pickets carried arms to defend themselves from "reactionaries" (*fandong pai*) who wanted to stir up trouble.[46]

Then, Wang Jingwei, leader of the left-wing Guomindang, returned to China from his European sojourn in early April and his arrival in Shanghai was heralded by large advertisements which appeared over several days.[47] Wang was touted as the rightful leader of the Nationalists,

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affiliated with the Shanghai Commercial Federation. See Shanghai Shi Dang'anguan [Shanghai Municipal Archives], ed., *Yijiuerqi Nian de Shanghai Shangye Lianhehui* [The Shanghai Commercial Federation of 1927] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 7-14

46. See Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 3, 4, 1927.

47. For some of these advertisements see *Shen Bao*, April 5, 6, 7, 1927.

even by Jiang Jieshi.[48] On April 5 it was reported that Wang agreed to a "compromise" (*tuoxie*) with local Nationalist leaders on the future plans of the Guomindang. On the same day *Shen Bao* reported the release of the joint declaration signed by Wang Jingwei and the Communist leader Chen Duxiu. This attempted to patch over divisions between the Nationalists on the one hand and the Communists and General Labour Union on the other while also denying that the former intended to suppress the latter.[49] But the next day such luminaries of the Guomindang right-wing as Wu Zhihui, Cai Yuanpei, Song Ziwen, Bai Chongxi, Li Zongren and Li Jishen held a meeting at which Wu in effect denied the validity of the joint declaration. The Communists could join the Guomindang to lend it assistance, Wu argued, but there was no way that they could rule China.[50]

Finally, as Harold Isaacs has noted in reference to the April 12 *coup*, the "approach of zero hour could almost be plotted graphically in the half-page announcements" placed in the newspapers by the political department of Bai Chongxi's Eastern Route Army.[51] These contained increasingly hostile warnings to the armed pickets. The announcement of April 11 proclaimed: "Our soldiers are desperately sacrificing themselves at the frontlines. Honest workmates in the rear will never force strikes or cause chaos and disorder."[52]

Shen Bao allowed all of these rather sinister omens to appear in its pages without ever passing judgement on their possible significance. *Shen Bao*'s editorials were typically apolitical. One editorial spoke of the

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48. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 154-155.

49. Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 5, 1927. For a partial translation of the declaration by Wang Jingwei and Chen Duxiu see Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, p. 165.

50. Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 6, 1927.

51. Isaacs,*Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, p. 173.

52. See *Shen Bao*, April 11, 1927. See also *Shen Bao*, April 7, 8, 10, 11, 1927.

way in which a "group" (*tuanti*) can consolidate itself and gain the trust of the people by protecting itself from those outside the "group" who wish to do it harm.[53] Whether or not the "group" referred to was the Guomindang is a matter for speculation, but this was the closest *Shen Bao* came to political commentary throughout this period.

The attack on the armed pickets was finally launched early in the morning of April 12.[54] The next day, under the headline "All of Shanghai's Worker-Pickets Disarmed," *Shen Bao* presented detailed, on-the-spot reports of the fighting. Despite the fact that Jiang Jieshi relied heavily on members of the Green Gang to carry out the attack on the pickets, *Shen Bao* did not report the gangster origins of this assault force. Instead it referred to groups of men wearing white armbands inscribed with the character for "worker" (*gong*) who "suddenly came out of the concessions." By nine o'clock in the morning, *Shen Bao* reported, "everything was settled."[55]

Soon after the pickets had been eliminated, the announcements from the General Labour Union disappeared from *Shen Bao*'s pages to be replaced by declarations from the Guomindang sponsored Shanghai General Labour Association (Shanghai Gonglian Zong Hui).[56] The political department of the Eastern Route Army was as active as ever in spreading its version of events through announcements and press conferences. On April 17 Bai Chongxi described the elimination of the pickets as being necessary to the unity of the national revolution and warned the press to

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53. *Shen Bao*, April 5, 1927.

54. The best account of the events of the *coup* is still Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 175-186.

55. Local News, *Shen Bao* April 13, 1927. On the background to the Green Gang's involvement in the attack on the pickets see Brian G. Martin, "The Green Gang and 'Party Purification': Green Gang-Kuomintang Relations, 1928-1937," paper presented to the Symposium on the Nanking Decade, 1928-1937: Man, Government and Society, Univeristy of Hong Kong, August 15-17, 1983, pp. 33-45, *passim*.

56. See announcements in *Shen Bao*, April 14, 15, 1927.

be careful about Communist propaganda.[57]

The extraordinary thing about newspaper coverage of these events was not the reporting but the absence of comment. Throughout this entire period, certainly an extraordinary period of Shanghai's history, neither the Guomindang nor the Communists, nor any political organization, was discussed in *Shen Bao*'s editorials. While the fighting raged on the city's biggest daily newspaper maintained its silence. Chen Jinghan did not stray beyong reflections on the general character of Chinese society and politics. In mid-April he wrote of the difficulty in changing China's social organization. Though Chinese society at times appeared to lack organization, he noted, being as obscurantist as usual, in reality there existed a particular "element" (*yuansu*) to its organization. The difficulty was that outside this "element" there was a kind of "cover" (*mengzhi*) which in turn was surrounded by another "cover," and so on. When assaults were made on China's social organization, it was really only these outer rings, these "covers," which were broken; a direct attack on the "central element" in China's social organization was extremely difficult.[58] Chen was perhaps unimpressed by the changes brought to China by the Northern Expedition and was suggesting, in an oblique way, that the Nationalists were not substantially different to other Chinese militarists. Later in April he wrote that the splits and divisions in China's recent past had been caused by divisions between different doctrines, yet he did not even describe these doctrines, let alone indicate a preference one way or another.[59]

This non-committal attitude was to change over the next year, but

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57. See the announcement of the political department of the Eastern Route Armyin *Shen Bao*, April, 14, 1927. On Bai Chongxi's press conference see Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 17, 1927.

58. *Shen Bao*, April 15, 1927.

59. *Shen Bao*, April 26, 1927.

for the moment *Shen Bao* continued to act as a daily billboard for the Nationalist's latest plans for the re-organization of labour unions and the government of Shanghai. The status of such newspaper advertisements of this kind was a political issue in itself. Much of the political "news" printed in the newspapers was publicity copy supplied by political organizations. *Shen Bao*'s "Guomindang News" column fell within this category. Some proprietors, according to one observer, would print such information as advertisements to show that they did not "approve of its news character." Newspapers rarely received payment for carrying such advertisements.[60] This suggests that newspapers in *Shen Bao*'s position felt they had little choice on the matter and carried political advertising to avoid trouble.

Political pressures of this kind increased over the coming months. Once the Nationalists won control of Chinese Shanghai they attempted to mobilize some of the city's abundant resources behind the completion of the Northern Expedition and the establishment of a national government in Nanjing. Jiang had already received some financial support from members of the Shanghai Commercial Federation upon his arrival in Shanghai. Throughout April and May some of the Shanghai capitalists were asked to make further contributions and a few were subjected to coercian or kidnapping to help persuade them to deliver. On April 16 *Shen Bao* reported Finance Minister Song Ziwen's insistent request that Shanghai financial circles foward a loan of thirty million yuan to the new government.[61] Some members of the conservative group in the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce who had supported Sun Chuanfang, Fu Xiaoan for example, were kidnapped and forced to pay ransoms to secure their

60. Roswell S. Britton, "Chinese News Interests," *Pacific Affairs* 7.2 (June 1934): 187.

61. Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 16, 1927.

release.[62] The first taste of the Nanjing government's press censorship came when in May it imposed a one day postal ban on *Xin Wen Bao* for reporting a list of the Shanghai capitalists that were being pressured to forward loans to the government.[63] Despite these high-handed tactics, a *Shen Bao* headline declared: "Jiang Jieshi Orders the Protection of Financial Circles."[64] In subsequent months the Guomindang attempted to gain control over local commercial organizations, particularly the Chamber of Commerce, although, according to recent research, these attempts met with only limited success.[65]

The communications resources of the newspaper press also became a target of the Nationalists' drive to consolidate their power. Of course, the Guomindang had newspapers of its own, *Minguo Ribao* and, from January 1928, *Zhongyang Ribao* (*Central News Daily*) for example, but even into the 1930s the circulation of these newspapers was at most around twenty thousand, a far cry from the audience reach of the big dailies.[66] The propaganda position of the Nationalists therefore depended to a considerable degree upon its ability to influence and control the major Shanghai newspapers.

The atmosphere of terror that hung over the Nationalist occupation of Shanghai ensured that the likes of *Shen Bao* would not speak out against the new regime. The Nationalists soon backed this up with its own

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62. See Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites*, pp. 117-118, 122-130.

63. On this incident see Parks M. Coble, Jr., *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 35.

64. Local News, *Shen Bao*, April 21, 1927.

65. Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites*, pp. 130-131.

66. On Guomindang newspapers see Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi* [A Hsitory of Journalism in China] (Taibei: Sanmin Shuju, 1966), pp. 275, 325, 355-358, 577-578; Liang Jialu, et al., *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 283-288; Lee-hsia Hsu Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian research Centre, 1974), pp. 98-99.

censorship apparatus. There were no specific press or publication laws in this initial period of Nationalist rule. Later, in 1928, the banning or censoring of published material was carried out according to laws on "counter-revolutionary" offences.[67] News Censorship Bureaux (Xinwen Jianchasuo) were nonetheless set up in the major cities, including Shanghai. The Shanghai Censorship Bureau was composed of one representative each from the local Guomindang, the garrison command, the Bureau of Social Affairs, and the Nanjing government.[68] As was suggested in chapter four, these censors were given a curiously accommodating reception by newspaper staff. During the first stage of its operations the Censorship Bureau's central office was even located within the *Shen Bao* building. Moreover, in the wake of the Nationalist occupation, all the major dailies, with the exception of the American-owned *Xin Wen Bao*, renounced their registration as foreign enterprises and became Chinese-registered concerns.[69] This degree of co-operation with the Nationalist government has led some observers to conclude that newspapers "submitted voluntarily" to censorship, or, that as an expression of hope in the country's future they willingly gave up foreign registration.[70] It is difficult to imagine any newspaper "voluntarily" accepting government censorship. A more plausible explanation is that cautious proprietors like Shi Liangcai believed it was better to placate rather than provoke the military men who dominated the new regime.

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67. See "Fan Geming Zui Tiaoli" [Regulations on Counter-revolutionary Crimes], in *Guomin Zhengfu Xianxing Fagui Daquan* [Current Laws of the National Government], 8 vols. (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1928), 5: n.p.

68. *Report of the Hon. Mr. Justice Feetham, C.M.G., to the Shanghai Municipal Council*, 4 vols. (Shanghai: North China Daily News and Herald, 1931-1932), 1: 233.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 233. The issue of foreign registration will not be fully understood unless further evidence comes to light, but it is worth noting that Feetham's report claimed that before the Nationalists took over Shanghai *Shen Bao* and *Minguo Ribao* were registered as French and *Shi Bao* as Japanese companies respectively.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 234; Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian*, 1: 136.

Compromise was preferable to the risk of potentially crippling postal bans. In addition, the Nationalist government's legal jurisdiction over Shanghai extended further than that of any previous Republican regime. This was because in January 1927 the Mixed Court of the International Settlement was turned over to Chinese authorities and put under the control of the Jiangsu Provincial Government.[71] Taken together, control of the courts and the establishment of the Censorship Bureau gave the Nationalists considerable powers of surveillance over the Shanghai newspapers.

In contrast, the Nationalists' attempts to win the active support of the big Shanghai dailies were less successful. In chapter four it was seen that in early 1927 Jiang Jieshi was able to place Chen Bulei on the senior staff of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*. At first, however, Chen's political opinions were stifled by a management whose attention was focused on making the paper a commercial success. Chen resigned after only a few days. It was only after he came to an arrangement with Pan Gongbi, one of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*'s senior editors, that Chen made some headway. From October he wrote editorials for the paper and for more than a year was able to give the Nationalist government's views a relatively high profile in the Shanghai press. At the same time, despite the fact that Chen had the support of a few sympathetic colleagues, many of the journalists at *Shi Shi Xin Bao* did not welcome the presence of a political interloper within their ranks, even though they were not in a position to get rid of him.[72]

More aggressive attempts to win newspaper support were made by the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang. The role of the local branch of the Party in Shanghai politics is still not fully understood, but in the first two years of Nationalist rule it engaged in campaigns to infiltrate sections

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71. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Jan. 1, 1927; Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China*, p. 102.

72. See chapter 4, pp. 201-203.

of the city's institutional life, for example merchant organizations and the lawyers' guild.[73] Chen Dezheng, head of the Party's propaganda department and one of *Minguo Ribao*'s editors, was an active promoter of these campaigns. Chen also turned his attention to the big daily newspapers, but he achieved mixed results. In chapter four it was shown that Chen managed to coerce the staff of *Xin Wen Bao* into admitting one of Chen's suppoerters, Xu Tianfang, to its ranks. Chen threatened to close down the paper if *Xin Wen Bao* did not co-operate. As an American-registered company *Xin Wen Bao* was in fact in no danger of being closed down. The decision to take in Xu Tianfang was thus motivated by diplomacy rather than necessity. All the same, the *Xin Wen Bao* staff were still able to deflect Chen's interference by relegating Xu to the education supplement where he was less likely to cause trouble.[74]

Although it has been suggested that *Shen Bao* resisted similar attempts by the local Guomindang to infiltrate its ranks,[75] a firm conclusion on this matter can not be made in the absence of further evidence. Outwardly, *Shen Bao*'s pages showed no signs of pro-Guomindang sentiment, but this in itself does not mean that there were no members of the Guomindang on its staff.

In general, then, the big Shanghai dailies survived this violent transitional period by scrupulously avoiding the main issues. While the fight for Shanghai raged on through the early months of 1927, *Shen Bao* preserved a stony editorial silence. When backed into a corner by the General Labour Union's pressure to come out in support of the insurrection against Sun Chuanfang, *Shen Bao*, together with the other

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73. Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites*, pp. 127-131.

74. See chapter 4, pp. 198-199.

75. Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao" [On Shen Bao During the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management], (M.A. dissertation, Fudan University, Shanghai, 1982), p. 32. Qin does not give evidence to support this claim.

big dailies, decided to stop the presses and go into hiding. And after the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi wiped out the militant forces of the united front in Shanghai, *Shen Bao* decided to meet the new regime half way. It co-operated in the establishment of government censorship and published news and announcements from the Nationalists without complaint. But in 1927 neither *Shen Bao* nor the other big dailies wanted to lend active support to the new government and its party machinery. If the *Shen Bao* of 1927 could be said to be in any way supportive of, or favourable to, the Nationalists, it was so in default of any clear political stance of its own. *Shen Bao* had not given its blessing to the Nationalists, nor had it risked the slightest criticism.

Support Turns to Disillusionment: *Shen Bao* and the Nationalists, 1928-1929

After the establishment of the Nanjing government in April 1927, Jiang Jieshi indicated his intention to push his forces further northward in an effort to achieve complete national unity. This again made China's relations with Japan an important national issue. The Japanese were concerned about protecting their territorial concessions in Shandong and, beyond this, their influence in the Manchurian region. In the past *Shen Bao* had demonstrated a willingness to speak out against Japan's presence in China, particularly during large-scale protests and boycotts such as those of May Fourth and May Thirtieth movements. Japan's hostile response to Jiang's plan to complete the Northern Expedition therefore provided fertile ground on which *Shen Bao* and the Nationalists could meet. Indeed, when Chinese and Japanese troops clashed in Jinan in early May 1928, *Shen Bao* showed unequivocal support for the completion of the Northern Expedition. Thereafter it was willing to assist the Nationalists toward achieving that end.

But this honeymoon period between *Shen Bao* and the new

government did not last very long. By the end of 1928 the Nationalists had either subdued or reached co-opearative agreements with each of the northern warlords and the government was able to settle down to the task of drafing laws and regulations. Rather than show its appreciation of *Shen Bao*'s support for the Northern Expedition, the government began to tighten its regulations governing the press. Moreover, the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang became one of the most active opponents of Shi Liangcai's takeover of *Xin Wen Bao* in January 1929. Although Shi Liangcai did not make any public statements about this affair, it marked the beginning of a serious rift in his relations with the Nationalist regime. The seed of Shi Liangcai's opposition to Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist government was planted.

Shen Bao responded very quickly to the problem of continuing the Northern Expedition toward the Japanese sphere of influence in north China. In May 1927, after the Japanese had dispatched a fresh contingent of troops to Qingdao, *Shen Bao* gave extensive coverage to organizations which expressed opposition to Japan's actions.[76] In June and July these protests became widespread and grew into another boycott movement against Japanese products. Again, *Shen Bao* devoted much of its column space to reporting this movement.[77] *Shen Bao* was hardly engaged in any maverick campaign of patriotic reporting as the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang itself provided organizational support for these boycotts. One protest rally, attended by over 300,000 people, was led by none other than Chen Qun, one of the Guomindang's principal strong men in Shanghai and a leader of the April purge of Communists in the city.[78] *Shen Bao*

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76. Local News, *Shen Bao*, May 29, 1927.

77. See Local News, *Shen Bao*, June 10, 11, 12, 13, 24, 29, and July 12, 1927.

78. Local News, *Shen Bao*, June 13, 1927. See also Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 146-148.

nevertheless showed once again that it was prepared to support anti-Japanese movements.

The danger of an immediate clash between the Northern Expeditionary forces and Japanese troops in Shandong subsided throughout July and August. The Nationalist troops under Jiang's command encountered several setbacks at the hands of Zhang Zuolin and Sun Chuanfang. In defeat and believing that the Guomindang needed to regroup its badly divided right and left-wings, on August 12 Jiang Jieshi announced his retirement in the hope that this would help unify the Party.[79]

After Jiang Jieshi stepped down from leadership of the Nationalist forces, an event which *Shen Bao* reported without any editorial comment, he travelled to Japan and met Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi. In a conversation between the two Tanaka was reported to have said that because Jiang was "anti-communistic," Japan wished to see him "consolidate [his] forces in the south." Japan would assist Jiang, continued Tanaka, "so long as international considerations permit[ted] it and so long as its own interests [were] not sacraficed."[80] Jiang then returned to China, resuming his command of the Northern Expedition in January 1928, anxious to avoid friction with Japan, and perhaps believing he had gained "tacit endorsement" from Tanaka for Nationalist military campaigns in north China.[81]

Despite Jiang's attempts to reassure the Japanese that their concession areas were not at risk, as the Northern Expedition resumed in

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79. Jordan, *Northern Expedition*, pp. 135-137.

80. Cited by Iriye, *After Imperialism*, pp. 157-158.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 194. In the same month Zhang Qun, a Nationalist general who had accompanied Jiang to Japan, reached a secret agreement with Tanaka whereby Japan would pressure Zhang Zuolin to vacate Beijing in return for a promise that Nationalist troops would not pursue him into Manchuria. See William F. Morton, *Tanaka Giichi and Japan's China Policy* (Folkestone, Kent: Dawson, 1980), p. 107.

April 1928 and Nationalist troops swept into Shandong another contingent of five thousand Japanese troops were sent to the Qingdao and others were sent from Tianjin to Jinan. This is not the place for a detailed examination of what followed, but on May 3 a skirmish between Chinese and Japanese troops in Jinan escalated into a city-wide battle which became known as the Jinan Incident.[82]

Shen Bao immediately saw the Jinan Incident as Japan's attempt to frustrate China's efforts to achieve national unity, and this led the paper into a declaration of full support for the aims of the Northern Expedition:[83]

> The most pressing need for China today is for the Northern Expedition to be a success. After the Northern Expedition succeeds China will be united; after unification there can be reconstruction in all affairs and China will become a nation with hope. Whatever the difficulties, all impediments to the Northern Expedition must be removed. All those who can eliminate the impediments to the Northern Expedition, must bear the suffering, however bitter. The success of the Northern Expedition remains the only goal at present, all else is secondary. After its success other sufferings may be alleviated.

Shen Bao certainly did not underestimate the gravity of the situation. It regarded the Jinan Incident as a matter of the utmost national importance; potentially a struggle for national survival, not a simple act of violence limited to the Jinan area. But the paper did not advocate an escalation of the military action against Japan. Instead it called for a sort of nation-wide closing of ranks, even though, in its own words, "there are not any Chinese who do not feel indignant" about the "insults" inflicted on China at the hands of the Japanese Army.[84]

A daily flow of editorials on the Jinan Incident appeared throughout May, but they contained only two central themes: restraint and unity. Restraint was necessary because, in *Shen Bao*'s view, the Japanese Army would seek any opportunity to advance its military plans for China. At the

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82. On the Jinan Incident see Iriye, *After Imperialism*, pp. 197-204; Morton, *Tanaka Giichi*, pp. 117-118; Jordan, *Northern Expedition*, pp. 158-159.

83. *Shen Bao*, May 5, 1928.

84. *Ibid.*

same time, it was essential that the Chinese people be prepared in their own minds for the worst possible outcome:[85]

> The only way to survive is for the people to embrace the notion of a life or death struggle and use all their strength to delay the moment of doom....[T]he people must exercise the utmost restraint so that the advances of the Japanese Army can not proceed according to the speed they are intended to proceed.

Thus *Shen Bao* urged the Chinese people to develop "fearlessness and endurance."[86]

In order to maximise China's chances of dealing with the threat from Japan, *Shen Bao* believed national unity to be of vital importance. Selfish actions were deplored and those who did not unite and act as one were considered "non-Chinese."[87] The grim message was that "during the period of restraint the Chinese people must heed the guidance of the government and not engage in any other activities."[88] The Chinese had to prepare themselves for what *Shen Bao* called "the final step" (*zuihou yibu*). Apart from upholding national unity, this preparation required that people be fully informed about the state of affairs, about what was expected of them and about how they could deal with the crisis. Lectures, propaganda and slogans were to be used in the process. Those with property and capital were to give up speculation for private gain and plan the efficient use of resources to assist the nation.[89] Finally, *Shen Bao* believed it was a "weakness" of the Chinese to look for assistance from other countries in times of trouble. This weakness had to be done away with.[90]

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85. *Shen Bao*, May 9, 1928.

86. *Shen Bao*, May 6, 1928.

87. *Shen Bao*, May 11, 1928.

88. *Shen Bao*, May 7, 1928; see also May 12, 1928.

89. *Shen Bao*, May 12, 13, 14, 1928.

90. *Shen Bao*, May 18, 1928.

There was not even a hint of a call for any military action in all of this "preparation for the final step." *Shen Bao* believed that provided the people were prepared for the worst and did not give the Japanese the opportunity to press their advantage, they might at least gain sufficient time to organize a way out of the crisis.

All in all, *Shen Bao*'s view was very close to the position adopted by Jiang Jieshi who, after the Jinan Incident, attempted to suppress anti-Japanese activities hoping to avoid further provocation of the Japanese Army in China.[91] On May 13, for instance, *Shen Bao* carried a report of a Shanghai press conference held by a delegation from the Nanjing government. They told reporters that the Northern Expedition would proceed and would not be drawn into further clashes with Japanese forces. To preserve national unity, protest meetings against the Japanese would be stopped, and the activities of "reactionaries" eliminated. The delegation expressed the hope that the Shanghai press would publicize the government's wishes on this matter.[92]

Indeed, Shanghai's major dailies were anxious to co-operate with the Nationalist government in publicizing the official view of events. On May 6 representatives of the Shanghai dailies convened a special meeting on the Jinan Incident. They agreed to organize a Provisional United Agency (Linshi Lianhe Banshichu), a sort of central office for the distribution of news and information. This agency asked the Central Party Headquarters in Nanjing to provide guidance in spreading news of the what the Agency called the "true" situation in Jinan and in publicizing the government's plans for dealing with the problem.[93] In other words, this special Agency wanted to assist the government's propaganda efforts in the wake of the

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91. Iriye, *After Imperialism*, p. 205.

92. Local News, *Shen Bao*, May 13, 1928.

93. Local News, *Shen Bao*, May 7, 1928.

Jinan Incident.

The Northern Expedition and the nationalism on which it fed had evidently swept up *Shen Bao* in the euphoria, and the paper rallied to the cause of nation united under a central government in Nanjing. As a result of events surrounding the Jinan Incident, *Shen Bao* not only adopted an editorial line in harmony with the Nanjing government's national strategy, but also offered its services for the promotion of that strategy. On May 19 *Shen Bao* reiterated its view that "the only way forward for our country rests with the completion of the Northern Expedition."[94] The degree of co-operation between *Shen Bao* and the Nationalists in this period was such that a prominent contemporary journalist, Huang Tianpeng, went so far as to describe *Shen Bao* as a "semi-Party organ."[95] This epithet was exaggerated, but it conveyed some sense of the common ground between the two. There is no evidence to suggest that *Shen Bao*'s support of the Nationalists was anything other than voluntary, and if it did not agree with Nationalist strategy the paper could have easily resorted to its former tactic of editorial silence.

The Northern Expedition continued to push on after the Jinan Incident until by mid-1928 Beijing had fallen to its troops. Only Manchuria remained, and Zhang Xueliang eventually raised the Nationalist flag at the end of December that year.[96] Some sense of *Shen Bao*'s self-satisfaction with the state of affairs in China was conveyed by the memorial to its 20,000 edition of November 19, 1928. Shi Liangcai modestly wrote of his "weak will" and "barren learning" which had inhibited *Shen Bao*'s "glory and greatness." But Shi could not conceal his

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94. *Shen Bao*, May 19, 1928.

95. Huang Tianpeng (Tian Lu), "Shanghai Xinwen Zahua" [Some Comments on Shanghai Journalism], in *Xinwenxue Kan Quanji* [The Complete Collection of Journalism Magazine], ed. Huang Tianpeng (Shanghai: Guanghua Shudian, 1930), p. 429. Huang's comment also applied to *Xin Wen Bao*.

96. Jordan, *Northern Expedition*, pp. 164-168.

contentment and his somewhat utopian hopes for the future: "My deepest wish is that in future, after another 10,000 editions, [we will] report a world of well being and peace (*xiao kang shi*); and another 10,000 editions after that there will be a new chapter in the world of harmony and equality (*da tong shi*)." Shi concluded with a poem:[97]

> Eliminate war and there will be no barriers
> Strive for productivity, replenish
> agriculture and industry
> The land will not lie fallow, the people not be poor
> Talent will not be wasted, order will prevail
> A culture united, all voices heard
> Spiritual and material, East and West in harmony
> National barriers will crumble, the universe
> will be just
> Put an end to struggle, follow the tolerance of ancient times
> With limitless joy and an end to all desires
> We will celebrate the success of the 40,000 edition.

With a China ostensibly united after almost twenty years of local warlordism and factional infighting, perhaps Shi Liangcai had good reason for his optimism. But from this moment on relations between *Shen Bao* and the Nationalists went into decline. For the Nationalists had achieved only a fragile national unity and Jiang Jieshi's obsession with maintaining that unity led to an increasingly authoritarian system of government.

The first sign of a cooling down in relations came in November 1928 when a minor skirmish broke out between the Shanghai newspapers and the Ministry of Communications over the press' use of the postal and telecommunication services. The Shanghai Daily Press Association, of which Shi Liangcai was chairman, attempted to convince the Ministry that the special communicative service provided by the newspapers qualified them for a reduction in postal, telegraphic and telephone rates. Initially Wang Boqun, the Minister of Communication, rebuffed these requests and

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97. Shi Liangcai, "Shen Bao Faxing Er Wan Hao Jinian" [Memorial to the Publication of the Twenty Thousandth Edition of Shen Bao], "Shen Bao Er Wan Hao Jinian" [Memorial to the Twenty Thousandth Edition of Shen Bao], *Shen Bao*, Nov. 19, 1928.

flatly denied any claims to special status. He argued that the resources of the Post Office were insufficient to grant any reductions in charges to the newspapers. *Shen Bao* reported the Minister's intransigence and forcefully restated the newspapers' case.[98] Several meetings followed, but the Ministry agreed only to reduce the rate on postal delivery to places outside the reach of motor transport.[99] Despite the firm support that the Shanghai newspapers had given to the Northern Expedition, the Nanjing government was not about to grant them any favours.

For *Shen Bao* this wrangle was a taste of things to come. Now that they were reasonably well established as *the* national government of China the Nationalists had more time to turn their attention to legislation and the regulation of society. In January 1929 the Party's central standing committee issued its *Regulations for the Investigation of Propaganda Material* (*Xuanchuanpin Shencha Tiaoli*) which covered all forms of the press and publishing. This contained the usual restrictions on "communist" and "reactionary" material, but also included an extensive range of provisions against criticism or even distortions of the Guomindang's ideology, platforms and programmes. Offending publishers were liable to be subjected to arrest or have their operations closed down.[100]

It was also in January 1929 that Shi Liangcai launched his bid to take control of *Shen Bao*'s greatest rival, *Xin Wen Bao*. The events surrounding this takeover in many ways represented a microcosm of the relationship between *Shen Bao*, the Shanghai commercial elite and the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang. Sixty-five percent of *Xin Wen Bao*'s shares

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98. Local News, *Shen Bao*, November 19, 1928.

99. Several detailed documents on this affair can be found in Huang Tianpeng, ed. *Xinwenxue Kan Quanji*, pp. 467-500.

100. These regulations can be found in *Zhongguo Guomindang Nianjian, 1929* [Yearbook of the Chinese Guomindang, 1929], pp. 868-869.

were in the hands of John Ferguson, an American who had controlled the paper for over twenty years. As shown in chapter two, Ferguson was concerned about the rise of Chinese nationalism as early as 1912; nor did he look favourably upon the rise to power of the Guomindang.[101] He was therefore ready to sell up if given an appropriate offer.

Because much of the bargaining and negotiating of the sale of *Xin Wen Bao* was kept secret, it is still difficult to sort out the details. Shi Liangcai appointed Dong Xianguang (Hollington Tong) to meet Ferguson in Beiping and negotiate the purchase of Ferguson's shares. Dong had at various times been associated with *Yong Bao* in Tianjin and *China Weekly Review* in Shanghai. According to one account, on Dong's request, *Yong Bao* received some support from Shi Liangcai, and the paper then became a kind of Tianjin appendage to *Shen Bao*.[102] In early January Dong secured the shares in *Xin Wen Bao*, but nobody on the paper's staff was aware of the deal. There was a strong banking link behind this takeover, which helps to explain where Shi Liangcai raised the necessary capital, reputedly 800,000 French francs.[103] Shi Liangcai was himself a director of the Zhong-Nan Bank which was in turn one of the so-called "Beisi Yinhang"(Four Northern Banks). Shi was able to gain financial backing from two prominent members of the Beisi group: Wu Yunzhai, of the Jincheng Bank, and Qian Yongming (Qian Xinzhi) a Shanghai representative of the Beisi group and also vice-Minister of Finance in

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101. Tao Juyin, *Jizhe Shenghuo Sanshi Nian* [Thirty Years of Life as a Journalist] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), pp. 149-151.

102. Yu Zhihou, "Yijiuerqi Nian zhi Kangzhan Qian Tianjin Xinwenjie Gaikuang" [An Outline of the Press in Tianjin from 1927 to the Eve of the War Against Japan], in *Tianjin Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* [Selected Hitorical Souces on Tianjin], no. 18 (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), pp. 48-49.

103. Yan Duhe, "Fukaisen yu Xin Wen Bao" [Ferguson and Xin Wen Bao], in *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi Cankao Ziliao* [Reference Material on the History of the Press in Modern China], ed. Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwenxue Xi [Journalism Department of the Chinese People's University] (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xinwenxue Xi, 1982), p. 200.

1928.[104]

Initially the management and staff of *Xin Wen Bao* were unaware of Ferguson's decision to sell the paper. Wang Boqi and his younger brother, Wang Zhongwei, had taken over responsibilities for running *Xin Wen Bao* upon the retirement of their father, Wang Hanxi, in 1924. When they first got wind of the paper's sale they believed that the sole purchaser was Wu Yunzhai, although Wang later claimed that Wu Yunzhai functioned as a smokescreen for Shi Liangcai.[105] They were thrown into greater confusion when Dong Xianguang walked into their offices and informed them that there would be some changes in the management of the paper. The *Xin Wen Bao* staff were suspicious of Dong's associations with northern warlords, particularly Zhang Xueliang, and believed he might have been acting for a warlord interest. This became evident when Dong visited the *Xin Wen Bao* staff for the third time in as many days only to be confronted with banners proclaiming "overthrow the warlords" and "oppose the secret sale of shares."[106]

The *Xin Wen Bao* staff, led by Wang Boqi, organized a campaign of resistance to the sale, and the whole imbroglio soon involved some prominent members of Shanghai's commercial and political elite. From January 13 *Xin Wen Bao* began publishing a series of announcements attacking the secret share deal and proclaiming the formation of a movement by the staff to regain control of the paper. They justified their action in terms of the need to protect the independent expression of

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104. Tao Juyin, *Jizhe Shenghuo Sanshi Nian*, p. 150; Hu Daojing, "Xin Wen Bao Sishi Nian Shi" [A Forty Year History of Xin Wen Bao], in *Zhongguo Jindai Baokan Shi Cankao Ziliao*, p. 189; Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi' [My Relationship with Xin Wen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 12 (Beijing: Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1982), p. 142.

105. Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi," p. 142; Tao Juyin, "Xin Wen Bao Fajia Shi" [The Historical Development of Xin Wen Bao], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), p. 137.

106. Feng Yaxiong, "Shen Bao yu Shi Liangcai" [Shen Bao and Shi Liangcai], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 17 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961), pp. 163-164.

opinion.[107]

Over the next few days, in a decisive move that considerably increased the odds against Shi Liangcai's takeover, the local Nationalist forces threw their weight behind *Xin Wen Bao*'s cause. But the confusion over who was behind the takeover persisted and was even evident in the first published declarations of the Nationalists. On January 14, for instance, *Xin Wen Bao* published a declaration of support from the Shanghai Municipal Committee in which the new owners of the paper were considered to be "reactionary elements" headed by Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun) and Liang Shiyi.[108] Chen Dezheng, the activist leader of Guomindang propaganda in Shanghai who had already lodged one of his followers within *Xin Wen Bao*'s staff, wrote an article in *Minguo Ribao* which described the takeover as an attempt to build a news "trust" (*tuolasi*). This suggested that Chen was aware of Shi Liangcai's involvement in the takeover, for no other newspaper proprietor could reasonably fit such a description. Chen concluded his article on an ominous note: "trust systems should not be allowed to exist in a Republic of China shaped by the Three People's Principles;...they deserve our strict punishment."[109] On the following day *Xin Wen Bao* finally mentioned Shi Liangcai and Wu Yunzhai as the prime movers behind the takeover bid and, echoing Chen Dezheng, lambasted the "oppression of large-scale capitalism" and trustification of the press.[110]

The campaign against Shi Liangcai was then taken to the Nanjing

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107. "Ben Guan Quanti Tongren Jinyao Xuanyan" [An Urgent Declaration by the Entire Staff of this Newspaper], *Xin Wen Bao*, Jan. 13, 1929.

108. "Shanghai Tebie Shi Zhiweihui zhi Ben Guan Han" [A Letter from the Shanghai Municipal Committee to this Newspaper], *Xin Wen Bao*, Jan. 14, 1929.

109. "Tuolasi" [Trusts], "Xingqi Pinglun" [Weekly Comment], *Minguo Ribao*, Jan. 14, 1929.

110. "Ben Guan Quanti Tongren Xuanyan" [A Declaration by the Entire Staff of this Newspaper], *Xin Wen Bao*, Jan. 16, 1929.

government. *Minguo Ribao* reported that the Central Publicity Department (Zhongyang Xuanchuan Bu) was "paying close attention to the *Xin Wen Bao* affair."[111] On January 18 *Xin Wen Bao* reported on a press conference in Nanjing held by the Central Publicity Department. Representatives of *Xin Wen Bao* requested the Department to keep a careful watch on those "reactionaries" who would harm the press industry through trustification.[112]

Various commercial organizations also expressed support for *Xin Wen Bao*'s staff. In Shanghai the General, County and Zhabei Chambers of Commerce issued an anouncement on January 16 which *Xin Wen Bao* and, in a show of even-handedness, *Shen Bao* published over several days. Similar anouncements of support flooded in to *Xin Wen Bao*: the National Commercial Federation (Quanguo Shanghui Lianhehui); the Chambers of Commerce of Nanjing and Suzhou; newspaper staff unions from Nanjing, Suzhou and Wuxi; and the six suburban branches of the Shanghai Guomindang, all declared support for *Xin Wen Bao*.[113]

With such widespread expressions of support and such a determined campaign of resistance it was clear that Shi Liangcai had little choice but to negotiate with *Xin Wen Bao*'s staff in order to reach a settlement. The details of what happened next remain unclear, but Shi Liangcai came out of it all with only a Pyrrhic victory. On January 24 *Xin Wen Bao* announced that a "well-known figure from the commercial world" was to take charge of the paper's negotiations for a settlement.[114] The identity of this mysterious figure is unkown, although it has been suggested that Yu Xiaqing offered to take charge of *Xin Wen Bao*'s resistance movement.

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111. See *Minguo Ribao*, Jan. 15, 1929.

112. "Jieyao Xinwen" [Important News], *Xin Wen Bao*, Jan. 18, 1929.

113. See *Xin Wen Bao*, Jan. 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 1929.

114. See the front page announcement, *Xin Wen Bao*, Jan. 24, 1929.

After allegedly cashing a cheque of 50,000 yuan for the general manager, Wang Boqi, he is said to have taken no further part in the affair. Lawyers were then called in to attempt to negotiate a settlement.[115] One account has it that even Du Yuesheng, Green Gang boss and past master of settling industrial disputes, was involved in the negotiations, and that he managed to secure some shares in *Shen Bao* for himself as a reward for his services.[116] This extraordinary battle over the control of *Xin Wen Bao* lasted more than a month. The opposition assembled against Shi Liangcai was so great that he eventually surrendered a portion of his shares to Ye Zhuotang and Qin Runqing, two Shanghai bankers, leaving himself with a fifty per cent stake in *Xin Wen Bao*. The editorial and managerial arrangements of the paper were to remain unchanged, the Wang brothers managing to hold on to their positions in the paper.[117]

Though details of these events remain obscure, some salient features of the politics of the newspaper world were highlighted by the Shi Liangcai's takeover bid. First, the strongest ideological attack on Shi Liangcai came from Chen Dezheng and the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang. In a sense Chen and the *Xin Wen Bao* management made strange bedfellows because they represented a union between an anti-imperialist ideologue and a comprador family that had been running a newspaper for an American owner for almost thirty years. Chen, whose attempts to infiltrate the big dailies had not endeared him to the likes of Shi Liangcai, accused Shi of being a capitalist who was trying to build a news "trust." Chen's intervention succeeded in making the takeover bid

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115. Tao Juyin, "Xin Wen Bao Fajia Shi," pp. 138-139.

116. Xu Zhucheng, *Du Yuesheng Zheng Zhuan* [The True Story of Du Yuesheng] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), p. 77. Although there are no sources to corroborate this claim, it was highly likely that Du Yuesheng did manage to secure some shares in *Shen Bao* because he was later listed as a member of *Shen Bao*'s board of directors after Shi Liangcai's assassination.

117. Wang Zhongwei, "Wo yu Xin Wen Bao de Guanxi," pp. 142-143.

more than just a local squabble over shares. In the end he helped to frustrate Shi Liangcai's attempt to gain full control of China's two biggest newspapers. Yet Chen's rationale was curiously ideological. The Nationalists had no reason to be displeased with either Shi Liangcai or *Shen Bao*, except for the fact that, as Chen reasoned, he could be seen as a big capitalist attempting to monopolize the press. But by 1929 the Nationalists were attempting to rid themselves of this kind of rhetoric and put the lid on the radical mass movement in their organization. In this light it is interesting to note that Chen was himself to became a target of the Nanjing government's efforts to demobilise the Party's mass movement. In 1930 he was arrested and imprisoned, allegedly at the behest of Yu Xiaqing, for over zealous application of Party doctrine.[118] Moreover, despite appeals for them to intervene, there is no evidence to suggest that the central authorities in Nanjing took any action to influence the course of Shi Liangcai's takeover bid, although it is not difficult to imagine that they would have been concerned about one person being in control of such a huge newspaper enterprise. Thus, even though there was no indication that his motives were anything other than commercial, Shi's attempt to take full control of his greatest rival failed at least in part because a local Guomindang zealot acted according to his Party's ideology.

A second feature of Shi's takeover bid was the support given to *Xin Wen Bao*'s staff by the various commercial groups. Almost all the major chambers of commerce came down on the side of *Xin Wen Bao*. This suggests that Shi Liangcai was not as well connected with Shanghai commercial circles as the Wang family. *Xin Wen Bao* was considered to be the businessman's bible and its success was largely due to its concentration on economic and business affairs. The Wang brothers were able to rely on connections with business heavyweights, such as Yu Xiaqing, to rally to

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118. Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites*, pp. 123, 156-157.

their defence. Shi Liangcai's less intimate connections with these circles made him appear more of a maverick, and this was also to count against him in the 1930s.

Finally, the process of the takeover bid rendered Shi Liangcai's newspaper empire more vulnerable to the influence of conservative Shanghai bankers and others who had developed close contacts with Jiang Jieshi. Through his connection with the Beisi banking group Shi gained financial support for his takeover bid from Wu Yunzhai and Qian Yongming. Little is known of Wu's activities, but he was one of Shanghai's most prominent bankers and, like Shi Liangcai, was to become very active in local affairs in the early 1930s. Qian Yongming maintained close links with the Nanjing government since his time as Vice-Minister of Finance in 1928. Both Wu and Qian were members of the Shanghai Commercial Federation that welcomed Jiang to Shanghai in March 1927.[119] More importantly, the fracas over who was to have final control of *Xin Wen Bao* presented an opportunity for some individuals to pick up some scraps from the bargaining table. Du Yuesheng was an experienced hand at this game, and he had developed a close relationship with Jiang since the Green Gang led the attack on the militants in Shanghai in April 1927. Qin Runqing and Ye Zhuotang, who both picked up some of the shares that Shi was compelled to surrender, were less influential figures, but they, too, had been members of the Shanghai Commercial Federation.[120]

Because modern newspapers are a highly capitalised industry, their financial base has commonly been provided by banking or commercial interests, particularly in countries where low levels of newspaper circulation restricted self-generated revenue through sales and advertising. It is interesting to note in passing that with the rise of

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119. Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites*, p. 117.

120. *Yijiuerqi Nian de Shanghai Shagye Lianhehui*, p. 7.

Fascism in Italy and Germany, newspaper dependence upon banks and industry for capital support proved a liability. As some of these bankers and industrialists were drawn to the right, so editorial policy was gradually made to follow a line more supportive of the authoritarian regimes.[121] Although Shi Liangcai was able to run his newspaper empire without having to be directly accountable to, in his case, bankers and gangsters, he had opened the door to conservative elements who were more intimately connected with the government under Jiang Jieshi than Shi cared to be. After Shi Liangcai's assassination these elements emerged in the ascendancy on *Shen Bao*'s board of directors.[122]

If Shi Liangcai was upset with the role of the Nationalists in his takeover of *Xin Wen Bao* he did not reveal his feelings in the pages of *Shen Bao*. But Shi did make some changes at *Shen Bao* which suggested that he wanted to increase the distance between himself and the Nationalists and which pointed toward the kinds of reforms that transformed his paper in the 1930s. Toward the end of the year he replaced Chen Jinghan, the paper's editor since 1912 with the deputy editor of long standing, Zhang Yunhe. Some contemporary observers claimed that Chen had become an adviser to Jiang Jieshi, and this could well have been the principal reason behind Shi's decision to replace Chen.[123] In addition, Zhang Zhuping, the paper's manager who resigned to devote his attention to *Shi Shi Xin Bao*

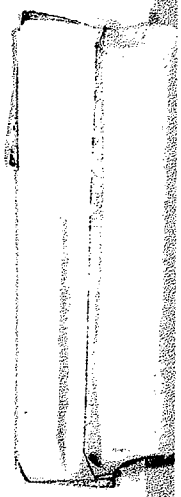
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121. See Oron J. Hale, *The Captive Press in the Third Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 1-14, 76-94. On Italy see the editors' introduction to "Journalism," in *Antonio Gramsci: Selected Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 342-345.

122. This board of directors included Shi Yonggeng (Shi Liangcai's son), Ma Yinliang, Wang Xiaolai, Qian Yongming, D. Yuesheng, Zhang Xiaolin, Huang Yanpei and Hu Bijiang. See Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi" [A Sixty Six Year History of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai* [A New Era in the History of Journalism] (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1946), p. 101.

123. See Shanghai Municipal Police (International Settlement) Files, Chief Detective Inspector Prince, "Chinese Newspapers," D. 3414, April 18, 1932; Wang Zhongwei, "You Jingzhen you Lianhe de 'Xin,' 'Shen' Liangbao," p. 89.

was replaced by one of Shi's distant relatives, Ma Yinliang.[124] These appointments reflected Shi's desire to gather about him trusted associates, almost as though he were fortifying his defences for the future. He no longer had any desire to support the Nationalists, but neither did he have a strong reason to attack them. The Nationalist government's response to Japanese militarism in China was to provide him with that reason.



124. Shen Bao Shi Bianxiezu [Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], "Shen Bao Qishi Qi Nian Da Shi Ji, 1872-1949" [A Seventy Seven Year Chronology of Shen Bao, 1872-1949], Draft, Beijing, 1979, p. 7. Ma Yinliang trained as a medical doctor and had no expertise in running a newspaper before he started at *Shen Bao*. Interview with Ma Yinliang, Sun Enlin's residence, Shanghai, April 10, 1985.

CHAPTER VII

SHEN BAO TAKES A STAND, 1931-1934

The outbreak of hostilities between China and Japan on September 18, 1931 marked a dramatic turning point in twentieth century Chinese history. Although hindsight allows historians to better appreciate the significance of such events, the affect on Chinese politics and society of Japanese militarism in the early 1930s deserves to be given greater attention. There was a decisive re-orientation in the the political scene which is still not fully understood. The problem of how to deal with the threat of Japanese militarism to China's survival as a nation, and it was seen by many as the beginning of a life or death struggle, exacerbated the tensions between competing political forces in China. Jiang Jieshi's decision to "first unify the nation, then resist foreign aggression," however realistic in strategic terms, effectively denied his government a great deal of potential public support. Other political groups, for example, the Communists, the militarists of the Guangxi Clique and southern politicians like Hu Hanmin, were quick to exploit popular anti-Japanese sentiment in an attempt to gain political advantages over the Nanjing regime.[1]

Shi Liangcai and *Shen Bao* became the most prominent Shanghai critics of Jiang's non-resistance policy and also engaged in political campaigns of their own. While the Nationalist government reeled under the pressure of the Manchurian invasion and the bombing of Shanghai,

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1. For a brief account of these groups in the early 1930s see Hsi-sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982), pp. 16-24.

Shi Liangcai felt an increased responsibility for local affairs. Not only did he use *Shen Bao* to attack government policy, he also placed himself at the head of a movement to preserve order, and prop-up the local economy and lead Shanghai out of the crisis of early 1932. The significant aspect of this movement was that it attracted the support and active involvement of leading Shanghai capitalists and politicos. Although the interests of the members of this movement were not identical, through their joint action they increased their political influence over Shanghai affairs at the expense of Nationalist authority in the city. The Nationalists had to make concessions to this movement while at the same time attempting to prevent it, and other anti-Japanese movements, from assuming the proportions of a popular front in favour of resistance to Japan.

For the first time in his career as a press mogul Shi Liangcai decided to draw upon his potential influence to play an active part in Shanghai politics. He was primarily driven by a patriotic desire to save Shanghai and China from invasion by the Japanese. But his reactions to events following the Shenyang Incident were more complex than a straightforward patriotism would allow. After all, Shi Liangcai did not exercise a monopoly over such sentiments, and all of the key political groups laid claims to patriotism. Shi's first concern was the economic and financial well-being of Shanghai, and this partly expalins why he acted in concert with Shanghai capitalists against government policy. Beyond this, however, Shi Liangcai also articulated political demands which exceeded the demands of most of his capitalist colleagues. In co-operation with several key intellectuals, Shi used *Shen Bao* to attack the Nationalist dictatorship, demand the institution of constitutional government, and advocate an end to the military campaigns against the Communists.

This was a politically daring course to take because it inevitably led to a head on collision with the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi. Jiang was very simply able to silence the editorial recalcitrance of *Shen Bao* by

imposing a postal ban in mid-1932, a tactic that was bound to prove effective against such a large commercial newspaper. Although Shi Liangcai was thereby gagged, he did not lose interest in political struggles. In a sense he simply moved the attack from the editorial to the cultural page, although this strategy involved a range of new publishing and cultural ventures that went beyond *Shen Bao* itself. In addition, Shi continued to lend support to liberal-oriented anti-government political movements. He could not have known it at the time, but this open political opposition to Jiang's authoritarian regime sealed Shi's fate.

Shen Bao and the Politics of Patriotism, 1931-1932

The Manchurian Crisis

To be fair to Shi Liangcai, his decision to transform *Shen Bao* into an active participant in the political scene was not born of a precipitate reaction to the Shenyang Incident. To begin with *Shen Bao* had shown a readiness to support anti-Japanese movements in the past provided that they did not destabilize Shanghai society in the process. Secondly, it was seen in chapter six that Shi Liangcai was given little cause to support the Nationalists after the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang intervened in his takeover bid of *Xin Wen Bao*.

In December 1930 the Nationalist government did little to improve its relations with the press when they introduced a comprehensive Publications Law (Chuban Fa). This required all newspapers and periodicals to register with the government. But, perhaps more importantly, the various articles of the Law added up to a free hand for the government in deciding what constituted "damage to the interests of the Republic of China."[2] Indeed, censorship procedures were so loosely

2. A full English translation of this law can be found in Legation of the United States, Peip'ing, to American Consular Officers in China, "Law of Publications," March 5, 1934, *Confidential US State Department Central Files: China, Internal Affairs, 1930-1939*, (893.918/89). See especially chapter 4 articles 19-21, pp.

defined that, in the end, all that mattered was that the government always retained the final power to censure or ban "reactionary" material. In September 1929, for instance, it was reported that the Party's Central Executive Committee would abolish censorship of the press. Newspaper registration was to remain, however, as were the usual qualifications proscribing what the government considered to be acceptable comment. A similar "suspension" of censorship occurred over the winter of 1930 to 1931, following the conclusion of the Nationalists' expedition against the rebellious forces of Yan Xishan and Feng Yuxiang. The newspapers carried on as normal, fearing that they might still be subject to government censorship.[3]

In the spring of 1931 *Shen Bao* made further changes to its personnel which, together with the replacement of Chen Jinghan and Zhang Zhuping in 1929, helped to give the paper a new character. Huang Yanpei and Tao Xingzhi were taken on board as key advisors to Shi Liangcai. Huang Yanpei had been associated with Shi Liangcai since 1905 when they were colleagues in the Jiangsu General Association of Education (Jiangsu Xuewu Zonghui). Both Huang and Tao were active promoters of populist vocational education. In the late 1920s Tao established experimental village schools outside Nanjing.[4] These two, especially Tao Xingzhi, were responsible for many of the reforms at *Shen Bao*. Their influence began to show on September 1, 1931. On that day *Shen Bao* published a statement in preparation for its sixtieth anniversary in 1932.

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pp. 6-7. For the Chinese version see Zu Cheng, "Xinwenjie Qing Fuyi Xiuzheng Chuban Fa Huiji" [A Record of Requests to Reconsider Revising the Publications Law], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.4 (August 1935): 91-94.

3. See *China Weekly Review*, 50.2 (14 Sept. 1929): 108; "The Futility of the Press Censorship," *People's Tribune* (new series), 2.9 (31 May 1932): 140.

4. Tao Xingzhi was profoundly influenced by John Dewey. See Barry Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment in China: Educational Reform and Political Power in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1977), 81-111.

This revealed a further advance on the paper's cautious approach to newspaper journalism and an emerging social conscience. It sounded a new commitment to "positive action" and the dissemination of "new learning." It continued:

> In this new historical stage of continuous advancement how should this newspaper shoulder the heavy burden responsibility of pioneering and advancing society? How do we make society follow rational conventions? How do we enable our people to attain prosperity? By positive action, by consientiously reforming this newspaper and by being responsible rather than shirking our duty....

The statement went on to outline *Shen Bao*'s future plans. It promised a commitment to the introduction of new scientific learning, the exploration of social problems, discussions of the world economy, the guidance of China's youth, and the education of the people so that they could struggle for equality with other nations. Finally, it asked the government to be "broad-minded and to accept public opinion."[5] This clearly set the tone for things to come.

China's relations with Japan were nonetheless the key to the political transformation of *Shen Bao*. These relations deteriorated steadily throughout 1931, particularly after two unrelated incidents in north-east China in May and June. In the first incident a dispute between Chinese and Korean peasants over land and water rights at Wanbaoshan, near Changchun, led to clashes between Japanese police and Chinese in Korea. This in turn sparked anti-Japanese boycotts in Shanghai. The second incident invloved a Japanese intelligence officer, Captain Nakamura Shintaro, and his aide who disappeared while on a secret mission to survey the potential military uses of the topography in Manchuria. An investigation by the Japanese Guandong Army allegeded that both men were killed by Chinese troops. Although both the Nationalist and Japanese governments prevented the first incident from becoming a larger issue,

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5. "Benbao Liushi Zhounian Jinian Xuanyan" [A Declaration on the Sixtieth Anniversary of Shen Bao], *Shen Bao*, Sept. 1, 1931.

the Nakamura incident was used by Japanese Army officers as an example of Japan's inability to protect its interests in the region should its treaties with China be revoked. These officers kept the issue alive and it dragged on through several investigations until, on September 4, Japan demanded an apology, compensation and guarantees that no similar incident would occur in future.[6]

From July to September *Shen Bao* published a number of articles on the problem of Japanese activities in Manchuria, indicating its interest in this issue well before the Shenyang Incident.[7] In the wake of Japanese demands over the Nakamura incident *Shen Bao* published two strongly worded editorials which accused the Japanese of distorting the truth in an attempt to create a smoke screen for invading Manchuria.[8] This was less than a week before the Japanese Army made its move in Shenyang.

The invasion of Manchuria that started at Shenyang on September 18 put the fire into *Shen Bao*'s belly. When the fighting broke out *Shen Bao* rose to the challenge as if it were leading a crusade. Its columns filled with on the spot reports, about half the dispatches coming from the paper's own correspondents.[9] The editorial of September 23 argued that it would be fatal to wait for an international settlement to the dispute. The only hope for China was a "last-ditch war of self-defence."[10]

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6. On both these incidents see Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 290-297; William F. Morton, *Tanaka Giichi and Japan's China Policy* (Folkestone, Kent: Dawson, 1980), pp. 165-166.

7. On these articles see Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi LIangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao" [On Shen Bao During the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management] (M.A. dissertation, Shanghai, Fudan University, 1982), p. 7.

8. *Shen Bao*, Sept. 12, 13, 1931.

9. Qin Sahode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao," p. 8 notes that *Shen Bao*'s first reporting on the Shenyang Incident was made up of 85 dispatches, 47 of which were from its own correspondents.

10. *Shen Bao*, Sept. 23, 1931.

On September 22 Shi Liangcai became a member of the National Salvation Committee for Resisting Japan (Kangri Jiuguo Weiyuanhui). This marked the beginning of his participation in the politics of Shanghai's patriotic movement and his more general interest in leadership of local affairs. At an anti-Japanese rally organised by this Committee on September 26, Shi Liangcai made a declaration, before an assembled crowd of over 200,000 people, calling for the government to send troops to Manchuria to resist the Japanese forces.[11]

The Nationalists responded to the Shenyang Incident by maintaining that "national unity [was] the foundation of peace" and "observance of the law the basis of [China's] struggle."[12] It placed itself in the invidious position of having to suppress patriotic anti-Japanese movements while carrying on a civil war against the Communists in Jiangxi. *Shen Bao* quickly showed that such a strategy was an easy target for criticism when it published Tao Xingzhi's oblique attack on the Nationalist style of government. This appeared, under Tao's pen-name, in the feature page *Ziyou Tan* (*Free Talk*). His poem *Jia Hao Ren* (*False Good People*) wrote of, among other things, a "False Army" which "can bear to watch its own land smashed. But it has its particular skill; it can kill its own blood sisters."[13] The metaphor here was not especially hard to fathom.

It was not long before the Nationalists acted to stem the flow of this sort of comment. After *Shen Bao* published comprehensive and sympathetic reports of the patriotic student movement in Shanghai, on December 11 the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang ordered a postal ban

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11. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Sept. 27, 1931.

12. "Guomindang Zhongyang Gao Quanguo Tongbao Shu" [A Message to all Compatriots from the Guomindang Central Party Committee], *Shen Bao*, Sept. 23, 1931.

13. Tao Xingzhi, "Jia Hao Ren", in *Ziyou Tan*, *Shen Bao*, September 25, 1931. Tao wrote under the title "Bu Chu Ting Cao Zhaifu" [The scholar who does not weed his garden].

to be imposed upon the paper (the other major Shanghai dailies were also subject to the ban).[14] The Shanghai Daily Press Association, in which Shi Liangcai was the dominant figure, convened an emergency meeting. They decided to register a protest with the central government and the Shanghai municipal government. They appealed to government authorities to respect freedom of the press and cease unwarranted censorship. They pointed in vain to the Provisional Constitution for the period of tutelage government, promulgated in June 1931, which guaranteed freedom of the press. Though the newspapers made use of their own columns to publicise their cause, appeals based upon constitutional guarantees of freedom showed great naivety. As has been shown, throughout this period laws which offered press freedom were always qualified by what Nationalist authorities judged to be harmful to the "interests of the Republic of China." On this occasion only the December 11 issue of *Shen Bao* was affected by the postal ban.[15]

Shen Bao continued its criticism of the government undeterred. By mid-December the government in Nanjing was in serious disarray. As Lloyd Eastman has written, "the Nationalist regime was plunged into unprecedented crisis by the events of late 1931 and early 1932."[16] Jiang Jieshi, finding his popularity as low as when he retired in August 1927 and under pressure from southerners like Sun Ke (Sun Fo) and Hu Hanmin who had declared a rebel government in Canton, once again decided to withdraw from the scene. With Jiang out of the way *Shen Bao* felt safe

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14. On the paper's coverage and comment on this movement see *Shen Bao*, October 6, 1931, and Local News, *Shen Bao*, Dec. 11, 1931.

15. On the declarations of the Press Association see "Shanghai Ribao Gonghui Qishi," "Shanghai Ribao Gonghui Jinji Huiyi" (a local news report); and "Shanghai Ribao Gonghui Xuanyan," all in *Shen Bao*, Dec. 12, 1931. See also "The Law and the Freedom of the Press," *People's Tribune*, 2.10 (new series) (June 15, 1932): 275; *China Critic*, Dec. 24, 1931, p. 1254.

16. Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 159.

enough to direct some criticism his way. The December 15 editorial stated that "with the retirement of Mr Chiang the new will replace the old. In this most critical period the Guomindang, which supports and governs the people, should exert great efforts toward the regeneration of national affairs." The paper followed up the next day with an appeal for "expert politics" (*zhuanjia zhengzhi*), a political motif then popular among liberal critics of the Nationalist regime.[17] The governemnt was said to be suffering from "bureaucratism." Politicians were denounced because they[18]

> use force but not ability, and are deceitful rather than upright. The greater the use of force the greater the deceit; the higher one's position, the greater the display of power.

On December 19 Tao Xingzhi denounced the decision taken by Jiang Jieshi before his retirement to appoint three militarists, Gu Zhutong, Lu Diping and Xiong Shihui, to top provincial government positions. Tao concluded that militarists had become "masters of the nation."[19]

Shen Bao looked to the new government under Sun Ke, who had taken over leadership upon Jiang's retirement, to reverse this state of affairs. This showed that the principal target of the paper's criticism was the militaristic rule of Jiang Jieshi rather than the Nationalist government as a whole. Indeed, the paper expressed the hope that the new leadership would "with the greatest possible resolution work for the reconstruction of a new life...and the foundation of honest government."[20] With this in mind *Shen Bao* made suggestions on reforming the government system which it hoped would be taken up by the first session

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17. See, for example, Terry Narramore, "Luo Longji and Chinese Liberalism, 1928-1932," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 32 (Sept. 1985): 187-195.

18. *Shen Bao*, Dec. 16, 1931.

19. Tao Xingzhi, "Zhe shi shenmo yisi?" [What is the meaning of this?], in *Ziyou Tan*, *Shen Bao*, Dec. 19, 1931.

20. *Shen Bao*, Dec. 20, 1931.

of the Fourth Guomindang Congress. First, they argued for "rectification of the military." *Shen Bao* believed that eighty per cent of national expenditure went to the military.[21] This had been a common complaint among the ranks of the Shanghai capitalists since the completion of the Northern Expedition in 1928, with many feeling that they should not have to maintain such high levels of military funding once the Nationalist government had been established in Nanjing.[22] This was to continue to be a sore point in relations between the government and the Shanghai capitalists. Secondly, and related to this problem, *Shen Bao* believed that reforms in education were necessary because this was an area that had also been "invaded" by "military bureaucratism." Funding for education needed to be independent, not used for what the paper referred to as "other purposes." And, in concluding remarks which revealed the hand of Tao Xingzhi, it was argued that education should be a vital, progressive "superstructure" (*shangsheng jianzhu*) of society, not something with which to preserve the *status quo*; it required independence in order to fulfil its proper function.[23]

At about this time *Shen Bao* stepped up its attack on the "military bureaucratism" of the Nationalists. On December 20 it published a declaration by Song Qingling. Song was writing in response to the news of the execution of former colleague on the Guomindang left-wing, Deng Yanda. Both had broken away from the mainstream Guomindang to form what became known as the "Third-Party" (Di San Dang), believing that they were guardians of Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary spirit.[24] Song

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21. *Shen Bao*, Dec.23, 1931.

22. On these complaints see Parks M. Coble, Jr., *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Governemnt, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press), pp. 51-61.

23. *Shen Bao*, Dec. 24, 1931.

24. On the Third Party see Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, pp. 93-96. Deng Yanda was arrested in Shanghai's International Settlement in August 1931.

described Jiang Jieshi's rule as a "personal dictatorship" which was "nominally anti-communist but in reality reactionary." She called on all those who "deeply believe in the true Chinese revolution" not to be scared away by "terror and slaughter from the reactionary forces."[25] Given the strength of this statement it is not surprising that Shi Liangcai had trouble convincing his colleagues in the Daily Press Association that all member newspapers should publish it. In the end, only the Guomindang's *Minguo Ribao* dissented. One view has it that Shi Liangcai's promotion of Song Qingling's declaration was one of the reasons behind the decision to assassinate him.[26] In any case, Song Qingling became a close confidant to Shi Liangcai from this moment.

All in all, *Shen Bao*'s views represented strong denunciations, from a once sedate conservative, of the Nationalist regime under Jiang Jieshi. By the end of 1931 all the elements that were to propel Shi Liangcai and his paper into the centre of Shanghai politics had come together. Shi Liangcai, owner of the two biggest dailies in the country, had found a social conscience. He had gathered around him intellectuals such as Huang Yanpei and Tao Xingzhi who were opposed to Jiang's militaristic government and committed to such broadly-based liberal values as popular education and government according to expertise and ability. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria was the crisis which served to precipitate *Shen Bao*'s more outspoken character, and the undeclared war in Shanghai merely intensified the paper's views and stirred Shi Liangcai into political action.

The War in Shanghai

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25. "Song Qingling zhi Xuanyan" [A Declaration by Song Qingling], *Shen Bao*, Dec. 20, 1931.

26. Yun Yiqun, "Da Shen Bao Shi Bianxiezu" [A Reply to the Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 5 (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 1980), p. 63; Lu Yi, "Shi Liangcai yu Shen Bao" [Shi Liangcai and Shen Bao], in *Shanghai Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 47 (Shanghai: Wenshi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1984), p. 94.

Throughout 1932 Shi Liangcai became involved in a number of political activities centred on the patriotic anti-Japanese movement in Shanghai. With *Shen Bao* as his forum, for a brief period Shi was part of a broader challenge to government authority. He was able to mobilise support from Shanghai's leading capitalists for the defence of Shanghai and the preservation of the city's economic stability. But Shi went beyond most of these colleagues in that, through *Shen Bao*, he made political demands of the government and attacked it on specific policy issues. Moreover, Shi used *Shen Bao* to publicise the activities of intellectuals and political organisations opposed to the Nationalist regime. Though the government struck back and silenced *Shen Bao*'s editorial comment, Shi merely redirected his paper along a less explicitly political course.

Even before the bombing of Shanghai on January 28, Shi Liangcai had taken steps to bring together like-minded friends and associates who shared his concern about the rise of Japanese militarism. On January 14 he formed the Ren Shen Club (1932 being a "ren shen" year on the Chinese calendar), a group of around twenty intellectuals and commercial figures who met once a week to discuss ways of coping with the crisis in national affairs. The Club members even went so far as to draft resolutions which they passed on the the Mayor of Shanghai, Wu Tiecheng. Wu allegedly ignored these resolutions.[27]

When the bombing came, after some skirmishes between Chinese and Japanese residents of Shanghai, *Shen Bao* made it clear that the time for patience and forebearance in dealing with the Japanese Army had come to an end:[28]

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27. Ma Yinliang, "Jianchi Kangri, Fandui Neizhan: Shi Liangcai zai Yijiusaner Nian" [Staunchly Resisting Japan and Opposing Civil War: Shi Liangcai in 1932], in *Shanghai Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 47, pp. 78-79.

28. *Shen Bao*, Jan. 29, 1932. The "Shanghai Incident" refers to the fighting between Chinese and Japanese residents which resulted in the death of a Japanese monk. Following this incident the Japanese made a number of demands, including the suppression of anti-Japanese movements, which eventually led up to the

> Since the outbreak of the Shanghai Incident, our authorities have been patient and forebearing in every respect, even to the extent of accepting all Japanese demands. The result of bearing this suffering and humiliation, however, is that we still cannot satisfy the wishes of the Japanese and they then engage in military action....When our country is at this stage, when it has repeatedly borne all difficulties, then it cannot but rise up and take the appropriate defensive measures.

Tao Xingzhi followed up with an editorial which argued that the battle for Shanghai was actually a life or death battle for the entire Chinese people. He suggested that four steps immediately be taken: first, recognize the Nineteenth Route Army as a national army and provide it with material support; secondly, all those who join the Nineteenth Route Army or armies imbued with a similar spirit should become the foundation for the protection of the entire nation; thirdly, the government should issue a plan of action and ensure that soldiers at the front receive its full support; and finally, care should be provided for the wounded and refugees.[29] The Nineteenth Route Army, which grew up around the Guomindang movement in the south, was moved from Guangdong to Shanghai following the Shenyang Incident. Though Jiang Jieshi did provide some armed support to the Nineteenth Route Army, with the help of newspaper publicity it appeared that the Army was taking an heroic, lone stand against the enemy.[30]

The Japanese attacks caused terrible destruction, especially around Zhabei and other industrial areas north of Suzhou Creek. *Shen Bao*'s reports gave some idea of the ferocity of the war, for by that time the

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bombing on January 28. See F. C. Jones, *Shanghai and Tientsin: With Special Reference to Foreign Interests* (San Francisco: American Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), pp. 50-53.

29. *Shen Bao*, Jan. 31, 1932.

30. For brief accounts of the Nineteenth Route Army, see Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, pp. 86-93; Paul O. Elmquist, "The Sino-Japanese. undeclared war of 1932," *Papers on China*, 5 (1951): 49-52.

paper's entire news space was given over to covering the various battles.[31] When the Shanghai war was over, Shi Liangcai met Jiang Guangnai and Cai Tingkai, field commanders of the Army, to record their accounts of events at the frontline. Both allegedly related details of their dealings with Nationalist leaders like Jiang Jieshi and He Yingqin. Although Shi Liangcai did not wish to risk publishing these accounts, the recollections of Weng Zhaoyuan, who led the fight at Wusong, were published in *Shen Bao*'s monthly journal in July 1932.[32]

Acting in the spirit of Tao Xingzhi's editorial, Shi Liangcai began to organize support for the Nineteenth Route Army. He decided to form the Shanghai Citizens' Local Preservation Association (Shanghai Shimin Difang Weichihui). Shi had proposed the formation of this Association at a meeting of the Ren Shen Club on 3I January. He was elected chairman, with Huang Yanpei as secretary, and the Association was announced in *Shen Bao* the next day.[33] The significant feature of the Association was that its members included Shanghai's most influential capitalists and politicos. Among the listed members were Yu Xiaqing, Wang Xiaolai, Xu Jiqing, Qin Runqing, Zhang Xiaolin, Du Yuesheng, Qian Yongming, Mu Ouchu and Wu Yunzhai. This list represented an interesting union between capitalists and gangsters, but the co-operation of both was required to get anything of importance done in Shanghai. Most of these people came into close contact with Shi Liangcai during his takeover of *Xin Wen Bao*. What united these powerful individuals, many of whom had close relationships with the Nationalist government, was the desire to

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31. See, for example, reports on the fighting in *Shen Bao*, Feb. 1, 2, 1932. By now the paper was reduced to eight pages because of the crisis.

32. Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," pp. 81-82; "Weng Zhuoyuan dui Shibin de Hua" [Weng Zhuoyuan's Words to his Soldiers], *Shen Bao Yuekan* 1.1 (July 1932): 108-109.

33. Local News, *Shen Bao*, Feb. 1, 1932; Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," pp. 78-80.

support the Nineteenth Route Army and foster an environment in which, as far as possible, Shanghai's business activities could continue as normal. In other words, they responded out of concern to keep the Japanese from the door, restore social and political order, and preserve the Shanghai economy in which they all had a stake.

Concern for control of the city was clearly revealed in the actions of Shi Liangcai and the Local Preservation Association. Shi began using *Shen Bao* to rally support for the Association's aims. From February 16 announcements were made calling for contributions to assist the Nineteenth Route Army and provide relief for refugees. By 4 March, banks and business organisations had donated over 380,000 yuan to the cause. At the end of 1932 *Shen Bao* published the final report of the Local Preservation Association in which it was stated that over 930,000 yuan had been raised, most of it going to the Nineteenth Route Army. The *Shen Bao* business department handled the administration of this fund raising effort.[34] Shi Liangcai, Song Qingling and Yang Xingfo, in consultation with members of the Local Preservation Association, went as far as formulating plans for confronting new contingents of Japanese troops. They allegedly drew up strategic blueprints and passed them to Wu Tiecheng, who then sent them to Jiang Jieshi. Chiang apparently ignored these plans.[35]

The Local Preservation Association also co-ordinated various refugee relief efforts from a central office, and Shi Liangcai assisted Song Qingling and Yang Xingfo in the establishment of a hospital in the Chinese sector of the city, at Communications University (Jiaotong Daxue). During

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34. "Shanghai Shimin Difang Weichihui Banli Jiuguo Kuaiji Jieshu Baogao" [The Final Accounts Report on the Management of National Salvation by the Shanghai Citizens' Local Preservation Association], *Shen Bao*, Dec. 29, 1932; Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao," p. 12.

35. Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," p. 80.

this period Shi either headed or was a member of around half a dozen refugee relief organizations.[36]

On another level, Shi Liangcai was anxious to preserve order and restore economic activity in Shanghai. The war brought business in the city to a standstill. Banks closed on the second day of the battle, and merchants declared a city-wide boycott as a form of anti-Japanese protest. It seemed a financial crisis would set in.[37] Shanghai had virtually been closed down for several days when, on February 3, a *Shen Bao* editorial appealed for "planning," "organization," and the "preservation of social order." All merchants were asked to re-open for business "because a three day strike sufficiently demonstrates our solemn feelings of resistance to Japan." Banks were asked to open for the sake of financial stability. *Shen Bao* believed that the Japanese were engaged in a deliberate campaign to incite "terror" (*kongbu*) hoping to smash the economic centre of China.[38] In another editorial a few days later *Shen Bao* argued that[39]

> the purpose of this crime committed by the Japanese Army is to smash the finacial heart of Shanghai and carry out its policy of invasion....Whether in defeat or in victory, once there is disorder public feelings will cause panic. Once there is panic, with people swarming all over the place, finance will be bankrupted; and when Shanghai finance crumbles then Hangzhou and Nanjing finance will follow. This is even more serious than the siezure of Manchuria and is an even greater calamity.

These editorials were written partly in response to a rush on the Chinese banks as depositors sought to transfer savings to foreign banks. In his capacity as chairman of the Local Preservation Association, Shi

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36. See the list in Qin Shaode,"Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Huoqi de Shen Bao," p. 79.

37. For some idea of the economic effects of the war, see Yang Yinbo, "Songhu Kangri Zhanzheng yu Zhongguo Jinrongye" [The Shanghai Anti-Japanese War and Chinese Finance], *Xin Zhonghua*, 1.2 (January 25, 1933): 45-53; Ho Pingyin, "Industry and Commerce During 1932," *People's Tribune*, 3.11 (new series) (January 9, 1933): 426-52. On the merchant boycott, see Elmquist, "The Sino-Japanese Undeclared War," pp. 48-9, and *China Weekly Review*, 59.10 (6 February 1932): 305.

38. *Shen Bao*, Feb. 3, 1932. See also *Shen Bao*, Feb. 4, 1932.

39. *Shen Bao*, Feb. 7, 1932.

Liangcai attempted to heal the general financial malaise by bringing together representatives of Shanghai's banks and related businesses to form a special committee. Shi's own banking connections, through his directorship of the Zhong-Nan Bank, would have helped him in this venture. The committee was able to raise over seventy million silver taels to help shore-up Shanghai's unstable finances.[40]

Shen Bao's news columns also reflected a concern to create a sense of calm and order in the city. Among the articles in the local news of February 2 appeared the headlines "Ways to Preserve Finance, Lin Kanghou Asks All to be Calm," and the reassuring "City's People Have No Food Worries, Enough Rice for Two Months."[41]

In many ways, then, Shi Liangcai and *Shen Bao* had taken on the role of self-appointed guardians of Shanghai. *Shen Bao*'s appeals for order and calm were reminiscent of its reaction to both the May Fourth and May Thirtieth movements when it feared strikes and boycotts would harm Chinese business interests. But the more serious damage wrought by the Japanese attacks in 1932 inspired Shi Liangcai to take things into his own hands. He was able to mobilise support from Shanghai's most influential capitalists, as well as from power brokers such as Du Yuesheng and Zhang Xiaolin. These members of Shanghai's elite took advantage of the political turmoil afflicting the central government and the temporary respite in the exercise of government authority in Shanghai. The Nationalist Government had left Nanjing on January 30 to seek the safer ground of Luoyang, and this left the way open for those gathered around Shi Liangcai to exert some authority in managing the city in a time of crisis. *Shen Bao* felt that the central government should have been far more

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40. Local News, *Shen Bao*, March 1, 1932; Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao," p. 13.

41. See also Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao," p. 13.

actively involved, but under the circumstances those who rallied to the cause of the Local Preservation Association took into their own hands the organisation of the defence and preservation of Shanghai as a centre for commerce and capital. The general crisis which beset the city from September 1931 afforded groups opposed to Jiang Jieshi's rule greater opportunity to press for political demands. This was true of Shi Liangcai and others in Shanghai who had become politically more active as a consequence of the war. Shi Liangcai and *Shen Bao* stepped up their attack on the Nationalist regime in the coming months.

For its part, the Nationalist government responded to the crisis brought by Japanese militarism in two main ways. First, when Jiang returned to take up his leadership in late January 1932, he opted for the tactic of relying on an international diplomatic settlement to the problem. He hoped that intervention by the League of Nations could at least slow the advances of the Japanese Army and that this would give him time to eliminate the Communists in Jiangxi.[42] Secondly, in response to increased political pressure from opposition groups, in November 1931 the Nationalist government announced that a National Emergency Conference (Guonan Huiyi) would be convened with delegates selected on a non-partisan basis.[43]

On Jiang's first tactic, *Shen Bao* stated that it had no faith in the ability of the League of Nations to solve China's problems with Japan. As early as October 2, 1931 the paper expressed opposition to the mediation of the League, claiming that such words as "peace" and "justice" were "sweet fruits to deceive the weak."[44] In March 1932 a ceasefire was negotiated in

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42. Edmund S. K. Fung, "Nationalist Foreign Policy, 1928-1937," in *Ideal and Reality: Political and Social Change in Modern China, 1860-1949*, ed. David Pong and Edmund S. K. Fung (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), pp. 199-202.

43. Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, p. 160.

44. *Shen Bao*, Oct. 2, 1931; see also *Shen Bao*, Dec. 6, 1931.

Shanghai and the Lytton Commission, representing the League of Nations, arrived in the city to investigate the situation. The Daily Press Association held a banquet for members of the Commission. In an address to the assembled guests Shi Liangcai argued that in solving China's problems with Japan "justice absolutely cannot be sacrificed for the sake of peace."[45] The journalist Ge Gongzhen, who joined *Shen Bao* in 1929, was appointed to the Lytton Commission and was able to keep Shi Liangcai fully informed of its progress.[46] *Shen Bao* did not look kindly on the Lytton Commission's final report which was released in October 1932. The paper concluded that "because of the complexities of the international situation," the Commisssion "agreed to substitute the existing situation, which has been created by Japan, for China's recovery of the Three Eastern provinces...."[47]

Both Shi Liangcai and *Shen Bao* developed an even more damning attitude to the National Emergency Conference. Although the Conference was delayed several times, first because of Jiang's retirement in December 1931 and then because of the Shanghai war, it was finally set down to take place in April 1932. Shi Liangcai was himself chosen to be a delegate, certainly some recognition of his newly-found high political profile. To begin with, the Conference delegates were selected under the auspices of the Sun Ke government, and more than eighty percent of these delegates did not belong to the Guomindang. The Conference was also to have a wide-ranging agenda covering almost all important aspects of national affairs. When Jiang Jieshi retuned to the government, however, he and Wang Jingwei stacked the Conference with additional Guomindang delegates and limited the agenda to three issues: foreign aggression, natural disasters

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45. *Shen Bao*, March 18, 1932.

46. Gu Zhizhong, "Wo yu Ge Gongzhen" [Ge Gongzhen and I], *Xin Guancha* [New Observer], no. 20 (1985), p.30.

47. *Shen Bao*, Oct. 4, 1932.

and the "bandit," that is, Communist, problem.[48] But Shi was never content with the Conference's revised agenda. Before the Conference, Shi met with his fellow Shanghai delegates several times to formulate proposals for broadening the scope of the agenda. Among their proposals were the recovery of Manchurian territory, an end to Party rule and the institution of constitutional government within six months, the free existence of other political parties and the formation of a National Emergency Government. Wang Jingwei, who was responsible for the organisation of the Conference, rejected these suggestions outright. Shi Liangcai and the Shanghai delegates then decided to undermine the authority of the Conference. They sent a telegram to the government proclaiming their decision to stage a boycott of proceedings and reiterating their belief in the need for and end to Party rule and the introduction of constitutional government.[49]

Shi Liangcai also marshalled the resources of *Shen Bao* to attack and embarrass the Conference. The editorial of April 1 described it as "nothing more than a perfunctory artifice for the people." Because of such opposition, the National Emergency Conference was a publicity disaster for the Nationalist government. Only one-third of the selected delegates attended, and most of these were Guomindang members.[50] *Shen Bao* concluded that the "dying words of the Conference were nothing more than a skilful comedy duo (*shuang huang*) where the high and low

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48. Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, p. 161.

49. On Wang Jingwei's rejection of the demands put by the Shanghai delegates, see his letter in *Shen Bao*, April 2, 1932. On the telegram of the Shanghai delegates, led by Shi Liangcai, declaring thier reasons for not attending the Conference see Shanghai Shehui Kexue Yuan Jingji Yanjiu Suo [Shanghai Academy of Social Science Economics Research Institute], ed. *Rong Jia Qiye Shiliao* [Historical Sources on the Rong Family's Enterprises], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1980), 1: 355-356.; Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," pp. 83-84.

50. Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, pp. 160-163; Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, *The Government and Politics of China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 279-280.

deceived and praised each other. Where was the talk of 'national emergency'?"[51] The government's attempts to defuse opposition voices by offering them an official forum thus ended in ridicule.

Because the National Emergency Conference was largely organized by Wang Jingwei, these attacks upon it did little harm to Jiang Jieshi's own position. But *Shen Bao*'s attitude to the Conference reflected what had by then become a deeper dissatisfaction with the Nationalist government in general. The paper's earlier opposition to militaristic government had grown into the articulation of demands for a liberal-democratic polity. During the second session of the Fourth Nationalist Party Congress in March, *Shen Bao* wrote that[52]

> everybody believes the government presently lacks the strength to single-handedly save the nation, that it should get rid of one party dictatorship and open up political power....Because our national crisis has reached the critical stage, we need not wait [to hear] the people's demands, but should automatically end tutelage government and institute constitutional government.

The paper also demanded that "all the people be given freedom" and the "opportunity to participate in government."[53] Furthermore, in *Shen Bao*'s view, once other political parties had been organized, they could work together and form a cabinet in the style of Ramsay MacDonald's coalition.[54] At the beginning of April all five branches of the Nationalist government were condemned as offering no more than "asylum for the powerful" (*quanshi yi bi*). In short, *Shen Bao* totally rejected the need for dictatorship or government by tutelage. The Nationalist government may have taken on "the responsibilities of being nursemaid to the people," but "it must nurse its own health before seeing to the health of the infant."[55]

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51. *Shen Bao*, April 15, 1932.

52. *Shen Bao*, March 5, 1932; see also *Shen Bao*, March 4 1932.

53. *Shen Bao*, March 10, 1932.

54. *Shen Bao*, March 5, 1932.

55. *Shen Bao*, April 6, 1932.

Shen Bao's comments could hardly have been more scathing, short of advocating the overthrow of the government. The only thing new about them, however, was that they came from Shanghai's, and probably China's, most influential daily newspaper. *Shen Bao* did not pioneer such criticism of the government, nor was it the first to state it publicly. Similar views had been expressed by other sections of the press and by various intellectuals, some of whom had spoken out as early as 1929, all anxious to see the creation of some kind of national parliament.[56] Opposition pressure was timed to coincide with the Fourth Nationalist Party Congress in the hope of convincing the government to take a more open approach to politics. Some critics attempted to keep the pressure on even after the failure of the National Emergency Conference. Indeed, *Shen Bao* turned its attention to the issue which Jiang Jieshi regarded as his main priority: the "bandit suppression," or anti-Communist, campaigns.

In the jargon of the day "bandit suppression" and "civil war" were commonplace euphamisms for the military campaigns against the Communists in Jiangxi. In May 1932 an anti-civil war movement gained some momentum, although the movement was especially guarded about making public declarations on its attitude to the anti-Communist campaigns and its precise function is not very clear. An Anti-Civil War League (Feizhi Neizhan Da Tongmeng) was established, with many of its members coming from Shi Liangcai's Local Preservation Association. The League was fundamentally an organization of capitalists who were again seeking to reduce their burden of funding the government's military expenditure. *Shen Bao* lent editorial support to anti-civil war movement,

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56. For some of the groups and intellectuals involved, see Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, pp. 159-62. Many of the political demands made during this period emanated from liberal intellectuals, the Youth Party, the State Socialist Party, and press sources like Tianjin's *Da Gong Bao* and *Guowen Zhoubao*. It is well to remember that, even taken together, these groups represented a relatively small, if vocal, section of Chinese society. On some of the political ideas of these groups, see Chester C. Tan, *Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Wren, 1972), pp. 224-303.

claiming that such a movement was a direct by-product of the Shanghai war:[57]

> There is a patriotic majority very concerned about this country who, because of the Shanghai war, are afraid of civil war and wish never to allow it to occur again. Thus they have begun an anti-civil war movement. The Shanghai war has been like a Stentor rousing the people from a mentality steeped in over twenty years of civil wars....

One of the principal forces behind the movement was Wu Dingchang, the banker, industrialist and proprietor of Tianjin's *Da Gong Bao* and *Guowen Zhoubao*, which he used to publicise his cause. Shi Liangcai became a member of the Anti-Civil War League, although he did not hold a leading position.[58]

Despite being coy about the subject, the Anti-Civil War League could not avoid discussions of the position of the Communists in the political arena; indeed their very name suggested that this was their major concern. Many of the Shanghai capitalists were in fact losing patience with Jiang Jieshi's expensive military tactics against the Communists. By June, Jiang was preparing to launch a fourth campaign in Jiangxi, and he demanded that monthly military expenditure be increased from thirteen million to eighteen million yuan. Jiang was preoccupied with "bandit suppression." As a result the government's military expenditure was, in the words of one scholar, "truly astonishing" as Jiang "set his military needs above everything."[59] Some Shanghai bankers agreed to purchase more government bonds to boost military expenditure, but only after Finance Minister, Song Ziwen, had reassured them that the new bonds

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57. *Shen Bao*, May 28, 1932.

58. See "Lun Feizhan Yundong," *Guowen Zhoubao* 9.22 (June 6, 1932); "Feizhi Neizhan Yundong," *Da Gong Bao*, May 30, 1932; Wu Dingchang, "Feizhi Neizhan Da Tongmeng," *Guowen Zhoubao* 9.25 (June 27, 1932). See also Coble, *Shanghai Capitalists*, pp. 115-119.

59. Hung-mao Tien, *Government and Politics in Kuomintang China, 1927-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 84.

would not be used to finance anti-Communist campaigns.[60] But because Jiang placed such a high priority on the military and his anti-Communist campaigns, anyone who criticized him on these issues ran the risk of severe censure or punishment. This proved to be the downfall of the Anti-Civil War League. When they came to discuss whether or not "bandit suppression" constituted civil war, major ructions appeared in their ranks and the League eventually disbanded in late August.[61]

Perhaps in response to the growing number of critics of his "bandit suppression" tactics, Jiang announced that a new strategy of "seven parts political, three parts military" would be employed in the fourth campaign. In other words, the Nationalists were to attempt to win the allegiance of the peasantry through political reforms and thereby deprive the Communists of their social base.[62]

But *Shen Bao* was not as reticent as the Anti-Civil War League on the Communist issue. It was unimpressed with the Nationalists' methods of dealing with the Communists and, in its most daring expression of anti-government opinion, it launched an attack on the "bandit suppression" campaigns. Following a series of meetings between Shi Liangcai, Yang Xingfo, Tao Xingzhi, Huang Yanpei and *Shen Bao*'s editorial staff, from late June to early July the paper published three editorials on the subject. The central theme of these editorials was that the government's actions were indirectly "creating banditry" rather than suppressing it. *Shen Bao* believed that the root causes of the increase in "banditry" were the continuing cultivation of opium, an increasing tax burden, corruption among local government leaders and the disruptive influence of troops in

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60. Coble, *Shanghai Capitalists*, pp. 113-114.

61. Local News, *Shen Bao*, August 29, 30, 1932; Coble, *Shanghai Capitalists*, p. 119.

62. On this campaign see William Wei, *Counterrevolution in China: The Nationalists in Jiangxi During the Soviet Period* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), pp. 50-51.

village areas.[63] "Who are these 'bandits' that are being suppressed?" asked one editorial. "Could they be our toiling people; could they be our good people that have been struck down by starvation and bitter cold, struggling to survive in utter misery...?"[64] The so-called "bandits" were, in *Shen Bao*'s view, "good people" driven to drastic action by "political repression and the demands of survival." Moreover, the behaviour of the "bandit suppression" forces was such that "the people fear these troops more than the 'bandits.'"[65]

However simplistic an understanding of communism in China, the important point about these views is that they constituted a direct attack on Jiang Jieshi's favoured policy. *Shen Bao* was quick to draw a contrast between the government's willingness to meet Japanese demands and its massive campaigns against its own people "who risk danger out of desperation."[66] The paper agreed that a political solution was necessary, and this did not differ substantially from the position adopted by the government itself, but it argued that the chosen policy was failing and doubted whether the government had the ability to achieve success.[67]

In expressing these sorts of views Shi Liangcai was venturing out on a political limb. He enjoyed the support of Shanghai capitalists and power brokers in acting to take control of local affairs in early 1932, but none of his colleagues on the Local Preservation Association would have been prepared to publically declare that Jiang Jieshi's "bandit suppression" campaigns were counterproductive and a failure. This was one vital difference between Shi Liangcai and the Shanghai capitalists.

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63. *Shen Bao*, July 2, 1932.

64. *Shen Bao*, June 30, 1932.

65. *Shen Bao*, June 30, July 2, 4, 1932. See also Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," pp. 85-86.

66. *Shen Bao*, June 30, 1932.

67. *Shen Bao*, July 4, 1932.

The Nationalists quickly struck back at *Shen Bao* over these editorials. In Shanghai the local Party branch, the Shanghai municipal government and the garrison command notified the central government of what they held to be Shi Liangcai's abuse of power. Jiang Jieshi reputedly personally ordered the imposition of a postal ban on *Shen Bao*, effective from July 16. The staff of the paper were not informed about the ban, so several days passed before Shi Liangcai was aware of what had occurred. He was informed of the ban by a postal worker who wrote to him on July 20. Shi then asked Huang Yanpei to seek the advice of Du Yuesheng and Qian Yongming, former colleagues on the Local Preservation Association who had close links with Jiang Jieshi. They allegedly recommended that Shi be patient and compromise with Jiang. But Shi decided to send his Nanjing correspondent, Qin Moshen, to meet Jiang in an effort to sound out his attitude to the ban. Qin was not able to meet Jiang in person, but was informed by Yang Yongtai that the Nationalists demanded three changes be made at *Shen Bao* before the ban would be lifted. First, the paper should correct its editorial attitude; secondly, Tao Xingzhi, Huang Yanpei and Chen Binhe (the author of the offending editorials) should be dismissed, and; thirdly, the paper should accept a Nationalist appointee on its editorial staff. Shi Liangcai accepted all but the third condition. On August 21 full postal rights were restored to *Shen Bao*.[68]

The Nationalists had won out in this battle, and *Shen Bao*'s outspoken editorials were effectively ended. The means of achieving this victory had been all too simple, for by limiting *Shen Bao*'s circulation through the posts the central government had struck at the source of the paper's income. This was a tactic that was bound to find the limits of a newspaper

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68. Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," p. 86; Qian Zhisheng, "Shi Liangcai bei Ansha An Zhenxiang" [The True Story of Shi Liangcai's Assassination], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 18 (Beijing: Xinhua Shudian, 1961), pp. 154-159.

enterprise's political will. From this moment, *Shen Bao* refrained from direct editorial attacks upon the Nationalist government. The paper's outspoken anti-government stand lasted less than a year.

Shi Liangcai had not, however, lost interest in politics. The Local Preservation Association was disbanded after the Shanghai war, on June 3. But just four days later Shi was elected chairman of the Shanghai Civic Association (Shanghai Shi Difang Xiehui). The membership of the Civic Association was virtually the same as that of the Local Preservation Association and, like its predecessor, it represented Shanghai's capitalist elite. The Civic Association declared itself to be dedicated to the welfare of local residents and the improvement of local enterprise. Although little is known of the Civic Association, it enabled Shi Liangcai to maintain a high political profile in local Shanghai affairs. Most importantly, it reinforced Shi's ability to mobilize the support of some of Shanghai's most influential figures in tackling significant local political issues.[69]

Partly in recognition of Shi Liangcai's authority in local affairs, the Nationalist government began to meet him and his supporters half-way by offering them official positions. For the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi this was necessary step in the mending of bridges to Shanghai political circles that had collapsed during the Shanghai war. In October 1932 Shi was appointed president of the Shanghai Provisional Senate (Shanghai Linshi Canyihui). Although it has been said that Shi Liangcai had no interest in this Nationalist appointment, the Provisional Senate was an important advisory body with powers over local administration and economic development. The record shows that Shi Liangcai took an active part in its operation. Moreover, some of his colleagues on the Civic Association, for example, Yu Xiaqing, Du Yuesheng and Wang Xiaolai,

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69. On the foundation of the Shanghai Civic Association see Local News, *Shen Bao*, June 9, 1932.

turned up again as members of the Provisional Senate.[70] Shi also accepted many other committee-level postings in areas ranging from war relief work and village reconstruction to the promotion of cultural and educational activities.[71] Although this entire period of Nationalist relations with the Shanghai elite deserves more detailed research, evidence suggests that the Provisional Senate, and other official bodies to which Shi was appointed, represented attempts by Jiang's Nationalist government to placate a disgruntled elite who had to a large extent taken power into their own hands.

At the same time, the fact that the Nationalists dangled the temptations of official positions before Shi's eyes suggests that they had not yet decided to put a black mark against his name (although it might have been pencilled in). Despite the friction caused by *Shen Bao*'s daring editorials on the failure of "bandit suppression" (which has been cited as the major reason for Shi's assassination),[72] the Nationalists were still willing to deal their way around one of their most dangerous critics. If in offering these posts to Shi the Nationalists were hoping to co-opt his support, or at least neutralize his political influence, however, they were to be disappointed. They certainly managed to put a stop to Shi's very

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70. On the Provisional Senate see Shanghai Shi Tongzhi Guan Nianjian Weiyuanhui [Yearbook Committee of the Gazetteer Bureau of Shanghai], ed. *Shanghai Shi Nianjian, 1935* [Shanghai Yearbook, 1935], Section "F," pp. 51-57. On the claim that Shi Liangcai was not interested in Nationalist appointments see Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," p. 87.

71. Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," pp. 86-87; Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao," n. 163. The latter lists all Shi's positions from 1932 till his death. Another of his important positions was as member of the board of directors of the China Merchants' Steamship Navigation Company. It is also interesting to note that Shi was a director of the Association for the Promotion of the New Life Movement (Xin Shenghuo Yundong Cujin Hui). However, nothing is known of his participation or otherwise in this movement, often thought to be a campaign to promote fascist-like morality. See Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, pp. 66-70.

72. Qian Zhisheng, "Shi Liangcai bei Ansha An Zhenxiang," pp. 154-156; Shen Zui, "Yang Xingfo, Shi Liangcai bei Ansha de Jingguo" [The Assassinations of Yang Xingfo and Shi Liangcai], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 37 (Beijing: Wenshi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1963), p. 169.

public attacks on the government through *Shen Bao*, but they did not manage to convinve him to support their cause. Shi Liangcai's behaviour over the next two years was to show quite the opposite: that he was still opposed to the Nationalists, only in an indirect way.

Politics and Culture, 1933-1934

The ceasefire in Shanghai and the intervention of the League of Nations in the Sino-Japanese crisis did provide Jiang Jieshi with some breathing space south of the Great Wall, but Japanese troops overran Manchuria throughout 1933. Within its own bailiwick in the south Jiang's government began to intensify its repression of the Communist and anti-Japanese movements. This repression was more severe in 1933 than at any time since the April 1927 purges in Shanghai. Although in the end the government's actions silenced most critical voices, groups of intellectuals and writers in Shanghai did make some attempts to attack the government and expose its heavy-handed repression. Through *Shen Bao*, Shi Liangcai not only supported many such intellectuals and writers, but also engaged in a progressive cultural and educational programme of his own. This was a pale reflection of *Shen Bao*'s head-on confrontation with the government in 1932, but there were still important stirrings of anti-government sentiment going on away from the editorial page. Indeed, over the next two years *Shen Bao* served as a forum for many of Shanghai's left-wing intellectuals. They were able to assist Shi Liangcai in broadening the social profile of *Shen Bao*'s presence in Shanghai, bringing the paper's resources to people beyond the middle-class for the first time. None of these activities endeared Shi Liangcai to Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist government. But how was one to stop a financially secure press mogul who did not respond to political largesse?

Shi Liangcai's first opportunity to pin his political colours to the wall came with the formation of the League for the Protection of Human

Rights (Minquan Baozhang Tongmenghui) in the winter of 1932-1933. The League was formed in response to the mounting numbers of political prisoners and to the reputedly harsh treatment of such prisoners. It was supported by some of China's most prominent intellectuals, including Cai Yuanpei, Yang Xingfo, Lu Xun, Zou Taofen, Hu Shi and Lin Yutang. Song Qingling served as political figurehead. Harold Isaacs and Agnes Smedley were also members. The League gave a great deal of its time to exposing the torture of political prisoners at the hands of their Nationalist jailers.[73] Though Shi Liangcai never joined the League, he was in sympathy with its aims and was known to have spoken at one of its meetings.[74] Chen Binhe, the former editorial columnist sacked on Nationalist instructions, became a member, as did the *Shen Bao* reporter, Qian Hua.[75]

Shi was also prepared to use *Shen Bao* to publicise the League's activities. One of the Leagues publicity campaigns centred on a journalist from Zhenjiang, Liu Yusheng. Liu had been detained, without trial, by the governor of Jiangsu, Gu Zhutong, since July 1932. In February 1933, on the day before the government's Control Yuan recommended that Gu Zhutong be impeached over the affair, Liu was executed on Gu's orders. In his defence Gu claimed that Liu Yusheng was a Communist agitator. When the League got wind of this case they, with the help of *Shen Bao*'s publicity, mobilized the support of over two hundred local journalists who sent a signed declaration of protest to the authorities in Nanjing. *Shen Bao* published this declaration and supported it with an editorial. But the

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73. Zhang Zhang, "Minquan Baozhang Tongmenghui" [The League for the Protection of Human Rights], in *Dangdai Shi Teng* [Fleeting Moments of Contemporary History] (Shanghai: Shanghai Zhoubao She, 1933), pp. 170-173; Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, pp. 22-24.

74. Ma Yinliang, "Shi Liangcai in 1932," p. 89.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

futility of this kind of protest became apparent when Gu Zhutong came through it all unscathed.[76]

The League and *Shen Bao* joined forces again in an attempt to gain the release from prison of Communist Party members such as Liao Chengzhi and Luo Dengxian. Both were arrested in Shanghai at the end of March 1933, as were several lesser known Communists. When they came up for trial *Shen Bao* carried a statement by the League which argued that the arrests were made on hearsay evidence and that the accused had done nothing which suggested criminal behaviour. In conclusion, the statement claimed that people must have "the freedom to oppose imperialism," and asked for the release of all political prisoners. In addition, the League provided legal assistance to the accused throughout their trial.[77] Liao Chengzhi was luckier than his fellow prisoners. As the son of Liao Zhongkai, he was eventually released after his mother, He Xiangning, appealed to Nationalist authorities. In August that year Luo Dengxian joined the ranks of those executed in Nanjing.[78] Once agian, appeals to rights and legalities were no match for the authoritarian power of the Nationalist government.

The League itself was dealt a death blow by the Nationalists when Yang Xingfo was killed by assassins on June 16. A loose collection of individuals from the beginning, the League then disbanded under mounting government repression. According to some commentators, Yang's assassination was partly intended as a warning to Song Qingling to

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76. "Difang Xiaoxi" [Regional News], *Shen Bao*, Feb. 4, 5, 1933, and the editorial of Feb. 5, 1933. See also Lee-hsia Hsu Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Centre, Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 96.

77. Local News, *Shen bao*, March 31, 1933.

78. On Liao Chengzhi and Luo Dengxian see Howard L. Boorman and Richard C. Howard, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, 4 vols. (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967-1971), 2: 363-364, 438.

cease her political activities and criticism of the government. Perhaps Shi Liangcai was meant to ponder a similar message.[79]

Severe government repression of this kind meant that many political struggles had to be played out on a cultural front. The images, metophors and allegories of literature were among the few weapons left with which it was possible to criticize the government with some impunity. *Shen Bao* entered into the cultural battlefield with considerable enthusiasm. The paper fired its first shot as early as November 30, 1932. It announced a twelve-point plan of reform based upon what it referred to as "a spirit of real action" (*shiji zuo de jingshen*). The paper claimed that the disruptions of 1932 had prevented it from implementing its sixtieth anniversary reforms as promised, so now was the time for action. "Real action" involved a commitment to a more comprehensive news coverage, an increase in the number of special supplements, new publishing ventures and the establishment of a circulation library. "A newspaper is like a radio to society," *Shen Bao* declared. "It transmits fair-minded public opinion and relates the sufferings of the masses."[80] This marked a dramatic transformation in the paper's *raison d'etre*. It is hard to imagine that this was the same newspaper that published British propaganda during the May Thirtieth movement. *Shen Bao* was nevertheless assured of its new, reformist view the world and was determined to "transmit" this to the "masses."

The daily literary supplement, *Ziyou Tan*, was the first part of the paper to show signs of this transformation. It will be remembered that Tao

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79. Qian Zhisheng, "Shi Liangcai bei Ansha An Zhenxiang," p. 160; Shen Zui, "Yang Xingfo, Shi Liangcai bei Ansha de Jingguo," pp. 165-169; Wei Daming, "Pingshu Dai Yunong [Dai Li] Xiansheng de Shigong" [An Assessment of the Achievements of Mr. Dai Li], Pt. 1, *Zhaunji Wenxue* 38.2 (Feb. 1981): 44-45. Both Shen Zui and Wei Daming regard the planning behind the assassination of Yang Xingfo and Shi Liangcai as being related. There is a possibility that the decision to kill them was based upon similar reasoning.

80. "Jinhou Benbao Nuli de Gongzuo" [The Hard Work Ahead for this Newspaper], *Shen Bao*, Nov. 30, 1932.

Xingzhi's anti-government poems and essays appeared in *Ziyou Tan* until he was compelled to resign from active duty in August 1, 1932. In December of that year, Li Liewen took charge of the supplement. Li was a little known figure in Shanghai literary circles. He was a specialist in French literature and worked for a time with the French Havas news agency in Shanghai. Li devoted himself to the promotion of new literature in contradistinction to the "butterfly and "Saturday" schools of literature that dominated newspaper literary supplements.[81] In his first statement to *Ziyou Tan*'s readers Li claimed only that literature should be "progressive" and "modern."[82] But the appearance on the same day of Ye Shengtao's story, "What Nice Weather Today!" (*Jintian Tianqi Hao a!*), foreshadowed the kind of literature that Li Liewen would publish. Ye's story was a parody on the lack of free speech under Nationalist rule. All that was left for one to talk about was the weather, and the story's title became a common phrase of ridicule among left-wing writers.[83] Thereafter, Li repeatedly appealed to contributing authors for "writing which describes real life, or essays and miscellaneous thoughts with profound meaning."[84] In effect, this was a signal telling left-wing writers that *Ziyou Tan* would act as their publishing medium. Li received an extraordinary response. Over the next eighteen months China's best left-wing writers published their work in *Ziyou Tan*. Among these were Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Yu Dafu, Lao She and Ye Shengtao.

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81. Yuan Xingda, "Shen Bao 'Ziyou Tan' Yuanliu" [The Origin and Development of Shen Bao's 'Ziyou Tan'], *Xin Wenxue Shiliao*, no. 1 (1978): 248; Qin Shaode, "Lun Shen Bao 'Ziyou Tan'" [On Shen Bao's 'Ziyou Tan'], *Xinwen Daxue*, no. 5 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), p. 86.

82. "Bianjishi Qishi" [An Announcement by the Editor's Office], *Ziyou Tan, Shen Bao*, Dec. 1, 1932.

83. Yuan Xingda, "Ziyou Tan' Yuanliu," p. 252.

84. "Bianjishi Qishi," *Ziyou Tan, Shen Bao*, Dec. 12, 1932.

Lu Xun was one of the most frequent contributors. Initially, because he did not know Li Liewen and did not expect Shi Liangcai to make such drastic changes at *Shen Bao*, Lu Xun was sceptical about the sincerity of *Ziyou Tan*'s progressive character. This scepticism was an indication of the low regard for the paper among left-wing writers. Lu Xun's first published essay in *Ziyou Tan* was written in a deliberately provocative style to test Li's courage. This essay, "An Apology for Flight" (*'Tao' de Helihua*), mocked the suppression of anti-Japanese student movements. "We can remember the fuss the students started making the winter before last," he wrote in reference to their protests of late 1931.[85]

> Some wanted to come south, some to go north; but there was no train for either way. When they reached the capital and respectfully presented petitions, they were "utilized by the reactionaries," and many happened to knock their heads on bayonets and rifle stocks, while some even got drowned by "falling into the water themselves."
>
> After the postmortem it was announced that "they were black and blue." I could not understand that.

When this essay appeared in *Ziyou Tan* on January 30, 1933, Li Liewen asked his readers to pay particular attention to two writers with unfamiliar names. These were the pen-names, He Jiagan and Xuan, used by Lu Xun and Mao Dun respectively. Mao Dun recalls that this was a surprise to both authors, and prompted them to give their full support to Li's transformation of the supplement. Lu Xun formed a close friendship with Li Liewen and contributed over 140 essays to *Ziyou Tan*, of which about a dozen were actually written by Qu Qiubai and submitted under one of Lu Xun's pen-names.[86]

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85. "An Apology for Flight," in *Lu Xun: Selected Works*, translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, 4 vols., 3rd. edition (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980), 3: 223.

86. "Bianjishi Gao Duzhe shu" [A letter to Readers from the Editor's Office], *Ziyou Tan, Shen Bao*, January 30, 1933; Zhang Wan, "Lu Xun yu Shen Bao 'Ziyou Tan'" [Lu Xun and Shen Bao's Ziyou Tan] (Unpublished Research Paper, Journalism Research Institute, Beijing, 1984), pp. 6-10, 14-15, 67; Mao Dun, "Huiyi lu" [Memoirs], Pt. 16, "Doushi Huoyue de Suiyue" [Busy and Lively Times], *Xin Wenxue Shiliao*, no. 16 (1982), pp. 5-6.

In March 1933, sections of the Guomindang's press in Shanghai began to mount an attack on Li Liewen's *Ziyou Tan*. *Shehui Xinwen* (*Social News*) accused Li of handing over the supplement to "red" members of the League of Left-Wing Writers. Pan Gongzhan's *Wei Yan* (*Sublime Words*) joined in the attack.[87] It was also in March that the Guomindang upgraded the Shanghai Censorship Bureau, giving it a centralized office and requiring newspapers to submit pre-publication editions for the Bureau's inspection.[88] During May, the Censorship Bureau ordered the withdrawl of five Lu Xun articles intended for publication in *Ziyou Tan*. In addition, the local Party branch urged Shi Liangcai to dismiss Li Liewen and replace him with someone more acceptable. Though Shi refused to do so, he did ask his chief editor, Zhang Yunhe, to be more careful in checking the content of *Ziyou Tan* in future.[89] The pressure eventually forced Li Liewen to declare a change of policy. On May 25 he wrote:[90]

> This year it has been difficult to speak and even more difficult to wield a pen....With earnest sincerity the editor implores writers throughout the country to in future talk more of random matters and to complain less....It is said that "those who understand their times are heroes," and this is what the editor ventures to tell our authors.

Lu Xun's contributions to *Ziyou Tan* did not cease, but he and other writers had to employ an array of different pen-names and submit writing cloaked in even more complicated stylistic disguises.[91] In general, from this moment on *Ziyou Tan* published fewer politically oriented essays. Nonetheless, perhaps because he continued to carry Lu Xun's articles, Li Liewen still had to contend with the opposition of local Party sources. There were constant rumours within literary circles that he would be

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87. Yuan Xingda, "'Ziyou Tan' yuanliu," pp. 254-256.

88. See *Shanghai Shi Nianjian, 1936* [Shanghai Yearbook, 1936], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1936), 2: Section T, pp. 47-48.

89. Zhang Wan, "Lu Xun yu Shen Bao 'Ziyou tan'", pp. 14-18.

90. "Bianjishi Qishi," *Ziyou Tan*, *Shen Bao*, May 25, 1933.

91. Zhang Wan, "Lu Xun yu Shen Bao 'Ziyou Tan'", pp. 18-21.

asked to resign, and when Shi Liangcai eventually asked him to do so in May 1934 it came as no surprise.[92] Once again the Nationalists had fathomed the limits of Shi Liangcai's political will. On this occasion they were able to achieve their aims through the application of covert pressure.

Ziyou Tan continued for another year, and although the new editor, Zhang Zisheng, was also committed to the introduction of "new literature," he faced the same kind of repression as Li Liewen. He resigned in October 1935.[93]

In other areas of culture *Shen Bao* adopted the mantle of benevolent educator. Shi Liangcai believed that culture held the key to human progress and that it was a newspaper's duty to spread culture to the general populace. In China's past the problem had been that culture was "the private concern of scholars."[94] In an effort to bring knowledge to the "masses," in March 1933 *Shen Bao* opened a circulation library. About seventy-five per cent of the library's ten thousand registered borrowers were said to be workers, shop assistants, public servants, students or unemployed youth.[95] This library was in fact something of a haven for left-wing intellectuals. It was run by Ai Siqi, who went on to become a popularizer of Marxist philosophy for the Communists, Li Gongpu, former Guomindang member and later to be a prominent figure in the democratic movement of the 1940s, and two *sub rosa* members of the Communist Party,

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92. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

93. Yuan Xingda, "Lu Xun yu 'Ziyou Tan'," pp. 256-258.

94. See Shi Liangcai, "Introduction," in *Shen Bao Liutong Tushuguan Yi Zhounian Jinian Ce* [Memorial to the First Year of the Shen Bao Circulation Library], ed. Shen Bao Guan (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1934), n.p.

95. Shen Bao Guan, ed., *Shen Bao Liutong Tushuguan Di Er Nian Gongzuo Baogao* [Work report on the Second Year of the Shen Bao Circulation Library] (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1935), n.p.

Liu Shi and Xia Zimei. Apart from lending out books, the library also functioned as a kind of well-spring of left-wing ideas and causes.[96]

Shen Bao also established a number of schools in March 1933. The first grew out of a supplement called *Yeyu Zhoukan* (*Sparetime Weekly*) which began appearing in *Shen Bao* from December 1932. The favourable response of readers prompted the development of a "sparetime school" (*yeyu xuexiao*). Li Gongpu and Ai Siqi were also associated with this venture. A school for women followed soon after. This, too, was prompted by the response of readers to a special supplement, *Women's Space* (*Funü Yuandi*), which first appeared in February 1934. Shen Zijiu, one of the few women in China to rise to prominence in the field of journalism, was responsible for this supplement. Finally, *Shen Bao* employed its own staff and some of Shanghai's leading journalists to run a correspondence school of journalism.[97]

All of these ventures brought *Shen Bao* into a closer relationship with its audience and helped the paper to establish channels of genuine communication with a far broader range of social groups than at any time in its past. In its own modest way *Shen Bao* was acting as an agent of social change, a role it shunned for most of its long history.

In one sense *Shen Bao* had also become an informally organized political institution in its own right. It not only supported left-wing causes through its news coverage, but employed leading left-wing intellectuals in its various cultural and educational ventures. Some observers have suggested that Shi Liangcai did in fact contemplate

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96. Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingyin Houqi de Shen Bao," pp. 52-54; Joshua A. Fogel, *Ai Ssu-Ch'i's Contribution to the Development of Chinese Marxism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 22-23.

97. Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen bao," pp. 45-46, 50-54.

forming a political party.[98] But it was not necessary for Shi to take this formal step; he showed throughout the period 1932-1934 that he could achieve political influence without the need for a party structure. He possesed wealth, powerful connections and a highly public platform for the expression of his views. Nobody else in Shanghai enjoyed a position of quite the same kind of influence, and for a short period even the Nationalist government felt it had to make concessions to that influence.

Shi Liangcai's problem was that he was caught between two conflicting roles. As a wealthy press mogul and associate of Shanghai's capitalists, he attained political influence, but could exercise influence only insofar as it did not put his commercial interests at risk. Thus he was susceptible to manipulation through such tactics as government imposed postal bans, the ban of July 1932 being a classic case. As a sponsor of liberal causes and left-wing writers and intellectuals, he was bound to displease the government, and in the process he became politically isolated from his powerful capitalist acquaintances who cultivated close links with the government. Shi did not want to co-operate with the Nationalists, nor did he want to sacrifice his newspaper enterprise to anti-government political causes. Inevitably, he compromised. But unlike in the past when he opted for silence as the best policy, Shi managed to maintain an undercurrent of liberal, anti-government opinion. This was a compromise the Nationalists were not prepared to tolerate.

The fragility of *Shen Bao*'s political activism became apparent following the assassination of Shi Liangcai on November 13, 1934. That the Nationalists felt his death to be necessary says as much about the brutal side of their regime as any other incident of the period. For although Shi Liangcai made no secret of his opposition to Nationalist policies, he was

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98. Xu Deheng, "Shi Liangcai zhi Si" [The Death of Shi Liangcai], *Shehui Kexue* [Social Science], no. 5 (1980), p. 34, cited by Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao," p. 81.

hardly in a position to represent any real threat to the government's survival. With Shi's death, however, *Shen Bao* regressed to its silent former life. Shi Liangcai's death marked the beginning of the end for a critical newspaper press in Shanghai, as the next chapter will briefly demonstrate.

CHAPTER VIII

EPILOGUE

Upon hearing the news of Shi Liangcai's death *Shen Bao* recoiled in shock. Without Shi's presence the paper lost direction and its short life as a forum of liberal, anti-government opinion was suddenly brought to an end. Within less than a year all of its reformist supplements and cultural and educational ventures were wound down. Only the circulation library run by Ai Siqi and Li Gongpu was able to continue independently of *Shen Bao*, thereafter adopting the name "Liangcai Memorial Library."[1] From the point of view of the Nationalist government, Shi Liangcai's assassination was a great success. It gave them a reasonably secure guarantee that China's most influential daily newspaper would no longer function as a government critic.

Although the senior staff at *Shen Bao* knew who killed Shi Liangcai, obituaries and memorials published by the paper gave no hint as to the posssibliity of government involvement in the assassination.[2] Shen Zui, then a member of the Jun Tong which was responsible for Shi's assassiantion, claims that Jiang Jieshi offered a reward of ten thousand yuan to anyone who could give information leading to the arrest of the

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1. Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi" [A Sixty Six Year History of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai* [A New Era in the History of Journalism] (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1946), pp. 95-100; Joshua A. Fogel, *Ai Sssu-ch'i's Contribution to the Development of Chinese Marxism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 24.

2. Interview with Ma Yinliang, Residence of Sun Enlin, Shanghai, April 10, 1985. For obituaries see "Shi Liangcai Xiansheng Ehao" [The Solemn News of Mr. Shi Liangcai's Death], *Shen Bao*, November 14, 1934; "Zhuidiao Shi Liangcai Xiansheng Qi" [Memorial to Shi Liangcai], *Benbu Zengkan* [Local Supplement], *Shen Bao*, Dec. 9, 1934.

culprits, while those who carried out the assassination were paid five thousand yuan for their services.[3] Shen has also suggested that "relations with Shanghai gangs" enabled the Jun Tong to gather information from Shi's chauffeur about Shi's movements on the Shanghai-Hangzhou road where he was killed.[4] But it remains unclear whether or not gang leaders like Du Yuesheng were involved in Shi's assassination. Du did appear to benefit from Shi's assassination; for example, Du replaced Shi as president of the Shanghai Provisional Senate and was later named as a member of the board of directors of *Shen Bao*. On the other hand, Du passed a resolution in the Provisional Senate calling for an immediate investigation into Shi's death and a speedy apprehesion of those responsible, although there is the possibility that this could have been a smoke screeen.[5] It would nonetheless have been an unusual step for Du Yuesheng to take against someone with whom he worked so closely during the Shanghai war and its aftermath. Du's own political fortunes were advanced by his participation on Shi Liangcai's Local Preservation and Civic associations. This level of co-operation between the two men would militate against the conclusion that Du was involved in Shi Liangcai's assassination.

It was patently clear, however, that the new *Shen Bao* board of directors, of which Du Yuesheng was a member, was conservative in nature. Apart from Du, the board included: Zhang Xiaolin, another gang leader; Wang Xiaolai, leader of the Chamber of Commerce; Qian Yongming, banker and former Vice-Minister of Finance; Hu Bijiang, director of the Zhong-Nan Bank; and the senior staff of the paper, Ma Yinliang, Zhang

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3. Shen Zui, "Yang Xingfo, Shi Liangcai bei Ansha de Jingguo" [The Assassinations of Yang Xingfo and Shi Liangcai], in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji*, no. 37 (Beijing: Wenshi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1963), pp. 169-171.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

5. See Shanghai Shi Tongzhi Guan Nianjian Weiyuanhui [Yearbook Committee of the Gazetteer Bureau of Shanghai], ed., *Shanghai Shi Nianjian, 1935* [Shanghai yearbook, 1935] (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1935), Section F, p. 56.

Yunhe, Chen Jinghan and, Shi Liangcai's son, Shi Yonggeng.[6] It is possible that at least three of these board members, Du, Wang and Qian, were able to claim a stake in the paper during the fracas over Shi Liangcai's takeover of *Xin Wen Bao*. Some observers have seen the new board as representative of the triumph of bureaucratic capitalism (*guanliao zibenzhuyi*) over Shi's liberal, or national, brand of capitalism. Edgar Snow went so far as to claim that "in the reorganization of [Shi's] interests after his death, Sze's [Shi's] son was forced to admit Fascists to the board."[7]

There is a hint of a conspiracy theory in these views, suggesting that Shi Liangcai's assassination was necessary because he stood in the way of the advance of bureaucratic (or fascist) capitalism. This line of argument contains an attractive neatness which is not altogether invalid, but it is overly deterministic. There is credence in the view that bureaucratic capitalism was on the rise from the mid-1930s on. By 1935 the government had moved into the banking system, taking control of the Bank of China and the Bank of Communications, and it had ensured that the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce was a largely obedient group of capitalists.[8] Moreover, H. H. Kung (Kong Xiangxi), who was the prime mover behind the takeover of the banks, also moved into areas of the press in Shanghai. His principal target was the press empire of Zhang Zhuping. It will be remembered that Zhang, once manager of *Shen Bao*, was able to put

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6. Hu Daojing, "Shen Bao Liushi Liu Nian Shi," p. 101.

7. Edgar Snow, "The Ways of the Chinese Censor," *Current History* 42 (July 1935): 385. On the usurption by bureaucratic capital see Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao" [On Shen Bao During the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management], (M.A. dissertation, Shanghai, Fudan University, 1982), pp. 4, 26, 28-29; Liang Jialu, et al., *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 339-342.

8. Joseph Fewsmith, *Party Stae, and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Political Power in Shanghai, 1890-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), pp. 193-203, *passim*; Lloyd E. Eastmen, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 232-233.

himself at the head of four press establishments by 1932: *Shi Shi Xin Bao, China Press, Da Wan Bao* and the Shenshi News Agency. But to reach this exalted position Zhang had borrowed heavily from Du Yuesheng. He might not have encountered any problems with his debts if he had not decided to take a stand in favour of the Fujian rebellion of 1933. The Fujian rebellion was, like many anti-government movements of the day, ostensibly organized around dissatisfaction with Jiang Jieshi's policy of non-resistance to Japan. Zhang recruited an editor who was a supporter of the rebels to the staff of *Shi Shi Xin Bao*, and it has even been suggested that the paper received financial backing from the rebel Fujian government.[9] It was then that the Nationalist government decided to put the squeeze on Zhang. They imposed a postal ban on *Shi Shi Xin Bao* which would have exacerbated Zhang's liquidity problems. Du Yuesheng then pressured him to pay back his debts. Unable to raise the money, in early 1935 Zhang was compelled to sell all four of his press establisments to H. H. Kung.[10]

But the point about both Shi Liangcai's assassination and H. H. Kung's takeover of Zhang Zhuping's press empire is that they were essentially politically motivated decisions. If Shi Liangcai did not use *Shen Bao* as a forum of anti-governemnt, particularly anti-Jiang Jieshi, opinion, and if Zhang Zhuping did not support the Fujian rebellion, it is very unlikely that the government would have taken action against them. Both Shi and Zhang were playing anti-government politics, something the Nationalist regime could not tolerate. Shi Liangcai in particular increased his political influence in Shanghai by placing himself at the head of an anti-Japanese movement. In a sense, much of his political kudos depended

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9. See Huang Zhuoming and Yu Zhenji, "Gunayu Shi Shi Xin Bao Suojian Suowen" [Things Seen and Heard Concerning Shi Shi Xin Bao], in *Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao*, no. 19 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1983), pp. 186-188.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-191; Edwin S. Cunningham, Consul general, Shanghai, to Secretary of State, June 10, 1935 (893.911/310), *U.S. State Department, Central Files: China, Internal Affairs, 1930-1939* (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1984).

on his role in this movement. Moreover, throughout 1932 Shi provided the Nationalists with any number of opportunities to be upset with him. *Shen Bao*'s editorial attacks upon Jiang's policy of non-resistance, the dictatorship of the Guomindang and, Jiang's first priority, the "bandit suppression" campaigns, as well as its advocacy of constitutional government, all ran directly counter to government policy. Added to this was *Shen Bao*'s support of left-wing writers and intellectuals during 1933 and 1934. In the eyes of the authoritarian and increasingly paranoid government of Jiang Jieshi, these were good enough reasons for an assassination.

Finally, there is some doubt about whether *Shen Bao*'s new board of directors represented bureaucratic capitalism in the way that H. H. Kung did. At most it could be said that the principal members of the board, apart from the senior staff, enjoyed close relationships with the Nationalist government, but each had their own interests to serve and protect. Unlike Shi Liangcai, they decided that their interests were best served by co-operating with the government.

In the end, however, by 1935 the Nationalists had managed to suppress the critical voices of the Shanghai daily press. The government had little to worry about from that quarter in the years leading up to the outbreak of full-scale war with Japan in 1937. In 1935 there were some feeble appeals from the daily press for a rational censorship system, but even these were the by-product of a speech by Jiang Jieshi promising to end censorship. On February 9, 1935, for example, *Shen Bao* added its voice to these appeals with an editorial entitled "Opinions on Improving News Censorship." This asked only that the boundaries of censorship be clearly

defined and that the censors be instructed to work according to strict guidelines.[11]

An entirely new era of struggle for the Shanghai dailies began with the arrival of Japanese forces in late 1937. In mid-December Japanese authorities pressured the Municipal Council into asking the dailies to submit to Japanese inspection. In response, refusing to accept this inspection, on December 15 *Shen Bao* decided to cease publication. The paper then withdrew to Hankou where it re-appeared on New Years' day in 1938. Of the other big dailies, *Xin Wen Bao* and *Shi Bao* allowed the Japanese inspection to take place and were then able to continue publishing in Shanghai. *Shi Shi Xin Bao* closed down and followed the retreating Chinese forces westwards.[12] In March Shi Yonggeng brought out a Hong Kong edition of *Shen Bao*. In October the paper returned to Shanghai registered as part of the Columbia Publishing Company, "Incorporated Delaware, U.S.A.," hoping that this tactic would insulate the paper from Japanese interference.[13] The problem was that, as a foreign, company, *Shen Bao* was subject to the censorship of the Municipal Council and the Council generally complied with Japanese wishes on such matters. Foreign censorship became more strict than at any time in Shanghai's past as, in similar fashion to the first Guomindang censors, employees of the Municipal Council, along with Chinese translators, were given offices within the major Chinese dailies.[14]

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11. "Gaishan Xinwen Jiancha zhi Yijian," *Shen Bao*, Feb. 2, 1935. See also Zu Cheng, "Xinwenjie Qing Fuyi Xiuzheng Chuban Fa Huiji" [A Record of Requests to Reconsider Revising the Publications Law], *Baoxue Jikan* 1.4 (August, 1934); 97-99 for reference to other sources of press opinion on this matter.

12. Shen Bao Shi Bianxiezu [Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], "Shen Bao Qishi Qi Nian Shi, 1872-1949" [A Seventy Seven Year History of Shen Bao, 1872, 1949], Pt. 4, "Gudao Shanghai Shiqi de Shen Bao, 1938-1941" [Shen Bao in the Period of Shanghai as the Lonely Island, 1938-1941], Draft (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Yuan, Xinwen Yanjiu Suo, 1982), p. 1.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

The pressure on *Shen Bao* to conform to a pro-Japanese line increased with the rise of Wang Jingwei's forces in Shanghai. From August 1939 *Shen Bao* was singled out in a campaign of terror against the anti-Japanese press. The newspaper offices was bombed several times and key staff were subjected to assassination attempts. In the period leading up to the outbreak of the Pacific War, two employees were killed and seven injured as a result of this campaign.[15]

Japanese military authorities moved into *Shen Bao* on December 8, 1941. They did not shut down the paper, and preferred to control its content from behind the scenes. For instance, they insisted that *Shen Bao* continue publishing under nominal American registration as the Columbia Publishing Company, hoping that this would help to disguise Japanese control over the paper. Over the next year the Japanese were content with tight checking of *Shen Bao*'s news reports (editorial comment of any kind was forbidden) and they did not force the paper to become an active supporter of their interests.

But this state of affairs lasted only until December 1942 when *Shen Bao* was compelled to become a mouthpiece for Japanese military expansion in Asia. In what remains one of the great mysteries of *Shen Bao*'s history, Chen Binhe, the author of the notorious editorials against Jiang Jieshi's "bandit suppression" campaigns, was wheeled out to act as the editorial voice of the Japanese military. Some have speculated that Chen had been a Japanese agent since 1928, but, as with other journalists who co-operated with the Japanese and the Wang Jingwei government, it was probably a certain malleability of character that allowed him to adapt

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

to his new role. Whatever the reason, Chen served as chief editor until the end of the Pacific War.[16]

It was only after the Pacific War that something akin to bureaucratic capitalism came to dominate the Shanghai daily press. When the Nationalists returned to Shanghai they took possession of both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*. It was almost as if these newspapers served as reparations for the period of war. Little is known of newspaper circles in the post-war period, but the C.C. Clique, under the guidance of Pan Gongzhan, won control over both *Shen Bao* and *Xin Wen Bao*. In May 1946 the C.C. Clique, again acting in concert with Du Yuesheng, somehow compelled Shi Yonggeng to sell them a fifty-one percent controlling stake in *Shen Bao*.[17]

By March 1949 the Communists were in control of Shanghai. In the final chapter of *Shen Bao*'s history, on May 26, 1949 members of the Communist Party moved into the *Shen Bao* building and soon after began printing copies of *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang Ribao*).

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16. For details on this period in *Shen Bao*'s history see *Idem*, " Shen Bao Qishi Qi Nian Shi," Pt. 5, "Diwei Jieduo Shiqi de Shen bao, 1941-1945" [Shen Bao During the Japanese Occupation, 1941-1945], Draft (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Yuan, Xinwen Yanjiu Suo, 1982), pp. 20-29, 32-36. For another example of a pro-Japanese journalist see Jin Xiongbai, *Jizhe Shengya Wushi Nian* [Fity Years of Life as a Journalist], 2 vols. (vol. 1; Hong Kong: Wuxing Jishu Baoshe, 1975; vol. 2; Taibei: Yuesheng Wenhua Shiye Youxain Gongsi, 1988), 2: 29-35, 61-64. Chen was tried by the Nationalists in 1946 and found guilty as a traitor, but Chen had already fled to Japan.

17. Shen Bao Shi Bianxiezu [Compilers of the History of Shen Bao], "Shen Bao Qishi Qi Nian Da Shi Ji, 1872-1949" [A Seventy Seven Year Chronology of Shen Bao, 1872-1949], Draft (Beijing, 1979), p. 13; Zeng Xubai, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shi* [A History of Journalism in China] (Taibei: Sanmin Shuju, 1966), p. 475.

CONCLUSION

That *Shen Bao* was able to publish continuously for almost the entire period of its seventy-seven year history says a great deal about its character as a newspaper. It put survival as a commercial enterprise above all other considerations. For all but a few brief years of its life *Shen Bao* adapted to prevailing political and economic conditions rather than attempt to change those conditions. Under the proprietorship of Shi Liangcai *Shen Bao* showed itself to be a master of adaptation and it therefore became a great business success. But up until the early 1930s, this success was achieved at the expense of significant and active participation in the Shanghai political scene.

Shen Bao's character was inseparable from the peculiar historical setting in which it operated. Founded in Shanghai's International Settlement by the Englishman, Ernest Major, *Shen Bao* was from its very beginning an admixture of foreign economic resources and Chinese intellectual and cultural resources. Publishing out of the International Settlement, it was cushioned against interference by Chinese government authorities but had to be careful no to offend the foreign authorities on Shanghai's Municipal Council. Except for the fact that by the first decade of the twentieth century Chinese businessmen had replaced their foreign counterparts as the owners of *Shen Bao*, this general situation did not undergo significant change until the 1920s. Even after the declaration of the Chinese Republic in 1912 *Shen Bao*, (and all the other major daily newspapers in Shanghai), retained registration as a foreign company and was to a large extent dependent on such foreign economic and technical resources as newsprint, printing presses, advertising and telegraphic dispatches. When Shi Liangcai assumed full control of *Shen Bao* in 1915 he

was not about to put his hard won newspaper business at risk by disturbing its economic and technical foundations. He placed great store in staying away from party political struggles and devoted his energy to expanding *Shen Bao*'s market in competition with his greatest rival, the American-owned *Xin Wen Bao*. Those who describe Shi Liangcai as a "national capitalist" (*minzu zibenjia*) should therefore consider the extent to which his newspaper depended upon foreign resources.[1]

This strictly commercial approach to newspaper journalism did pay handsome dividends for Shi Liangcai, but it necessarily involved certain tensions and contradictions. It offered little joy to working journalists. Several prominent journalists of the early Republican years believed that their occupation could preserve an independence from the party and factional struggles of the warlord era if it were based upon a sound commercial newspaper industry. But, quite apart from the fact that these same journalists, Huang Yuansheng and Shao Piaoping, for example, were intimately involved in political struggles, the practices adopted by Shi Liangcai tended to reduce journalists to the status of clerical officers. Below the level of the senior editors, journalists came a poor second to the telegraphic dispatch. The situation was not helped by the readiness of many journalists to accpet bribes and gratuities from politicians and local gangsters. The end result was that journalists who borrowed some of the noble theories of European and American journalism could make no headway within the big dailies like *Shen Bao*. Theories of professional and independent journalism therefore stayed within the academic arena. By the late-1920s, when newspapers like *Shen Bao* approached the pinnacle of their economic success and takeovers began to emerge in the industry,

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1. For this view see especially Qin Shaode, "Lun Shi Liangcai Jingying Houqi de Shen Bao" [On Shen Bao During the Latter Period of Shi Liangcai's Management], (M.A. dissertation, Shanghai, Fudan University, 1982), pp. 4, 26, 28-29; Liang Jialu, et al. *Zhongguo Xinwenye Shi* [A History of the Press in China] (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 339-342.

instead of touting commercial journalism as their saviour, some progressive and leftist journalists condemned it as socially irresponsible. Their feelings grew more intense after the Shenyang Incident. The leftist journalists in particular lambasted newspaper proprietors in Shi Liangcai's position as being capitalists concerned only with making profits.

There was some credence to views of this kind because newspapers like *Shen Bao* had proved to be notoriously slow to respond to expressions of anti-imperialist nationalism. On such occasions the contradiction between *Shen Bao* serving a Chinese audience but depending on foreign economic resources and the good will of foreign authorities became all too obvious. *Shen Bao* nevertheless found it easier to break connections with Japan than with Britain. During the May Fourth movement *Shen Bao* and the other major Shanghai dailies had little hesitation in banning Japanese advertising and commercial news. Once the central demands of the protest movement had been met by the Beijing government, however, *Shen Bao* showed that it was anxious to see an end to the strikes and demonstrations. This relative caution foreshadowed *Shen Bao*'s politically timid response to the May Thirtieth movement. *Shen Bao* had seen some of the Guomindang's newspapers fined in February 1925 for supporting strikes against Japanese cotton mills and for publishing manifestos of the unions. As a result, *Shen Bao* gave events surrounding the May Thirtieth Incident a wide birth and published only relatively sparse reports. But they then took the highly provocative, and unwise, step of publishing a British account of the May Thirtieth movement. This action exposed *Shen Bao*'s dependence upon the good will of the British authorities in the Municipal Council and showed the paper in its least favourable light. But angry students and workers forced *Shen Bao* to recant and to apologize to its readers by threatening to disrupt the paper's sales and distribution. In addition, in contrast to its action against Japanese advertising, *Shen Bao*

was reluctant to meet the demand of May Thirtieth protesters that the paper ban British advertising. On this issue, too, public pressure forced it to take action.

This was the most glaring weakness of Shi Liangcai's brand of commercial newspaper journalism. While serving the Chinese market he had to be careful not to upset the foreign authorities. Shi generally coped with this dilemma by adopting the attitude that "silence is golden." But when he changed his attitude during the May Thirtieth movement, instead of coming down on the side of the protesters he laid himself open to the charge of complicity with the imperialist powers.

Similarly, when the battle for control of Shanghai was raging all around his newspaper in early 1927, Shi Liangcai ensured that *Shen Bao* stayed well away from the crossfire. In the face of pressure from the General Labour Union to publish statements attacking the warlord Sun Chuanfang and supporting united front forces, Shi Liangcai did not take a stand one way or the other, but, along with the other big dailies, stopped the presses for almost a week.

Although *Shen Bao* and the other major Shanghai dailies were initially wary of the Nationalist's presence in Shanghai, in general they did not want to ruffle the feathers of their new rulers and opted for circumspect co-operation. Most of the big dailies converted from foreign company registration to Chinese and they accepted a censorship system that was more intimate than anything they had experienced in the past. By 1928, at the time of the Jinan Incident, *Shen Bao* had warmed to the possibility of a China united under Nationalist rule. This was one of the very few occasions when the paper openly expressed support for a government and its policies. Indeed, *Shen Bao*'s editorial line closely resembled the stand taken by Jiang Jieshi over the Jinan Incident. Once again *Shen Bao* displayed a readiness to speak out on matters concerning

Sino-Japanese relations, although the co-operative spirit it developed toward the Nationalists was not to last.

Shen Bao's relations with the Nationalists were strained when the government in Nanjing showed that it was not about to give the press any preferential treatment. At the end of 1928 the Shanghai newspapers failed to exact concessions from the government over postal and telecommunication charges. Thereafter the government moved to legislate to control the press. But the biggest blow to Shi Liangcai came when the Shanghai branch of the Guomindang supported the movement to block his takeover of *Xin Wen Bao* in January 1929. Although the Nanjing government played only a marginal role in this affair, the Shanghai Party branch, under the leadership of notorious activist, Chen Dezheng, politicized the takeover by branding it as Shi Liangcai's attempt to build a news monopoly (or, news "trust," in the jargon of the day) which, he claimed, ran counter to the political philosophy of the Republic. With *Xin Wen Bao*'s staff, the Shanghai Party branch and most of the more conservative commercial organizations, including the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce, lined up against the takeover bid, Shi Liangcai was forced to negotiate a compromise with *Xin Wen Bao*'s management. He surrendered a portion of his shares, keeping fifty percent for himself. In the process of reaching this settlement Shi exposed his newspaper business to outside interests like conservative banker Qian Yongming and gang boss Du Yuesheng, both of whom were closely connected with the Nationalist government. Although these conservative elements were not able to influence the direction of *Shen Bao* while Shi Liangcai remained at the head of his newspapers, after his assassination they emerged in the ascendency on *Shen Bao*'s new board of directors.

The events of 1929 did not endear the Guomindang to Shi Liangcai. At the end of the year Shi began making staff changes at *Shen Bao* which marked the first steps toward the creation of an active reformist attitude in

the paper, although *Shen Bao* did not broadcast this attitude until the critical breakdown in Sino-Japanese relations in 1931. For the first time in his life Shi Liangcai launched himself and his newspaper into a political campaign. The years of pursuing strict commercial strategies made Shi a wealthy man and he had developed interests in banking, publishing and industry which brought him into contact with Shanghai's commercial elite. As a result, after the bombing of Shanghai he was able to mobilize the support of some of the most infleuntial Shanghai capitalists and politicos in an effort to support resistance to the Japanese, preserve economic and social order in the city, and assert control over local affairs. The political influence of Shi and his supporters increased because of their activities during this period. The Nationalists found they had to make some political concessions to the movement led by Shi Liangcai in order to repair the government's links with the capitalist elite in Shanghai.

Shi Liangcai and his supporters acted in concert in the wake of the Shanghai war, but Shi went much futher than his powerful associates in attacking the Nationalist government's political response to Japanese militarism in China. Through *Shen Bao*, and in co-operation with Song Qingling and intellectuals such as Tao Xingzhi, Huang Yanpei, and Yang Xingfo, Shi Liangcai campaigned against the Nationalists', and particularly Jiang Jieshi's, most favoured policies. *Shen Bao* lambasted the strategy of achieving national unity before resisting Japan, called for an immediate end to Party dictatorship and demanded the formation of constitutional government. Perhaps most importantly in terms of sealing Shi Liangcai's fate, *Shen Bao* attacked the military campaigns against the Communists, arguing that they were exacerbating the situation. The Shanghai capitalists and power brokers like Du Yuesheng were not prepared to go quite so far in resisting government policy and this made Shi Liangcai all the more vulnerable to government reprisals. In fact, silencing *Shen Bao*'s unprecedented outspokenness was a simple matter of imposing a

postal ban. This the government did, with great success, in July 1932. Within a month, Shi Liangcai backed down and agreed to government demands which reduced the paper to its former editorial silence. In the end, *Shen Bao* remained a commercial enterprise.

Although Shi Liangcai lent support to liberal and left-wing causes thereafter, the repression of the Nanjing regime under Jiang Jieshi's leadership made direct criticism of government policies a difficult and dangerous task. This repression eventually claimed Shi Liangcai as one of its victims. In a move which perhaps even Shi himself had not thought possible, he was killed by government-linked assassins on November 13, 1934. All the big Shanghai dailies then fell into passive silence until the outbreak of the war with Japan in 1937.

Shi Liangcai owed his political influence to the commercial success of his newspaper empire and to his connections with members of Shanghai's capitalist elite. On the eve of his death he could lay claim to being the most influential newspaper proprietor in China. Yet, and this highlights the terrible irony in his assassination, Shi Liangcai and the daily press in general enjoyed only limited influence over Chinese politics and society. The Shanghai branch of the Guomindang, and, indeed, many Shanghai journalists, condemned Shi Liangcai for attempting to build a press monopoly, but in comparison with the press empires of a Northcliffe, Shi Liangcai's empire was far from assuming monopoly proportions. This was because Shi Liangcai's newspaper empire was not based upon the kinds of mass readership attained by newspapers in industrialized societies. It was bound by the upper and middle classes of urban centres. Except for the period 1933-1934, when *Shen Bao* opened its own library and schools aimed at lower-middle and working class people, Shi Liangcai never attempted to move his newspapers beyond the wealthier social classes. Generally speaking, it was only these wealthier social classes that could read *Shen Bao*, afford its purchase price and afford to buy the

products it advertised. For Shi Liangcai to match the influence of a Northcliffe, it would have been necessary for much larger segments of Chinese society to have been industrialized and commercialized. But in 1933 the modern, industrial sector of the economy accounted for only 2.2 percent of China's net domestic product.[2] The size of this economy ultimately defined the limits to Shi Liangcai's infleunce and weakened his position *vis-a-vis* the Nationalist government.

At the same time, Shi Liangcai's influence among the urban elite, and especially the Shanghai elite, should not be underestimated. Throughout the first half of 1932 Shi Liangcai demonstrated an ability to rally local capitalists and gang leaders like Du Yuesheng for the preservation of economic and social order in Shanghai. The significance of this was lost on the Nationalists, whose bailiwick was also concentrated in urban areas, particularly in the lower Yangtze region. The Nationalists recognized Shi's local influence when toward the end of 1932, hoping to bring Shi within the fold, they appointed him president of the Shanghai Provisional Senate.

Although Shi Liangcai was closely connected with the Shanghai capitalists, it would be an exaggeration to say that *Shen Bao* necessarily reflected the interests of that group. Shi Liangcai shared with the Shanghai capitalists a commitment to the welfare of the Shanghai economy and a desire to manage local affairs during the period of crisis. But *Shen Bao*'s outspoken condemnation of the Guomindang dictatorship and Jiang Jieshi's "bandit suppression" campaigns went beyond the political limits of Yu Xiaqing, Wang Xiaolai, Qian Yongming and Du Yuesheng, people who supported Shi Liangcai in the wake of the Shanghai war. Shi also went beyond his more conservative capitalist associates in

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2. Albert Feuerwerker, *The Chinese Economy, 1912-1949* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1968), p. 17.

lending *Shen Bao*'s support to liberal political causes like the League for the Protection of Human Rights, and to left-wing writers and intellectuals in the two years before his death. Shi Liangcai ran his newspaper as a commercial enterprise and he was, as much of this study has attempted to demonstrate, constrained by commercial priorities, but it would be wrong to suggest, in the manner of deterministic Marxists,[3] that this made *Shen Bao* an organ of the capitalist class.

After the Shenyang Incident Shi Liangcai's greatest problem was in attempting to strike a balance between commercial survivial and support for anti-government opinion and political movements. If the Nationalists succeeded in silencing *Shen Bao*'s editorials with the imposition of a postal ban, it is perhaps surprising that they did not continue to use such tactics in controlling Shi Liangcai. Despite the government's fears to the contrary, Shi was in no position to represent a genuine threat to them. But his murder was a political act, one of the more prominent examples of the brutal tactics sometimes employed by the Nationalist regime. Shi Liangcai's assassination not only removed a prominent critic, it also served as a warning to others not to contemplate similar expressions of opposition to the government. This tactic proved to be effective; in the short term. By early 1937 even Jiang Jieshi was compelled to give in to the anti-Japanese movement, form a united front with the Communist Party, and prepare for all out war against Japan.

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3. For one example of such a Marxian view (which is not necessarily shared by all Marxists) see Ralph Milliband, *Marxism and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 50.

APPENDIX

THE CIRCULATION OF *SHEN BAO*

a) Circulation, 1872-1936

Date	Circulation
April 1872	600
Jan. 1875	1,200
June 1876	2,000
1877	5,000
1912	7,000
1916	14,000
1917	20,000
August 1920	30,000
1921	45,000
1925	100,710
1926	141,440
1927	109,760
1928	143,920
1929	143,120
1930	148,240
1931	150,200
1932	145,400
1933	150,600
1934	155,950
1935	155,900
1936	150,000

Sources: Hu Daojing, "*Shen Bao* Liushi Liu Nian Shi" [A Sixty Six Year History of Shen Bao], in *Xinwen Shi shang de Xin Shidai* [A New Era in the History of Journalism] (Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1946), p. 103; Shen Bao Guan, ed., *Shen Bao Gaikuang* [The State of Shen Bao] (Shanghai: Shen Bao Guan, 1935), n.p.

b) Geographical Distribution of Shen Bao *in 1934*

Region	Circulation
Shanghai	56,050
Jiangsu	34,950
Zhejiang	14,300
Anhui	12,400
Jiangxi	8,650
Henan	6,800
Shandong	6,250
Hubei	6,050
Fujian	3,050
Guangdong	2,150
Hebei	1,550
Hunan	1,450
Guangxi	400
Shanxi	300
Sichuan	260
Shaanxi	220
Yunnan	200
Gansu	160
Guizhou	100
Chahar	80
Suiyuan	75
Xikang	65
Ningxia	42
Xinjiang	38
Qinghai	24
Xizang	16
Mongolia	10
Overseas	310
Manchuria	Temporarily Suspended
Total	155,950

Sources: *Shen Bao Gaikuang*, n.p.; Gan Jiaxin, "Zhongguo Ge Da Bao Jingying Shikuang" [An Account of Management Conditions of China's Broadsheet Newspapers] *Su Heng Banyuekan* 17-18 (November 1936): 25.