

Shanghai Gongren Yundongshi [History of Workers' Movement in Shanghai]. Vol. 1. Ed. by Shen Yiheng, Jiang Peinan and Zheng Qingsheng. Liaoning People's Publishing House, Shenyang 1991. xxxii, 661 pp. ¥ 14.50.

This volume forms the first part of the editors' analysis of the Shanghai working class from 1840 to May 1945. It covers the period from 1840 to July 1937. The reader's expectations are raised by reading in the editors' preface that this has been one of the key research projects in the sixth and seventh Five-Year Plans of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and represents a collective endeavour by seven experienced researchers. The authors have surveyed and pulled together valuable sources (some of which are not available in the West) with unusual industry (a major merit of the book). In view of the importance of the issues discussed and the sources presented, it is all the more a pity that the work is severely constrained by the framework and limits imposed by communist ideology.

The editors claim that the workers in Shanghai developed from a class-for-itself (*zizai jieji*) engaged in "spontaneous economic struggles" from 1840 to 1920 to a class-in-itself (*ziwei jieji*) which, from July 1921, was engaged in conscious political struggles for national liberation (pp. 1–3, chapters 1–5). Thus, once "Marxism was combined with the workers' movement" and the movement "under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party" (founded in 1921), the workers in Shanghai became a "particularly strong team" that "kept on fighting despite all setbacks" and through collaboration with the People's Liberation Army achieved liberation in 1949 (p. 1, preface by Shen Yiheng).

The editors state that the communist-dominated Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions (set up in 1925) had a total membership of 800,000 in about 1926–1927 (p. 382). They also claim that Chiang Kai-shek's suppression in 1927 drove the communists underground and, as a result, the workers' movement under their leadership began to suffer setbacks leaving no workers under their control by 1934 (p. 661). In fact, by 1930 the number of trade union members under communist control had been reduced to no more than 2653 (p. 479). Thus, the number of workers sympathetic to the communists was very small, and the editors admit that CCP influence was weak (p. 624). This gives rise to the question of how exactly the workers did "fight bravely" under the leadership of the party.

What is missing in this volume is a substantial discussion of the support for the party and the party-led trade unions, both organizationally and financially, by the Comintern and the Profintern; the co-operation between the communists and the nationalists before 1927; and the fight against warlords and Western imperialism. This is the important historical context within which the party operated (for an excellent book on this topic see T. Saich, *The Origins of the First United Front in China: The Role of Sneevliet* (Leiden, 1991)). For example, one cannot possibly understand how the party succeeded in organizing the third armed uprising by the workers against the warlord Sun Chuanfang without knowing that the party was entrusted by the nationalist government to do so. This fact is only mentioned in passing (p. 5, preface by Shen Yiheng) and is not sufficiently discussed.

The discussion of Shanghai University is another example of inadequate explanation. The historical context is that because of the Guomindang's new policy of "association with the Soviet Union, the Communist Party and assisting and supporting the workers and peasants", a number of Guomindang labour leaders,

e.g. Liao Zhongkai (director of the workers' and peasants' department of the Guomindang centre in Canton) and Yu Youren in Shanghai, became very supportive of the policy and of the communists. They nearly put all their work in the hands of the latter. Shanghai University was funded by the nationalists and was under the auspices of the workers' and peasants' department of the Guomindang's Shanghai executive bureau, to which Yu Youren was appointed director (Yu was concurrently the university's president). Yu appointed Deng Zhongxia (a communist leader) as the dean and entrusted him with all the affairs of the university. Taking this opportunity, Deng turned the university into a training institution for the communists. Yet this book gives the impression that the university was set up by the Chinese Communist Party and the latter thus had a legitimate claim to the leadership of the former (pp. 168–169).

The book also suffers from a lack of perspective. The impression is given that the communist labour movement suffered from setbacks caused by Guomindang, lack of experience and a correct policy. However, in my view, the setbacks have to be analysed within the context of the development of the communist movement as a whole. Further, the political situation after 1927 was much more complicated than described in the book. In 1927, the Guomindang became the governing party. But within the Guomindang itself, there were quite distinct groupings. There were the struggles between Chiang and Wang Jingwei for the inheritance of the legitimacy derived from Dr Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (nationalism, democracy and the people's livelihood). Even Chen Duxiu (secretary general of the Communist Party of China) signed a joint declaration with Wang, stating that the Communist Party recognized the "Guomindang and the Three Principles of the People as a necessity in today's China" (p. 363). Within the Guomindang there was also a fascist tendency represented by Yang Hu and Chen Qun. The terror unleashed by Yang Hu and Chen Qun was described as *langhu chenqun* (a play on their Chinese names. Isaacs translates this as "in Shanghai wolves and tigers stalk abroad in packs", Harold Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford, 1961), p. 177). Chiang himself was more repressive towards the communists than the workers. The new right of the Guomindang (the reformists) denied class struggle and believed that 'Fordization' would solve the workers' problem. Lu Jingshi and other Guomindang labour leaders thought that persuasion had to be used to win the workers over. By contrast, the communists, operating illegally, still believed in revolution as the only way to solve the workers' problems. Apart from occasional passages, the authors do not pay sufficient attention to these different approaches.

The communist-dominated Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions was banned in 1927 (pp. 390–392) and the subsequent period saw the rise and fall of various labour organizations. The competition between Guomindang's fascist-oriented Gongtong (Shanghai Unification Committee of Trade Unions) and the Gongzhong (Shanghai General Workers' Union) to represent the Shanghai workers provided the unique circumstances under which seven major and influential "yellow" trade unions emerged (Commercial Press Workers' Union, Commercial Publishing Workers' Union, South Pacific Tobacco Workers' Union, Postal Workers' Union, Newspaper Workers' Union, BAT Workers' Union, Chinese Electric Workers' Union, pp. 458–473). In 1928, both the Gongtong and Gongzhong were dissolved and the Gongzheng (Shanghai Rectification Committee of Trade Unions) was set up though it was quickly dissolved in the same year (p. 471). Subsequently, the

Shanghai City Preparatory Committee of the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions was established, but the Trade Union Law of October 1929 prohibited the formation of trade unions at city level. Thus, in 1929, the Shanghai Association of Trade Unions was set up (p. 477). Once again the situation changed in 1934 when the law was revised to allow the restoration of the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions (pp. 582–584). Within this fluid situation communist influence was negligible and the Federation was more closely linked with powerful and influential gangsters such as Du Yuesheng.

With or without the help of trade unions, the workers struggled for their economic survival and tried to improve their lot. Again the role of the CCP is debatable. Deng Zhongxia, who had been general secretary to the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and served as a member of the executive committee of the Profintern's fourth congress in Moscow from 1928 to 1930, is quoted as saying that the communist-dominated Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions was a bright "star" around 1926–1927 (p. 225). However, Deng also spoke of the political apathy of the workers at this time. According to Deng, some workers "only worry about bread and don't worry about politics", and he demanded that "those who wear long jackets [i.e. the communist intellectuals and leaders] should get out quick" (Deng Zhongxia, *Zhongguo Zhigong Yundong Jianshi 1919–1926* [A short history of the Chinese workers' movement 1919–1926] (Beijing, 1957), p. 120). The communists were not welcomed by the workers and involvement with them could put one's life at risk. In fact, the workers were more effective in organizing themselves. Xu Amei was successful in leading a 57-day strike by the workers in a French electric company in 1929 (p. 491). This was because his dismissal from the party freed him from its interference in his work (p. 513).

On occasion, the editors distort or obscure history to make it accord with official CCP accounts. The set-up and activities of the Chinese Trade Union Secretariat in 1921 is discussed (pp. 99–111). The editors have assigned special importance to Li Qihan (who was indeed important in this respect). Yet Li worked under Zhang Guotao, who was head of the Secretariat and one of the three-member party central bureau. The declaration of the Secretariat's foundation is printed almost in full (p. 100), but the signature of Zhang Guotao (using the name of Zhang Teli) is not included. At least this is better than in many other mainland publications where Zhang's signature is changed to that of Li Qihan. The reason for ignoring Zhang's role is simple: in 1938 he defected to the Guomindang. While the editors consistently refer to differences within the party and its workers' movement (for example on p. 478, p. 571, p. 606 and p. 624), they only specifically refer to the differences between Liu Shaoqi and Wang Ming (p. 582). However, they exclude analysis of the different opinions expressed by people such as Li Lisan, He Mengxiong, Luo Zhanglong, which is important to the true face of history.

The book could have been improved by good editing. A lack of proper citation is a general problem in books by mainland authors. In this book the editors do give footnotes but, in view of the importance of the subject and the length, a bibliography should have been provided. Tables of numbers of workers, trade union members, party members, etc., would have saved the reader a lot of time scouring the text. Sometimes the text is not well organized. Thus, for example, we are informed that the temporary party central bureau in Shanghai was wiped out in 1935 (p. 539), but we are not told until much later that it had even been established (p. 573).

The editors also tend to jump to conclusions without adequate explanation. On 23 March 1927, workers and workers' pickets took two staff and a female foreman in custody and, next morning, forced them to wear a tall paper hat (a sign of humiliation) and paraded them through the street. For the editors, "this is the beginning of the practices 40 years later [i.e. the Cultural Revolution]" (p. 353). This is an interesting but not sufficiently substantiated remark. After the discussion of a yellow trade union – the postal union – the editors remark that its changes provide a reason for "our revolutionary trade union cadres to give a second thought" (p. 545). Whom do they mean, today's trade union cadres in China? To rethink what: to be or not to be a yellow trade union?

In view of the above comments, is the argument convincing that workers in Shanghai had become a class-in-itself under the leadership of the party? Despite this and the other problems mentioned above, the book should still be seen as a contribution to the study of the history of Shanghai's workers. One hopes that the editors will give a more considered account in their second volume.

Qi Lin

CROSS, GARY. *A Quest for Time. The Reduction of Work in Britain and France, 1840–1940*. University of California Press, Berkeley [etc.] 1989. xi, 330 pp. \$39.95.

In the century between 1840 and 1940 most Western economies experienced the transition from a working day of 10 to 12 hours and more in industry to a normal working day of 8 or 8½ hours. Since then workers have profited from economic growth mostly in the form of rising income and greater leisure. The continuing growth in leisure has mainly taken the form of work-free weekends, retirement, holidays and education, but not of a further reduction in the length of the working day. Eight hours is still our norm for a day's work.

Gary Cross has analysed the adoption of the eight-hour norm and the connected developments in the discourse on work, family and leisure in France and Britain. There is a clear link with his earlier work on immigration in France, where the declining birth-rate, the losses in the First World War and shorter working hours combined to give urgency to the feeling that France had to go *à la recherche du temps perdu*. Immigration of labour was one way to compensate for losses in working time. After his book on immigration Cross published several articles on working hours and leisure in France.<sup>1</sup> In this book Cross puts his views on the French situation into a long-term context and compares them with his findings on British developments.

1. G. Cross, *Immigrant Workers in Industrial France. The Making of a New Laboring Class* (Philadelphia, 1983); "Redefining Workers' Control: Rationalization, Labor Time, and Union Politics in France, 1900–1928", in J. E. Cronin and C. Sirianni (eds.), *Work, Community and Power. The Experience of Labor in Europe and America, 1900–1925* (Philadelphia, 1983), pp. 143–172; "The Quest for Leisure: Reassessing the Eight-Hour Day in France", *Journal of Social History* 18 (winter 1984), pp. 195–216; "Les Trois Huits: Labor Movements, International Reform, and the Origins of the Eight-Hour Day, 1919–1924", *French Historical Studies* 14 (1985) 2, pp. 240–286. See also G. Cross (ed.), *Worktime and Industrialization. An International History* (Philadelphia, 1988).