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0521231981 - Shanghai: Revolution and Development in an Asian Metropolis

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AN ASIAN METROPOLIS

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Edited by
CHRISTOPHER HOWE

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PREFACE

The idea that the Contemporary China Institute might hold a conference on Shanghai first arose in a discussion between Lynn White and myself in Hong Kong in the summer of 1972. It seemed to us then that there were a number of scholars whose work in or close to this field was known to specialists but which, if framed in a collective project, could reach a wider audience and achieve a significance that isolated publication denied it. Proposals for such a conference were subsequently supported by the Institute's Committee and, in July 1977, we finally assembled in the learned and beautiful surroundings of Clare College, Cambridge.

In addition to those reading papers, we had the benefit of a number of discussants: Madame Marianne Bastid-Bruguière, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris; Mr Nigel Crook, School of Oriental and African Studies; Mr Brian G. Hook, University of Leeds; Professor Rhoads Murphey, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Mrs Suzanne Paine, Clare College, Cambridge; Professor Lucian W. Pye, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Professor Stuart R. Schram, School of Oriental and African Studies; Dr Brunhild Staiger, Institut für Asienkunde, Hamburg; and Professor Kenneth R. Walker, School of Oriental and African Studies. Many of the points raised in the discussions have been incorporated in the final papers, and Lucian Pye has kindly written a Foreword that encapsulates our conclusions as succinctly as it is possible for one person to do.

As will be seen, most of us believe that Shanghai has had, and will have, a pivotal role in the evolution of modern China and we hope that our papers do some justice to this tremendous subject.

We are all much indebted to the School of Oriental and African Studies for its financial support of this project; to the Master of Clare College for providing such a splendid venue; to Lt.-Col. T. W. Baynes for handling all the administration and travel arrangements; to Kate

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Owen for a great deal of typing and secretarial work, and to Mrs Caroline Oakman, for acting as rapporteur and for other editorial assistance.

I am grateful to David Goodman for help in romanizing personal names. Any remaining errors are my responsibility.

Christopher Howe

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FOREWORD

Lucian W. Pye

Why select Shanghai as the window through which to look at the new China? One of the world's largest cities can hardly be considered 'average' or 'typical', and no Sinological sociologist in search of the Chinese equivalent of the Lynds's 'Middletown', Warner's 'Yankee city' or Hunter's 'Regional City' would settle for Shanghai. The reason for choosing Shanghai, aside from its intrinsic historical interest, is that the city is not average but critical – critical in the sense that serious analysis of nearly all of the important aspects of life in China must, eventually, confront Shanghai and its special place in the Chinese scheme of things.

Whether the subject is heavy industries, such as steel or petrochemicals; or light industries, such as textiles or electronics, Shanghai commands attention. Shanghai's political significance in the history of revolutionary China reaches from the founding of the Chinese Communist Party there to the more recent dramatics associated with the Gang of Four. If the subject is learning, be it scientific and technological or cultural and artistic, Shanghai cannot be ignored, for its educational system is the most diversified and its middle schools the most comprehensive in all China. It goes without saying that any study of Chinese urban matters must deal extensively with that country's largest city, but it is equally true that the special districts of the Shanghai periphery illustrate the best of China's suburban planning, excellent examples of farming, and a wide range of rural industries. The systematic study of Shanghai, in short, directs attention to most of China's critical problems and to her prospects for modernization.

Since 1949 Shanghai has been the major dynamo for the Chinese economy, and it is destined to bulk large in the current efforts to fulfil the Four Modernizations by the end of the century. It is, however, paradoxical that Shanghai should achieve such importance for China's development, because for nearly one hundred years many Chinese

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depicted the economic history of Shanghai in terms of foreign ‘exploitation’ – the city was a cancer destroying the vitality of China. Then suddenly, in the early 1950s, the new authorities in Peking discovered that what had been created in Shanghai could, surprisingly, be ‘exploited’ for the development of the rest of China. How could it be that all that came before, which was supposed to be so bad, could turn out to be so valuable?

Clearly something extraordinary was created in Shanghai which did not die when the foreign connections were broken, and possibly more important, when much of Shanghai’s indigenous capital and its most talented managers fled to Hong Kong where they created the amazing expansion of that city’s economy. It is unlikely that scholars will ever agree as to exactly what kind of a social and economic phenomenon Chinese and foreigners jointly created in Shanghai during the Treaty Port era – yet in my judgment the introductory historical review in this volume by Marie-Claire Bergère is one of the most balanced and penetrating brief accounts ever written. The problem is that for some people pre-war Shanghai was a grotesque anomaly that shamelessly refused to mask its social ills; while for others, the city will be remembered as the liveliest and the most dynamic commercial and radical-intellectual centre in the East. Fortunately, when the provocative issue of historical interpretation is set aside and attention is turned to contemporary developments, there can be no debating the proposition that Shanghai has been an indispensable source of wealth and talent for the People’s Republic.

True, China’s political masters in Peking, no doubt sensitive about their pre-1949 years of blackening the reputation of the city, have been consistently reluctant to acknowledge openly their indebtedness to Shanghai’s capabilities. For nearly thirty years Shanghai has been denied any significant replenishment of capital by the central authorities, yet the city has persisted in being the principal source of funds for that same central government. It has also been the main source of technical skills and administrative talents for China’s industrial development. Within a year of the establishment of the People’s Republic, Shanghai was producing a fifth of all of China’s industrial output. Even more impressive is the fact that, during the *First Five Year Plan*, Shanghai provided, through taxes and profits, a sum ‘sufficient to finance 64% of all the basic construction investment plan for industry throughout China’ (Howe, p. 166). Furthermore, even though during the *First Five Year Plan* when Shanghai was being starved of new resources

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and received only from one to two per cent of national investment, it still achieved a 14% growth in industrial output. In spite of having to export to the rest of the country some eighty textile mills and numerous other factories, the city clung to its traditional role of being the pacesetter of China's industrial development. For example, with the advent of the electronics industry, Shanghai quickly moved to the forefront, and it now has nearly as many such plants as its next two closest rivals, Peking and Tientsin, combined.

Perhaps the most remarkable quality of Shanghai is that over the years its schools and universities have consistently produced the most skilled and disciplined workers and the most imaginative and professional managers and administrators in China. Government policy has steadily transferred much of this talent to other parts of the country. The exact number of people who have been required to leave Shanghai to help develop other parts of China is impossible to determine. The emigration has included not only Shanghai's contribution to the national programme of 'sending down' educated youth to the countryside, but also a specific programme of reassigning skilled labour to build up industries elsewhere. Christopher Howe judges that since 1949 at least one million skilled workers have been sent out from Shanghai, but certain Shanghai officials have told foreign visitors that nearly two million Shanghaiese, not including the educated youth, have been sent to the rest of the country.

All of these accomplishments occurred in spite of government policies designed, until recently, to equalize regional differences: policies which thus favoured other parts of China to Shanghai's disadvantage. No one can say what Shanghai might have accomplished had the city been treated more sympathetically during the last thirty years and had its marginal advantages been more systematically realized. In any case, current government policies are changing and Shanghai is now to be the beneficiary of much of the regime's new programmes of modernization.

Aside from themes, in economic history, the story of Shanghai provides a key for understanding the Chinese political process. In particular, it dramatically illustrates the remarkable, but rarely appreciated, fact that in Chinese politics locally based power rarely champions local interests. To a degree unique among nations, Chinese politics is largely insensitive to geography and to the particular interests of regions. Cliques may be formed among people from the same place, but the policies they advocate do not necessarily, or even

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usually, represent the distinctive interests of their locality. This is not to say that officials, in the past as well as at present, may not seek to reduce the impact of national policies on their localities, but such actions are quite different from trying to change national policies in ways that would favour local geographical interests. Throughout Chinese history it has not been considered legitimate to engage in the articulation of the special interests of any locality. This tradition, which has been reinforced by the communist ideals of centralized government, has produced some bizarre effects in Shanghai, largely because of the city's unique character.

Since the founding of the People's Republic, Shanghai's political leaders have consistently failed to assert the special economic and cultural interests of their city. Indeed, quite to the contrary, they have over considerable periods advocated policies and programmes diametrically opposed to the interests and the welfare of the people they presumably represented. The Shanghai 'Radicals', whom we are now supposed to call 'Ultra-Rightists', were at the forefront in articulating the very policies which were the most detrimental to the economic, cultural and social interests of the citizens of Shanghai. The city with the broadest and strongest educational system had leaders that worked for the near-destruction of Chinese education; the city that had economic advantages that could have made it be the principal supplier of goods for the entire country had a leadership that espoused regional and local self-sufficiency and autarky; the city that had the highest-paid and most productive workers in the country also had a leadership that denounced material incentives. That Shanghai's leadership could be so impervious to local interests explains much about the nature of power in China. In his contribution to this volume, David S. G. Goodman documents the extreme radicalism of the Shanghai leadership in a variety of policy areas, including the militia, education, the military, industrial management, and economic development programmes. The outburst of joyful exuberance which followed the announcement of the 'crushing' of the Gang of Four is proof that the citizens of Shanghai are not entirely fools when it comes to understanding their own self-interests, and, paradoxically, once the city came under more direct control of the 'centre' its inherent advantages were encouraged and Shanghai is now rapidly becoming the most cosmopolitan city in China.

Indeed visitors to China uniformly testify that, since October 1976,

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the pace of life in Shanghai has steadily picked up, and that its shops are manifestly more numerous, better supplied, and filled with more customers than those in other Chinese cities. The people of Shanghai seem anxious to shed their unnatural parochialism of the last thirty years and revert to being once more a part of the modern world.

Historically Shanghai was quick to adopt innovations: it first encountered trains only seven years after the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in America; its first textile mills were built before any in the American South, and by 1930 it had, according to some methods of calculation, the largest mill in the world; its first cinema opened only five years after San Francisco got its first large movie house; and by the late 1930s its Commercial Press was publishing each year as many titles as the entire American publishing industry – most of which were, of course, pirated.

Today, Shanghai, unleashed by the goals of the Four Modernizations, is striving to reduce the gap in technology and culture between itself and the modernized world, a gap which has become wider during the last thirty years. It starts with an ‘old’ city, in which it appears that not a single structure has been erected in the former International Settlement and French Concession, and a ring of new industrial suburbs where workers live in high-rise flats adjacent to their factories and plants. Physically, much of old Shanghai is run down and shabby, but it is likely that, as China enters a new phase of determined modernizing, Shanghai will again assert itself as the country’s most advanced and dynamic city.

In the pages that follow scholars from several countries examine numerous facets of the development of Shanghai since 1949. Some have chosen to concentrate on what might appear to be relatively esoteric aspects of Shanghai life, such as the role of the Shanghai dock workers during a period of political upheaval; others have painstakingly collected, from obscure sources, key statistics which reveal economic trends and past conditions – such as figures on the standard of living of workers in the 1930s; while others have painted with broader brushes, but always with care about facts and evidence.

The drafting of these papers was done before China was firmly on its current course of pursuit of the Four Modernizations, but this does not date the volume because their analyses skilfully trace the zigs and zags of Chinese policies since 1949 and, collectively, they vividly set the stage for understanding precisely what is now taking place in China.

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Thus anyone interested in current Chinese developments, and in that country's prospects for modernization, can greatly benefit from this volume because the authors, in explaining the past, illustrate from many different perspectives the reasons why China's leaders have come to the programmes they now espouse.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CFJP</i>	(<i>Chieh-fang jih-pao</i>)	<i>Liberation Daily</i>
<i>CKCNP</i>	(<i>Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien pao</i>)	<i>China Youth Daily</i>
<i>CNP</i>	(<i>Ch'ing-nien pao</i>)	<i>China Youth</i>
<i>CQ</i>		<i>The China Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>		<i>China Reconstructs</i>
<i>CWR</i>		<i>China Weekly Review</i>
<i>FBIS</i>		<i>Foreign Broadcast Information Service</i>
<i>HC</i>	(<i>Hung-ch'i</i>)	<i>The Red Flag</i>
<i>HHJP</i>	(<i>Hsin-hua jih-pao</i>)	<i>New China Daily</i>
<i>HHPYK</i>	(<i>Hsin-hua pan-yüeh k'an</i>)	<i>New China Semi-Monthly</i>
<i>HHYP</i>	(<i>Hsin-hua yüeh-pao</i>)	<i>New China Monthly</i>
<i>HHYPP</i>	(<i>Hsüeh-hsi yü p'i-p'an</i>)	<i>Study and Criticism</i>
<i>HMWP</i>	(<i>Hsin-min wan-pao</i>)	<i>New People's Evening Daily</i>
<i>HWJP</i>	(<i>Hsin-wen jih-pao</i>)	<i>Daily News</i>
<i>JMJJP</i>	(<i>Jen-min jih-pao</i>)	<i>People's Daily</i>
<i>JMWHS</i>	(<i>Jen-min wen-hsüeh</i>)	<i>People's Literature</i>
<i>JPRS</i>		<i>Joint Publications Research Service</i>
<i>KMJJP</i>	(<i>Kuang-ming jih-pao</i>)	<i>Enlightenment Daily</i>
<i>LTP</i>	(<i>Lao-tung pao</i>)	<i>Labour Daily</i>
<i>MY</i>	(<i>Meng-ya</i>)	<i>The Sprout</i>
<i>NCNA</i>		<i>New China News Agency</i>
<i>PR</i>		<i>Peking Review</i>
<i>SCMP</i>		<i>Survey of the China Mainland Press</i>
<i>SPRCM</i>		<i>Survey of the People's Republic of China Magazines</i>
<i>SHWHS</i>	(<i>Shang-hai wen-hsüeh</i>)	<i>Shanghai Literature</i>
<i>SWB</i>		<i>Survey of World Broadcasts</i>
<i>TKP</i>	(<i>Ta kung pao</i>)	<i>Impartial Daily</i>
<i>WHP</i>	(<i>Wen-hui pao</i>)	<i>Cultural Daily</i>
<i>WYP</i>	(<i>Wen-yi pao</i>)	<i>Literary Gazette</i>
<i>WYYP</i>	(<i>Wen-yi yüeh-pao</i>)	<i>Literary Monthly</i>