

NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

I. Institutional News

Labour History at the Institute of History, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

The Chinese working-class was born in the middle of the nineteenth century. Eighty years of spontaneous, painful struggle and groping in the darkness followed before the Chinese Communist Party was founded and gave the working-class leadership. Thereafter, the Chinese labour movement entered into a new period of conscious struggle. For 28 years, the Chinese working-class followed a hard and tortuous road, suffering setbacks with the lives of many thousands of its pioneers being sacrificed. Finally the people of China, led by the Chinese Communist Party, succeeded in overthrowing the evil rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism, and established the People's Republic of China in 1949. The basis of rule is the alliance between the working-class and the peasantry under the leadership of the working-class. How did this miracle occur? How did the Chinese workers' movement achieve victory under the conditions of semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism? What kind of historical experiences does it have? Which laws determined its development? These problems interest scholars as well as people involved in the workers' movement.

In order to find the answers to these questions, in 1961 our research department began to investigate them, although the studies themselves had begun as early as 1952. In that year a committee was set up in Shanghai to collect and sort out source materials on the workers' movement and to conduct research. Later the key members and a part of the source materials of that committee were transferred to the Institute of History, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Thus, a department for the study of the workers' movement was set up to continue the research in this field.

Shanghai is a big city with the largest concentration of workers in China. It is a centre of the workers' movement in this country and we have done much research on the Shanghai workers' movement. A number of source materials, articles and books have been published. Since 1985 we have been working on *The History of the Shanghai Workers' Movement* (about 800,000 Chinese characters [about 1,600 pages in book form]). It will comprise two volumes, the first of which will be published by 1988, the second by 1990. Since 1986 we have also been doing research on the national labour movement. A five-volume, comprehensive and detailed study entitled *The History of the Chinese Labour Movement* is scheduled for completion in eight years. It is one of the key projects of the research programmes of Shanghai Municipality in philosophy and the social sciences. In order to do a

thorough job for the compilation of *The History of the Chinese Labour Movement*, some monographic research has already been completed or is still in progress. This preliminary research consists of the following studies:

(i) The research object. The question of who belongs to the Chinese working class must first be answered. For example, are white collar workers such as teachers part of the working class? Some people in China have always excluded this category from the working class, describing them as bourgeois intellectuals. This has really done them an injustice. In the past, farm labourers were defined by some people as part of the proletariat and they were therefore organized in trade unions. Yet in fact, farm labourers are part of the rural proletariat and should not be confused with the working class. Is the labour movement an independent social factor? Some Chinese historians customarily regard the history of the Chinese workers' movement as being an inextricable part of the history of the Chinese Communist Party. This is not scientific. Before the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party the labour movement had already made its own history, even if this was during a period of spontaneous struggle. Even after its founding, the Chinese Communist Party did not lead every workers' struggle. Hence the history of the Chinese labour movement should be an independent discipline with its own research contents. What then are these contents? Someone has suggested that the study should be referred to as the history of the movements of white and blue collar workers. These questions are worth exploring further.

(ii) The comparative study between the workers' movement in China and in Western countries. This is the key question if we are to describe the specifically Chinese character of the history of the labour movement. What points do the working classes in China and in Western countries have in common? Generally speaking, the working class, whether in China or in Western countries, is the most revolutionary class, being associated with the most advanced means of production. The Chinese working class, suffering from the oppression of imperialism, feudalism and the bourgeoisie is different from that of Western countries, which only suffers the oppression of the bourgeoisie. The Chinese working class has a short history. The constant absorption of bankrupt peasants and handicraftmen resulted in a close relationship with the peasant. That too is a difference with western working classes. As to the revolutionary strategy: in Western countries parliament was usually employed as a forum for educating and mobilizing the masses. In revolutionary situations, they would launch general strikes and armed uprisings in the cities and take power by force. Up to 1927, the Chinese workers' movement tried to do the same. The victory of the Chinese revolution was the result of an armed struggle in the rural areas led by the Chinese Communist Party. During some 22 years of extremely hard struggle (1927-1949), we attained power by surrounding and attacking the cities with forces raised in the rural areas. The task of the workers' movement in the cities was to gather strength through effective agitation and organisation, and to co-ordinate its actions with the armed struggle in the rural areas and finally to liberate the cities. There is no such precedent in the West.

(iii) Research on the Chinese Labour Secretariat. This Secretariat was an organization set up to lead the nationwide labour movement after the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party. How was it established? What were its activities? What kind of role did it play in the Chinese workers' movement? What was its

relationship with the early Japanese labour movement? These are questions which must be answered through research on the early Chinese workers' movement.

(iv) Research on the armed uprising of the Shanghai workers. From October 1926 to March 1927, Shanghai workers launched three armed uprisings in support of the Northern Expeditionary Army. What was the background of the armed uprising? How about the role of the leadership in the uprising? Some Chinese scholars and people from trade unions tend to consider the Shanghai workers' uprising to be the equivalent of armed uprisings in Western countries. A proper estimate of the importance of these uprisings would be helpful in summing up the historical experiences of the Chinese labour movement and in properly defining its characteristics as it developed.

(v) Research on the Chinese yellow trade unions. What are the similarities and differences with Western yellow trade unions? How could they exist? This is a subject worth studying. Due to the differences in social and economic conditions, there was no foundation for reform in China, as there was in Western capitalist countries. But that did not exclude the setting-up of some yellow trade unions with the aim of attaining reforms in some trade and locations. We are studying a typical example of yellow trade unionism: the Shanghai Post Trade Union. Originally, the revolutionaries had the upper hand in that trade union. But, after the defeat of the First Great Revolution in China in 1927, it gradually became a yellow trade union. It then dominated the postal workers for about twenty years. This had something to do with the fact that there were many white collar activists in that trade and the grassroots membership was controlled by feudal gangs and under the influence of social organizations which existed in Chinese society. This could be described as another typically Chinese characteristic.

(vi) The relationship between the Chinese trade union and international trade union organizations is a topic which is always neglected in the research of the history of the labour movement in China. The Chinese labour movement is an important part of the international labour movement. During the long revolutionary struggle, a close relationship existed between the Chinese trade union movement and international trade unions. Undoubtedly the influence of international trade union organizations on the Chinese labour movement is a necessary topic of research. This is also true as far as the international activities undertaken by the Chinese trade unions during various historical periods is concerned.

Some of the above monographic researches have already been published, while others are in preparation. Yet other monographic studies will be added when the research project is in full swing. In order to enable the department to carry out the research necessary for the study of the Chinese labour movement, it is being steadily expanded. At the moment we have eleven research members. Among them is Prof. Shen Yixing, once the deputy director and adviser of the Institute of History (SASS): a specialist on the history of the labour movement, now the vice-president of Shanghai Historical Society, deputy director of the source material committee of the Shanghai labour movement. He was himself engaged in workers' activities in Shanghai and Nanjing and compiled journals for the workers' movement from the end of the 'thirties onwards. He has specialized in research on the history of the workers' movement. In recent years he has had contacts with many trade-union activists of various countries and scholars of the history of the labour movement.

such as Prof. Jean Chesneaux from France. He wrote the book *The Revolutionary Struggles waged by Shanghai workers during several historical periods*. Recently he published a collection of treatises *Records of Arguments about the History of the Labour Movement*. Another researcher is Prof. Jiang Peinan, also a specialist in the history of the labour movement. He was once the head of the department of labour movement history at the Institute of History (SASS) and is now a member of the academic committee of the Institute. He started out as a capable research journalist and has studied labour movement history for more than thirty-five years. *The Fighting Fifty Years* (the history of the British-American Tobacco Company) and *The Ins and Outs of the April 12 Event* were compiled by him.

I myself began to assist Prof. Sheng Yixing in the research of labour movement history thirty-five years ago. At present, I am the head of the Department of Labour Movement History and an associate professor. Also on the staff are seven assistant researchers (lecturers) including the deputy director of my department, Mr. Chen Weiming and an English translator. All of these people are capable of independent research and some of their more valuable work has been published. My colleagues and I will continue the research on the history of the Chinese labour movement. We hope to contribute more publications for readers both in China and abroad. We would also like to have academic exchanges with foreign scholars interested in the history of the Chinese labour movement.

The editors of the *International Review of Social History* asked me to write something for the journal. This has given me a welcome opportunity to inform the readers of this famous journal about the present and future research being done by our department. I believe it can promote friendship and academic exchanges between Chinese and foreign scholars. [Translation: Wang Yintong.]

Zheng Qingsheng

II. Acquisitions

Archives of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union

The Labor-Management Documentation Center at Cornell University (Ithaca, NY 14853, U.S.A.) announces the acquisition of thirteen hundred feet of historical documents, photographs, and memorabilia comprising the Archives of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. The archives consist of 56 collections which include records relating to the administrations of the six past presidents of the Union, ILGWU headquarters departments, and many of the key locals. The largest single part of the collection are the David Dubinsky records which consist of 450,000 items and which span the years 1932-1966. In addition to manuscript and printed documents, the collection includes an important labour photograph collection, a number of oral histories conducted with senior officials of the union, and guides to most of the important records groups in the collection.

In addition to documenting the history of the union and the garment industry, the records are useful for the study of the development of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the American Labor Party, the Spanish Civil War, the New Deal,

communism and international affairs, and Italian-American and Jewish American affairs.

The center already holds the records of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and the Fur and Leather Workers Union.

Archives of the Mexican Communist Party

The Hoover Institution at Stanford University (Stanford, CA 94305, U.S.A.) has acquired a major collection of archival and printed materials on the Mexican Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Mexico; PCM). The archive, which spans the entire history of the party, from its foundation in 1919 until its merger with several other parties in 1981, was assembled by Rodolfo Echeverría Martínez, long a member of the PCM Executive Committee.

The PCM archive encompasses books, pamphlets, newspapers, journals, party memoranda, and political posters. The collection is especially valuable for its holdings of internal party documents. The minutes, correspondence, bulletins and resolutions relating to the PCM's twenty national congresses held during the period 1921 to 1981 throw considerable light on the checkered history of the party. Among other things, these papers reveal the depth and scope of communist trade-union activity, especially among railway workers, electricians, and the academic community.

Papers of Hamon, Martínez and Russell

The International Institute of Social History (Kabelweg 51, 1014 BA Amsterdam, The Netherlands) has acquired: (i) the papers of Augustin Hamon (1862-1945), the French libertarian writer and collector; among them is a huge correspondence with virtually all notable anarchists in France and many anarchists abroad. (ii) The institute also acquired the books and papers of José Martínez (1921-1986), containing the archives of his publishing house, Ruedo Ibérico, an important collection of clandestine anti-Franco publications, and documents on the origins of the Comisiones Obreras; and (iii) The papers of Dora Russell (1894-1986), the British feminist, pacifist and freethinker, documenting most aspects of British radicalism during her lifetime.

III. Announcements

Power and Responses to Power

In the two academic years 1988-1990 the subject of the Seminar of the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton will be "Power and Responses to Power". Power will be considered from the whole range of analytic and exploratory perspectives being brought to bear on it in contemporary scholarship;

the centre seeks fellows and papers that attempt to apply these perspectives in specific historical contexts. Power is understood to be inherent in all institutions, large or small, and as taking many forms, including military, social, economic, cultural, intellectual, religious, customary and ritual. Responses to Power includes all available options, such as collaboration, deference, acquiescence, exit, passive resistance and active rebellion. The topic will thus embrace imperialism, acculturation to it, and anti-imperialism; foreign domination, acceptance of it, and rebellion; internal power struggles between status, class or religious groups; and consensus or conflict within intermediary institutions such as churches, cities, villages, schools and economic organizations. The Center thus hopes to explore a diversity of approaches, settings and issues.

Inquiries and requests for Fellowship Application Forms should be addressed to the Secretary, Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, 129 Dickinson Hall, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. 08544, U.S.A. Scholars who would like to offer a paper to the Seminar are asked to write to the Director, Professor Lawrence Stone.

Documenting Canadian Labour

The spring 1989 issue of *Archivaria* (Number 27), the journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists, will be a special issue devoted to "Documenting Labour". It will include articles exploring the development of labour archives in Canada, various aspects of current archival practice in the labour field, the importance of non-trade union records as source for labour history, and related subjects. Anyone interested in contributing should contact John Bell and Rod Young, *Archivaria*, c/o National Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3, Canada.

The Suburb, 1500-2000

History Workshop Journal will be publishing a special issue, and possibly a book, on "The Suburbs"; as a first step it is holding an informal workshop on this to which they invite contributions and papers. The five themes suggested are: (i) the industrial suburb, 1500-2000; (ii) the aesthetic of the suburb, 1800-2000; (iii) the suburb and literature, 1800-2000; (iv) the class make up of the suburbs, 1800-2000; (v) illusion and reality: ideal homes and lived experience. The workshop will concentrate on English/British experience from 1800 to the present day, but would welcome contributions from earlier periods and other countries. Proposals should be directed to 19 Elder Street, London E1, Great Britain.

Bukharin

Eight scholars in the Federal Republic of Germany are preparing an international symposium on "Bukharin as a Theoretician of Socialism". The symposium will be held from Monday, 10 October (Bukharin's hundredth birthday) until Thursday, 13 October 1988 in Wuppertal. Scholarly papers are welcome. Requests for further

information should be addressed to Professor G. Schäfer, Geibelstrasse 16, 3000 Hannover, FRG, or to Professor Theodor Bergmann, Im Asemwald 26-6-215, 7000 Stuttgart 70, FRG.

Four Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century

The Société d'Histoire de la Révolution de 1848 et des Révolutions du XIXe siècle is preparing a special issue of its bulletin on the four revolutions in France during the nineteenth century: 1830, 1848, 1870, 1871. The issue will appear in 1989. Material for consideration should be sent to the Société, 17 rue de la Sorbonne, 75005 Paris, France.

Slavery

The University of São Paulo will hold an international congress on slavery, 7-11 June 1988.

The themes are: (i) methods and techniques used in the study on slavery; (ii) historiography of slavery; (iii) archives and documents on slavery; (iv) slavery in literature; (v) slave culture and forms of expression; (vi) slavery and law; (vii) historical demography of slavery; (viii) economic aspects of slavery; (ix) religion and religiosity in slave societies; (x) Black Africa and slavery; (xi) forced labour and slavery in American Indian societies; (xii) slave trade; (xiii) daily life in slave societies; (xiv) slavery: ideology and *mentalité*; (xv) tensions, conflicts and forms of resistance to slavery; (xvi) abolition; and (xvii) the heritage of slavery and the situation of the Indian and Negro in contemporary class societies. All those wishing to present a paper should write to Professor José Jobson de A. Arruda, Universidade de São Paulo, F.F.L.C.H., Departamento de História, Av. Prof. Lineu Prestes 338, Sala N2, Cidade Universitária, CEP 05508, São Paulo, SP, Brasil.