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SHANGHAI'S THREE ARMED UPRISINGS, 1926–1927

Despite initiatives in other places, Communist leaders put their greatest faith in China's industrial capital, Shanghai, as the center of the revolution that would bring their party to power. But in Shanghai a heated debate was developing over how this revolution should proceed and just who would undertake it. The time had arrived, the CCP concluded, to move beyond strike actions and to seize political power. Yet whether the impending revolution should be conducted in the name of the people or the proletariat remained open to question. Such controversies crystallized in the course of militia mobilization.

As the CCP planned its first armed uprising, cadres in Shanghai privately admitted that the several hundred worker militiamen under their nominal command were actually a destructive force—in the same league with the thousands of armed drifters who roamed the city at the behest of gangsters.[1] Unruly though the Worker Self-Defense Corps was acknowledged to be, its activities were nonetheless deemed essential in laying the groundwork for the upcoming insurrection. In fact, the very destructiveness of the corps was seen by some as a necessary element in setting the stage for what was anticipated to be a bloody affair. Proletarian violence, it was suggested, would pave the way toward wider popular involvement. CCP labor organizer Luo Yinong (recently returned from four years in the Soviet Union), on the eve of the first attempt at armed uprising, stressed the close relationship between bloodshed and the awakening of the citizenry: "We must prepare for the people to shed blood,

make military preparations for a popular uprising, so that all the people will have a political awakening."[2]

THE FIRST ARMED UPRISING

Declaring a popular revolution was one thing, carrying it out quite another. Warriors and weapons were both in short supply. In keeping with the Comintern-instigated United Front (see chapter 1), which pledged the Nationalists and Communists to a common struggle against the warlords, 100 of the 130 guns in the hands of the Shanghai workers were a gift from the KMT—purchased on the very day the uprising was to be launched. With no time for practice, however, the revolutionaries found the weapons useless against the three thousand armed soldiers and policemen who enforced warlord control in the city. The KMT's promise to augment the worker militia with thousands of gangsters also failed to materialize.[3]

CCP strategy at this time was clouded not only by the unreliability of its Guomindang allies, but also by the Communists' own uncertainties about the proper parameters of revolutionary citizenship—uncertainties that reflected the complex society in which the revolution was taking shape. Shanghai was indeed the site of China's largest concentration of workers; however, it was also home to the country's richest and most powerful bourgeoisie. On the one hand, the CCP was committed to the idea of a proletarian revolution. On the other hand, CCP leaders were anxious to cooperate with the "self-governance movement" then being promoted by prominent businessmen in Shanghai.[4]

A product of bourgeois initiatives, the self-governance movement took community—rather than class—as the cornerstone of political participation. In phrases reminiscent of the American and French revolutions, Shanghai merchants issued calls for popular sovereignty (*renmin zizhi*) and a citizens' assembly (*guomin huiyi*). This political vision drew upon local experiments in self-governance that predated the 1911 Revolution, when Chinese sections of Shanghai had been managed in a manner that Mark Elvin termed "gentry democracy."[5] At that time citizens' associations (*gongminhui*) had been established in the districts of Zhabei and Nanshi "to discuss and deal with all local administrative issues."[6] As historian Xu Xiaoqun has observed, these associations—based on residence in a particular district of the city rather than upon native-place or occupation—represented a significant departure from traditional guild forms of merchant organization.[7] The activities of the associations, moreover, centered not on commercial concerns but on matters of citizenship: calling for fair elections for provincial assemblymen, negotiating district boundary lines, and proposing that foreigners be required to relinquish residency in their sections of the city.[8]

Although these self-governance organizations were abruptly suspended in 1914 when President Yuan Shikai issued a directive banning local councils across the country, the dream of municipal autonomy did not die. In the early 1920s, merchants in the district of Zhabei established a Self-Governance Office (*zizhi gongsuo*) backed up by an armed North-South Defense Corps (*nanbei baoweituan*).[9] These institutions—one civil, the other military—were dissolved by warlord Sun Chuanfang in August 1926, but not before Communist labor organizers had also become convinced of the need for some form of municipal self-rule to succeed Sun's control of the city. Appreciating the widespread appeal of these ongoing impulses toward local autonomy, and operating under a United Front that encouraged bourgeois participation, Communist cadres endorsed the prospect of an elected assembly to be established in close cooperation with Shanghai businessmen.[10] As a sign of the importance that they attached to the struggle for self-governance, CCP organizers decided that leadership of the upcoming armed uprising should rest with merchants rather than with the proletariat.[11] The goal of the insurrection, as the Communists described it in a Plan for Shanghai Self-Governance, was "to bring about a truly meaningful bourgeois-style of self-rule government."[12]

When the October uprising was crushed in less than a day, CCP leaders were compelled to reconsider both their alliance with the bourgeoisie and the role of armed workers. The monetary concerns of the pickets had been made all too clear at the outset of the insurrection when dozens of dock workers refused to participate in the fighting once they discovered that a forty-cent bus fare stood between them and

their appointed location.[13] Within a day after the defeat of the uprising, disheartened pickets streamed into party offices to demand that new jobs be found for them. After party cadres explained that they were powerless to provide such assistance, the angry workers threatened to seek revenge by enlisting in the warlord army of Sun Chuanfang! As party leaders analyzed the situation, the pickets had been composed largely of unemployed workers who expected to benefit by being given permanent work with the victory of the armed uprising.[14] Their defeat shattered these dreams. It also shattered the organization of the pickets. Among the casualties of the insurrection was Xi Zuoxiao (also known as Li Zuoren), who had been in charge of the Worker Self-Defense Corps. Xi was captured and executed by warlord forces shortly after the abortive uprising.[15] In the wake of this setback, some party leaders argued that future military work should be handled entirely by the party itself and not entrusted to the (less secretive) union.[16]

THE SECOND ARMED UPRISING

Despite the debacle of its first attempt at armed uprising, the Shanghai Party Committee (SPC) was optimistic that a second attempt would be more successful: "First there must be a general strike. The masses will immediately rise up to make speeches and hold meetings in preparation for establishing a Paris Commune in Shanghai."[17] Mass spontaneity would not suffice to ensure revolutionary victory, however. Zhou Enlai, party secretary of the Communists' Central Military Commission, was dispatched to Shanghai to take charge of military planning for the next uprising.

Zhou had developed an interest in proletarian revolution during his studies in France. In 1922, he wrote of the October Revolution that had occurred in Russia only five years before, "The mission of this revolution was the complete opposite of a democratic revolution. The only historically comparable event was the Paris Commune of 1871. Even so, the Paris Commune was a brilliant but short-lived flower in the history of proletarian revolution, whereas Russia's October Revolution laid the revolutionary foundations for the proletarian class of the entire world."[18]

In the tradition of the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution, Zhou Enlai saw worker militias as essential to the success of the Shanghai uprising. One thousand workers were targeted to serve as the armed spearhead of the revolt. Selection of this vanguard bespoke a stricter definition of revolutionary citizenship. Previous efforts to recruit gangsters and unemployed workers to the Self-Defense Corps were now deemed mistaken because these marginal elements were "not truly revolutionary." Only gainfully employed workers were eligible for service. This purely proletarian force would be rebuilt on the foundation of the existing pickets, which were now under party direction, having been transferred from union auspices. The public name of the force would be Shanghai Pickets (*Shanghai jiuchadui*); the internal name would remain Worker Self-Defense Corps (*gongren ziweituan*). Although military training could not be conducted openly, the party designated a special unit to oversee clandestine nighttime drills.[19] Numbered armbands were issued to all pickets, in an attempt to impose greater accountability, and a new director was chosen.[20]

An inventory of picket weapons revealed a growing supply of everything from wooden staves to Mauser pistols, rifles, and hand grenades. To tighten discipline, a detailed set of regulations was issued: while on duty, for example, pickets must never let go of their weapons and were not to smoke or light a fire, speak loudly, cough, spit, or nap. Whenever a pedestrian entered patrolled territory, the picket must demand that the intruder pronounce the appropriate password. If, after three queries of "Who goes there?" no answer was forthcoming, the picket should shoot to kill.[21]

Despite this attention to proletarian purity and preparedness, ambivalence over the nature of revolutionary citizenship continued to complicate the CCP's plans for armed insurrection. Privately, the Communists now agreed that workers—not the bourgeoisie—must serve as the mainstay (*zhuti*) of the second uprising.[22] For the time being, however, the official role of the pickets was to be restricted to maintaining order at mass meetings and providing leadership during marches.[23]

Significantly, a distinction was made between picket involvement in community actions and class actions. With regard to the former, party organizers decreed that the pickets should carry no weapons

while monitoring the mass demonstrations that were then taking place in Shanghai as part of the self-governance movement. When more than fifty thousand people representing over four hundred organizations gathered on November 28 at a public stadium to demand that Shanghai become a special metropolis ruled by a citizens' assembly, unarmed pickets provided crowd control. A peaceful demeanor was considered to be of utmost importance in agitating for the right of community self-governance, so as to reassure the general public. But when it was a question not of community action but of class action, such as marching to demand the reopening of their own labor union (which the warlord authorities had closed down), pickets were permitted to bear arms as an appropriate expression of the military prowess of the proletariat.[24]

At the same time that he acknowledged the importance of public circumspection, however, Zhou Enlai supervised secret preparations to convert the pickets into a more powerful fighting force capable of overthrowing warlord rule in the city. Fearing that the ten-person teams (*xiaodui*) that currently served as drill units would be too weak to stand alone during combat, picket leaders amalgamated every three teams into a squadron (*zhongdui*). Each squadron was to consist of thirty regular members and eight leaders (three team leaders, three drill sergeants (*chuanling*), a squadron director, and a squadron vice-director). The squadrons were expected to serve as the main combat units in the forthcoming armed uprising. In circumstances where larger tactical forces were required, brigades (*dadui*) could be formed from two or more squadrons.[25] The original several hundred pickets were designated a special picket force (*tebie jiuchadui*), whose members were responsible for helping to train new recruits.[26]

While CCP leaders were determined to make armed workers the vanguard of their revolutionary designs, they were also sobered by the persistent problems that such forces generated. In Shanghai, cadres continued to bemoan the materialistic fever that had swept the pickets as a result of May Thirtieth strike pay.[27] Some of these disciplinary difficulties were attributed to the continuing involvement of secret-society gangs.[28] CCP leaders observed in January of 1927, "The standing of the Shanghai General Labor Union has improved greatly, and now the local gangs involved in opium smuggling all want to make contact with it."[29] Picket directors emphasized that workers needed to be armed not only to prepare for a second workers' armed uprising, but also to protect themselves from gangsters. In an initiative designed to defend against gang inroads within the militias, the party cautioned that only employed workers whose thinking was "very revolutionary" should be issued arms. They must, moreover, undergo high-quality political and military training, conducted in the utmost secrecy.[30] Yet admonitions about proletarian purity notwithstanding, in Shanghai in the 1920s it was often quite impossible to distinguish regular workers from secret-society gangsters.[31]

A summary of picket work, presented at a party committee meeting on January 30, 1927, reiterated the importance of eliminating unemployed workers from the ranks of the revolutionary vanguard. Shop clerks and handicraftsmen, who were often active in militia operations at the time, were likewise to be weeded out. This streamlining of the revolutionary citizenry was intended to rescue the revolution from the parochial skirmishes in which it had become mired. The pickets were chided for arresting rival groups of workers and merchants, sealing up factories and shops, forcing people to join unions, extorting union dues, and engaging in other types of disorderly conduct. They were condemned as well for waging armed feuds (*xiedou*) among rival factions of workers. Ineffective militarily, and with only the appearance of being an armed force of the proletariat, the pickets' arbitrary abrogation of police prerogatives was said to be giving society a terrible image of the labor movement in general.[32] And the difficulties were not confined to Shanghai. In Wuhan, according to internal party reports, the several thousand pickets had gotten completely out of hand—detaining people at will, closing down rival organizations, and creating general disorder. Dismayed by this unruly behavior, Party Central ordered the Hubei Party Branch to scale back its picket work.[33]

The root of these problems, according to the summary report, was that worker militias had been transformed from a temporary organization into a permanent institution. The report noted that throughout the world pickets had historically emerged during strikes to prevent scabs from breaking the work stoppage. In China, however,

this appropriately spontaneous and short-lived entity had recently taken on a life of its own. Because the Canton–Hong Kong Seamen's Strike had lasted for a full year, picket units that sprang up suddenly in the context of that movement gradually evolved into a regular armed force. Then other places began to imitate the seamen's militia with activities that went well beyond proper limits.[34]

The party's summary report was somewhat disingenuous in pinning the blame for the continuing disciplinary problems on Cantonese seamen, when in fact its own policy of institutionalizing armed worker militias—in Canton and elsewhere—was at least as culpable. The issue was further complicated by the wide array of armed workers' groups, nurtured by different elements of the party and union, now in existence. In addition to regular pickets (*jiuchadui*) and picket special forces (*tebiedui*), there was a Self-Defense Corps (*ziweituan*) as well as a Self-Defense League (*ziweidui*). In theory, some of these (e.g., *jiuchadui* and *ziweituan*) were simply different names for the same force; in practice, however, the different designations indicated quite separate organizations with discrete membership lists. Some of the units were assigned to public crowd control duties, while others operated in secret to carry out undercover missions. Communist cadres favored folding the various smaller units into the worker pickets, so as to bring about greater order as well as to reduce the dangerous tendency to value weapons over people. But amalgamation was easier said than done.[35] To compound the problems, there were also countless freelance pickets who had no formal connection with either union or party. CCP leaders agreed upon a policy of disarming these independent forces and executing their leaders.[36] With many of the maverick units enjoying secret-society protection, however, the policy was unenforceable.

The second attempted uprising, which was quashed almost as quickly as the first, graphically demonstrated the drawbacks inherent in this fragmented array of fighting units. In the district of Yangshupu, for example, a self-proclaimed "workers' soviet" issued death sentences for scabs and then proceeded to carry out the executions—without approval from higher levels. At the French Tramway Company, pickets who were ordered to return to work by the CCP initially refused to obey.[37] The main reason for the failure of the uprising, party cadres opined, was the lack of discipline: "The pickets are still not well organized . . . We must quickly organize them."[38]

A further obstacle lay in the various vigilante units that roamed the streets of Shanghai as hired guns of local merchants, gang leaders, and warlord authorities. An outfit known as the Big Swords (*dadaodui*), sponsored by the head of the local garrison, put their sabers to use in chopping off the heads of anyone caught distributing handbills in Chinese sections of the city announcing the second uprising.[39] The gruesome effect of these beheadings was not unlike that produced by the guillotine during the Terror of the French Revolution (see photo 2.1). A foreign correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* who witnessed the carnage reported:

> After the heads of the victims were severed by swordsmen, they were displayed on the top of poles or placed upon platters and carried through the streets. This sight in a parade through crowded



Photo 2.1. Shanghai's "White Terror" of February 1927. The head of an executed Communist hangs from a telephone pole, attracting a crowd of onlookers. Corbis.

> thoroughfares had the effect of creating a veritable reign of terror, because the victims were denied the semblance of a trial. The executions occurred in the densest quarters. The executioners bearing broadswords and accompanied by a squad of soldiers, marched their victims to a prominent corner where the strike leaders were forced to bend over while their heads were cut off. Thousands fled in horror when the heads were stuck on sharp-pointed bamboo poles and were hoisted aloft and carried to the scene of the next execution.[40]

After the defeat of the workers' uprising a few days later, the Big Swords grew bolder still, halting pedestrians at will and plunging the entire city into a state of fear.[41] Youths wearing Western-style clothes, women with short hair, peddlers reading leaflets, even children clutching handbills were all targets of Big Sword attacks. A street vendor was beheaded when his hawker's cry of "cakes for sale" (*mai dabing*) was misheard as "ragtag soldiers" (*dabai bing*).[42]

The general state of apprehension attendant upon the failure of the Second Workers' Armed Uprising was shared by Comintern agents in the city. But almost as shocking to them as the White Terror that followed in its wake was the uprising's poor prior planning. A report submitted to Moscow soon after the suppression indicated that the labor stoppage that occurred in conjunction with the insurgency had taken Comintern advisers—and some CCP leaders as well—completely by surprise:

> The decision for a general strike was made at a meeting of union activists late at night on the 18th [of February], without approval of the CCP Central or the district committee . . . We learned the details of the strike only from newspaper reports. On the 19th, we spoke with Zhou Enlai, Qu Qiubai and Xiao San. They couldn't tell us anything about the strike because they themselves didn't know anything about it . . . The reason that Peng Shuzhi called off the uprising was that the working class wasn't prepared or properly armed.[43]

Comintern agents, perhaps unaware of the tribulations that the Russian Bolsheviks had faced in dealing with their own Red Guards, chided the Shanghai revolutionaries for insufficient attention to the problem of arming the proletariat:

> The party has done a poor job of arming the workers. Naturally the party can't obtain firearms, but it can call upon the workers to arm themselves . . . The party has, however, actually impeded the arming of the workers—fearing doing so would prove dangerous. When N. M. Nasonov and Xu Wei were discussing this issue on the morning of February 20, Xu responded to Nasonov's call for arming the workers by saying "At present the party's program is to restrict the number of armed workers to a limited number of three-to-five thousand because workers love to fight. If we tell them to go ahead and arm themselves, there might well be precipitous conflicts."[44]

Shanghai partisans' reluctance to arm the proletariat was, as Comintern advisers recognized, due in part to a fear of rowdy workers. But it also reflected an unresolved effort—embodied in the United Front—to balance the competing claims of community and class in the construction of revolutionary citizenship. Hoping to ride the wave of the self-governance movement then sweeping across the city, party leaders were loath to assign too prominent a role to armed workers. The manifesto calling for a general strike indicated the party's dual agenda. The first five demands concerned community-based claims of citizenship: an end to imperialist incursions and warlord rule; establishment of a government protective of the people's interests; and freedom of assembly, of association, and of speech and press. The remaining seven demands were focused on workers and their concerns: union representation, a guaranteed minimum wage, an eight-hour workday, maternity leave.[45] While this uneasy juxtaposition of community and class exposed underlying tensions in the United Front of CCP-KMT cooperation, it also revealed the Communists' own uncertainties over the relevant markers of citizenship.

Open letters issued by the SPC at the time of the second uprising—making explicit reference to the American Revolution—stressed civic pride, rather than class consciousness:

> Shanghai is one of the premier cities of the world and is *the* premier city in all of China. It is China's major industrial, commercial, and cultural metropolis. With its population of over two million, it supersedes the population of the smaller European

> countries as well as that of the United States at the time when the thirteen colonies were fighting for independence. Our Shanghai citizens [*shimin*] shoulder a heavy responsibility. But all the imperialist nations view Shanghai as their commonly controlled colony, oppressing and exploiting, unbridled and unscrupulous; domestically, all the warlord factions see Shanghai as their lifeline, their private property, fighting among themselves year after year. How could this be anything but humiliating for the entire Shanghai citizenry?[46]

Significantly, the open letter made no mention of worker pickets. Instead, it referred favorably to defense leagues (*baoweituan*),[47] the descendants of the merchant militias that had been formed in Chinese districts of the city by local shopkeepers to protect their property during the waning years of the imperial era (see chapter 1). The Communists advocated that these leagues be placed under the direct control of a citizens' government and expanded to every district and subdistrict in order to provide security throughout the city. In other words, a bourgeois—rather than a proletarian—militia was being publicly promoted as the counterpart to the Paris Commune's National Guard.[48] Three days later, another open letter from CCP Central characterized the new order that would emerge from the uprising as a Shanghai Citizens' Commune (*Shanghai shimin gongshe*).[49]

When the second uprising was summarily suppressed, however, CCP leaders backed away even further from support for the Shanghai bourgeoisie in favor of concentrating more resolutely on the role of the proletariat. Within days of the suppression, local party leaders were heartened to learn that the pickets had expanded their ranks and were making practical plans for the next insurrectionary attempt. Even the fact that pickets were asking for pay in advance was regarded favorably by some party organizers, who concluded that "this shows that they really are planning to do the job."[50] Unlike the first uprising, the second had been accompanied by a general strike. The more than three hundred thousand strikers were responding, however, not to party orders but to a unilateral decision of the Shanghai General Labor Union.[51] Although the strike caught local party leaders by surprise and came in for harsh criticism from Comintern agents, it was quickly hailed by Shanghai Communists

as "the first expression of the great revolutionary force of the Shanghai working class since May Thirtieth." The Shanghai Communist Party itself took credit for the work stoppage, concluding that "we can say this was even more meaningful than May Thirtieth because whereas then the workers' power issued from ordinary revolutionary fervor, this time it was directed and planned."[52] As Luo Yinong, secretary of the Shanghai District Committee of the CCP, put it, "In the final analysis, we will be judged as having done something great in Chinese history . . . after several hours of propaganda and mobilization, 300,000 people went out on strike. This is unprecedented in any European country. Although the uprising didn't succeed, it stirred the entire world."[53]

Chinese Communists were particularly struck by the "revolutionary justice" that had marked the uprising. Zhao Shiyan (head of the Shanghai Party Organization Department) reported approvingly in his summary of the general strike:

> The worker masses in Shanghai's Yangshupu District gathered on the 22nd for a demonstration. Nearly ten thousand people attended from the entire district. There happened to be a running dog, nicknamed "Slicky" [*xiao huatou*], who had often colluded with the police to arrest labor leaders. He eventually arrived on the scene to gather intelligence on the activities of the labor leaders. When people saw that Slicky had appeared, they fell upon him and took him in front of the rostrum, handing him over for mass judgment. Most of the people shrieked, "Kill him." The chair, following the will of the masses, put it to a vote. The entire crowd raised their hands in affirmation. Slicky was executed on the spot.
>
> This was mass revolutionary judgment. This was simply answering terror with terror, answering counterrevolution with revolution. The verdict to execute a scab running dog was a judgment of the masses. It is revolutionary justice . . . it is principled revolutionary behavior.[54]

In reflecting upon the shortcomings of the second uprising, party leaders regretted that they had not prepared adequately to convert mass enthusiasm into armed struggle. Had they done so, suggested Luo Yinong, they could have upgraded their insurgency, if not to the

exalted level of the October Revolution, then at least to a level on a par with the Paris Commune:

> Lenin said the Communist Party must always everywhere prepare for armed uprisings in order to seize political power. This is an extremely important maxim. In the past we were not at all prepared. This was a great shortcoming. Lenin said that as soon as a general strike begins, an armed struggle must immediately be launched because this is the moment when mass emotions are running very high . . . Had we been properly prepared, this time we could have seized an armaments factory and taken parts of the city. Even with the advance of the warlord troops, we could have claimed some accomplishments. At the very least we would have had another tragic Paris Commune.[55]

In order to trigger "another tragic Paris Commune," however, the Communists would first have to succeed in staging a triumphant insurrection.

THE THIRD ARMED UPRISING

To ready the proletariat for a more successful armed struggle, the Communists turned their attentions to the military training of the worker pickets, engaging former soldiers as instructors. These efforts, which would soon bear fruit, had to be conducted in the utmost secrecy. One of the makeshift teachers, a demobilized soldier named Sun Changsheng, later recalled the drama that surrounded the surreptitious initiatives involved in militia training:

> In early March of 1927 I was working at the British-owned Yihe Cotton Mill. One day as I was leaving work I saw a man in a black cotton jacket beckoning to me from just outside the back gate of the factory. I went over and realized that I didn't know him, but he said to me "Are you Sun Changsheng?" Suspicious, I asked him what his name was. He replied simply [in English], "C. P." (the abbreviation for the Communist Party) and continued, "Higher levels told me to assign you a mission; you've been a soldier, right? Now you need to teach others how to shoot a gun. That person will help you." He pointed to a man in a Western suit, and then rushed off. I went over to the young man in the suit, who nodded to me and took me to a secluded alley. We agreed that he would handle all the preparations and would notify me when it was time to start the classes.
>
> A couple of days later I went to the place I'd been told to go. I'd never been there before, but one of my fellow factory workers waved at me and showed me the way upstairs. Seven people were anxiously awaiting my arrival, four of whom were from my factory. Aside from a table, the room held only a few stools. The windows had been covered with cardboard so that neither light nor shadows were visible from the outside. Before I'd even sat down, a young woman ran in with two packages that she placed on the table, telling me to return them to her when I was done. She then left.
>
> I opened one of the packages, which looked like it held a bolt of cloth, to find that wrapped inside the cloth were a six-inch revolver and bullets. The other package, which looked like it contained cosmetic powder, held a black, round hand grenade. These were the teaching materials that the Party had prepared for me. I lectured on everything from the structure of pistols to the use of rifles and machine guns. I taught for one week, during which time more than sixty people attended in rotation.[56]

Confident that they were finally getting the knack of engineering a proletarian revolution, the Shanghai Communists began to envision the new political order that would issue from a successful power seizure.[57] Although Marx's depiction of the Paris Commune served as a guiding inspiration for the CCP's efforts at urban insurrection, the party was reluctant to declare a dictatorship of the proletariat as its immediate political objective. Instead, a citizens' assembly (*shimin gonghui*) was proposed. In preparation for launching a third uprising, the CCP presented itself—in contrast to the KMT—as a champion of democratic citizenship:

> After the Northern Expedition Army arrives, the most important matter will be the issue of city government. We value the masses, whereas they [the KMT] value the exercise of leadership. We

> want elections, whereas they want appointments. This is an important disagreement. We must quickly carry out elections for representatives. We should change the name to "popularly elected municipal government" [*minxuan shizhengfu*] so that the people are perfectly clear. Before the Northern Expedition Army arrives, we need to create a very dense atmosphere of popular elections . . . If the Northern Expedition Army doesn't recognize the popularly elected representatives, then there can be new elections for a formal government. This movement cannot be assured of victory; everything depends upon our advance propaganda work.[58]

The Communists' portrait of their KMT allies as dictatorial and undemocratic was not unfounded; having recently been reorganized by Comintern advisers, the KMT was arguably a more Leninist party than the CCP. With elections as the foundation, the Communists planned to put in place a "democratic city government" just as soon as the warlord forces could be toppled:

> What is a democratic city government? A government organized by representatives elected by the people themselves. How is a democratic city government organized? The citizens' representative assembly elects an executive committee that organizes the Shanghai city government. How is the citizens' representative assembly organized? First, associations of workers, peasants, students, soldiers, merchants and other types of professional delegate representatives (according to the size of their membership) organize citizens' representative congresses in each district. Then each district congress sends representatives (according to the size of its membership) along with representatives of all political parties, to organize a citizens' representative assembly [*shimin daibiao huiyi*].[59]

There were to be eight district congresses, to which representatives (one per five hundred residents) would be directly elected by meetings of factories, handicraft associations, shop clerk associations, peasant associations, chambers of commerce, military barracks, schools, and professional associations (of journalists, lawyers, doctors, and accountants). Specifically excluded from electoral representation were academic research institutes, benevolent associations, the Red Cross, religious groups, and native-place associations. Also excluded were "nonlaboring, unprofessional gangsters."[60]

CCP cadres remarked that their principles—which stressed occupation over neighborhood as the basis for representation—were at odds with the preferences of the bourgeoisie, whose self-governance plan called for territorial units as the sole basis of representation "in order to allow gangsters to participate in municipal government."[61] But clearly the Communists were not simply concerned with excluding gangsters; they were also trying to dilute representation based upon community in favor of representation based upon class. Although the CCP was anxious to encourage electoral democracy, it did so with an instrumental purpose in mind. The ultimate goal was a class-based soviet government. As Communist cadres emphasized in internal discussions,

> There are many dangers in a citizens' representative assembly, the most important of which is that the reformist bourgeoisie wants to control it, to turn it into a Japanese-type of semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois parliamentary system . . . We want this Shanghai citizens' representative assembly to become a soviet for all of Shanghai's revolutionary masses. But we must take the working class as the mainstay . . . Now we want to launch a populist citizens' representative assembly, which will elect its own government, in preparation for a future workers' soviet."[62]

On the principle that there was to be one city-wide representative for every one thousand residents (i.e., half the number of district representatives), more than two thousand representatives were to be chosen for the city-wide citizens' assembly. Like the district representatives, the city representatives were to be selected via elections held at places of employment and professional associations. Representatives to both types of congress would elect an executive committee of thirty to fifty people, which would in turn designate a nine-to-thirteen-person steering committee. Steering committees would meet every other day; executive committees once a week; and representative congresses every month. All representatives would serve for one-year (renewable and revocable) terms.[63]

Even at this extraordinary moment of democratic idealism, however, there were already telling hints of a more controlled political regime in the making. Popular power, it was suggested, might be balanced by party oversight inasmuch as revolutionary parties would enjoy the right to send representatives to participate in the deliberations of executive committees at all levels.[64] A further portent of things to come lay in the Communists' own organizational changes at this time. In preparation for the third uprising, leadership had been divided into two large systems: one open, the other secret. Paralleling every (open) level of the labor union were (secret) party cells that called the shots.[65]

INSTITUTIONAL INVERSION

As the CCP carried out a crucial reorganization of its command structure, rendering it more secure and secretive, the party's approach toward the worker pickets was undergoing a similar adjustment. Having already authorized a distinction between overt and covert operations, CCP leaders began to devote more attention to the clandestine side of picket work. In so doing, they encouraged activities that went beyond (and beneath) the expected assignments of a worker militia. Terrorism and infiltration became an integral part of picket affairs, further distancing the institution from the benign image of proletarian power that Marx had drawn of the National Guard in his analysis of the Paris Commune.

Revolutionary Terrorism

In reflecting on the lessons of the second uprising, Zhao Shiyan stressed the positive role of terrorism:

> The assassinations of white terrorism only stimulate the revolution of red terrorism. To repay terror with terror—that is a revolutionary situation . . . Armed power in the hands of warlords is white terror; to seize armed power and put it in the hands of the masses themselves is the eruption of revolutionary armed struggle. This is a lesson in Marxism-Leninism. The Shanghai working class needs to practice this lesson![66]

As it happened, a few members of the Shanghai working class were already quite well practiced in the art of terrorism. In late 1925, workers at several of the Japanese cotton mills where the May Thirtieth Movement had first gotten underway proposed taking revenge on the "running dogs" responsible for the deaths of many of their colleagues during the harsh repression that followed the movement. Encouraged by the Communist Party secretary of the West Shanghai District Committee, the group formed a dog-beating team (*dagou dui*). At first the name lists of those to be killed were approved by the district party secretary, but before long the "dog beaters" were operating in mill districts all across the city with no party oversight.[67] In addition to cotton mill workers, the group welcomed secret-society members to its ranks.[68]

When Zhou Enlai arrived in Shanghai to take charge of armed struggle, Party Central directed him to establish a Political Security Bureau (*zhengzhi baoweijü*)—responsible for terrorism—under the leadership of Gu Shunzhang, the newly appointed picket director. Gu was a former tobacco worker and member of the Green Gang (a secret-society-organized criminal network) who had just returned to Shanghai from Vladivostok, where he had been schooled in espionage and armed insurrection.[69] The dog-beating team got in touch with Gu, and on his advice was converted into the Red Terror Squad (*hongse kongbudui*), operating as part of the pickets under Gu's personal supervision. A leader of the Red Terrorists later recalled Zhou Enlai's instructions when he first met with them: "It's great that you're beating dogs. I approve. But there's one problem. You beat big and small running dogs alike. We can neutralize or win over the small running dogs. Let's strike at the big ones."[70] With its targets now explicitly assigned by Party Central, the dog beaters went after more prominent figures.[71] Soon the ranks of the Red Terror Squad were increased to fifty or sixty people, specially trained by party leaders at a local elementary school.[72]

When warlord retribution hampered the activities of the Red Terrorists, party leaders noted that under the circumstances it might be impossible to continue to kill "big running dogs," but encouraged the Red Terrorists to go after smaller fry "in order to maintain worker enthusiasm."[73] Although many of the pickets arrested for assassinations

had made confessions to the police, the party still believed that the advantages of this type of activity outweighed the disadvantages because "thanks to the beating to death of running dogs, mass enthusiasm is high."[74] In early March, the party authorized the dispatch of five thousand pickets from the labor union to go after running dogs in the commercial and handicraft sector.[75]

Party cadres argued (in closed party sessions) that targeted murders were a necessary prelude to a wider proletarian revolution. As they prepared for the third armed uprising, CCP leaders called for terrorism on a grand scale. Luo Yinong admonished a gathering of party activists:

> We must actively advance a spiritual and material red terror. In working class districts, since the party committee decided to carry out red terrorism, there have been major results. Many scabs have been killed and workers' self-esteem is very high. Now we should expand the scope of red terror to include all counterrevolutionary elements such as rightist leaders, compradore merchants, student running dogs, etc. At the same time, we should use terrorist tactics to ensure that counterrevolutionaries dare not reside in Shanghai; this is what we call spiritual red terror.[76]

Noting that male workers were proving more enthusiastic about these assaults than their female counterparts, party leaders explicitly called on women workers to arm themselves so that they might better guard against reactionaries and kill scabs.[77] In another meeting with activists in early March of 1927, Luo Yinong stressed the need to "intensify the work of red terror: thoroughly massacre scabs, gangsters, and police—show no mercy."[78]

Buoyed by such encouragement, picket-instigated killings increased dramatically. A few days later, party cadres reported with satisfaction that "Red Terror has achieved results in all the working class districts of Shanghai. Fearful capitalists are generally making concessions to the workers . . . Most of the running dogs are terrified; some have resigned their positions, others are in hiding."[79] Huang Yifeng, a member of the Zhabei District Party Committee assigned by Zhou Enlai to "eliminate traitors" (*chujian*) from factories in his area, remembered executing more than a dozen "spies, scabs and rumor mongers" in connection with the campaign. As Huang recalled many years later, "At that time, because I had no experience in this sort of work, I betrayed impetuous emotions. Comrade Enlai suggested to me that, especially during moments of high anxiety, one must maintain a calm demeanor. To this day, I haven't forgotten his teaching."[80]

As "dog beatings" escalated in the days leading up to the third insurrection, however, the party was hard pressed to keep the upper hand. Zhao Shiyan, despite his earlier calls for terrorism, now recoiled at the results: "At present many comrades are beating the wrong dogs and neglecting the proper duties of an armed force . . . they must be severely punished by the party."[81]

One of the problems surrounding terrorist actions was the close and complicated connection between dog-beating squads and lumpen-proletarian gangsters. Despite Zhou Enlai's preference for limiting the ranks of the pickets to gainfully employed workers, terrorist activities attracted the involvement of marginal elements. In some cases, unemployed workers who had lost their jobs because of participation in previous strikes were recruited by the CCP for terrorist operations.[82] Although the targets of the terrorist hit squads were frequently gang bosses, the squads conducted their assignments under the active protection of yet other gang chieftains. As historian Steve Smith notes, "Given the complex networks of protection and predation within which the 'dog-beating squads' operated, it is hardly surprising that most acts of terror were carried out without the knowledge or sanction of the Shanghai regional committee."[83]

A further problem was the confusion of responsibility for such activities among Communist labor organizers themselves. Foreshadowing bureaucratic rivalries that would plague the institution of the worker militias in later years, the party (blaming the union) declared a sudden moratorium:

> Beginning today, all dog beating must stop because many comrades have committed many mistakes. Some have openly admitted that the union was beating dogs. This is the secret political work of the party; the union cannot handle this work. When there are assaults to be carried out, they cannot be directed by the union. They must be decided by the party.[84]

Gangster involvement and bureaucratic competition were not the only difficulties troubling the Shanghai revolutionaries on the eve of the third uprising. Public opposition was another. When a Hunanese manager at the Hengfeng Cotton Mill was slain by pickets, the Hunan–Hubei Native-Place Association engaged in a counterattack on the pickets.[85] By this point, moreover, a vicious cycle of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence was gaining momentum. Especially alarming to Communist cadres was the news that the "old right wing" (i.e., the conservative Western Hills faction of the KMT) was now organizing its own armed pickets (*wuzhuang jiuchadui*) in Shanghai with the express purpose of carrying out assassinations of CCP members.[86] Envisioning a two-thousand-strong force, the KMT-right had already recruited three hundred pickets to its anti-Communist outfit—all well equipped with guns.[87]

REVOLUTIONARY INFILTRATION

To move beyond terrorism to armed uprising, the procurement of additional weaponry was essential. Whereas the various merchant-sponsored defense leagues (*baoweituan*) scattered across the city were generally quite well armed, the same could not be said for the Communist forces. Aware of this disparity, the Communists decided to try to win over the defense leagues.[88] Chen Duxiu pointed out at a party meeting called to plan the third uprising that "The defense leagues have more than a thousand guns. They don't dare launch an attack so we must get them to lend their guns to us."[89] Thereupon the party decided to handpick a few workers from the Commercial Press to infiltrate the defense leagues. When the workers expressed reluctance to go along with this proposal, top party leaders went in person to convince them. As Zhao Shiyan explained the party's rationale, "Is it a good idea to let the defense leagues serve as the armed forces of the warlords and counterrevolutionary capitalists? Wouldn't it be better to infiltrate them and arm ourselves, gaining military knowledge and training, converting the defense leagues into an armed force to defend the working class?"[90] A young picket at the Commercial Press, Ren Qixiang, was initially dismayed by Zhou Enlai's request that he

and his comrades should join the Zhabei Defense League. An aspiring proletarian revolutionary, Ren demurred at the prospect of enlisting on the side of the bourgeoisie. He later recalled the encounter:

> Smiling broadly, Zhou Enlai asked me, "What do we now lack?" I answered, "We lack guns and ammunition." Zhou continued, "Right! If we infiltrate the defense league, won't everyone have guns and ammunition? Not only that, but we can take advantage of the defense league's legal status to carry out military training, as a cover to prepare for our uprising." After this wake-up call from Zhou Enlai, my mind was clear. In accord with the needs of revolutionary work at that time, more than forty of us workers joined the defense league. Some of us even became group and team captains, wearing the uniform of the defense league and using this legal identity to facilitate the transport of weapons and ammunition.[91]

In the end, each district in the city contributed on average a hundred pickets to infiltrate the leagues. With every league member issued a uniform, rifle, and several rounds of ammunition, the benefit to the insurgents was substantial. Nicknamed by their comrades the "white skinned red hearts" for the revolutionary commitment that lay just below the camouflage of their borrowed white uniforms, the infiltrators acquired much needed military training through the public drills conducted by the leagues.[92]

In assuming the uniforms—and in several cases even leadership positions—of the officially-sanctioned defense leagues, the underground pickets were in a position to obtain and transport guns and ammunition. Their legal status permitted them to augment the efforts of the Red Secret Liaison Officers (*hongse mimi jiaotongyuan*), a group of factory workers deployed by Zhou Enlai to deliver weapons into the hands of the revolutionaries.[93] Weapons were hidden in coffins or chamber pots and transported by night to cemeteries and other deserted spots where they were distributed to eager pickets.[94] At the same time, the Communists persuaded activists in the left wing of the KMT to take control of defense leagues in the southern district of the city. These leagues proved crucial in seizing guns from the Nanshi police station.[95]

The practice of infiltrating the opposition set a dangerous precedent that would generate serious unanticipated consequences over the long run. Under Zhou Enlai's adroit leadership, with pragmatism trumping proletarianism, tactics of terrorism and infiltration profoundly changed the character of worker militias. Here, in embryonic expression, was an instance of institutional inversion with enduring negative consequences. But in the short run this strategy was undeniably effective. It took the five thousand pickets a mere thirty hours to rid Shanghai of warlord forces in the victorious third armed uprising.[96]

WORKERS' SOVIET?

Two weeks before the uprising, the CCP had divided the city into eight districts (the same eight districts from which representatives to the new municipal government were to be elected). Each district branch of the party established a military committee to direct picket operations in its jurisdiction.[97] On March 21 the fighting commenced more or less simultaneously in the different districts. Police stations and military posts were occupied and more than five thousand guns were seized from the enemy. In Pudong, for example, defense leagues quickly joined forces with the pickets and a new government was established within four hours.[98] Although fighting in some districts (most notably Zhabei) was heavy, resulting in the deaths of more than two hundred pickets, the outcome was decisive. By the time the Northern Expeditionary Army arrived on the scene, all of Shanghai—except for the International Settlement and the French Concession—was in the hands of armed militiamen sporting the distinctive red armbands of the pickets.[99] A general strike, this time announced with advance party involvement, brought an amazing 800,000 workers out of the factories.[100]

As soon as the warlord forces had been routed, the Communists called together stray pickets from across the city for an assembly. Some showed up with only one shoe, many wore hats and uniforms stolen from the enemy forces, and some shouldered three or four confiscated rifles.[101] The CCP planned to reorganize this motley crew, under the protective umbrella of the United Front, to maintain order in revolutionary Shanghai.

The new official flag of the pickets, which depicted a five-pointed star together with a hammer and sickle against a blue sky–white sun field (the symbol of the KMT), symbolized the cooperation between the CCP and the KMT. To emphasize the proletarian composition of the pickets, they were to be placed firmly under union leadership. Various Shanghai notables presented banners and set off firecrackers to celebrate the official reopening of the Shanghai General Labor Union (located, as had been the case during the May Thirtieth Movement, at the Huzhou Guild Hall in Zhabei District). Chiang Kai-shek himself sent a congratulatory banner to the guild hall, a banner that read "Struggle Together" (*gongtong fendou*), to commemorate the pickets' victory. On the day of the union's reopening, a dozen or so armed pickets stood guard at the guild hall entrance, subjecting anyone without a red armband to intensive interrogation. A large red banner proclaiming "Long Live the Victory of the Proletariat" hung from the eaves of the Huzhou Guild Hall. Probably of greater interest to rank and file pickets was the provision of free food to thank them for their efforts.[102]

The victory of the third armed uprising and the attendant euphoria of the party leaders was not enough to sustain a new political order, however. On March 29 a provisional municipal government was inaugurated under Communist sponsorship. Although prominent Shanghai businessmen were granted a dominant voice, they refused to serve once it became clear that Chiang Kai-shek did not intend to recognize the new government. The Communists' first experiment in urban governance was immediately gripped by paralysis.

Businessmen were not the only recalcitrant ally troubling the Communists. Every day the press carried fresh reports of pickets arbitrarily seizing people.[103] Public trials and executions of the sort that had occurred sporadically in the course of the second uprising became much more common, with pickets using the sabers once wielded by their opponents to eliminate members of the Big Swords.[104] Party cadres continued to call for collecting pickets' weapons and retraining and reorganizing the pickets under tighter central control.[105] Food for the pickets was also becoming a critical issue.[106]

Exhausted by their revolutionary exertions, the pickets were invited to recuperate at the Huzhou Guild Hall.[107] Now that the

uprising was over, the party was happy to return responsibility for picket supervision to the union. While at union headquarters, the pickets were expected to turn in their weapons, and publicly the CCP made a show of sending all surrendered weapons to a Northern Expedition commander, Xue Yue, considered sympathetic to Communist concerns. However, a good deal of the weaponry remained in CCP hands. Yet even more difficult to control than the arms were the pickets themselves. The party was anxious to disband the less reliable elements of the pickets, many of whom had gangster links, but it was acutely aware of the dangers inherent in such a move. Instead, the more problematic picket members were reassigned to Xue Yue's forces.[108]

The remaining two to three thousand pickets, armed with rifles and machine guns, were formally reorganized along military lines under union leadership. The idea once again was to limit picket membership to bona fide workers. Soon most of the rank and file had been issued new blue military uniforms along with circular hats adorned with blue sky–white sun badges. The uniforms were an effort to improve the comportment of the pickets by enhancing their pride and by preventing gangsters and other interlopers from infiltrating their ranks. A general command for the pickets was established at the Commercial Press, located not far from union headquarters in the Huzhou Guild Hall (see photo 2.2). Ten pickets constituted a platoon (*fendui*), with three platoons forming a team (*xiaodui*), three of which in turn made up a squadron (*zhongdui*). In all, the city had eight brigades (*dadui*), composed of three squadrons apiece. Pickets were expected to serve for two-month shifts, after which they would return to the factories to work. Their main responsibility while on assignment was to protect the leftist unions, a task for which they would be paid forty cents a day.[109] To ensure ample manpower, the party envisioned setting up two-month training sessions to prepare as many as three thousand new patrolmen at a time.[110] A Picket Training and Education Department (*jiuchadui xunyubu*) was established under union auspices to carry out this important mission.[111] Although some party members advocated that pickets be removed from union supervision, and—as a means of improving discipline—placed directly under the military committee of the party, this step was apparently never taken.[112]



Photo 2.2. Worker pickets guard their headquarters at Shanghai's Commercial Press after the victory of the third workers' armed uprising in March 1927. Corbis

The critical role of worker militias in the third armed uprising was precisely what rendered the event of epic importance in the eyes of young Chinese Communists. In summing up the meaning of the March uprising, Zhao Shiyan waxed euphoric: "After the October Revolution, the Shanghai workers' March uprising has added a new historical entry to the proletarian revolutionary line . . . validating the place of the working class in the revolution. The March uprising merits a new page in world history, written right after the October Revolution."[113] The leftist writer Jiang Guangci quickly penned a short story entitled "Sans-culottes" (*duanku dang*), which depicted the Shanghai worker pickets as the latest revolutionary actors in an international proletarian pageant dating back to Paris 1789.[114] Class had now been firmly embraced as the chief criterion of revolutionary citizenship.

In the heady atmosphere that prevailed in the wake of the third uprising, the Shanghai Communist Party Branch took the highly unusual step of recruiting new members openly.[115] Several tables were

set up just outside the Huzhou Guild Hall with brush, ink, and a notebook where any worker who wished to join the party could freely enlist.[116] All pickets were automatically enrolled in the Communist Party. Even more surprising, some party branch meetings were held openly so that ordinary workers might attend and lend their voice to the deliberations.[117]

Despite the sense of security that such transparency suggested, the Communists harbored few illusions about the Guomindang. They recognized, moreover, that the pickets were a ticking time bomb, threatening to explode the fragile alliance that the two parties had formed in joint opposition to warlord rule. Nevertheless, the CCP was unwilling to relinquish its claim to an armed worker militia, fractious though the institution might be. Party cofounder Chen Duxiu, although later denounced by the party for his "right opportunism," argued fervently for the maintenance of the militia:

> If we don't resolve the problem of armed pickets, it will erupt into a CCP-KMT struggle that will undermine any pretext of cooperation. Still, we must prepare to resist. If the right-wing military comes to collect their weapons, we must wage a decisive battle. Even if we should lose, Chiang Kai-shek's political life will be cut short in the process. So this battle is even more meaningful than the battle against the warlords. Pickets must be concentrated at Huzhou Guild Hall. We must adopt a mentality of self-sacrifice.[118]

At the same time that the Communists publicly praised the achievements of the worker militias, their private assessment was more restrained. As Chen Duxiu put it, "We just want to get to a point where the pickets respond when we issue an order!"[119] The fact that all pickets were being admitted to party membership underscored the importance of ensuring their reliability. Party branches were asked to carry out investigations regarding the dependability of militiamen within their jurisdictions. Anyone deemed unreliable was to be compensated and ordered back to factory work at once. Those who survived the investigation were to be subjected to an intensive regimen of military and political training.[120]

Maintaining an armed proletarian force was considered essential to the survival of Communist influence in the city. Luo Yinong summarized the party's position:

> Currently the most pressing problem in Shanghai is that of continuing the struggle. The core issue is the armed pickets. Only if the labor union has pickets does it have a voice . . . If the workers are disarmed, they will sink back into their previous darkness. Thus maintaining armed worker pickets is our most important task at present.[121]

Whereas the Communists saw the preservation of an armed force of workers as an absolute imperative, other power holders in the city were equally adamant about the necessity of disarming the pickets. On the day after the triumph of the third uprising, leaders of the chamber of commerce and the financial community met to decide upon their response to recent events. At the meeting, Rong Zongjing—head of the Chinese Cotton Mill Owners' Association—summed up the general sentiment of Shanghai's businessmen: "Our hearts grow cold when we hear that workers have guns in their hands. We must confiscate the weapons in order to maintain public order." The meeting resolved to request that Bai Chongxi (commander of the Northern Expeditionary Forces in Shanghai) disarm the workers.[122] The foreign community was no less outspoken in its opposition to the pickets. The *North China Herald* called on Chiang Kai-shek "to destroy the Communists or be swept away in the Red flood."[123]

In hopes of forcing the issue, Zhou Enlai suggested at a party committee meeting on March 28 that the Shanghai General Labor Union cable the left-wing Nationalist Government in Wuhan to explain the significance of the pickets and to request their official recognition along with a monthly stipend of thirty thousand dollars.[124] Cautioning restraint, other party leaders reported on a meeting with Chiang Kai-shek the day before at which Chiang had pointedly refrained from praising the Shanghai workers. When reminded of the pickets' achievements in the uprising, Chiang had shown little interest. Chiang indicated that the patrolmen could remain in place for the time being, but emphasized that he did not believe that the Shanghai General Labor Union represented the entire working class of Shanghai.[125] Trying to steer a middle course, Chen Duxiu advised that the union pretend to go along with Chiang, while actually making military preparations for a showdown. The labor union, he stressed, must steadfastly maintain the pickets, but it

should tone down its political rhetoric so as to arouse less public suspicion.[126] Heeding Chen's suggestion, the party decided it would be better to divert Chiang's attention from the worker militias by directing his opposition toward the newly established municipal government instead.[127] The friction between Chiang (as representative of the bourgeoisie) and the pickets (as representatives of the workers) was interpreted by the CCP leadership as an irreconcilable class conflict that would eventually be resolved through violence.[128] In the meantime, letting the city government serve as a surrogate magnet for Chiang's displeasure could buy the militias valuable time in which to regroup and rearm.

The debate over the fate of the Shanghai pickets was not merely an internal Chinese affair: it was also an issue in the rift within the Comintern concerning correct revolutionary strategy. Whereas Stalin called for a continued United Front between the CCP and KMT during this stage of "bourgeois revolution," Trotsky urged the Chinese Communists to pursue an independent proletarian path. Trotsky wrote on April 3, 1927, "The Shanghai proletariat already possesses the priceless experience of struggle and is fully capable of creating soviets of workers' deputies which will set an example for all of China and thereby become the center of attraction for all genuinely revolutionary organizations."[129]

As arguments about the Shanghai working class raged both domestically and internationally, influential Shanghai citizens reacted by beefing up their own security forces. In areas like Wusong where the pickets were in disarray, paramilitary units sponsored by the Shanghai gentry rushed in to fill the breach.[130] And in the district of Pudong, a local defense league captain colluded with the police to try to rid the area of pickets.[131] As Communist leaders recognized, the worker militias continued to arouse widespread fear and animosity because of their arbitrary seizures and executions.[132]

In this inherently unstable situation, rumors about the militias spread like wildfire. CCP cadres felt it necessary to post handbills around the city in an effort to reassure the public:

> Many rumors are circulating. There are rumors that the party and army are going to disarm the pickets, rumors about conflicts between the party/army and the pickets, rumors that—on such and such a date—the pickets will storm into the concessions. These rumors are being purposely spread by imperialists and counter-revolutionaries to stir up panic. There is no conflict between the pickets and the Northern Expeditionary Army, and any takeover of the concessions would not be the work of the Shanghai General Labor Union alone but would involve the entire citizenry.[133]

By early April, the atmosphere had grown extremely tense in cities throughout the Yangzi Delta, following a string of bloody Nationalist attacks on labor unions and worker militias in Nanchang, Jiujiang, Anqing, Wuhu, and Hangzhou.[134] In Shanghai, the Communists warned that "The core issue in our conflict with Chiang is the disarming of the Shanghai Union's pickets. He wants to eliminate the political role of the Shanghai workers. This is the final, deciding battle between the KMT and the CCP."[135]

Fearing the worst, Zhou Enlai directed the pickets to stockpile enough grain and fuel to hold out for a month in the event of an enemy attack.[136] Armed pickets stood guard every night outside the Shanghai Labor Union headquarters at the Huzhou Guild Hall in Zhabei in order to prevent surprise assault by army forces. On the night of April 10, however, the patrolmen were informed that Chiang Kai-shek had gone to Nanjing, and thus that security could be temporarily relaxed. Pickets were therefore permitted to return home in shifts to see their families.[137] The following night, taking advantage of the reduced security, hundreds of gangsters (wearing blue clothes and white armbands on which were inscribed in black the character for *worker*) proceeded to the Huzhou Guild Hall to challenge the pickets. Depleted in numbers, the militiamen locked the iron gates of the guild hall to prevent the intruders from entering. The next morning, however, several military officers appeared on the scene. Proclaiming that they had come to negotiate an end to the standoff, the officers convinced the pickets to open the gates of the guild hall. The officers then ordered both sides to lay down their weapons, but as soon as the militiamen had dropped their guns, the gangsters seized the weapons and turned on the pickets (see photo 2.3). A brutal massacre ensued in which hundreds of pickets were

killed or wounded. Furious at this betrayal by the Northern Expeditionary Forces, Zhou Enlai rushed to army headquarters to protest. He was locked up on the spot, and later escaped only thanks to the intervention of a sympathizer among the soldiers.[138]

On April 13, the Shanghai General Labor Union convened a citizens' meeting attended by 200,000 people—mostly workers on strike. After an impassioned rally, participants marched to the Garrison Command to deliver a petition demanding that the worker patrols be rearmed. Along the route, unarmed pickets maintained order. When they reached their destination, however, the crowd was fired upon by garrison troops. More than a hundred more victims (predominantly workers) were killed, and over two hundred arrests were made.[139]

In view of the disaster that had befallen its comrades in Shanghai, the Wuhan government now authorized that eighty thousand yuan be disbursed: thirty thousand for those pickets who had survived and fifty thousand for the dependents of those who had been killed.[140] Pointing out that this was too little too late, Luo Yinong complained bitterly: "In the past, Shanghai admittedly committed many mistakes, but Wuhan didn't pay enough attention to Shanghai. It even expressed opposition toward the Shanghai municipal government. I feel that Wuhan doesn't see Shanghai clearly and our relations are not close."[141] As if to underscore Luo's point, Wuhan's belated allocation never actually reached either the pickets or their survivors.



Photo 2.3. Gangster-sponsored militiamen fire on the Communist-led worker pickets at Shanghai's Huzhou Guild Hall in April 1927. Corbis

The Comintern continued to express disapproval of the situation in Shanghai. A report issued in Moscow a month after the April coup criticized Luo Yinong and his comrades for their recklessness:

> That the Shanghai workers have lost their weapons and engaged in pointless riots is due to the policies of the Shanghai committee, especially Luo Yinong. On April 12, when we learned that the workers had been disarmed and that a general strike had been declared, we proposed that the strike be called off immediately and that the workers retreat and conceal their remaining weapons. Our proposal was rejected by the district committee. On April 15, when we met with Luo, he argued that in order to fire up the passions of the masses, it was necessary to carry out red terrorism on a large scale and prepare for a new uprising. We opposed these ideas.[142]

While the Comintern advisers were surely not as blameless as they suggested, the situation was indeed dire. When no relief was forthcoming, the remnant pickets dissolved in disarray. Even in Nanshi, once a model of discipline, the now destitute militiamen redirected their energies toward trashing the union and party offices.[143] Although the disarmed pickets continued to exist secretly for a while, it was no longer possible for them to be properly trained or supplied. In early May the party decided to disband them altogether.[144] Some were transferred to the left-wing government at Wuhan;[145] others were introduced to new jobs by the union, while yet others were simply left to fend for themselves.[146] Only a small Red Terrorist squad was retained in Shanghai.[147]

Chastened by their stinging defeat, the Communists engaged in soul searching (as well as scapegoating) to explain the reversal. According to the official Central Committee verdict, the defeat in Shanghai "was due to a failure to recognize clearly the conflict between the proletariat's seizure of power and the big bourgeoisie . . . The result of this uprising was merely the acquisition of a few thousand guns. No political power was seized; no municipal government was established."[148] Nevertheless, when Zhou Enlai, Li Lisan, and six of their fellow underground comrades met secretly in Shanghai two years later to discuss how best to remember the armed uprisings, they agreed that commemorations should be carried out on the anniversary of the Paris Commune.[149] If they could not claim of their effort, as Marx had of the Commune, "that was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," they could at least try to connect these events in historical memory.

CONCLUSION

In retrospect, the fledgling attempts of the CCP to mobilize a proletarian revolution may appear doomed from the start. China was an overwhelmingly agrarian country whose workers accounted for but a tiny percentage of the population. The warlord authorities who dominated the political scene, moreover, were unremittingly hostile to the nascent labor movement.[150] But to both the young Chinese Communists and their Comintern advisers, arming the working class—small and segmented as it was—seemed like a plausible strategy. After all, the Red Guards of Petrograd and Moscow had recently facilitated the victory of the Bolsheviks in another predominantly agrarian setting where the political authorities were equally unfriendly. In neither China nor Russia did the preexisting social and political structure dictate either an obvious or an unobstructed revolutionary path.

The early trials of the CCP in endeavoring to realize a Bolshevik revolution in China are of interest not because they illustrate an insuperable mismatch between structural environment and revolutionary strategy, but because—despite the agrarian turn that the revolution would soon take—these founding experiences had a lasting effect on the shape of Chinese politics. Debates and decisions about the nature of revolutionary citizenship bequeathed to later generations a class-inflected understanding of political participation and prerogative that assigned to the proletariat a uniquely privileged role. Although Mao Zedong would highlight the contributions of the poor peasantry, steering the CCP toward an ultimately successful agrarian strategy of revolution, neither Mao nor the party ever abandoned an official recognition of the members of the working class as the rightful heroes and heirs of revolutionary struggle. This abiding commitment to the proletariat helps explain an otherwise puzzling postrevolutionary Maoist order in which state workers—in stark contrast to peasants—were granted a wide range of government-supplied benefits and provisions.[151]

At the same time, the Communist Party's early experiments in community-based representation, as evidenced by its support for the self-governance movement and its design for a new municipal government in Shanghai, indicated room for nonclass considerations in the construction of revolutionary citizenship. A decade later, when war with Japan had become a reality and nationalism a rallying cry for the CCP, communal appeals would take on even greater importance in the party's mobilization efforts.[152] By then, however, community was understood to mean the Chinese nation as whole, rather than one's own neighborhood or municipality. Patriots (regardless of their objective class background) were to be welcomed as honorary members of the Chinese proletariat. The complications that this expanded understanding of revolutionary citizenship bequeathed to postrevolutionary politics would prove considerable.

More immediately, although the worker pickets did not fulfill the party's hopes for proletarian revolution, they nevertheless provided crucial lessons in the art of revolutionary mobilization. Over the course of the three uprisings, the Communists learned how to capture preexisting institutions (e.g., strike pickets and merchant defense leagues) and to convert them to their own purposes. Equally significant, the CCP had acquired a flexible attitude toward its own organizational creations, directing ostensibly proletarian entities (e.g., the Worker Pickets and Self-Defense Corps) toward terrorism and counterrevolutionary infiltration when such strategies promised to

further its objectives. This institutional versatility became a hallmark, not only of the Chinese Communists' revolution, but of their rule as well.

The early years of the CCP comprised a time of experimentation and discovery, the results of which were by no means predictable at the outset. In revisiting the now storied events of that day, one is tempted to ponder the counterfactual possibilities inherent in those historic moments.[153] What if, rather than arm the lumpen-proletariat for insurrection, the Chinese Communists had used the pretext and protection of the United Front to push more vigorously for political reform? Might the Chinese Revolution have taken a decisive turn in the direction of community solidarity and away from the destructive tendencies of class struggle?

Students of the Chinese Revolution have long debated the degree to which the CCP was an innovative and autonomous actor, as opposed to a puppet of the Comintern.[154] Recent archival discoveries have added fuel to the fire, revealing both greater Soviet involvement and greater Chinese independence than previously appreciated. The new sources also indicate deeper internal disagreements, within Comintern and CCP alike.[155] Taken as a whole, these revelations point to significant scope for ad hoc improvisation on the part of the early Chinese Communists.[156]

The definition of revolutionary citizenship that took shape at this critical moment was the product of intense disagreement and extended deliberation. It was not a foregone conclusion that the CCP, in trying to mobilize a populace that was as repelled by colonialism as by capitalism, should privilege the claims of class over community. The major events that had fostered the emergence and rapid growth of the CCP—May Fourth, May Thirtieth, the Canton–Hong Kong Strike of 1925–1926—were after all cross-class, nationalistic responses to the provocation of foreign imperialism. In recognition of this reality, the Communists at this time devoted at least as much attention to articulating community-based demands as to advocating class warfare. The CCP's vision of a new revolutionary government for Shanghai—representing the same eight municipal districts that would serve as organizing units for the worker pickets in the third armed uprising—is evidence of a territorially-based approach to citizenship (not unlike that which had inspired the Paris Communards).[157] But how to frame such an understanding, both linguistically and conceptually, was far from obvious. The shifting terms for citizenship employed in Chinese Communist manifestos of the day—*shimin* (city people) and *guomin* (people of the nation-state) in particular—indicated the party's uncertainty over the proper level at which to pitch a communal appeal: municipality or nation?[158]

When it came to the matter of class, the appropriate division of labor between proletariat and bourgeoisie was initially also unclear. Should merchants (and their defense leagues) or workers (and their pickets) play the leading revolutionary role? Once the CCP settled on the workers, the further question arose of who exactly qualified as the proletariat (*wuchan jieji*—or the propertyless class): unemployed vagrants? only gainfully employed industrial laborers? Such queries involved—literally as well as figuratively—a daunting challenge of translation.

The many plausible answers to these terminological questions imply an equally plausible number of revolutionary trajectories. Hampered by the blinders of hindsight, today's student of modern Chinese history may have difficulty imagining a revolution legitimated in terms other than class struggle. Yet the Chinese Revolution has presented a series of spectacular surprises, from its earliest days to the present. Foundational determinations of the meaning of citizenship would exert a formidable impact on subsequent developments, to be sure, but they might have taken—and might yet take—a very different course.

NOTES

1. Central Archives and Shanghai Municipal Archives, eds., *Shanghai geming lishi wenjian huiji* [Documentary compilation on Shanghai revolutionary history] bk. 1, 1:407 (1986); at another party meeting on October 15, 1926, the estimate for Self-Defense Corps members under CCP control was put at just over two hundred, organized into forty-one units. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 4:72.

2. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 4:68; Shanghai Municipal Archives, ed., *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi* [The Shanghai Workers' Three Armed Uprisings] (Shanghai: SMA Press, 1983), 9. This important internal-circulation publication of archival documents, not to be confused with the source cited in note 3, is hereafter cited as SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*.

3. Shanghai Party Committee Party History Materials Compilation Committee, ed., *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu* [Study of the Shanghai Workers' Three Armed Uprisings](Shanghai: Zhishi Press, 1987), 18–19. This internal circulation collection contains valuable archival material and other documentary material not included in the collection cited in note 2.

4. On the political inclinations of Shanghai businessmen in this period, see Marie-Claire Bergere, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Politics in Shanghai, 1890–1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985). On the self-governance movement in Shanghai, see Bryna Goodman, "Democratic Calisthenics: The Culture of Urban Associations in the New Republic," in *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, ed. Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 70–109.

5. Mark Elvin, "The Gentry Democracy in Shanghai, 1905–1914," in *Modern China's Search for a Political Form*, ed. Jack Gray (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 41–65. Although limited to a minority of the population, the system nevertheless was based upon majority voting by those eligible to participate. For more on the self-governance movement of the late Qing dynasty, see Roger R. Thompson, *China's Local Councils in the Age of Constitutional Reform, 1898–1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1995).

6. *Shibao*, March 18; September 22, 1912.

7. Xu Xiaoqun, *Chinese Professionals and the Republican State: The Rise of Professional Associations in Shanghai, 1912–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chap. 3.

8. *North China Herald*, May 4, 1912, p. 291; *Shibao*, March 11, August 5, August 12, 1913.

9. *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 13.

10. *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 151.

11. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 6.

12. Ren Jianshu, "Shanghai gongren wuzhuang qiyi yü shimin zizhi yundong" [Shanghai workers' armed uprisings and the citizens' self-governance movement], *Dangan yu lishi* [Archives and history], no. 3 (1987): 57.

13. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 4:159.

14. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 44; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 4:172.

15. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 1:452.

16. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 4:204.

17. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 70.

18. Wu Hao [Zhou Enlai], "Shiyue geming" [The October Revolution], in *Shaonian* [Youth], no. 5 (December 1, 1922).

19. *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 31; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:5.

20. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:20.

21. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:61–64.

22. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 39.

23. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:20.

24. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:43; Ren, "Shanghai gongren wuzhuang qiyi yü shimin zizhi yundong," 58.

25. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:69.

26. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:125.

27. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:136.

28. On the importance of gangster involvement in the May Thirtieth Movement, see Elizabeth J. Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 81–84.

29. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:152.

30. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 110; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:180.

31. On the role of the Green Gang in Shanghai labor at this time, see Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*; and Brian G. Martin, *The Shanghai Green Gang: Politics and Organized Crime, 1919–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

32. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 111; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:3–4, 181–82.

33. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:472–73.

34. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 110; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:181.

35. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:566.

36. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 4:125.

37. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:225.

38. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:27.

39. Shanghai Party History Research Office, ed., *Zhou Enlai zai Shanghai* [Zhou Enlai in Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1998), 6.

40. Quoted in Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), 134.

41. Shanghai Party History Research Office, *Zhou Enlai zai Shanghai*, 7.

42. Shanghai Garrison, ed. *Shanghai minbing douzheng shiziliao* [Historical materials on the struggles of the Shanghai Militia], bk. 1, 1:24 (Shanghai: 1981). This three-volume internal circulation collection includes materials on the history of militia organizations in Shanghai from the mid-1920s to the early post-Mao period.

43. *Liangong (bu), gongchan guoji yü zhongguo guomin geming yundong, 1926–1927* [The Soviet Communists (Bolsheviks), Comintern, and the Chinese national revolutionary movement, 1926–1927], translated (from Russian) by the Chinese Communist Party Central Party History Research Office (Beijing: Beijing Library Publishing House, 1998), 4:139–40. Hereafter cited as *Liangong*.

44. *Liangong*, 4:143–44.

45. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 3:5–6.

46. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 127.

47. The defense leagues began in 1905 as exercise societies [*ticaohui*], becoming in 1907 merchant militias [*shangtuan*] and then in 1924—under the stress of the warlord battles rampant in the region—defense leagues, with branches in Nanshi, Zhabei, and Pudong. Funded by merchant contributions, in the 1920s the defense

leagues did not enjoy unified command. SMA, ed., *Shanghaishi dang'anguan jianming zhinan* [A concise guide to the Shanghai Municipal Archives] (Shanghai, 1991), 48–49.

48. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 129.
49. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 3:21.
50. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:589.
51. *Shanghai sanci gongren wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 39.
52. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 171; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:234.
53. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:17.
54. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 203; *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 3:12–13.
55. *Shanghai sanci gongren wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 191–92.
56. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 2:38–39.
57. On March 5, 1927, in a top secret communication to the Comintern from Shanghai, Chen Duxiu requested a blueprint for establishment of a people's representative assembly. *Liangong*, 148.
58. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 5:592–93.
59. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:257–58.
60. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:272.
61. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:266.
62. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 327; *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 195.
63. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:273.
64. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:274.
65. Feng Shoucai and Shi Quanping, "Shanghai gongren disanci wuzhuangqiyi de zuzhi lingdao jigou gaikuang" [The condition of leadership organs during the Third Shanghai Workers' Armed Uprising], *Dangshi ziliao* [Party history materials], no. 24 (1985): 73–76.
66. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 201; *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 3:10.
67. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 25:1. Other examples of dog-beating teams operating in Shanghai at this time can be found in S. A. Smith, *A Road is Made: Communism in Shanghai, 1920–1927* (Richmond, Va.: Curzon, 2000), 140–41.
68. Xu Meikun, "Yi qiyi qianhou" [Remembering the period before and after the uprising], *Shanghai gongyun shiliao* [Historical materials on the Shanghai labor movement], no. 2 (1987): 1.
69. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 4:172; 6:72, 126, 132; Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *Policing Modern Shanghai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 138.
70. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 25:2.
71. These included Ni Tiansheng of the British Tramway Company, Yang Jiaomuo of the French Electric Company, and West Shanghai gangster chief Liu Jinrong, among many others.
72. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 25:2.
73. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:32.
74. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:45.

75. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:160.
76. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 329; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:269.
77. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:267–68.
78. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 269.
79. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 238.
80. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 1:44.
81. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 341.
82. A former worker by the name of Yang Fulin, upon being fired from a Japanese cotton mill during the May Thirtieth Movement, was assigned by the party to security work, which included serving as a bodyguard to a district party leader as well as carrying out assassinations of "running dogs." Yang was also active in picket organization during the three armed uprisings. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 2:30–34.
83. Smith, *A Road is Made*, 142.
84. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 342; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:347.
85. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:160.
86. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 243.
87. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 303.
88. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 351–52.
89. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 224. This internal circulation publication includes transcripts of secret party-planning sessions and other primary sources.
90. Zhou Shangwen and He Shiyou, *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyishi* [A History of the Shanghai Workers' Three Armed Uprisings] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1987), 154.
91. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 2:27; "Lao gongren huiyi Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi" [Elderly workers remember the Shanghai Three Workers' Armed Uprisings], *Shanghai wenshi ziliao*, no. 1 (1978). When the third uprising began, guns from the Zhabei Defense League were used in the Communists' attack on the north train station. *Zhou Enlai zai Shanghai*, 11.
92. Zhou and He, *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyishi*, 154–55.
93. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 1:23.
94. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 2:12, 19.
95. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 208; *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 57; *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 1:11.
96. As Steve Smith points out, however, the pickets were not alone in this endeavor: "Certainly the pickets played the principal role, one in which they showed great heroism, but others did their bit too." In particular, Smith notes the role of bands of secret-society members. Smith, *A Road is Made*, 183.
97. Feng Shoucai and Shi Quanping, "Shanghai gongren disanci wuzhuangqiyi de zuzhi lingdao jigou gaikuang," 75–76.
98. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 3:25.
99. Zhou Shangwen and He Shiyou, *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyishi*; *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 1:14.

100. *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu*, 63–65.
101. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 10:342.
102. Zhang Weizhen, "Shanghai zaoqi gongyun douzheng huiyi" [Memoir of struggles in the early Shanghai labor movement], *Shanghai wenshi ziliao xuanji*, no. 88 (1998): 37; *North China Herald*, April 2, 1927, p. 19.
103. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 4:445.
104. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 2:6, 15, 42, 49.
105. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 2:362.
106. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 374; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:379.
107. *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 2:26.
108. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 378; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:384–85.
109. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 401–402; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:406.
110. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:407.
111. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 10:342.
112. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:405.
113. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 417; *Shanghai minbing*, bk. 1, 3:22.
114. Although Jiang completed his story on April 3, 1927, it was not published for another seven months. Jiang Guangci, *Jiang Guangci wenji* [Essays by Jiang Guangci] (Shanghai: Shanghai Literary Press, 1982), 1:211–304. See also Gui Fang, "'Duanku dang'—Shanghai gongren wuzhuang qiyi de baogao wenxue" [*Sans-culottes*—Reportage literature on the Shanghai workers' armed uprisings], in Fang Ming, ed., *Jiang Guangci yanjiu ziliao* [Research material on Jiang Guangci] (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1983), 384–86.
115. The decision to encourage an "unrestricted expansion of party membership" had actually been taken a few days prior to the uprising, on March 18. Every party member was requested to introduce a new member every day. See *Shanghai sanci gongren wuzhuan qiyi yanjiu*, 53.
116. Zhang Weizhen, "Shanghai zaoqi gongyun douzheng huiyi," 37.
117. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:407. The policy was subsequently modified to permit only "good" pickets to join the party; similarly, only "good" branches were to open their meetings to the populace at large. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:445.
118. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 389; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:412.
119. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 390; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:413.
120. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 393; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:417.
121. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 391; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:414, 419.
122. Li Jiashou, ed., *Rongjia qiye shiliao* [Historical materials on the Rong Family enterprises] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1980), 1:192–93.
123. *North China Herald*, March 28, 1927; quoted in Nicholas R. Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire: Westerners in Shanghai and the Chinese Revolution of the 1920s* (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College Press, 1991), 255.
124. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:424.
125. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 427–28; *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:431–32.
126. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:432.

127. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:465.
128. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:480, 488.
129. Les Evans and Russell Block, eds., *Leon Trotsky on China* (New York: Monad Press, 1976), 148.
130. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:441.
131. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:475–76.
132. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:470–74.
133. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 10:295–96.
134. Isaacs, *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, 152–53.
135. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 446.
136. Zhu Hua, *Shanghai yibainian* [Shanghai century] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1999), 169.
137. Zhang Weizhen, "Shanghai zaoqi gongyun douzheng huiyi," 38.
138. Zhang Weizhen, "Shanghai zaoqi gongyun douzheng huiyi," 38.
139. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 10:348–49.
140. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:510.
141. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:518.
142. *Liangong*, 266–67.
143. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:552, 566.
144. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:620–27.
145. At the fifth congress of the CCP, which opened in Wuchang on April 27, the local workers' militia selected Chen Duxiu and a Comintern representative "as honorary militiamen and solemnly presented them with their uniform—dark-blue jackets and trousers and military caps." Vera Vladimirovna Vishnyakova-Akimova, *Two Years in Revolutionary China, 1925–1927*, trans. Steven I. Levine (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 315. Nevertheless, by late May Wang Jingwei had determined that the pickets were up to no good, and ordered that their activities be severely restricted. The next month, the Wuhan Worker Pickets were forcibly disbanded. Zhang Guangyü, "Wuhan gongren jiuchadui de jianli he shibai" [The establishment and demise of the Wuhan Worker Pickets], *Zhonggong dangshi ziliao* 49, no. 11 (1992): 251–54. A Soviet adviser on the scene referred to the disarming of the Wuhan Pickets as "one of the most egregious errors of that period." She noted with dismay that "only the unarmed worker pickets standing guard around the People's Palace served as a reminder that the workers' guard in Wuhan had ceased to exist." Vishnyakova-Akimova, *Two Years in Revolutionary China*, 324–25. Similarly, in Changsha the army forcibly disarmed and arrested members of the Worker Pickets in May of 1927, despite fierce resistance. *Liangong*, 272.
146. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 1, 10:354–55.
147. *Shanghai geming*, bk. 2, 6:633.
148. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 463.
149. SMA, ed., *Shanghai sanci*, 482.

150. The warlords' disinterest in social mobilization distinguished them substantially from the Leninist party-states, KMT and CCP alike, that would follow in their wake. As Edward McCord notes, however, warlordism exerted an important influence on China's subsequent political development, bequeathing to both Nationalists and Communists "a shared commitment to centralized, unitary solutions to China's political problems." Both the KMT and CCP advocated hierarchically organized political parties capable of controlling their own military forces, strong programs of ideological indoctrination, and new forms of popular mobilization. See Edward A. McCord, *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 311–15.

151. On workers in Mao's China, see Andrew G. Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Xiaobo Lü and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds., *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997); Jackie Sheehan, *Chinese Workers: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

152. Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962).

153. On the use of historical counterfactuals in social science analysis, see Robert H. Bates et al., *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998). For another approach, see Robert Cowley, ed., *What Ifs? of American History: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (New York: Putnam, 2003).

154. See, for example, Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951); Allen S. Whiting, *Soviet Policies in China, 1917–1924* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954); Conrad Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China, 1924–1927* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958); Maurice Meisner, *Li Tachao and the Origins of Chinese Communism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); Arif Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

155. Hans J. Van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920–1927* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Tony Saich, *The Origins of the First United Front in China: The Role of Sneevliet (alias Maring)*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991); Wen-Hsin Yeh, *Provincial Passages: Culture, Space and the Origins of Chinese Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Alexander Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); Smith, *A Road is Made*.

156. Research on CCP cofounder Chen Duxiu has revealed his keen interest in Western democratic practices. Not until 1927, when Chen was relieved of his party leadership position, did Lenin's authoritarian conception of Communist Party organization gain full acceptance within the CCP. See Lee Feigon, *Chen Duxiu, Founder of the Chinese Communist Party* (Princeton: N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983); Van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade*; and Gregor Benton, *China's Urban Revolutionaries: Explorations in the History of Chinese Trotskyism, 1921–1952* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1996).

157. Roger Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urban Industrialization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

158. For more discussion of this issue, see Elizabeth J. Perry, "Popular Protest in Shanghai, 1919–1927: Social Networks, Collective Identities, and Political Parties" (paper prepared for the "Social Networks in Republican Shanghai" Conference, Center for East Asian Studies, Stanford University, November 2003).