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**Jonathan J. Howlett**

***The Shanghai News (1950-1952): New Democracy and external propaganda in early 1950s Shanghai\****

**Short title: *The Shanghai News (1950-1952) and New Democracy***

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**Abstract:**

*The Shanghai News* was the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) first English-language newspaper. The *News* played an important, but forgotten, role in the development of the PRC's "external propaganda" apparatus, used to fight the ideological Cold War. The *News* was unusual in that it adopted a commercial business model and juxtaposed vehement anti-imperialist propaganda with advertising for multinational companies from "imperialist-capitalist countries." This article argues that the *News* was a product of "New Democracy," the central political paradigm of the PRC between 1949 and 1953. New Democracy, a policy of cross-class cooperation in the name of national reconstruction, is often dismissed as cynical tactic deployed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to diminish resistance during the takeover of China. The author argues for taking the real world impacts of New Democracy on life and work in early 1950s Shanghai seriously and cautions against teleological narratives.

**Keywords:**

*The Shanghai News*, New Democracy, external propaganda

New Democracy (*xin minzhuzhuyi*, 新民主主义) was the defining political paradigm of the early years of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Between the revolution in 1949 and the announcement of the beginning of the "transition to socialism" in 1953, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) promoted New Democracy as a policy designed to unite a broad coalition of social classes behind national reconstruction and the creation of a prosperous "New China." Owing to its relatively short-lived period of implementation, historians have often dismissed New Democracy as little more than a cynical tactic deployed by the CCP to diminish resistance during the takeover of China. This article argues that, regardless of the CCP leadership's intentions, the concept of New Democracy played an important role in shaping everyday social and cultural activity in the early PRC. It does so through an exploration of the history of the PRC's first English-language newspaper, *The Shanghai News* (hereafter referred to as "the News").<sup>1</sup> The *News* has received little attention from historians and has been written out of official histories of the development of China's "external propaganda" (*duiwai*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Shanghai News (TSN)* (Chinese title *Shanghai Xinwen bao*, 上海新闻报) is not to be confused with the Chinese language newspaper *Xinwen bao* (新闻报) published in Shanghai between 1899 and 1949; or the newspaper *Shen bao* (申报), published between 1872 and 1949, which used the English title *Shanghai News*. Please also note that the Chinese names of organizations are given in footnotes throughout for the sake of brevity.

*xuanchuan*, 对外宣传) apparatus.<sup>2</sup> This article presents the first in-depth investigation of the history of this landmark newspaper, which began publication on 10 June 1950 and ceased on 31 December 1952. This article demonstrates that the *News* occupies an important, but neglected, place in the history of propaganda production in the PRC and in newspaper publishing in Shanghai. The *News* was a product of a distinctive set of New Democratic values that were reflected in its format, target readership, business model and hiring practices. The radical political climate of early 1950s Shanghai rendered the New Democratic assumptions under which the *News* was established redundant within the space of only a few years. A focus on the fortunes of this important experiment in the production of external propaganda allows, however, greater understanding of the significance of New Democratic ideals in shaping life and work in the early PRC, overcoming teleological narratives of creeping authoritarianism.

New Democracy was enshrined as the guiding political doctrine of the PRC in article one of the provisional constitution signed on 29 September 1949. The concept evolved out of the CCP's experience of "united front" coalition building during the 1937-1945 war against Japan. It was defined by Mao Zedong (毛泽东, 1893-1976) in his 1940 article *On New Democracy*, as an historical stage preceding a transition to socialism, in which a coalition of non-party political and social groups would cooperate in building a prosperous China, transforming "the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal form of society into an independent, democratic society." This entailed courting capitalists and intellectuals, and encouraging private enterprise alongside the state sector to revive production. New Democracy was not supposed to resemble Western liberal democracy. Mao dismissed the latter as "bourgeois democracy," a class dictatorship serving only the privileged. In New Democratic China, he argued, the revolutionary state would protect the interests of all classes, especially the workers and peasants, against all exploiters, resulting in truer freedom for all.<sup>3</sup> While Mao never specified how long New Democracy would last, historians generally agree that the policy's retirement, signaled by the announcement of the "General Line for the Transition to Socialism" in October 1953, came earlier than planned. Creeping state intervention in the economy derailed the private sector and non-party elites were persecuted in a series of mass mobilization campaigns. The abandonment of New Democracy has long served as an important way-marker in teleological histories of creeping Chinese totalitarianism, culminating in the excesses of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Recent scholarship has emphasized the need to break away from teleological narratives in PRC history, to explore continuities from the Republican period (1911-1949), and to approach the

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<sup>2</sup> The *News* has received little attention from historians, with the exception of a brief discussion in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010: a History in Fragments* (London: Routledge, 2009), 88-93; and mentions in Beverley Hooper, *China Stands Up: Ending the Western Presence, 1948-1950* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 150; and in Neil L. O'Brien, *An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly/Monthly Review* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 212. The absence of the *News* in historical overviews of the PRC's external propaganda is notable. See Cagdas Ungor, Xi Shaoying, and Yao Yao's otherwise comprehensive accounts: Cagdas Ungor, "Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)" (PhD diss. State University of New York at Binghamton, 2009); Xi Shaoying 习少颖, *1949-1966 Nian Zhongguo duiwai xuanchuan shi yanjiu* 1949-1966年中国对外宣传史研究 (Wuhan: Huazhong Keji Daxue Chubanshe, 2010); Yao Yao 姚遥, *Xin Zhongguo duiwai xuanchuan shi: jiangou xiandai Zhongguo de guoji huayu quan* 新中国对外宣传史: 建构现代中国的国际话语权 (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "On New Democracy," January 1940, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume II* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 339-84.

impacts of government policies from the perspective of ordinary people.<sup>4</sup> In this vein Neil Diamant has argued for the development of a more holistic understanding of the complex and overlapping ways people experienced state initiatives in their everyday lives, moving away from simplistic chronologies demarcated by campaigns and major government policies.<sup>5</sup> While a rich literature now exists on the fate of capitalists, intellectuals and religious followers who were first co-opted and then marginalized by the CCP in the early 1950s, the concept of New Democracy itself has received short shrift from historians.<sup>6</sup> Conceptual histories of the development of the idea abound, but there have few dedicated studies analyzing the real-world impacts of the policy through archival research (Nara Dillon's work on private charity in Shanghai is a notable exception).<sup>7</sup> Some historians have dismissed New Democracy entirely as a "bogus" rhetorical device, deployed to obscure the CCP's authoritarian agenda.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, New Democracy was espoused by the CCP as a part of strategy to win power, but most current scholarship suggests that the CCP genuinely sought cooperation with capitalists and intellectuals in the early 1950s. The transition to socialism was accelerated by a series of unforeseen economic and political crises, beginning with the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-1953) and culminating in the Three and Five Antis Campaigns (*san fan yundong*, 三反运动 and *wu fan yundong*, 五反运动) of 1951-1952.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the CCP leadership's intentions, New Democracy had a life of its own: it was given pride of place in the provisional constitution, taught to CCP cadres and state officials as government policy, and widely publicized throughout the country. Central and local government in the PRC was monolithic neither in officials' understanding of central policy, nor in the ways they interacted with society. State actors often held contradictory understandings of government policy and divergent priorities, including over important issues such as the nature of "democracy" and the degree to

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<sup>4</sup> Two particularly important interventions in this unfolding literature are: *Dilemmas of Victory: the Early Years of the People's Republic of China*, edited by Jeremy Brown, and Paul G. Pickowicz (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); and *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China's Era of High Socialism*, edited by Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Neil J. Diamant, "Policy Blending, Fuzzy Chronology, and Local Understandings of National Initiatives in Early 1950s China," *Frontiers of History in China* 9:1 (2014), 83–101.

<sup>6</sup> On different social groups see Sherman Cochran and Xie Zhengguang, *The Lius of Shanghai* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2013); Paul P. Mariani, *Church Militant: Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011) and Yang Kuisong 杨奎松, *Ren bu zhu de "guanhuai": 1949 nian qianhou de shusheng yu zhengzhi* 忍不住的"关怀": 1949年前后的书生与政治 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2014 rev. version).

<sup>7</sup> Nara Dillon, "New Democracy and the Demise of Private Charity in Shanghai," in Brown and Pickowicz, *Dilemmas of Victory*, 80-102. The origins of the concept are explored in Stuart R. Schram, *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949, Volume VII, New Democracy, 1939-1941* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 330-69. There is an extensive literature on the origins and development of the theory in Chinese. Recent publications include: Yu Huamin 于化民, "Zhonghua renmin gongheguo chengli qian Zhonggong dui xiang shehuizhuyi guodu zhi yu chou" 中华人民共和国成立前中共对向社会主义过渡之预筹, *Shixue Yuekan* 2018.01, 70-85; and Xiao Donglian 萧冬连, "Zai yi xin minzhuzhuyi de tizao jieshu" 再议新民主主义的提早结束, *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu*, 2014.8, 51-64.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Dikötter has argued for example that: "In reality, as in the satellite states of the Soviet Union, the New Democracy was part of a bogus coalition between different forces that the party was simply unable to control at this early stage." Frank Dikötter, *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1945-57* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 165-6.

<sup>9</sup> Robert K. Cliver, "Surviving Socialism: Private Industry and the Transition to Socialism in China, 1945–1958," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 16 (2015), 139-64; Jonathan J. Howlett, "Accelerated Transition: British Enterprises in Shanghai and the Transition to Socialism," *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 13:2 (2014), 163-87; Bennis Wai-yip So, "The Policy-Making and Political Economy of the Abolition of Private Ownership in the Early 1950s: Findings from New Material," *The China Quarterly* 171 (2002), 682-703.

which certain groups were to be empowered.<sup>10</sup> Focusing on the everyday work of local-level propaganda production allows new perspectives on the lived reality of New Democracy.

Although the *News* was state-owned, its short history broadly paralleled that of the Shanghai's privately-owned newspapers and publishing companies in the early PRC. The *News*'s printing press was located at 150 Yan'an East Road, close to the heart of China's newspaper industry. Shanghai had been home to a dynamic newspaper and publishing trade since the mid-nineteenth century. According to CCP statistics, there were 49 newspapers published regularly in the city in March 1949, with between 500,000 and 700,000 sold each day.<sup>11</sup> Zhang Jishun has characterized the CCP's early approach towards privately-owned newspapers after the "Liberation" of Shanghai in May 1949 as "adoptive authoritarianism." Fourteen newspapers, owned either by the former government or by private individuals considered hostile to the new government, were closed immediately after the takeover. The city's most influential daily, *Shen bao* (申报) was dissolved and reconstituted as the *Jiefang ribao* (解放日报), the flagship state-owned newspaper for East China. *Xinwen bao* (新闻报) was reincorporated as *Xinwen ribao* (新闻日报), a joint state-private company. Several independent newspapers, including *Dagong bao* (大公报), *Wenhui bao* (文汇报) and *Xinmin bao* (新民报) were permitted to continue to operate, receiving substantial financial support from the state. Research by scholars including Jennifer Altehenger, Robert Culp, Nicolai Volland and Zhang Jishun has demonstrated that much of Shanghai's private publishing sphere reacted positively to the establishment of the New Democratic political order, and some even embraced regime change as a commercial opportunity. CCP policy towards cultural production was improvised and adaptive: cooperation, rather than total control, was the CCP's goal. Publishers struggled, however, to reconcile the creation of lively, saleable products with the demands of the rapidly changing political situation.<sup>12</sup> A series of economic crises compelled capitalists to become increasingly dependent on state aid. This led, eventually, to the creation of state-private enterprises as a step towards state-ownership. The CCP may have initially envisioned a lively newspaper industry thriving as part of the New Democratic mixed economy, but as Zhang has observed, economic crises and mass mobilization campaigns had brought private newspaper publishing to its knees by late 1952. Shanghai's newspaper industry was reorganized to cement state control at the end of the year.<sup>13</sup> A study of the *News*, which was launched, published 795 issues, and closed all within the same period, allows us to understand how New Democratic ideals served as a guide for action in shaping commercial and political publishing in early 1950s Shanghai. The early

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<sup>10</sup> Brown and Johnson, 'Introduction', in Brown and Johnson, *Maoism at the Grassroots*, 1-15.

<sup>11</sup> *Shanghai Jiefang* 上海解放, edited by Shanghai Shi Dangangan 上海市档案馆 (Shanghai: Shanghai Sanlian Shudian, 1999), 14.

<sup>12</sup> Jennifer E. Altehenger, "On Difficult New Terms: The business of lexicography in Mao Era China," *Modern Asian Studies* 51:3 (2017), 622-61; Robert Culp, *The Power of Print in Modern China: Intellectuals and Industrial Publishing from the End of Empire to Maoist State Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019); Nicolai Volland, "Cultural entrepreneurship in the twilight: the Shanghai Book Trade Association, 1945–57," in *The Business of Culture: Cultural Entrepreneurs in China and Southeast Asia, 1900-65*, edited by Christopher Rea and Nicolai Volland (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015); Zhang Jishun 张济顺, "Wushi niandai chu de Shanghai baoye zhuanzhi: cong minban dao dangguan" 五十年代的上海报业转制: 从民办到党管, *Yan huang chunqiu* 4 (2012), 20-6; see also Wang Fei-Hsien, "A Crime of Being Self-Interested: Literary Piracy in Early Communist China, 1949-1953," *Twentieth-Century China* 43:3 (2018), 271-94, and Zhou Wu 周武, "Cong quanguoxing dao difanghua: 1945 zhi 1956 nian Shanghai chubanye de bianqian" 从全国性到地方化: 1945 至 1956 年上海出版业的变迁, *Shi lin* 6 (2006), 72-95.

<sup>13</sup> Zhang Jishun, "Thought Reform and Press Nationalization in Shanghai: the Wenhui newspaper in the early 1950s," *Twentieth-Century China* 35:2 (2010), 52-80; See also, Sei Jeong Chin, "The Historical Origins of the Nationalization of the Newspaper Industry in Modern China: A Case Study of the Shanghai Newspaper Industry, 1937–1953," *China Review* 13:2 (2013), 1-34.

demise of New Democracy was not inevitable. Focusing on the short history of this publication allows us to explore the rapidly evolving and contested character of New Democracy as it was understood at the time, separate from teleological concerns over “what happened next.”

Historical literature on external propaganda production in the PRC remains underdeveloped. Western scholarship produced during the Cold War presented the PRC’s propaganda as a dangerous medium, projecting the power of the monolithic communist state at home and overseas.<sup>14</sup> Most historical literature has focused on long-running and more publications, with a focus on the role of foreign experts in propaganda production, and on the evolution of the principles that have guided propaganda work in the PRC to the present day.<sup>15</sup> Cultural historians are increasingly inclined to explore the processes behind the manufacture of rich and varied propaganda materials by state officials at different levels, as well as how ordinary people interacted in unexpected ways with the finished product.<sup>16</sup> This study of the *News* offers new insights in to the human dimensions of propaganda production, divergences in central and local government policy, decisions made, and paths not taken in the early PRC.

To today’s reader the *News* appears distinctly odd at first glance. Its main function was to publicize the PRC’s successes, condemn American imperialism, articulate visions of socialist internationalist and anti-colonial solidarity, and report local Shanghai news. Jarringly, this orthodox propaganda was juxtaposed with large amounts of advertising for Chinese and foreign-owned companies. Commercial advertising was encouraged as a sign of lively New Democratic economy.<sup>17</sup> It is notable that most of the foreign companies that advertised in the *News* were those that had operated in China before the revolution, however, including some that were implicated most deeply in what the CCP called the “imperialist exploitation of China.” The presence of advertising for these foreign-owned firms, vilified elsewhere in the press for their part in China’s subjugation, in this state-owned publication charged with propagating anti-imperialism, made the *News* remarkable. It was even more noteworthy given the emphasis the PRC’s foreign affairs bureaucracy placed on presenting a carefully sanitized and ideologically coherent image of “New China” to foreign audiences.

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<sup>14</sup> See as an example C.P. FitzGerald, “Persuasion and Propaganda in China,” *The Australian Quarterly* 28:3 (1956), 32-9. The term “propaganda” has negative connotations in contemporary English, but the Chinese “*xuanchuan*” (宣传) is a more neutral term connoting the dissemination of information. See Timothy Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the intelligentsia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14-5, and Frederick T.C. Yu, *Mass Persuasion in Communist China* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964).

<sup>15</sup> The most comprehensive studies of external propaganda production in the PRC are: Ungor, “Distant Comrade”; and Yao, *Xin Zhongguo duiwai xuanchuan shi*. On foreign experts see Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Beverley Hooper, *Foreigners Under Mao: Western Lives in China, 1949–1976* (Hong Kong University Press, 2016); Julia Lovell, “The Uses of Foreigners in Mao-era China: ‘Techniques of Hospitality’ and International Image-building in the People’s Republic, 1949–1976,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (2015), 135-58; Xu Lanjun, “Translation and Internationalism,” in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, edited by Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 76-95. On contemporary propaganda: Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Cheng Yinghong, *Creating the New Man: From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009); Cook, *Mao's Little Red Book*; Stefan Landsberger, *Chinese Propaganda Posters: From revolution to modernization*. (Amsterdam, Singapore; Armonk: The Pepin Press; M.E. Sharpe 1995, 1998, 2001); Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Lu Xing, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> Karl Gerth, “Compromising with Consumerism in Socialist China: Transnational Flows and Internal Tensions in ‘Socialist Advertising’,” *Past and Present* 218:8 (2013), 222-31.

The incongruous juxtaposition of competing socialist and capitalist worldviews in the pages of the *News* was a consequence of the remarkable decision made by officials, charged with the important task of setting up the PRC's first external propaganda newspaper, to fund its political mission using a commercial business model, generating income through sales and advertising. In this way, the *News*'s idiosyncrasies were firmly the product of New Democracy. Nicolai Volland has demonstrated that cultural production in the early PRC needs to be understood as an activity situated in national and local contexts, but international in its ambitions.<sup>18</sup> In this regard, the *News*'s editors drew consciously on Shanghai's international reputation to promote a distinctive vision of local and national state building efforts.<sup>19</sup>

This article comprises two main sections. The first discusses the reasons for the establishment of the *News* and outlines its target audiences. It then explains the reasons behind the *News*'s distinctive character as a socialist propaganda organ in which commercial advertising for foreign "imperialist" companies and luxury goods featured prominently. Records of domestic and overseas sales are used to assess the *News*'s commercial performance and efficacy as a propaganda organ. The *News* struggled financially throughout its short existence. The editors struggled to reconcile the newspaper's format (a local daily) with their desire to find readers across the world. The second section offers a detailed examination of the staffing of the *News* using personnel records. The staff were a mixture of idealistic university graduates and people who had previously worked for the external propaganda organs of the CCP's predecessor, the Guomindang (GMD) government of the Republic of China (1927-1949). The latter group understood employment at the *News* as a chance for a "new life" in "New China." The article concludes by discussing the closure of the *News* in the context of the abandonment of New Democracy. New Democratic principles were outpaced by events and after only two and a half years the *News*'s commercial business model, and the hiring practices that had resulted in the recruitment of staff with undesirable political backgrounds, proved unsustainable. Ultimately, this article argues that New Democracy must be taken seriously as a political paradigm. New Democratic ideals of cross-class coalition, national strengthening and the promotion of a lively commercial economy influenced decision making by central and local authorities as they experimented with new political and organizational forms in the early 1950s. Both the adoption of the policy and its abandonment had profound impacts on the ways non-party elites and ordinary workers experienced the transformative years from 1949 to 1953.

### ***The Shanghai News as propaganda medium and commercial enterprise***

The decision to launch the *News* was taken in May 1950 by the International News Bureau, a body tasked with producing propaganda for foreign audiences, under the supervision of the Central People's Government's General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP).<sup>20</sup> The editor-in-chief, a non-party intellectual named Jin Zhonghua (金仲华, 1907-1968), was instructed to establish the newspaper on 20 May 1950 and to publish the first edition on 10 June. The newly-appointed senior staff had to find an appropriate building and machinery, recruit staff and prepare for publication within the space of a few days. This tight deadline

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<sup>18</sup> Nicolai Volland, *Socialist Cosmopolitanism: The Chinese Literary Universe, 1945-1965* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Wasserstrom, *Global Shanghai*, 91.

<sup>20</sup> Shen Suru 沈苏儒, "Yi xin Zhongguo di yi zhang yingwen ribao 'Shanghai Xinwen'" 忆新中国第一张英文日报:《上海新闻》, *Xinwen jizhe* 2009.6, 88. Responsibility for administrative affairs transferred to the Shanghai News and Publishing Department on 14 June 1951 (*Shanghai xinwen chubanshu*, 上海新闻出版处); Shanghai Municipal Archives (hereafter SMA) A22-2-73. *International News Bureau: Guoji xinwen ju* 国际新闻局; GAPP: *Zhongyang renmin zhengfu xinwen zongshu* 中央人民政府新闻出版总署.

caused long-term problems for the newspaper, not least because the building chosen proved to be seriously dilapidated.<sup>21</sup> Little serious thought appears to have been given to the *News*'s business model or target audience. The *News* may have been conceived as a Chinese version of *The Moscow News*, an English-language newspaper founded in 1930 to provide news to foreigners in the USSR.<sup>22</sup> A more immediate influence was the *China Daily Tribune*, an English-language newspaper set up in 1946 by the GMD's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and closed when the CCP seized Shanghai. The *News* inherited a significant proportion of the *Tribune*'s senior staff, office and manual workers, and printing machinery, as well as retaining its commercial business model.<sup>23</sup> The *News* aspired to be self-funding, through sales and advertising, akin to a privately-owned publication, in line with the principles of the New Democratic economy.

According to Shen Suru (沈苏儒, 1919-2009), who worked for the *News*, the newspaper was established in Shanghai because of the need to inform the large numbers of foreigners in the city of laws and regulations.<sup>24</sup> The CCP pursued a policy of closing down foreign businesses and cultural organizations, but the foreign withdrawal from China was a protracted process, for which there was no advance timetable. There were 32,045 foreign nationals in Shanghai in June 1949, of whom 11,939 remained by December 1950.<sup>25</sup> In 1949, Shanghai's English-reading community was served by three newspapers: the American-owned *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, the left-leaning *China Weekly Review*; and the British-owned *North China Daily News and Herald*, founded in 1850. The CCP moved quickly to establish a monopoly on the dissemination of news and other information. On "Liberation Day", 28 May 1949, the authorities forbade newspapers from reporting military secrets, spreading rumors, and criticizing the new regime. Following the foundation of the PRC on 1 October 1949, foreign journalists were prohibited from working in China without permission and the New China News Agency (hereafter referred to as "Xinhua") became the sole authorized provider of news. The *Post* closed down in September 1949. Publication of the *North China Daily News* finally ceased on 31 March 1951 after a long delay, during which the newspaper practiced self-censorship. The *China Weekly Review* moved to monthly publication in 1950 before closing permanently in June 1953. This left the *News* as the only English-language daily in the PRC.<sup>26</sup> The editors explained the decision to establish the newspaper to readers in more expansive terms than Shen's in the first issue:

The Shanghai News [sic.] which appears today for the first time is a paper owned and published by the Chinese. In choosing English as its medium of expression it has in view the need of helping the English reading public to acquire an understanding of the new Shanghai and the new China as a whole. Inasmuch as Shanghai is one of China's largest cities and a place where contacts with foreign

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<sup>21</sup> SMA B37-1-29-39.

<sup>22</sup> M. Timothy O'Keefe, "The Moscow News: Russia's First English Language Newspaper," *Journalism Quarterly* 50:3 (1973), 463-488; *The Moscow News* was founded by Anna Louise Strong (1885-1970). From 1932, the editor was Michael Borodin (1884-1951), who had represented the Comintern in China. Both Strong and Borodin had close ties to the CCP, but it is worth noting that publication of *The Moscow News* was suspended between February 1949 and January 1956 for political reasons.

<sup>23</sup> SMA B37-1-29-39.

<sup>24</sup> Shen, "Yi xin Zhongguo."

<sup>25</sup> On the number of foreigners in Shanghai see: Shanghai waishi zhi 上海外事志, edited by Zhou Weiming, Tang Zhenchang 周伟明, 唐振常 (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1999), 334-5.

<sup>26</sup> Zhou *et al.*, *Shanghai waishi zhi*, 49, 312-3; Hooper, *China stands up*, 143-5. New China News Agency: *Xinhua tongxun she* 新华通讯社.



countries are most frequently made, many foreign nationals often come into contact with China through their contacts with Shanghai.

A year has passed since the liberation of Shanghai. Within the year Shanghai, and other parts of China, underwent the greatest and most fundamental changes in their history, which will continue to advance at an accelerating tempo. The aim of this publication is to report faithfully such changes, together with important relevant comments, to all those who are deeply concerned about the growth of the new Shanghai and the new China.<sup>27</sup>

The editors' stated desire to draw on Shanghai's international reputation to publicize the achievements "New China" spoke to a regional pride of place that is distinctive when contrasted with the national- or Beijing-focused character of the rest of the PRC's external propaganda output. An internal report written in January 1951 identified three target audiences: "(1) oppressed nationalities in Southeast Asia (2) foreigners in China [and] (3) the people of the New Democratic Countries and peace-loving people in imperialist countries."<sup>28</sup> As we shall see, the *News*'s editors struggled to reconcile the competing needs of these diverse groups.

The *News*'s reporting focused primarily on the successes of "New China," and the evils of imperialism. In late June 1950, not long after the publication of the first issue, American-led United Nations (UN) forces entered the Korean War. Chinese forces joined the conflict in October. Reporting in the *News* focused on Chinese and North Korean victories, alleged massacres undertaken by American troops, and claims that US forces had deployed biological weapons.<sup>29</sup> Reprinted articles from other periodicals gave this reporting an international dimension, including articles from the Soviet *Pravda*, the Cominform journal *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!* and a special report by the London *Daily Worker* correspondent Alan Winnington on the "U.S. Invasion of Korea."<sup>30</sup> Considerable coverage was also devoted to the compassionate treatment of captured UN prisoners of war (POWs) accorded by the Chinese. As part of their "political education," POWs were encouraged to contribute articles and letters to newspapers testifying to the benevolence of their captors and calling for an end to the war.<sup>31</sup>

Beyond the Korean conflict, the editors focused on praising the virtues of the Soviet Union and the Soviet-led World Peace Movement, as well as reporting on anti-colonial struggles.<sup>32</sup> A typical issue, published on 18 June 1950, contained the following articles: "Outrages of US Military Personnel in Japan," "Railway Freight Volume Up 250%," "All USSR to Mark Gorky 14<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary," "Play on Factory Health to be Broadcast Today," "Italian Mayors Demand Peace," and "China Signs for World Peace," by Song Qingling (宋庆龄, 1893-

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<sup>27</sup> "To Our Readers," *TSN*, 10 June 1950.

<sup>28</sup> SMA B37-1-32.

<sup>29</sup> 7,000 Koreans Massacred in "Death Valley" – Bestial U.S. Imperialist Butchery," *TSN*, 11 August 1950; "Int'l Scientific Commission Confirms U.S. Bacterial Warfare," *TSN*, 15 September 1952.

<sup>30</sup> "Bestial Crimes of U.S. Troops in Korea," *TSN*, 8 September 1950; "Stay Hand of American Fascist Murderers," *TSN*, 10 September 1950; "U.S. Invasion of Korea," *TSN*, 17 September 1950.

<sup>31</sup> "A GI Story," *TSN*, 18 March 1951; "War Prisoners in Korea Calling," *TSN*, 3 May 1951; *TSN*, "Greetings from Other POW's," 3 July 1951.

<sup>32</sup> "Support Iranians' Fight for Oil Nationalization," *TSN*, 10 July 1951; "Egyptians, be Resolute in Anti-British Struggle," *TSN*, 24 October 1951; "National Liberation Movement in Colonies & Dependent Countries," *TSN*, 20 February 1952.

1981).<sup>33</sup> Song, the widow of Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan, 孙中山, 1866-1925), was a prominent non-party intellectual who championed CCP rule as providing a solution to China's endemic poverty. Articles she wrote featured prominently in the *News* and other external propaganda.<sup>34</sup> The *News* frequently related local events to international affairs. This was particularly true with reporting on the World Peace Movement.<sup>35</sup> In turn, news of local events was carried to readers across the world, resulting in the dissemination of a specific, Shanghai-based form of socialist internationalism (albeit to a limited audience).

The *News*'s editorial stance was solidly orthodox. What creates the impression of the *News* as an idiosyncratic publication, however, is the combination of anti-imperialist propaganda and optimistically-worded commercial advertising for the services of foreign-owned companies in its pages. Foreign firms, including Butterfield & Swire, Jardine, Matheson & Company and The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), which were attacked elsewhere in the Chinese press as exploitative "imperialist-capitalist" enterprises, paid for large advertisements in the *News*. Such advertisements appeared most incongruous when featured in special editions marking important revolutionary dates.<sup>36</sup> In the issue celebrating Army Day on 1 August 1951, compliments were offered to readers by HSBC, the Mercantile Bank of India and China, Follies "Home of Fashion," King Chen Manufacturing Co. (producers of ink and watercolor paint) and vodka manufacturers Farimex Distilling Works. Advertisements for private companies were printed next to similar ones for the state-owned People's Bank of China and China National Petroleum Group.<sup>37</sup> In general, the directors of large foreign companies remaining in China held out little hope for their prospects, but the fate of larger firms, including Swire, Jardines and HSBC was not decided during the period in which the *News* operated (Swire and Jardines transferred their assets to the Chinese in 1954, HSBC in 1955). Aside from normal commercial purposes, these inexpensive advertisements may have been an attempt to placate the Chinese authorities, or a show of "business as usual."

Similarly, advertisements for luxury products featured alongside articles heralding the spartan ethos of the Chinese people in pursuit of national reconstruction. In October 1952, for example, the shop *Gastronome* on Shaanxi Road wanted readers to know that they had "Just received fresh Trappist Cheese." In December, *Gastronome*'s Christmas advertisement offered readers the finest caviar and smoked salmon.<sup>38</sup> Advertisements such as these appealed to both expatriate foreigners and Chinese elites holding on to their luxurious lifestyles despite the changing political climate.<sup>39</sup> Only a few years later, the publication of this type of advertising alongside government propaganda would be unthinkable. As noted above, commercial advertising was common in the early 1950s, but the advertising in the *News* was distinctive both in terms of which companies placed adverts and in the target audience of foreigners and

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<sup>33</sup> *TSN*, 18 June 1950.

<sup>34</sup> See for example, Song Qingling, "Shanghai's New Day has Dawned," *TSN*, 10 June 1950.

<sup>35</sup> "Fight of the Shanghai People in the Past Year," *TSN*, 22 October 1950; "A New Step to Peace," *TSN*, 28 August 1952.

<sup>36</sup> *TSN*, 28 May 1951.

<sup>37</sup> "In Celebration of the Army Day," *TSN*, 1 August 1951.

<sup>38</sup> "Just received fresh Trappist Cheese," *TSN*, 19 October 1952; *TSN*, 21 December 1952.

<sup>39</sup> One of the most best-known cases of such behavior is Zheng Nian's account of sitting down to a breakfast of imported coffee and marmalade while Red Guards ransacked her house during the Cultural Revolution: Nien Cheng, *Life and Death in Shanghai* (London: Grafton Books, 1987), 108; for more on elite lifestyles in "New China" see Lu Hanchao, "Bourgeois Comfort under Proletarian Dictatorship: Home Life of Chinese Capitalists before the Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Social History* 52:1 (2018), 74-100.

elite Chinese readers. The *News*'s eccentricities in this regard bear testament to the continuity of commercial and cultural forms between the Republican and socialist periods.<sup>40</sup>

The presence of these commercial advertisements spoke to one of the core problems facing the *News*'s editors, which was to reconcile its ambitions as an international propaganda tool with its format and function as a local newspaper. Rather than seeing commercial advertising as intrinsically problematic, in internal reports the *News*'s editors emphasized its important political functions, including: promoting the New Democratic economy and international trade; serving the readership by promoting cultural events and economic opportunities; demonstrating to imperialists and other doubters that "New China" was flourishing; and earning income to support the newspaper's political mission. Crucially, advertising was the only profitable part of the *News*'s operation. Advertising revenues accounted for an average of 34 percent of the newspaper's monthly income between June 1950 and May 1951. Some months, this figure was substantially higher, including rising to 55 percent in September 1950.<sup>41</sup>

Advertisers were difficult to find. A 1951 report by the advertising department noted that while potential advertisers could "easily believe that the readers of an English-language newspaper have consumer power," the economy was depressed, international trade was only beginning to develop and foreign companies within China were closing. Chinese advertisers feared that placing English-language advertisements might be a political mistake. In fact, the report noted that the content of advertisements was not a matter of great concern as long as they were neither "reactionary" nor "pornographic."<sup>42</sup> One exception was advertising for foreign films: early issues contained advertisements for a range of films from different countries. On 19 June 1950 the *News* advertised the American films "Golden Earrings," starring Marlene Dietrich and the musical "Hello, Frisco, Hello," alongside a British adaptation of Charles Dickens's "Great Expectations" and the Chinese production "The Vampire." On 12 November 1950, soon after Chinese troops entered Korea, a notice in the *News* thanked readers for pointing out the impropriety of disseminating American cultural propaganda and declared that it would no longer print such advertisements.<sup>43</sup>

In its first six months, the newspaper's income totaled 238,536,065 *yuan* (equivalent to 8,369 US Dollars at the time).<sup>44</sup> Expenditure amounted to 556,417,190 *yuan* (US\$19,523), resulting in a deficit of 317,881,125 *yuan* (US\$11,154). This precarious financial situation continued throughout 1951 and 1952.<sup>45</sup> In June 1951, a typical month, readers purchased an average of only 2,070 copies domestically and 199 overseas each day. In September, a relatively successful month, the most copies sold in one day was 3,050 and the average 2,660.<sup>46</sup> To contextualize these sales figures, the 379,164 copies sold between January and July 1952, amounted to less than one percent of sales of all Shanghai-based newspapers. *Jiefang ribao*

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<sup>40</sup> Paul A. Cohen, "Reflections on a Watershed Date: the 1949 Divide in Chinese History" in *Twentieth Century China: New Approaches*, edited by Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, (London: Routledge, 2003), 7-37.

<sup>41</sup> SMA B37-1-29, SMA B37-1-29-9.

<sup>42</sup> SMA B37-1-29-24.

<sup>43</sup> "Notice," *TSN*, 12 November 1950. On the prohibition of foreign films see Hooper, *China Stands Up*, 150-157.

<sup>44</sup> SMA B37-1-32: the official exchange rate was one US Dollar to 28,500 *Renminbi* in December 1950. *TSN*, 21 December 1950.

<sup>45</sup> SMA B37-1-32, SMA S314-4-5-11.

<sup>46</sup> SMA B37-1-29-9.

sold over a hundred thousand copies a day in August 1951.<sup>47</sup> Of course, nobody expected the *News* to have a comparable circulation with *Jiefang ribao*, but its low sales were significant relative to its high production costs.<sup>48</sup>

The staff of the *News* understood commercial success to be secondary to the fulfilment of the newspaper's ideological mission. Nevertheless, internal records show that financial concerns preoccupied the newspaper's staff at all levels. The *News* was the primary vehicle through which the new government communicated with foreigners. The editors estimated that one in seventeen foreigners in Shanghai bought the newspaper in 1951.<sup>49</sup> Many of those who remained in Shanghai after 1949 purchased the newspaper for information on international and local events that was unobtainable elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> Importantly, this included the publication of regular lists of the names of people who had been granted exit visas. The continued emigration of foreigners dramatically reduced the *News*'s potential readership within China. By 1952, only 6,749 foreigners (not all of whom could read English) remained in the city, down from 11,939 in late 1950.<sup>51</sup> Replacing this lost readership and increasing revenue by selling to overseas readers proved difficult. The passage of the Trading with the Enemy Act in Washington DC on 17 December 1950 signaled the creation of an international sanctions regime imposed upon the PRC by the United States and its allies.<sup>52</sup> Sanctions made it illegal to conduct financial transactions with China from many countries, meaning that the *News* could not receive payments. Later, external propaganda publications were distributed overseas by the state-run International Bookstore, but this organization was still finding its feet in 1950.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, the *News*'s format as a local newspaper proved unsuitable for export. Readers overseas did not need to know about winter service changes to Shanghai's bus routes for instance.<sup>54</sup> On 3 June 1951, the pattern of distribution of 3,483 copies sold was as follows: 1,573 purchased in Shanghai; 1,200 sent to North Korea (see below); 449 elsewhere in China; and 261 overseas.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> SMA B35-2-78-21, SMA A73-1-82-40. In the first seven months of 1952 the highest monthly circulation figure was 71,854 in January (average 2,318 daily) and the lowest was 59,004 in June (average 1,966 daily).

<sup>48</sup> SMA B37-1-29-55.

<sup>49</sup> SMA B37-1-29-20.

<sup>50</sup> An American Shanghai resident described the *News* in a letter home as their "last remnant of 'cultural breakfast food'" in National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), Washington DC, Record Group 59, Box 4203, 793.00/1-2253. On the availability of English-language reading material in the PRC see Nicolai Volland, "Clandestine Cosmopolitanism: Foreign Literature in the People's Republic of China, 1957–1977," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 76:1 (2017), 185-210.

<sup>51</sup> Zhou and Tang, *Shanghai waishi zhi*, 334-5.

<sup>52</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, Korea and China*, Vol. VII, Part 2, edited by John P. Glennon, Harriet D. Schwar, Paul Claussen (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1983); Document 249, 611.93231/1–2651, The Department of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, January 26, 1951; Foreign Assets Control.

<sup>53</sup> For more on the International Bookstore (*Guoji shudian*, 国际书店) see Ungor, "Distant Comrade," 206-20, 242-3; and Xu, "Translation and Internationalism," 83-4.

<sup>54</sup> SMA B37-1-29-39. "Nos 9 and 10 Bus Routes Adopt Winter Service Time," *TSN*, 15 November 1950.

<sup>55</sup> SMA B37-1-29-20. The newspaper was distributed widely within China, but not in great numbers: in north China, ninety-seven copies were sold in Beijing, forty-seven in Tianjin, four in Shanxi province and one in Inner Mongolia; in east China, forty-four copies were sold in Jiangsu province, thirty-seven in the city of Hangzhou, and thirty-seven in Shandong province, seventeen in Fujian, eight in Anhui and four in Jiangsu; in south and central China, forty-five copies were sold in the province of Guangdong, eighteen in Hunan, seventeen in Hubei, twelve in Guangxi and six in Hunan; in the west, fourteen copies reached remote Gansu and two copies were purchased in Shaanxi; and in the southwest, twenty-one copies were sold in Sichuan province, four in Guizhou, and three each in Yunnan and Tibet.

To address the newspaper's dire financial situation, the editors devised a "commercialization" (*qiyehua*, 企业化) plan in early 1951. This entailed increasing the sale price, cutting costs, attracting new advertisers and broadening the overseas readership.<sup>56</sup> In February 1951, the *News* announced that it was expanding from two to four pages to increase coverage of important events.<sup>57</sup> The real reason was that the editors wished to double advertising space.<sup>58</sup> At a meeting of the commercial bureau on 6 April 1951, the assembled staff discussed ways of promoting the paper, drawing on traditional commercial marketing techniques from the Republican era. As well as displaying advertisements in the windows of major companies, department stores and shops in areas of the city frequented by foreigners, those present considered the opportunities afforded by parades and celebrations, including International Workers Day, to promote the newspaper. Strikingly, they also discussed taking advantage of mass campaigns, including the Campaign to Resist America and Aid Korea (*kang Mei yuan Chao yundong*, 抗美援朝运动), as promotional opportunities.<sup>59</sup> The average monthly loss made by the *News* from June to December 1950 was 52,073,300 *yuan* (US\$1,827). This increased to 56,002,964 *yuan* (US\$1,965) in January 1951, but decreased over the ensuing months losses to 34,989,755 *yuan* (US\$1,698), 5,410,375 *yuan* (US\$263), and 4,812,172 *yuan* (US\$233), before increasing again in May 1951 to 24,475,497 *yuan* (US\$1,188).<sup>60</sup> Revenues increased, but income still amounted to only 59 percent of costs in May 1951. Rather than successful commercialization, this slight, but significant, upturn in business may have been the result of a large order placed by military organizations in Northeast China Military Region for use in prisoner of war camps in North Korea, about which more will be said below.<sup>61</sup>

A diverse range of international subscribers purchased the newspaper, but never in great numbers: the table below shows destination countries of 248 copies sold overseas on 3 June 1951.<sup>62</sup> The statistics show that, at least in numerical terms, the *News* had little impact among its target audiences. Of course, readership statistics can only provide us with limited information and tell us little about how purchasers engaged with the newspaper's content. The country to which the most copies were sent on 3 June was India, where fifty-six copies went to subscribing organizations and individuals, three were donated to progressive organizations and two given in exchange for other newspapers. The *News* had a small constituency of readers in Indonesia, but mostly failed to reach "oppressed nationalities" in Southeast Asia. Beyond this, circulation across Asia was limited, except for in the British colony of Hong Kong, where there were twenty-two subscribers. Hong Kong was the only place outside mainland China where readers could purchase the newspaper incidentally, without a subscription. Copies of the *News* made their way to friendly socialist countries, but only in very small numbers, except for in Poland, where there were forty-seven subscribers. The final overseas group targeted by the *News* was "peaceful" people in imperialist countries: there were twenty-nine subscribers in America and two exchange relationships in place; and in Britain there were three subscribers

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<sup>56</sup> SMA B37-1-29-39.

<sup>57</sup> "Notice," *TSN*, 10 February 1951.

<sup>58</sup> SMA B37-1-28-15, SMA B37-1-29-24. The proportion of space devoted to advertising in the newspaper was seventeen percent after the expansion.

<sup>59</sup> SMA B37-1-22.

<sup>60</sup> SMA B37-1-29-35. Dollar figures derived from the official exchange rate printed in the *News*, fixed at 20,610 *Renminbi* to US\$1 in the period between 24 March and 22 May 1951.

<sup>61</sup> SMA B37-1-29-20. Northeast China Military Region: *Dongbei junqu* 东北军区.

<sup>62</sup> SMA B37-1-29-20. If the *News* sold 261 copies every day in 1951 its annual overseas circulation would have been 81,432. To contextualize this number, the International Bookstore sold 670,000 periodicals overseas in total in 1951 (some of which may have included the *News*), these figures are from Ungor, "Distant Comrade," 254. The International Bookstore's overseas sales increased rapidly throughout the decade, reaching 7,520,000 in 1959.

and four exchanges. That the PRC's only daily English-language newspaper was selling so few copies overseas was a source of serious concern to the *News's* leadership.<sup>63</sup>

In January 1953, subscription fees paid by forty-seven international subscribers were refunded by the *News* as part of its winding-up process, allowing an insight in to who bought the *News* overseas at that time. Institutional subscriptions included: *The Denver Post*, the reference libraries of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the UN, the Ministry of Information of Indonesia, the Czechoslovakian Embassy in North Korea, and the Soviet news agency VOKS. Subscriptions in the US were managed largely through agents, including Universal Distributors Co., New York, and the Progressive Book Shop in Los Angeles. Among the subscribers was the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy, a front organization for the Communist Party of the USA. The *News* was also stocked by progressive booksellers elsewhere, including the Willing Book Co., Hong Kong and the Biblioteca Feltrinelli, Milan. Among its Indian subscribers were the general secretary of the Kerala Peace Committee in Kottayem and the left-wing *Free Press Journal*, published by the People's Publishing House in Bombay.<sup>64</sup> This list tells us little about the ways individual readers engaged with the newspaper's ideological or informational content, but it is clear that the majority of overseas subscribers were already self-identified left-wing organizations and progressive individuals. It is unlikely that the *News* changed many minds, but its international circulation will have contributed to efforts to promote the PRC within the global socialist movement, if only in a relatively minor way.<sup>65</sup>

*Table: Distribution of The Shanghai News by country on 3 June 1951*<sup>66</sup>

Country	Subscribers	Donated copies	Exchange copies	Incidental sales	Total sales
Australia	1				
Austria			1		
Czechoslovakia	3	6			
East Germany	1				
France	1	5	2		
Hong Kong	22	11		20	
Hungary	1				
India	56	3	2		
Indonesia	10	3	1		
Italy	1				
Japan		1			
Myanmar			1		
Netherlands			1		
New Zealand			1		
Pakistan		1			
Poland	47				
Romania	2		1		
Singapore		1			
Switzerland	1				
United Kingdom	3		4		
USA	29		2		
USSR	3				
Total	181	31	16	20	248

<sup>63</sup> SMA B37-1-29-20.

<sup>64</sup> SMA B37-1-33.

<sup>65</sup> Nicolai Volland, "Translating the Socialist State: Cultural Exchange, National Identity, and the Socialist World in the Early PRC," *Twentieth-Century China* 33:2 (2008), 51-72.

<sup>66</sup> SMA B37-1-29-20.

In a June 1951 report the editorial office staff confessed to being perplexed by the “audience question” (*duixiang wenti*, 对象问题). The *News*’s inflexible format as a local daily proved a considerable obstacle to gaining overseas readers. Foreigners in China and overseas, they observed, had very different reasons for buying the newspaper.<sup>67</sup> Earlier that year the editors had been advised by the Newspaper Affairs Committee, a body comprised of senior cadres who oversaw work at the *News*, to “face overseas” (*mianxiang haiwai*, 面向海外), but the GAPP had countermanded this instruction, ordering the *News* to limit their audience to foreigners within China. Jin Zhonghua told his staff, rather unhelpfully, that the *News* should be easy to sell overseas despite its format because people would be hungry for information on events in Shanghai and across the country. The editorial line should pay special attention to the needs of readers in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, he advised, while also including more local news. To increase sales, he suggested, the *News* should target Chinese readers with “foreign minds” (*yang tounao*, 洋头脑) and recently-returned overseas Chinese.<sup>68</sup> The “audience question” remained unsolved.<sup>69</sup>

The largest order refunded when the *News* closed was for 16,000 issues for the Education Section of the Prisoner of War Management Department of the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army (CPVA) in Pyoktong County, North Korea.<sup>70</sup> Pyoktong County was home to POW holding thousands of UN soldiers. Here the *News* and other publications were used as “study materials” in “thought reform,” a form of political education designed to change individuals’ thinking and behavior through peer pressure, coercion and rewards.<sup>71</sup> Facing meagre food rations, unsanitary conditions and plummeting winter temperatures, the extent of a POW’s engagement with political study could determine whether or not they survived.<sup>72</sup> As part of political education, POWs would first be given English-language news articles to read and discuss as a group. Later, they were expected to write their own pieces, which were often published in the *News*.<sup>73</sup> This created a feedback loop: the main audience for the extensive coverage of events such as the POWs’ Christmas festivities in 1951 were the POWs themselves.<sup>74</sup> The *News*’s original mission statement was internationalist and optimistic. Rather than reaching out to foreigners in China or overseas, it found its largest constituency of readers through deployment in support of coercive political indoctrination in POW camps.

Despite a lack of direct evidence, it is not unreasonable to suggest that lessons learned from the *News*’s lack of success will have informed the later development of China’s external propaganda apparatus. The *News* was one of several English-language publications produced

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<sup>67</sup> SMA B37-1-29-61.

<sup>68</sup> SMA B37-1-22. Newspaper Affairs Committee: *She wu weiyuanhui* 社务委员会.

<sup>69</sup> SMA A22-2-73.

<sup>70</sup> SMA B37-1-33. Prisoner of War Management Department of the CPVA: *Zhongguo renmin zhiyuanjun fuguanchu jiaoyuke* 中国人民志愿军俘管处教育科. Two other CPVA organizations were also refunded: the Political Department of the Ninth Army of the CPVA (*Zhongguo renmin zhiyuanjun di jiu bingtuan zhengzhibu* 中国人民志愿军第九兵团政治部) (775 issues) and the Political Department of the CPVA (*Zhongguo renmin zhiyuanjun zhengzhibu* 中国人民志愿军政治部) (167 issues).

<sup>71</sup> On conditions in the camps see Anthony Farrar-Hockley, *The British Part in the Korean War, Vol II, An Honourable Discharge* (London: HMSO, 1995), 266-293.

<sup>72</sup> Richard M. Bassett and Lewis H. Carlson, *And the Wind Blew Cold: The Story of an American POW in North Korea* (Ashland: Kent State University Press, 2002), 58-66.

<sup>73</sup> Raymond B. Lech, *Broken Soldiers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 84, 94, 119. POWs also received *People’s China*, the *China Monthly Review*, *Cross Roads* (from India), the New York and London editions of the *Daily Worker*, and *For a Lasting Peace, for a People’s Democracy!*

<sup>74</sup> “X’mas Festivities in POW Camp,” *TSN*, 9 January 1952.

in the early PRC. The others included: fortnightly journal *People's China*, first published on 1 January 1950 as a “forum of truth and a clearing house of actual revolutionary experience”; the more colorful *China Pictorial*, which began publication in 1951 as a translated version of the magazine *Renmin Huabao* (人民画报); and *China Reconstructs*, a bi-monthly (later, monthly) periodical that was first published in January 1952.<sup>75</sup> Cagdas Ungor has shown that the PRC's external propaganda apparatus was under-resourced, overly bureaucratic, and profoundly disrupted by political campaigns in the early 1950s. In contrast to the *News*, however, the three publications named above had clearly-delineated rationales behind their publication and were designed to appeal to specific target audiences. Key principles, developed in the course of the revolution and firmed-up in the 1950s, guided external propaganda production in the PRC. Two of the most important of these were: “inside and outside are different” (*neiwai youbie*, 内外有别), meaning that external propaganda should not simply replicate domestic propaganda, but should meet the needs of its audience; and “not forcing oneself on others” (*bu qiangjia yu ren*, 不强加于人), meaning that propaganda should be subtle and made relatable by being directed at “middle-of-the-road masses.” The aim was to make external propaganda lively and enticing to new readers, avoiding political jargon and controversial viewpoints.<sup>76</sup>

The heavily politicized and hectoring tone of the *News* stood in sharp contrast to that adopted in the more successful *China Reconstructs*, which ran from 1952 to 1990. *China Reconstructs* presented its readers with beautifully illustrated stories of “New China,” focusing on New Democratic themes including national reconstruction, poverty alleviation and the empowerment of previously marginalized groups.<sup>77</sup> While the *News* made little attempt to engage readers who were not already in sympathy with its ideological perspective, *China Reconstructs* prioritized winning readers' goodwill by familiarizing readers with Chinese news and culture through lively articles, sympathetic pictorials and imaginative arts and crafts activities. A typical issue from May 1954 contained articles on international trade, Christian life in China, exchanges of exotic animals, and “A Day with Tibetan Women.”<sup>78</sup> While the *News's* editors seldom addressed their readers directly, *China Reconstructs* encouraged comment from its readers. The most effusive efforts were printed in a readers' letters section. As Jin Zhonghua, the editor-in-chief of the *News*, was one of the founding editors of *China Reconstructs*, along with Song Qingling and Israel Epstein, we might, with a degree of caution, infer that the latter publication's successes were informed, at least in part, by the failures of the former. Regardless, it was clear that the *News* did not conform to the accepted principles of good external propaganda work. Neither did it conform to the principle that “inside and outside are different,” nor appeal to the “middle-of-the-road masses”. The commercial model adopted under the New Democratic ethos of 1950 resulted in the *News* having a distinctly odd format as a socialist mouthpiece reliant on advertising from “imperialist exploiters”, and as a local newspaper seeking international audiences. The *News* can only be judged a disappointment as a propaganda medium and as a commercial venture. Failure was not inevitable, however. Next,

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<sup>75</sup> *China Reconstructs*, “Introducing China Reconstructs,” 1:1 (Jan-Feb 1952). *People's China* was closed in December 1957 and replaced with the weekly news magazine *Peking Review* in March 1958, which is now published as *Beijing Review*. *China Reconstructs* later became a monthly magazine. It changed its name to *China Today* in 1990. On the *Peking Review* see Robert L. Terrell, “The First 25 Years of the Beijing Review, an official propaganda organ of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China,” *Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands)* 37:3 (1986), 191-219.

<sup>76</sup> Ungor, “Distant Comrade,” 56-60, 213-14.

<sup>77</sup> Xi, *Zhongguo duiwai xuanchuan shi*, 107.

<sup>78</sup> An index for 1953 listed thirty-two articles on economic topics, twenty-nine on social affairs, twenty-nine on culture, seven on ‘general issues’, six pictorials, six on postage stamps, and five on ethnic minorities. *China Reconstructs* 2:6 (Nov-Dec 1953).



we shall explore what working on the *News* meant to the individuals who devoted two and half years of their lives to the project.

### **New Democracy and the staff of the *News***

New Democracy was a policy designed to reassure non-party groups and individuals that they would be allowed to play meaningful roles in the new order. With the creation of a “New China,” came the opportunity for a “new life.” On 6 June 1950, just days before the *News* began publication, Mao reaffirmed New Democratic principles in a major speech titled “Don’t Hit Out in All Directions.” He called for the Party to ally with capitalists, democratic personages and intellectuals for the good of the country, saying: “Many of them were our enemies before, but now that they have broken with the enemy camp and come over to our side, we should unite with all these people.”<sup>79</sup> The staffing of the *News* reflected the new government’s willingness to draw on Shanghai’s unique depth of expertise in newspaper production and foreign languages. Examining people’s experiences in this moment of transition allows us to gain a better understanding of how people experienced New Democracy as a lived reality. This section draws on employee registration forms completed for the personnel department of the *News* in spring 1951. Individuals’ political backgrounds and employment histories conditioned their experiences at the *News*. Here we will consider what working at the *News* may have meant for different groups including: idealistic university graduates; people whose careers to that point had been interrupted by war and economic turbulence; graduates from the East China News College, a political education institution for intellectuals; and senior figures with close links to the GMD.<sup>80</sup> For those with politically difficult backgrounds, employment at the *News* signaled a fresh start in the spirit of New Democracy. Working at the *News* was demanding for everyone. In January 1951, the *News* had a staff of sixty-one, which increased to seventy-four by October 1952 (thirty-four workers and forty office staff).<sup>81</sup> A December 1950 report by the management office noted that the staff was kept as small as possible and this meant that individuals were overburdened by work. This situation was compounded, the report noted, by a lack of experience among those in senior positions, many of whom had never worked in the newspaper industry, or on an English-language newspaper, before.<sup>82</sup> The second part of this section follows the fortunes of the *News*’s staff as the impacts of mass campaigns, most prominently the Three Antis, were felt in the workplace. This was a foretaste of things to come. When the newspaper closed in December 1952, a few fortunate individuals were able to use their time at the *News* as a springboard for successful careers in Beijing. The majority were either relocated at short notice to Beijing, or were compelled to register for “political study”.

Enthusiastic university graduates employed by the *News* were inspired, or so they wrote on their personnel forms, by the idea of building “New China.” Of these, a large proportion had graduated from St. John’s University in Shanghai and many were already CCP members. Several had internationalized backgrounds and had gained experience working with international agencies, including the United States Information Agency (USIA), or studying overseas. Twenty-nine-year-old He Fei (何飞, 1920?-), was a graduate in foreign languages from St. John’s, employed as a journalist at the *News*. In 1946, he worked for the United

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<sup>79</sup> Mao Tse-Tung, “Don’t Hit Out in all Directions,” June 6, 1950, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung: Volume V* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), 33-6.

<sup>80</sup> The College was founded in early 1950 as a sub-unit of the East China University of Political Studies and Military Science. O’Brien, *An American Editor*, 187. East China News College: *Huadong xinwen xueyuan* 华东新闻学院.

<sup>81</sup> SMA B37-1-32, SMA S314-4-5-11.

<sup>82</sup> SMA B37-1-29-39.

Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) as a translator. The following year, he began two years of overseas study at the University of Missouri. On returning home in August 1949, he found work at the Shanghai People's Radio Station and then at the *News*. Many younger colleagues forged successful careers in English-language publishing or the foreign affairs organs after the *News* closed. They included twenty-five-year-old Fang Yingyang (方应昉, 1925-1969), a university graduate from a professional family background who worked in the editorial office. After graduating from Central China University in 1946, Fang had worked for the university's foreign language department as a teaching assistant for two years before finding work with USIA. In December 1949, he was recruited to the Foreign Affairs Department of the Nanjing Municipal Government. In February 1950, he joined the China New Democratic Youth League and was assigned to the *News* in June. His stated goal was to raise his political and technical understanding and "serve the people." He went on to work for *China Reconstructs* in Beijing. Yang Xiling (杨熙龄, 1927-1989), a twenty-three-year-old St. John's graduate, also came from a professional family background and worked as a journalist. After graduation in 1948, he had taught briefly in a secondary school and became a member of the CCP. He was employed by *Jiefang ribao* in August 1949 and was transferred to the *News* in June 1950. He would later become a prolific translator and writer. Twenty-four-year-old Meng Jiqing's (孟纪青, 1926-2009) career followed a similar path: he graduated in the same year as Yang and worked for *Jiefang ribao*. He later played an important role in setting up the magazine *Peking Review*. For the idealistic young Fang, Yang and Meng, the *News* was an opportunity to serve "New China" and a stepping-stone to careers in Beijing.<sup>83</sup>

These graduates worked alongside a slightly older cohort of people for whom the foundation of "New China" held the potential for a period economic prosperity after several decades of turbulence that had disrupted their lives and careers. Xu Zhirong (徐芝荣, 1917?-), for example, was a thirty-two-year-old translator-editor from Yangzhou who began her working life as a teacher in Guilin in 1940, having fled the Japanese occupation of China's eastern seaboard. She moved to Chongqing in 1945 and worked as a secretary for the Soviet news agency *Telegrafnoye agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuz* (TASS). In 1946, she returned with TASS to the GMD capital Nanjing where, after the takeover in 1949, she was employed by Xinhua as a translator-editor. She hoped, on starting work at the *News*, she wrote, to become a journalist capable of working independently. Wu Yifang (吴蕙芳, 1919?-) came from a poor peasant background in Anhui with a middle school education and spoke no foreign languages. She had worked for TASS in Chongqing between 1942 and 1945. Four years of unemployment had followed before she resumed work with TASS in Shanghai in June 1949. The job at the *News* may have represented an opportunity for this thirty-year-old woman to find some stability. Her file recorded her aspiration as simply "hoping to do this job well." The career of Li Jingshu (李景书, 1911?-), a thirty-eight-year-old employed in the editorial office had been similarly disrupted. She had moved jobs and locations many times during the Japanese invasion, before finally finding work at *Xinwen bao* after the war. From December 1949 to June 1950 she was unemployed and "studied" at the News College. She hoped, her file stated, to continue her political education in her new role, especially on the Korean conflict.<sup>84</sup> For Xu, Wu and Li, New Democracy offered the chance to advance their careers in a period of relative stability after the tumultuous 1930s and 1940s.

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<sup>83</sup> SMA B34-2-15. Central China University: *Zhonghua daxue* 中华大学.

<sup>84</sup> SMA B34-2-15.

A significant proportion of the staff were recruited from the News College. The CCP held that people were products of their environment and believed that the old society had corrupted the citizens of Shanghai. Government organizations like the *News* required skilled workers in all fields, so the News College was set up to educate intellectuals (broadly defined) in the newspaper industry in the new political realities of the PRC. Those who were willing to reform their thinking and behavior in line with the CCP's ideals were promised an opportunity to prove themselves.<sup>85</sup> One graduate of the College who seized this chance was Shen Suru. Shen had worked for the USIA as a translator after graduating from Jinan University in 1946. He was employed as a journalist for *Xinwen bao* between 1946 and 1949, and as a translator for the *China Weekly Review* before registering at the College in 1949. He joined the *News* in 1951 and became the head of the News Section. He was sent to Beijing in 1953 to work for *People's China* and *China Reconstructs*, and later became one of the PRC's foremost authorities on external propaganda work.<sup>86</sup>

Working at the *News* represented a chance to prove oneself for people like Wang Xuewen (王学文, 1904?-), a forty-five-year-old switchboard operator and Zhu Xiansheng (朱贤生, 1909?-), a forty-year-old accountant and advertising expert who had both worked previously for the English-language newspaper *The China Press*. The *Press* was aligned with the GMD through its major shareholder, the politician H.H. Kung (孔祥熙, 1808-1967). Having close links to the much-loathed GMD was not a bar to recruitment at the *News*. Among the staff were many who had worked for the *Press* or the *China Daily Tribune*. This included Guangdong-born editorial advisor Li Cai (李才, 1889?-), who was sixty-one in 1950 and who had been the general editor of the *Tribune* between 1945 and 1949. He had a career in English-language news dating back to his position as general editor of the *Peking Gazette* in 1915. Li had worked at the *Shanghai Gazette* (1918-1922) and *Canton Gazette* (1923-1927) before becoming the head of the GMD's Kuo Min News Agency (国民新闻社) from 1927 until 1941. Similarly, Jiang Yongqing (江永青, 1893?-), fifty-seven years old, had begun his career in publishing in 1909 and had worked for English-language publications in Shanghai, Beijing and Hankou. He was employed by the GMD's propaganda organs from 1940 to 1948.<sup>87</sup>

One of the first editors of the *News*, Lu Tongping (鲁潼平, 1905-2008?), was in his mid-forties at the time of the revolution and working as editor at the *Tribune*. Lu was from Hunan province and was a cousin of the high-ranking CCP leader Liu Shaoqi. Despite this familial connection, Lu and his immediate family's lives were entwined closely with the fortunes of the GMD. Lu had enrolled in Qinghua University in 1923 and studied overseas at the University of Missouri (1927) and the University of Chicago (1928), where he received his PhD in 1930. Between 1930 and 1949, he had worked variously at the propaganda department of the GMD Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese embassy in the United States and the Central Bank of China.

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<sup>85</sup> On thought reform see Aminda M. Smith, *Thought Reform and China's Dangerous Classes: Reeducation, Resistance, and the People* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012) and Christian Henriot, "La Fermeture: The Abolition of Prostitution in Shanghai, 1949-58," *The China Quarterly* 142 (1995), 467-86.

<sup>86</sup> See Shen Suru, *Duiwai chuanbo xue gaiyao* 对外传播学概要 (Beijing: Jinri Zhongguo chubanshe, 1999); Shen Suru, *Duiwai baodao yewu jichu* 对外报道业务基础 (Beijing: Zhongguo jianshe chubanshe, 1989); Shen Suru, *Duiwai chuanbo de lilun he shixian* 对外传播的理论和实现 (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2004).

<sup>87</sup> SMA B34-2-15.

He had joined the GMD in 1943.<sup>88</sup> Lu Tongping's elder brother was Lu Diping (鲁涤平, 1887-1935), a high-ranking GMD official who had served as the Provincial Chairman for Hunan, Jiangxi and Zhejiang before his untimely death in 1935.<sup>89</sup> His other brother, Lu Dangping (鲁荡平, 1895-1975), an editor of several GMD-aligned newspapers, had been an early member of the Tongmenghui (同盟会), a revolutionary group from which the core of the GMD emerged, and had left for Taiwan in 1949. The fact that people like Lu Tongping, Li Cai and Jiang Yongqing were employed producing external propaganda for the new government despite their close association with the enemy is evidence of the CCP's willingness to utilize the skills and experience available to them in Shanghai when it came to producing external propaganda.

The *News's* editor-in-chief, Jin Zhonghua, was a progressive liberal who had made his name in the 1930s as general editor of the magazine *World Culture* (*Shijie zhishi*, 世界知识). Like Song Qingling, he was an archetypal representative of the progressive "democratic persons" (*minzhu renshi*, 民主人士) courted by the CCP as part of their cross-class coalition. During the 1937-1945 war, Jin had edited several anti-Japanese publications and had worked with Song producing propaganda for the China Defense League.<sup>90</sup> He had also worked for both TASS and the USIA as a translator.<sup>91</sup> "Democratic personages" like Jin and Song were typically disillusioned with the GMD and understood their new roles as a way of contributing to a better society. In the early 1950s, Jin served conjointly as editor-in-chief of the *News*, *Xinwen ribao*, *Wenhuibao*, and *China Reconstructs*. He attended the first three sessions of the National People's Congress, participated in national and municipal Political Consultative Committees and served as one of several vice mayors of Shanghai between 1953 and 1966.<sup>92</sup> The CCP's inclusive policy only went so far: non-party intellectuals were accorded privileged status, but they were not permitted real authority. Jin's work at the *News* was overseen by a Newspaper Affairs Committee, formed of senior CCP cadres including Xia Yan (夏衍, 1900-1995), the chief of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee Propaganda Bureau and Huang Hua (黄华, 1913-2010), the head of the Shanghai Foreign Affairs Department.<sup>93</sup> Jin's second in command was Chen Linrui (陈麟瑞, 1905-1969), who had studied overseas and worked for the UN's International Labor Organization before 1949. After "Liberation" he worked as the head of Xinhua's English-language branch in Shanghai before being assigned to the *News*.<sup>94</sup>

These brief biographical sketches illustrate the importance of New Democracy when it came to setting up a propaganda newspaper to represent "New China" to the world. It is perhaps no great surprise that the CCP were willing to co-opt progressive intellectuals with international backgrounds like Jin Zhonghua and Chen Linrui, and recruit personnel from the News College's political study classes. The opportunities offered to those whose lives and careers

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<sup>88</sup> The biographical material in this paragraph is drawn from SMA B34-2-15 and *Hunanren zai haiwai (xia)* 湖南人在海外(下), edited by Zhang Xitian and Zhong Qihe 张锡田, 钟启河 (Changsha: Yuelu Chubanshe, 2001), 665.

<sup>89</sup> Stephen C. Averill, "Party, Society, and Local Elite in the Jiangxi Communist Movement," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 46:2 (1987), 295.

<sup>90</sup> *Renmin ribao* 人民日报, "Yuan Shanghai shi fushizhang, Shanghai shi Zhengxie fuzhuxi Jin Zhonghua tongzhi guhui anfangyi zai Shanghai juxing" 原上海市副市长、上海市政协副主席金仲华同志骨灰安放仪式在上海举行, 19 August 1978. China Defense League: *Baowei Zhongguo tongmeng* 保卫中国同盟.

<sup>91</sup> SMA C43-2-303-32. Jin worked for TASS and USIA in 1932-33 and 1945-1948, respectively.

<sup>92</sup> *Renmin ribao*, "Yuan Shanghai shi fushizhang."

<sup>93</sup> SMA A22-2-73, SMA B37-1-32. Shanghai Municipal Party Committee Propaganda Bureau: *Zhonggong Shanghai shiwei xuanchuanbu* 中共上海市委宣传部; and Shanghai Foreign Affairs Department: *Shanghai shi waishichu* 上海市外事处.

<sup>94</sup> Shen, "Yi xin Zhongguo."

were bound up with the GMD are more remarkable. Unfortunately, the moderation offered under New Democracy did not endure. Nara Dillon has shown that the turning point for New Democracy in Shanghai came at the turn of the year 1951-1952, with the launch of the Three Antis Campaign (against corruption, waste and bureaucracy in government organizations) and Five Antis Campaign (targeting bribery, tax evasion, theft of state assets, cheating on labor or materials, and stealing state economic intelligence in private enterprises). Attacks on non-party elites during both campaigns undermined previous efforts to develop cross-class coalition.<sup>95</sup>

The Three Antis was an internal discipline campaign conducted within government organizations. At the height of the movement one third of the staff of the *News* were taken away from routine work to participate in “tiger beating” investigations rooting out corruption amongst the senior staff. One report noted that before the campaign “seriously degenerate bourgeois thinking” had prevailed, marked by prevalent “formalism” (a focus on maintaining appearances rather than true endeavor in pursuit of revolutionary goals). Investigations uncovered alleged losses of over one hundred million *yuan* through corruption and waste, with senior managers identified as the main culprits. One in every seven staff members were accused of some form of corruption. The accused were not to be “forever despised” the report stressed, but rather to admit their guilt, accept their punishment and then be allowed to make a fresh start as good comrades. The report noted that the campaign had so intimidated the senior staff that they now sought to avoid any responsibility, including, in one case, seeking approval from the editor before authorizing the purchase of a single light bulb.<sup>96</sup> As well as enduring campaigns, working in government organizations after 1949 involved long working hours, exacerbated by lengthy political meetings before and after work. Individuals’ thoughts and behavior were subjected to intense scrutiny. Additionally, *News* employees who came from affluent, internationalized backgrounds will have found acclimatizing to the political climate of struggle and sacrifice difficult. Lu Tongping, for one, did not stay long at the *News*. In early 1951, he left mainland China and joined an exodus of refugees from Shanghai in crowded Hong Kong. He found work for the *New York Times* and eventually settled in America in 1955.<sup>97</sup> In 1953, a former *Jiefang ribao* reporter named Miu Yi’en (繆奕恩, dates unknown), who followed a similar path to Hong Kong, told American officials that he had begun his working life enthusiastically after graduating from St John’s in 1951. He was thoroughly disillusioned by the culture of false accusations and evasion of responsibility that characterized office politics after the Three Antis campaign. Moreover, Miu resented taking orders from middle-ranking Party members who were not intellectuals.<sup>98</sup>

The mass campaigns of 1951-1952 created an opportunity for the state to impose control over the entire newspaper industry in Shanghai. In the spring of 1952, the CCP launched a thought reform campaign to transform the “bourgeois” attitudes of the staff of Shanghai’s newspapers. Nationalization was not the intended outcome of the campaign, but it eventually evolved in to a systematic restructuring designed to increase state control. By February 1953, several smaller newspapers had been amalgamated or closed, and *Dagong bao* was moved to Tianjin. *Wenhui bao* and *Xinmin bao* were nationalized.<sup>99</sup> The *News* was closed during this process of reorganization and consolidation. Another contributing factor behind the closure was that the International News Bureau was reorganized and became the Foreign Languages Press in March 1952. The Press was given overall responsibility for producing printed external propaganda

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<sup>95</sup> Dillon, “New Democracy,” 80-81, 93-102.

<sup>96</sup> SMA B35-2-112-1.

<sup>97</sup> Zhang and Zhong, *Hunan ren zai haiwai*, 665.

<sup>98</sup> NARA RG 59, Box 4204, 793.00/4-753.

<sup>99</sup> Zhang, “Thought Reform and Press Nationalization,” 52-80.

nationally. The *News's* closure was part of this effort to centralize and homogenize the production of propaganda, with an emphasis on policing the flow of information out of China under the principle of “inside and outside are different”.<sup>100</sup> On 28 December 1952 the *News* announced, rather suddenly, to its readers that it would cease publication at the end of the month.<sup>101</sup> The newspaper’s editors and staff had received only eight days’ notice. The staff were assembled and told by Huang Hua that the newspaper had “already completed its historical task,” and that some of the staff would be appointed to new roles in Beijing.<sup>102</sup> Shen Suru later recalled: “So it was like this, the English-language *The Shanghai News* had completed its historical mission. In January 1953, we cadres and workers, who were still in the prime of our lives, longed for the capital with unbounded enthusiasm, laughing and singing we set out on a new path.”<sup>103</sup>

Reports from the time suggest that Shen’s excitement was not widely shared. Two further meetings were held to address the staff’s concerns. Twelve *News* employees were dispatched to the Foreign Languages Press and nineteen (mostly technical workers) to the attached Foreign Languages Printing Press. Three went to join Xinhua, two to *China Reconstructs*, and one each to the Chinese edition of *For a Lasting Peace, For a People’s Democracy!* and *World Culture*. Relocation was not voluntary and only immediate family were permitted to accompany those heading north. Those staying behind offered to help with “communicating with families remaining in Shanghai” to put their colleagues’ hearts at ease. The thirty or so employees who stayed in Shanghai were instructed to register at the News College by 6 February.<sup>104</sup> This must have been a blow for those whose careers had previously been disrupted by war and revolution, and whose ambitions were simply to perform well in their roles. At the College, the *News* employees joined more than 500 individuals from other reorganized media organizations. Zhang Jishun has shown that when “training” was completed in November 1953, only thirteen of this group “graduated” to resume work in the media.<sup>105</sup>

In the mass campaigns of the late 1950s and 1960s, non-party intellectuals such as those co-opted to produce the *News* became the targets of increasingly fierce criticism. This was especially true of those with links to the GMD. Even celebrated “democratic personages” like Jin Zhonghua, found themselves under attack. Jin was among seventeen high officials accused in 1966 of being “counterrevolutionaries” during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) in his capacity as a vice mayor of Shanghai. He was violently interrogated, denounced as a “foreign spy” and killed.<sup>106</sup> His junior colleagues at the *News*, Meng Jiqing and Yang Xiling, who had made successful careers for themselves in Beijing, experienced similar persecution. Fang Yingyang, who had been transferred to Beijing in 1952, was detained in early November 1968

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<sup>100</sup> Shen, “Yi xin Zhongguo.” On the reorganization see “Wenjiao weiyuanhui guanyu Guoji Xinwen Ju gaizu wei Waiwen Chubanshe de baogao” 文教委员会关于国际新闻局改组为外文出版社的报告 in *Zhonghua remin gongheguo chuban shiliao, di si juan: 1952* 中华人民共和国出版史料, 第四卷: 1952, edited by Zhongguo Chuban Shiliao Yanjiusuo, Zhongyang Dang’anguan 中国出版史科学研究所, 中央档案馆 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shuji Chubanshe, 1998), 38-39. Reporting of the Three and Five Antis Campaigns overseas became a matter for serious concern to the GAPP in the summer and autumn of 1952, see 86-7, 106-7, 202-9. Foreign Languages Press: *Waiwen chubanshe* 外文出版社.

<sup>101</sup> “Notice,” *TSN*, 28 December 1950.

<sup>102</sup> SMA B34-2-76.

<sup>103</sup> Shen, “Yi xin Zhongguo.”

<sup>104</sup> SMA B34-2-76. Foreign Languages Printing Press: *Waiwen yinshuachang*, 外文印刷厂.

<sup>105</sup> Zhang, “Thought Reform and Press Nationalization,” 75-6.

<sup>106</sup> *Renmin ribao*, “Song Qingling, huainian Jin Zhonghua – (Zhongguo Jianshe) de chuangshiren zhi yi” 怀念金仲华《中国建设》的创始人之一, 7 January 1981.

for investigation of “historical problems” and was accused of being an American spy due to the his time working for the USIA. He committed suicide in January 1969.<sup>107</sup>

### Conclusion

Given the CCP’s role in undermining the cross-class coalition it had built through mass campaigns, along with the triumphalism with which the transition to socialism was announced in 1953, it is tempting to simply dismiss New Democracy as little more than a slogan deployed to minimize dissent during the revolution. Our focus on the short history of the *News* has demonstrated that, whatever the intentions of the CCP leadership, the concept of New Democracy had a life of its own in the early 1950s. The CCP saw external propaganda as a vital weapon in the early Cold War. It is significant, therefore, that the PRC’s first English-language daily adopted a commercial business model, funding its ideological mission through sales and advertising. The *News*’s distinctly unusual character, in which propaganda was juxtaposed with commercial advertising, stood in stark contrast to the PRC’s other carefully-curated external propaganda publications. The *News*’s target readership diminished as foreigners departed from China. This left the editors struggling to reconcile its format as a local daily with their desire to increase international sales. The *News* proved ultimately unsuccessful as both a commercial venture and as a propaganda vehicle, but failure was not inevitable. Seen from the perspective of the staff in their run-down building on Yan’an Road, employment at the *News* represented a chance for new careers serving their country in the spirit of New Democracy. For some, this opportunity came despite their close links to the GMD. For others, working on the newspaper may have held the promise of stability after decades of disruption. New Democracy was a tumultuous period in which the aspirational goals of the new government (embodied, in turn, in the *News*’s own stated goals) conflicted with the CCP’s actions in driving social change using mass campaigns and intervening increasingly directly in the economy in response to political and economic crises. The assumptions on which the *News* was established in mid-1950 no longer held true by the end of 1952. While New Democracy was compromised, this article has demonstrated that the principles at the heart of the policy served as a guide to action in setting up the *News*. Moreover, the newspaper’s staff had a lived experience of the period that did presupposed neither the early abandonment of the policy, nor the severe repression and chaos of the late 1950s and 1960s.

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<sup>107</sup> Xue Yin, 雷音, *Yang Xianyi zhuan* 杨宪益传 (Hong Kong: Ziyou zhong shushe, 2018), 160.