Vision and Revolution

Anarchism in Chinese Revolutionary Thought on the Eve of the 1911 Revolution

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Contents

In the early summer of 1907, Chinese intellectuals studying abroad launched, almost simultaneously, two openly anarchist societies, one in Paris, the other in Tokyo. These societies marked the emergence of anarchism as a distinctive current in Chinese social revolutionary thought. In the journals they published, Chinese intellectuals encountered directly for the first time major works of European radicalism and their authors. Over the next two decades, anarchism continued to nourish the ideology of the revolutionary movement in China. Its influence on radical thinking was to remain unmatched by any other radical social philosophy until the early 1920s.

Anarchism was to make a lasting, if ambiguous, contribution to social revolutionary thought in China. Students of early twentieth-century Chinese thought have discussed anarchism from a variety of perspectives; what remains to be examined is anarchist thinking on the problem of social revolution, which was the distinctive anarchist contribution to Chinese thought but which has received, surprisingly, only sketchy treatment from students of Chinese anarchism. The discussion below undertakes a systematic examination of anarchist social thought before 1911 based on two important journals that the anarchists published at this time: *New Era* (*Xin shiji*) published in Paris, and *Natural Justice* (*Tianyi bao*) published in Tokyo.[1]

Anarchists were not the first to advocate social revolution in China. That honor belongs to Sun Zhongshan and the Revolutionary Alliance which, in 1905, incorporated a socialist program in its revolutionary agenda to achieve a social revolution in China. Anarchists, however, introduced significant new elements into Chinese thinking on social revolution. The Revolutionary Alliance conception of social revolution was political in its orientation: it proposed to use the state as the agent of social transformation. Anarchists, in their rejection of the state, challenged this conception of social revolution, and offered an alternative idea of social revolution that focused on the problem of cultural transformation, and took the individual as its point of departure. The anarchist conception of social revolution was authentically social, moreover, in its focus on society (in contrast to the state), and in its insistence on popular participation in the process of revolution.

Unambiguously revolutionary in its claims, the anarchist idea of social revolution would nevertheless produce ambiguous results. As much the expression of a mood as a philosophical critique of politics, anarchism represented an anti-political strain,and a mistrust of political institutions and politics in general, the power of which was revealed in the diffusion of anarchist ideals over a broad spectrum of Chinese political thought in the early part of the century. The anarchist message was a revolutionary one. Radicals intent upon the realization of good society through an immediate revolutionary upheaval discovered a source of inspiration in the anarchist vision of community and a new humanity. In the 1920s, Sun Zhongshan was inspired to remark on one occasion that anarchism was the ultimate goal of his Three Peoples Principles, a sentiment echoed by other Guomindang theoreticians. Critics of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s have

[1] In 1908, the anarchists in Tokyo published another journal called *The Balance* (*Hengbao*). The journal was similar in tone to *Natural Justice*, even though Kropotkin's ideas on social organization were more plainly visible now. Most of the pieces in this journal were published anonymously. It contained very interesting articles on the question of the peasantry and rural economy that have been included in a recent collection on anarchism published in China (Ge, 1984). For the citations in this discussion, the majority of which are from *Xin shiji* and *Tianyi bao*, I will simply give the issue number and not the author, as I refer to the authors by name in the text. For page references, I use the pagination for individual issues for *Xin shiji* and the cumulative Daian pagination for *Tianyi bao*. Anarchists used pseudonyms in these publications. For purposes of reference,the most commonly used pseudonyms and the authors that they represented were: Ran, Liao: Wu Zhihui; Zhen: Li Shizeng; Min: Chu Minyi; Shen Shu: Liu Shipei. In my translations from the Chinese, I have stressed intelligibility in English over literalness.

argued in recent years that the Cultural Revolution was inspired by anarchist ideas and attitudes which, having entered the Communist Party in its origins in the early 1920s, survived the long years of revolution to pervert Marxism in the Party. Although this may seem far-fetched, it is possible to argue, I think,that some of the themes that surfaced during the Cultural Revolution may indeed be viewed as faint echoes of themes in the Chinese revolution that had first been enunciated by anarchists.

The appeal of anarchism, however, was not restricted to revolutionaries. Conservatives who defended social and political order against the threat of revolution were also able to find in anarchism ideals upon which to focus their yearning for a good society. This ambivalence, to the point of ideological schizophrenia, was reflected in the history of anarchism in China. Anarchism, the most radical current in Chinese socialist thought until the early 1920s, was to end up in the service of Guomindang reaction in the late 1920s. To be sure, anarchist relationship with the Guomindang went back to personal and political relationships that the early anarchists (many of whom were also Revolutionary Alliance members) had established with later Guomindang leaders, relationships that existed quite independently of their ideology.

Nevertheless, anarchist ideology, in its peculiar formulation of questions of interest and conflict in society, lent itself to counterrevolution almost as easily as it did to revolution. Betrayed by the Guomindang once, they had exhausted their utility in the ideological struggles against Marxism in the late 1920s, anarchists rapidly disappeared as a force in the Chinese revolutionary movement. Revolutionaries thereafter repudiated anarchism, but the dream of humanity that had been the anarchist promise was to linger on in their memories.

The ambivalence that was to characterize Chinese anarchism was already apparent in the backgrounds of the two groups among the early anarchists, and the different anarchisms that they propagated. The Paris group was organized as the New World Society (*Xin shijie she*) in 1906. It started publishing a journal in 1907 that lasted, remarkably, for three years and over 100 issues. This journal, the New Era (*Xin shiji*), was subtitled *La Tempoj Novaj* in Esperanto, probably after *Les Temps Nouveaux*, published by Jean Grave. The names of the society, and its journal, were indicative of the inclinations of the Paris anarchists,a group of intellectuals who had been baptised into revolutionary activity in the early 1900s. Li Shizeng, the moving intellectual spirit of the group, had been living in Paris since 1902. He hadexhibited an internationalist orientation very early on, studied biology, and had become close friends in Paris with members of the family of the French anarchist-geographer Elisee Reclus,which probably launched him on the path to anarchism (Li, 1973:92; Shao, 1984). Wu Zhihui, who carried the major responsibility for publishing the *New Era*, had been involved in the early 1900s in radical patriotic activities in Japan and China.

It was Li, according to Richard Wang, who convinced Wu of the virtues of an anarchism when they met in Paris in 1906 (Wang, 1976: 83–84). The group's activities were financed by the enterprises of its third important member, Zhang Jingjiang, which included a *dofu* factory as well as a restaurant-tea shop. They were all from elite families and, after 1905, members of the Revolutionary Alliance. From the beginning, they seemed to have little difficulty in reconciling their anarchist philosophy with their political involvements in China and abroad. In the 1920s as unofficial Guomindang "elders" they would be involved in the orchestration of the Guomindang suppression first of the communists and, then, of their own young anarchist followers. The importance of their ideological contribution to social revolutionary thought in China lies in the

consistency of the ideology they propagated, not in the consistency with which they lived up to their own ideals.

The Paris anarchists advocated a revolutionary futuristic anarchism that introduced into Chinese socialist thought an unequivocally radical current in Western revolutionary thinking. Over the remarkable three years of its publication as a weekly, the *New Era* published long translations from European anarchists such as Kropotkin, Bakunin, Malatesta, and Reclus. These translations, reprinted over and over again in anarchist journals and special compendia after 1911, provided a major source of radical literature in China until the early 1920s; by 1920, anarchist literature available in Chinese was unmatched in scope and comprehensiveness by any other social and political philosophy of European origin. Students of Chinese anarchism have pointed out that anarchism provided not only radical literature, but a language of radicalism that facilitated the efflorescence of social-ism in China in the 1920s. The Paris anarchists played a major part in this.

At about the same time that the New Era started publication in Paris, Chinese anarchists in Tokyo established a Society for the Study of Socialism (Shehui zhuyi jiangxihui) which published its own journal, *Natural Justice* (*Tianyibao*). Intellectually, the moving spirit behind both the society and its journal were the conservative classical scholar Liu Shipei and his spouse, He Zhen,who was probably responsible for the more radical aspects of Tokyo anarchists' ideology. *Natural Justice* was quite revolutionary in tone, and in its analyses of the plight of women and the lower classes in China, which were more concrete than anything to be found in the New Era. Nevertheless, *Natural Justice* propagated an anti-modernist anarchism that stressed the virtues of agrarian society, and preferred the "freedom" from political interference that prevailed under the imperial state in China to the "despotism" of the modern nation-state. Whereas New Era writers discovered the archetypal anarchist vision in Kropotkin, *Natural Justice* gave the greatest prominence among foreign anarchists to Tolstoy.

Natural Justice lasted for one year. After Liu's return to China in 1908, he apparently served as an agent-provocateur for the monarchy and was prominent after 1911 as one of China's foremost conservatives. Although the long-term impact of *Natural Justice* did not equal that of *New Era*, it was quite influential in its time, because of the large number of Chinese students in Japan, and its proximity to China, which gave it an edge over the *New Era* in terms of accessibility. Liu's backward-looking anarchism, moreover, sensitized him to certain important questions in Chinese society; some of his analyses of problems of modernity in China anticipated themes that were to become prominent in Chinese radical thinking in later years.

The rise of interest in anarchism at this time has prompted Bernal to observe that 1907 marked "the victory of anarchism over Marxism" in China under the influence of a similar shift of interest that took place among Japanese radicals at this same time (Bernal, 1971). There is no question that, as with all Chinese socialism, Japanese sources and radicals played a significant part in Chinese anarchism (the term for anarchism, *wuzhengfu zhuyi*, first used in Chinese in 1903, was also of Japanese derivation).Nevertheless, this view is misleading, and not only because it is erroneous to describe as "Marxist" the socialism of the Revolutionary Alliance, which is what Bernal has in mind in referring to "Marxism." The major center of Chinese anarchism before 1911 was Paris, and shifts in Japan had little to do with the anarchism of the Paris anarchists.

Although some Revolutionary Alliance members began to show interest in assassination activities after 1907, it is not quite correct to read this interest as an interest in anarchism, even if assassination was associated with anarchism among some circles;the change in revolutionary methods is more concretely explicable in terms of the political dilemma with which the dynas-

tic constitutional reforms presented revolutionaries, who were now faced with the threat of the wind being taken out of their revolutionary sails. Revolutionary Alliance socialists, moreover,did not abandon the kind of socialism they had advocated in1905-1907, as is demonstrated by the persistence of these ideas in their thinking in later years. Anarchism possibly added new themes to their conception of social revolution, but the best that can be said on this basis is that the proliferation of new ideas of social revolution complicated social revolutionary thinking, and possibly added to ideological confusion over socialism. A clear distinction between anarchism and socialism would not be drawn until 1913–1914; between anarchism and Marxism, not until the early 1920s.

It is futile, I think, to look for a single all-encompassing explanation for the attraction to anarchism of the Chinese intellectuals who in these years engaged in "anarchist" activity or professed belief in anarchism. In explaining why anarchism has remained alive as a revolutionary faith in the West in spite of the failure of anarchists to achieve any results of significance, Joll has observed that a basic strength of anarchism has been to offer something to everyone; the diffuseness of anarchist ideology, which has been its weakness as a practical radical ideology, in other words, has also been its strength as a social philosophy(Joll, 1972: 248). This offers insights into the appeals of anarchism in China as well. Converts to anarchism in early twentieth-century China ranged from disciples of revolutionary terrorism, who found in anarchism justification for their activities, to modernists attracted to anarchist scientism, to Buddhist monks, who discovered in the anarchist message of love something akin to Buddhist ideals, to esthetes who perceived beauty in the anarchist ideal of a beautiful society. Not surprisingly, not everyone who found something of value in anarchism upheld, therefore, a coherent philosophy of anarchism.

Such profusion of appeal militates against easy explanations,especially explanations based on vague notions of outside"influence" that ignore the dispositions of the influenced. Foreign sources were important for anarchism, as they were for all Chinese socialism, but it was the intellectual and emotional needs generated by a society in revolutionary crisis that ultimately endowed anarchism with meaning for Chinese intellectuals. For all their contradictoriness, the variegated reasons for attraction to anarchism shared a common ground in the anarchist vision of social revolution which, however abstract and utopian, spoke to the immediate concerns of Chinese intellectuals; in the midst of the political and ideological crisis of Chinese society, they found themselves to be uncertain about their place in their society, and the place of their society in the world. In its affirmation of the essential unity of human beings, anarchism provided a counterpoint to the division of humanity into nations, races, and classes that in the early part of the century confronted Chinese intellectuals as the reality of their world. In its affirmation of the irreducible significance of the individual, it provided a counter-point to the preoccupation with the state that sought to expand its powers at the cost of social autonomy.

Anarchism is ultimately a philosophy of the individual, not of the individual as an end in itself, as is erroneously assumed by those who confound anarchism with libertarianism, but of the individual in his/her relationship to society. The preoccupation with the self had already emerged by the early part of this century as a feature of Chinese thinking in the activities of young radicals who believed that in selfless activity lay the path to the salvation of their society. Anarchism provided a systematic philosophical explanation for the problem of the self: politics, in the anarchist view, was the realm of oppression, authority and division; the hope of community rested with the self purged of the accumulated corruption of institutions of power. The message had a

powerful appeal among intellectuals who had already become uncertain of their relationship to existing social institutions.

It is not surprising that the message exerted greatest influence among members of the Chinese elite who felt deeply their alienation from the institutions of power upon which they had been nourished. Anarchism is by no means restricted in its appeals to the elite, but everywhere it has found its most cogent spokesmen among the elite for the simple reason that the alienation of the self from power is more an elite than a popular problem. In the years after 1911, anarchists would take the lead in popular mobilization. Nevertheless, from the beginning, its most eloquent proponents were members of the Chinese elite who,having been alienated from existing social relations, turned to new ideas of community to redefine their relationship to society. This was almost the exclusive concern of the first generation of Chinese anarchists.

The lasting contribution of anarchists to Chinese social revolutionary thought would lie in this realm of redefining the relationship between intellectuals and society, however abstractly the latter was conceived. Indeed, the significant impact of anarchist philosophy on Chinese intellectuals lay not in the justification it provided for individual acts of violence, but in turning them to the articulation of this relationship. Anarchism provided Chinese intellectuals with their first genuinely social,conception of social revolution, one that not only pointed to society as the proper realm of change, but rested the responsibility for changing society upon social activity. This conception led to a reading of the problems of changing China that anticipated questions that would assume increasing importance in Chinese social thought in later years.

For reasons to be explained below, the logic of the anarchist idea of social change was such that it brought to the surface early on the problem of cultural revolution, and the moral and intellectual transformation of individuals. In raising questions concerning individual transformation, anarchists also raised questions concerning the social institutions that obstructed individual transformation; they were the first among Chinese intellectuals to point unequivocally to problems of women and the family, which have lasted as central problems of Chinese social thought. They were the first to point to the need to bridge the gap between classes, especially intellectuals and laborers, by making intellectuals into laborers, and laborers into intellectuals. To resolve all these problems, finally, they called for a social revolution that made revolution itself into a utopia, which would have dramatic consequences for the Chinese revolution in the twentieth century.

Within Chinese socialism, then, anarchism provided the counterpoint to state-oriented strategies of change. The Revolutionary Alliance argument had proposed to use the state to prevent the devastation of society by conflicting interests. That argument had addressed the prospects of capitalism for China. The anarchist argument addressed the second important issue of the day, the issue of the state. Anarchists envisaged the abolition of interest in society through a total revolutionary transformation, the basic premise of which was the destruction of the state. Convinced of the essential sociability of human beings, they believed that a genuine human community could be realized if only institutional obstacles to free association could be abolished. Such institutions included the family and the capitalist economy,but the state, as the mightiest of those institutions and the protector of all partial interests in its defense of the political order, constituted the chief enemy of human society. As interest in socialism had accompanied the initial realization that capitalism was not only a means to economic development but also a primary source of the problems of modern society,anarchism expressed a parallel apprehension that the modern nation-state did not simply reflect the will of the people, but also served as a dehumanizing vehicle of control and oppression, an obstacle to the human liberation that revolution promised.

Both the Paris and the Tokyo anarchists subscribed to these basic premises of anarchism. Because they differed significantly in their vision of anarchist society in history, however, their views are best discussed separately.

THE PARIS ANARCHISTS

Whereas Revolutionary Alliance socialists had proposed social revolution as a supplement to the prior task of political revolution, anarchists made it into a substitute for the latter. In one of the earliest statements of the Paris anarchists' position on revolution, Wu Zhihui drew a clear distinction between social and political revolutions:

> Those of old who advocated revolution spoke only of the political aspect of revolution but did not emphasize society. They desired to abolish despotism to extend people's sovereignty, sought legal freedom but not freedom of livelihood, political but not social or economic equality. They sought the happiness and welfare of one country or some of the people, not the happiness and welfare of the masses of the world [Wu, 1907: 2].

"Socialist revolution" (shehui zhuyizhi geming), on the other hand, would

> seek equality, freedom, happiness and welfare for society, make justice (*gongdao*) the measure of achievement, expunge whatever harms society, or runs contrary to this goal-such as despotism and classes, the roots of all calamity, institute scientific progress to achieve a real world civilization and, ultimately, establish a humanitarian commonweal (*rendao datong*) and a paradisiacal world (*shijie jilo*) [Wu, 1097: 4].

Socialist revolution, Wu believed, would rid society of all the"poison" inherited from the past, and establish what was appropriate to social life (Wu, 1907: 4).

The anarchist social revolutionary idea differed from that of the Revolutionary Alliance both in goals and in method. The Revolutionary Alliance conception of socialism had been an instrumental one: "social revolution" as a policy tool for the state to achieve social harmony and stability. The Anarchist conception was a total one, which called for a total reorganization of society in all its aspects to realize an all-encompassing vision. In his long essay, "Anarchism," Chu Minyi described four goals to anarchism: (a) to abolish authority (and its backbone, the military) and establish humanitarianism, (b) to abolish laws, thus instituting freedom, (c) to abolish all inherited class distinctions(as embodied in the teachings of the sages) and establish equality,(d) to abolish private property and capital to establish communism (*gongchan*) (Xin shiji, No. 60: 8).

A major essay, written by Li Shizeng and Chu Minyi,describing the anarchist view of revolution, made even more explicit the ethical objectives underlying anarchist goals. The eight "meanings" to revolution, the essay stated, were: freedom, fraternity (*boai*), public-mindedness, reform, equality, universal unity (*datong*), truth, and progress (Li and Chu, 1907: 7). These goals were to be achieved through the abolition of marriage, of property, of family and familial relations, the private ownership of land, and of racial and national boundaries (Xin shiji, No.38: 4).

For the anarchists, social revolution was different from political not only in its goals but also, even more fundamentally,in its means. Whereas political revolution was revolution of the"few,"

social revolution was the revolution of the many-the common people (*pingmin*). Anarchists believed that "overthrowing the government must have the recognition and the consent of the majority" (Xin shiji, No. 17: 2). To this end, they specified five methods of revolution: propaganda (books, magazines, lectures), mass associations, mass uprisings, popular resistance (opposition to taxes and conscription, strikes and boycotts), and assassination (propaganda by the deed) (Li and Chu, 1907: 8). Anarchists themselves were not always consistent on the question of methods; in order to appreciate their preferences, it is necessary to keep in mind their general perception of the problems of social revolution. Anarchists rejected not only political institutions, but politics as well, even if an editorial in *New Era* referred on one occasion to the revolution they advocated as "a political revolution of pure socialism" (*chuncuide shehui zhuyizhi zhengzhigeming*) (Xin shiji, No. 3: 1). Authentic social revolution, they believed, could not be imposed from above, however, through inherently authoritarian institutions (Xin shiji, No. 17: 4). Even though they were members of the Revolutionary Alliance, their idea of social revolution was counter-posed explicitly to the social revolutionary program of Sun Zhongshan, both because of the reliance of the latter on the state, and for its ambiguities on the question of the role the "many" would play in the revolution.

Anarchists themselves conceived of social revolution as a process of social activity, a "revolution of all the people" (*quantizhi geming*) (Xin shiji, No. 34: 4). The revolutionary methods they proposed were all intended to stimulate such social activity. Neither the Paris nor the Tokyo anarchists engaged actively in assassination or social mobilization, but they looked favorably upon others who engaged in such activities. They lauded with enthusiasm the Pingxiang uprising in Hunan in 1906,and its leader Ma Fuyi (Xin shiji congshu, 1907). They wrote with approval of the self-sacrificing spirit demonstrated by Xu Xilin and Qiu Jin, two revolutionaries who were executed in 1907 for their attempted assassination of a Manchu official and their almost suicidal refusal in the face of failure to escape the authorities (Xin shiji, No. 12, No. 14). Assassination undertaken in the spirit of self-sacrifice, and with a clear commitment to "universal principle" (*gongli*), the anarchists believed, furthered the cause of revolution and humanity (Xin shiji, No. 18: 2). This notion that the *beau geste* may be more important than living tofight another day was revealing of the ethical impulse that underlay the anarchists idea of revolution, and distinguishes them from the latter day revolutionaries in China to whom the success of revolution would be far more important than gestures of personal authenticity. "Give me liberty or give me death," Chu Minyi was to declaim in his defense of violence as a revolutionary method (Xin shiji, No. 17: 3). The rebels that they lauded were not anarchists, nor were the activities intended to achieve anarchist goals; what counted was the act, the struggle itself, not its achievements.

This should not be taken to mean that anarchists viewed violence as an end in itself; rather, they condoned violence only if it was informed by a sense of moral purpose. Chu Minyi observed in connection with Xu Xilin that violence was an expression of political desperation (Xin shiji, No. 17: 3). Wu Zhihui explained that violence was necessary because, under despotism, it was impossible otherwise to educate people to achieve humanitarian goals (Wu, 1907: 8). Anarchists agreed, moreover, that violence was effective only to the extent that it "moved people's hearts," and aroused mass support for the cause of revolution.

If without a clear moral and social sense violence would degenerate into mindless terrorism, the anarchists believed,without education revolution would turn into unconscious uprising (Xin shiji, No. 65: 11). Of all the methods of revolution the anarchists promoted, education was the most fundamental. Anarchists called for simultaneous destruction and construction. Violence

could achieve destruction, but construction required education, which was the ultimate justification even for revolutionary violence (Xin shiji, No. 16: 2). If the masses could be gained over to the revolution, then social revolution would take a peaceful course, and anarchist goals could be achieved gradually (Xin shiji, No. 103: 5–6). Education to the anarchists was not simply an instrument of revolution, it was the equivalent of revolution: "Revolution will be effective only if, with the spread of education, people get rid of their old customs, and achieve a new life. From the perspective of effectiveness, this means that if there is education for revolution before the revolution is under-taken, there will be nothing impossible about revolution. There-fore, anarchist revolution … is nothing but education" (Xin shiji,No. 65: 11).

As for the nature of the education necessary for anarchist revolution, Wu Zhihui explained that "there is no education aside from education in morality that encompasses truth and public-mindedness, such as reciprocal love, equality, freedom, etc.; all education is anarchist that encompasses truth and public-mindedness, including experimental science, etc." (Xin shiji, No.65: 11). Chu Minyi observed that although revolution (as an act) served a transient purpose, education lasted forever in its effects,and transformed people endlessly. Unlike government sponsored (*youzhengfude*) education, which taught militarism, legal-mindedness, religion, or, in one word, obedience to authority, anarchist (*wuzhengfude*) education taught truth and public-mindedness, that is, freedom, equality and the ability for self-government (Xin shiji, Nos. 40–47).

Anarchist criticism of political revolution yields further insights into the nature of the social revolution that they advocated. Anarchists opposed political revolution because they believed that it only served to substitute new, and worse,inequalities for old ones. Political revolution, Wu stated, had "diminished misery in politics but increased economic misery" (Wu, 1907: 2). In a more comprehensive statement criticizing proponents of democracy and the Republic, Chu Minyi observed: "They do not know that freedom is the freedom of the rich,equality is the equality of the wealthy. The misery of the poor is the same as of old. What is freedom and equality to the poor? The evils of political despotism have now been replaced by the poison of economic monopoly" (Xin shiji, No. 6: 4). All anarchists concurred with Chu's view that this "poison" was the product of a bad social system in which a few, by monopolizing wealth,managed to live off the "sweat and blood" of the many (Xin shiji,No. 92: 5–8). In other words, the political revolutions that had created democracies and republics had made things worse by giving capitalists access to power, therefore increasing their ability to exploit laborers. Under these systems, everything served the interests of the rich. Even science was utilized not to benefit humanity but the interests of the powerful. Capitalists, whether they were good or bad as individuals, were motivated in their activities by the pursuit of profit.

Although machinery had made unlimited production possible,people did not benefit from production because capitalists used machines to suit their search for profit. When production increased to the point at which they could not find consumers for their products, they shut down production, throwing laborers out of work and causing immense misery. In a statement that was quite reminiscent of Revolutionary Alliance views on capitalism, Chu Minyi observed that as long as such a system prevailed, the advance of the "industrial arts" (*gongyi*) only served to create poor people by decreasing the need for labor: "People do not realize that the more advanced the industrial arts, the richer are the rich and the poorer the poor" (Xin shiji, No. 79: 4). Those who advocated social revolution, Chu noted, were those who understood the failure of the capitalist system. He himself advocated "a political revolution" against rulers (literally "a revolution for political rights," *quanli geming*), and "an economic revolution" against capitalists (literally, "a

revolution for livelihood," *shengji geming*-Xin shiji, No. 92: 8). Although such a program sounded similar to that of the Revolutionary Alliance, its premises were quite different: Revolutionary Alliance writers saw a Republican political revolution as a means to carrying out the social revolution; anarchists believed that a Republican revolution would only increase the power of the bourgeoisie, which is the class they had in mind even though they did not use the term.

As had been the case with Sun Zhongshan, anarchists acquired these ideas from their observations on the persistence of inequality in European society (Xin shiji, No. 79: 4). They also believed, with Sun, that inequality was much more serious in the west than it was in China (Xin shiji, No. 18: 2). But, unlike Sun,they did not think that such problems could be resolved or prevented through government action. Commenting on a letter from a "friend" who thought that constitutional government could take measures to forestall the emergence of inequality in China, an editorial in the *New Era* observed that it was only prejudice for government that sustained "faith in the ability of government to secure peace, and the refusal to see that government itself obstructed the advance of humanitarianism, that it was the source itself of all evils" (Xin shiji, No. 17: 4).

Although they discussed economic issues, it was politics and the state that were the focal point of the anarchist opposition to political revolution. Their mistrust of political revolution was grounded in their belief that political institutions in society only represented the interests of the minority that commanded wealth and power. As with the European anarchists whose philosophy they accepted in toto, Chinese anarchists were opposed to all kinds of government, no matter how different in form or in the substance of the relationship between state and society. Their opposition to capitalism was itself encompassed within their opposition to the state, for it was the state, with its laws, armies and the police, they believed, that defended the interests of the powerful in society (Xin shiji, No. 17: 2–3).

In the intellectual atmosphere that prevailed in China during the first decade of the century, these ideas were not likely to appeal to many. The issue of the day was to reorganize political institutions to create a stronger state that could unify and defend the country, coupled in the case of the revolutionaries with strident anti-Manchuism. Not surprisingly, anarchist ideas drew considerable criticism, mainly from other revolutionaries. Some-what surprisingly, however, the exchanges between anarchists and their opponents were carried out in a relatively mild tone,which contrasts with later controversies among socialists. The acrimonious exchange between Wu Zhihui and Zhang Binglin in 1908 was the exception rather than the rule. Anarchists themselves saved their most vituperative rhetoric for the Manchu government and Liang Qichao's constitutionalists. In other cases,they responded to their critics with patience, explaining their position with laborious effort, conscious not to offend fellow revolutionaries (Xin shiji, No. 31: 2). The reasons for this effort are not complex. In spite of their radical departure from Republican ideology, most of the anarchists remained members of the Revolutionary Alliance, and were tied to it through personal relationships. The disagreement was among "friends."

To some of the critics of the anarchists, their major weakness was their idealism, which blinded them to the realities of Chinese society, especially the backwardness of the people, who did not have the educational and moral qualifications required by anarchist principles. But the majority of the critics focused on the implications of anarchism for China's national struggle; especially its possible consequences in undermining the anti-Manchu struggle, and rendering China vulnerable to further aggression by other nations.

To the charge of idealism, anarchists responded that although they were idealists, they were not blind. The struggle for anarchism had to be immediate, they argued, but they did not expect to achieve their goals for a long time to come. On the other hand, they believed that the struggle was worth the undertaking because anarchism was the world trend, a necessary end of human evolution that had the backing of scientific demonstration (Xinshiji, No. 5: 1–2). They also added, indignantly, that although the level of the people of China might be low, it was no lower than that of the officials who governed them.

Most of the exchanges, however, revolved around the issue of nationalism. In these exchanges, the Paris anarchists demonstrated their ability to be flexible with their ideals, a characteristic that would mark their careers. On the issue of anti-Manchuism, they were quite firm. They believed that the major problem for China was to overthrow the Emperor-not because he was Manchu, but because he was the Emperor (Li and Chu, 1907: 1).They were unwilling to condone the racism that was implicit in the anti-Manchu arguments of the Republicans, and spoke reprovingly of the "revanchism" of nationalists such as Wu Yue,who had attempted to assassinate a group of Manchu officials in 1905 (Xin shiji, No. 6: 4). Racism, they believed, only served to reinforce boundaries between different peoples, which obstructed evolution toward a better society. They were willing to support patriotism only if it did not lead to hatred or fear of other nations and races (Xin shiji, No. 6: 4).

They were more willing to go along with Republican revolution. "Political revolution is the starting point, social revolution is the ultimate goal," Li Shizeng and Chu Minyi stated (Li and Chu, 1907: 1). Republican revolution was to be supported, the Paris anarchists believed, because it would move Chinese society a step closer to socialism. Although their patriotism was no doubt an element in their willingness to compromise with Republicanism, they may also have derived their inspiration from their intellectual mentor, Elisee Reclus,who himself had been a supporter of Republicanism in France. The Paris anarchists viewed the state historically, and believed Republican government to be more advanced than monarchy in its willingness to share power with the people, at least some of the people. There were some qualms over this problem. Chu Minyi observed on one occasion that constitutional government, in giving citizens the illusion of sharing power with them, caused the transfer of loyalty from the family (as under despotism) to the state; this was the main reason for the greater strength and resilience of constitutional governments: the people, having an interest in the state, were more willing to serve in its defense (Xinshiji, No. 23: 3–4).

Though Chu did not draw any conclusions from this observation, the implication was obvious that constitutional government made the task of achieving anarchism more difficult; this was an argument that was commonplace at the time among nationalists who wanted a stronger China. *New Era* anarchists opposed Manchu establishment of a constitution as a deceptive measure that aimed to achieve greater power for the Manchu throne, a feeling that they shared with other revolutionaries (Xinshiji, No. 9: 3–4). Otherwise, they viewed constitutionalism as a step toward anarchism, not away from it. They explained on a number of occasions that they advocated socialism not as a substitute for Republicanism, but because socialism included Republicanism, insisting only that the revolution seek to go beyond Republican government (Xin shiji, No. 6: 3). One of the Paris anarchists would become involved in politics after the establishment of the Republic in 1912; the others continued to make efforts to advance the cause of revolution through education, and refused to participate formally in politics. Their informal activities would be another matter.

Anarchists also dismissed the argument that China needed nationalism because it suffered from foreign aggression, or that their revolution would render China vulnerable to further aggression. To the first, Li responded that foreign aggression did not change the problem of oppression qualitatively, it only made heavier the burden of revolutionaries who had to struggle against foreign oppression, in addition to their struggle against the Chinese ruling class (Xin shiji, No. 6: 1). To the second, they responded with their faith, characteristic of anarchist attitudes throughout, that because the revolution was to be universal in scope, other states would be too busy coping with pressure from their own populations to engage in aggression against China (Xinshiji, No. 6: 1). Besides, they pointed out, the people's militia with which they would replace the regular army would be more effective in defending China than a regular army, which only served the interests of those in power.

To see the anarchist idea of social revolution only in political and social terms would be to see only a part, and not the most fundamental part, the premise, of the anarchist argument. Ultimately, this idea of revolution was a moral one: it sought not just to transform institutions but rather to transform human psychology, which to the anarchists was at once the point of departure for and the goal of revolution. The problem of human psychology was bound up with the question of the role of interest in society that the anarchists, unlike Sun Zhongshan, saw not just as an economic but also as a moral question.

To the anarchists, the test of a true revolution was whether or not it was "public" in its orientation or, in a more literal rendering, whether or not it pursued "the public way" (*gongdao*).This was also the ultimate test of whether or not a revolution was a social revolution. As Li put it: "What we speak of as a revolution of the many and a revolution of the few refers to whether or not it is really public [*gong*] or private [*si*], not to the actual number of people involved at any one time" (Xin shiji, No. 7: 1). These ideas were crucial to Chinese political thinking at the turn of the century, and placed the anarchists squarely in the context of contemporary thought. The two terms, *gong* and *si*, meant slightly different things in different contexts, but they were always juxtaposed as opposites. *Si* could mean selfishness, partiality or particularity; *gong* was used to denote selflessness, impartiality or universality.[2] In all these usages, however, *si* implied favoring what was of interest to the self, whereas gong meant the ability to transcend self-interest to realize or to express the good of the many. In the anarchist view, revolution was a process whereby particular interest was abolished to be replaced by public concerns in human minds, society and politics. The basic goal of revolution was, therefore, moral; specifically, the creation of "public morality" (*gongde*) (Xin shiji, No. 65: 10).

Chinese anarchists believed, as do anarchists in general, that public-mindedness, an instinctive sociability, as it were, was innate to human beings; the task of revolution was not so much to create public morality out of nothing, but to abolish the institutions that stood in the way of its realization. Chu Minyi pointed to morality as the distinctive characteristic of human-kind, and described as the goal of the education he proposed the achievement of true morality, which implied the abolition of all distinctions between self and others (Xin shiji, No. 38; No. 41: 2).The ultimate goal of revolution was to achieve unity on a universal scale, a unity that was not simply social, but also ethical and spiritual.

[2] For these various usages, see, respectively, Min, "Gemingzhi liuxie" (Bloodshed in Revolution), *Xin shiji* No. 103; Min, "Minzu minquan shehui" (National and Sovereign Society), *Xin shiji* No. 6 ; Zhen, "Tan xue" (Discussions of Learning), *Xin shiji* No. 7.

Partiality, in the anarchist view, was the root-cause of all the problems of contemporary society. To quote Chu again: "Contemporary society is a self-seeking and self-interested society [*zisi zilizhi shehui*]. A self-seeking society is not a true society, a self-interested society is not a fair [*gongping*] society"(Xin shiji, No. 35: 3). The separation of self from others was not just a social problem; it was contrary to the very "organic structure" (*jitizhi jiegou*) of natural existence (Xin shiji, No.41: 2). Anarchism, they believed, promised to do away with this separation and, with it, considerations of interest as a determinant of human behavior: "Anarchism means no national or racial boundaries. Even more importantly, it means no distinction between self and others, no notion of benefiting the self and harming others. When this has been achieved, true freedom, true equality, true fraternity will appear. That is why anarchism accords with public-mindedness and truth" (Xin shiji, No. 33: 4).It was on these same grounds that anarchists rejected competition as a determinant of existence, insisting instead that mutual aid was the source of human evolution (Xin shiji, No. 36: 3).

This opposition to partial interest on the grounds of its basic immorality was not only the ethical basis for anarchist opposition to politics and capitalism, it was also the basis for anarchist disagreements with fellow-revolutionaries. Racism (*zhongzu zhuyi*) and nationalism (*guojia zhuyi*) were, according to the anarchists, just such expressions of partiality. Anarchists opposed enmity to the Manchus as Manchus; they ought to be opposed because they selfishly held on to political power. In the same way,nationalism was bad because it fostered unjustified hostility to the people of other nations (Xin shiji, No. 6: 4). Selfishness declined,they believed, as the scope of human loyalties expanded. Thus:"The advance from the selfishness of the individual to racism and patriotism, the advance from racism and patriotism to socialism represent the progress of universal principle (*gongli*) and con-science (*liangxin*)"(Xin shiji, No. 3: 1). Not until all boundaries had been abolished, could humanity achieve "universal principle. "This, the anarchists argued, ought to be the guiding goal of the Chinese revolution.

It was for these reasons that the Paris anarchists rejected China's heritage in uncompromising language. That certain elements of Chinese tradition fostered private over public morality had been argued by others, most articulately by the constitutional monarchist Liang Qichao. With Liang, however,this criticism of China's heritage did not lead to a call for a wholesale attack on tradition, but rather to a plea for the gradual nurturing of habits of public life in order to create a "new citizenry. "

Anarchists, sensitive to the role ideology played in perpetuating authority, called for a revolution that would eradicate the authoritarian ideological legacy of the past, as well as of the institutions that sustained it. One, citing Engels for inspiration,suggested that China's "national essence" (which conservatives propagated) should be consigned to the museum because it was contrary to civilized life (Xin shiji, No. 44: 1). The Paris anarchists concentrated their attacks on Confucianism and the ideology of familism as the twin pillars of authority in Chinese society. Although they were not the only ones at this time to criticize Confucianism or the family, they did so more systematically and vociferously than others, and they certainly stood out among their contemporaries for presenting these issues as *the* primary issues of change in China. In both respects, they anticipated issues that would rise to the forefront of Chinese thinking during the New Culture Movement a decade later. In this sense, they were China's first cultural revolutionaries.

The very first issue of *New Era* included a short piece on Confucius that debunked him as a thinker of the age of barbarism whose only virtue had been to be a little more knowledgeable than

his ignorant contemporaries (Xin shiji, No. 1 : 3). Paris anarchists saw in Confucian teachings the source of the superstitions in Chinese society that had oppressed women and youth, and served as an instrument of power, a counterpart in China to religion in other societies (Xin shiji, No. 8: 1).[3] Superstition, they believed,was the basis for authority, but even more difficult to overthrow than authority itself, especially when religion and politics were not clearly distinguished. In China, a "Confucius revolution" was the prerequisite to achieving all the other goals of revolution (Xinshiji, No. 52: 4).

The attack on Confucianism was accompanied by an attack on kinship and pseudo-kinship relations that had for centuries been cornerstones of Chinese social thinking. "Family revolution,revolution against the sages, revolution in the Three Bonds and the Five Constants" would help advance the cause of humanitarianism (Xin shiji, No. 11: 2). Paris anarchists viewed the family as the major source of selfishness in society: though people were born into society (that is, the public realm), the family privatized their existence, and converted what was public into what was private. Chu Minyi described the family as the basis of all inequality: "Today's society is a class society. It is like a high tower in appearance. Marriage is its foundation. Property,family, national and racial boundaries are all levels of the tower,with government at the top" (Xin shiji, No. 38: 4). This is a common anarchist view but within the context of Chinese political thought, which had long viewed the family as a paradigm for politics, it had a special significance. The Three Bonds (that bound ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife) were to the anarchists the superstitions that perpetuated the power of the family that was based not on principle but on authority (Xinshiji, No. 11: 1). Their power was bolstered by the practise of ancestor worship that was contrary to "truth," secured the despotism of tradition, was economically wasteful (in using up good land for graves), and bound the living to the dead (Xin shiji, No. 3: 4). Anarchists advocated a "thought revolution" to eliminate these superstitions, and an "economic revolution" to eradicate the power of the family by making individuals economically independent (Xin shiji, No. 11: 2).

These premises of anarchist thinking reveal why education held such an important place on the anarchist agenda, or why anarchists should have believed revolution and education to be the two sides of the same coin, the one "negative," the other"positive" (Xin shiji, No. 40: 2). Revolution was to clear away material obstacles to the liberation of human potential, but it was education that would nurture the morality that anarchist ideals demanded. "There is no morality other than learning," pro-claimed the title of an article in the *New Era* (Xin shiji, No. 79).This was a commonly held anarchist view: that the morality of a people was proportionate to their learning. Education was the means to change human psychology, which in turn would lead to changes in behavior and morality. The relationship between education and revolution was conceived dialectically, with the advance of one inducing the advance of the other in the endless evolution of humanity.

This emphasis on education as revolution brought out an important feature of the anarchist idea of social revolution: that there was no distinction between the process and the goals of revolution, between ends and means. Revolution was necessary to make anarchist education possible; without such education, on the other hand, revolution could not be attained. Although anarchists on occasion ventured to offer their views on when the revolution might occur, these

[3] This article was entitled "Nannu geming" (Revolution in Relations Between Men and Women). As the titles of various articles in this context reveal, anarchists desired to revolutionize all that was basic to Confucian society.

predictions were superfluous because revolution was ultimately a continuing process with no foreseeable end.

Perhaps most revealing in this regard was the distortion of the etymology of the term revolution by Li and Chu in their important essay entitled "Revolution" (*Geming*). Using the foreign original, "revolution," the authors explained that the word was composed of "re" and "evolution," in other words, re-evolution, which they then explained in Chinese to mean "ever new" (*gengxin*). It is not possible to say for sure if the distortion was intentional or simply out of misunderstanding; circumstantial evidence points to the former. There was at least one essay published in the New Era that traced the word revolution,correctly, to its root, "to revolve" (Xin shiji, No. 17: 4). The underlying intention of the representation of "revolution" as"re-evolution," moreover, was to portray revolution and evolution as different aspects, or phases, of the process of human progress, which was also important in the thinking on revolution of Reclus (Fleming, 1979: 77). Whatever the reasons, however,this etymological interpretation corresponded to the anarchists' view of revolution as a process without end. In the words of Li Shizeng:

> Progress is advance without stopping, transformation without end. There is no affair or thing that does not progress. This is the nature of evolution. That which does not progress or is tardy owes it to sickness in human beings and injury in other things. That which does away with sickness and injury is none other than revolution. Revolution is nothing but cleansing away obstacles to progress [Xin shiji, No. 20: 1]

THE TOKYO ANARCHISTS

The Tokyo anarchists agreed with the basic premises of the Paris anarchists, the social scope of revolution, its moral basis, its universalistic goals, and the importance of education as a means to achieving anarchism. There was also considerable interchange between their two journals. The *New Era* contained reports on the activities of the Tokyo anarchists, whereas the *Natural Justice* frequently reprinted foreign works that had first been published in the *New Era*. Nevertheless, the two groups were separated by a wide ideological gap both in their understanding of anarchism,and in the conclusions they drew from it concerning contemporary problems. The disagreement rose to the surface on at least one occasion when the *New Era* criticized Liu Shipei's under-standing of anarchism.

Liu Shipei had made his fame as a classical scholar before he turned to anarchism, and he was a prominent leader of conservatives who propagated the idea of "national essence" of which the Paris anarchists were critical. Liu's commitment to China's cultural heritage was to shape his anarchism. In light of this, it is possible that the more radical aspects of the anarchism that *Natural Justice* propagated was the work of He Zhen, his wife,with whom he published the journal.

The general objectives of *Natural Justice* were stated in its first few issues: "To destroy existing society and institute human equality is the general objective. Aside from women's revolution,it advocates racial, political and economic revolution. Hence the name, *Natural Justice*." With issue number eight in October 1907,this statement was revised to read: "To destroy national and racial boundaries to institute internationalism; resist all authority; overthrow all existing forms of government; institute communism; institute absolute equality of men and women."

Although these goals were quite close to those of the *New Era*, especially in their later formulation, the two groups of anarchists differed significantly in their anarchism as well as in the

sources in which they found inspiration for their ideals. Native sources,viewed with contempt by the Paris anarchists, held a prominent place in the pages of *Natural Justice*. This in turn reflected an even more important difference in the way they perceived the relationship between anarchism and native ideas and ideology.

The Tokyo anarchists, too, rejected those aspects of pre-modern Chinese ideology that condoned hierarchy between classes and sexes. On the other hand, on the issue of political ideology, they believed that pre-modern Chinese thought came closer to upholding anarchist social ideals than its counterparts elsewhere. In a speech he gave before the first meeting of the Society for the Discussion of Socialism, Liu stated that though the Chinese political system had been despotic in appearance, the power of the government had been remote from the lives of the people, which had given them considerable freedom from politics. Furthermore, he argued, the major ideologies of China,Confucianism and Daoism, had both advocated *laissez-faire* government, which had helped curtail government intervention in society. As a result, he concluded, China had an edge over other societies in the possibility of achieving anarchism; he implied, in fact, that if only Chinese could be purged of their habits of obedience, anarchism could be achieved in China in the very near future (Xin shiji, No. 22: 4). The fifth issue of *Natural Justice* carried a picture of Laozi as the father of anarchism in China. And in the utopian scheme that he drew up, Liu acknowledged his debt to Xu Xing, an agrarian utopianist of the third century B.C.,who had advocated a rural life as the ideal life, and the virtues of the practise of manual labor by all without distinction, including the Emperor. Liu noted that he advocated cooperation whereas Xu had promoted self-sufficiency, but otherwise he saw no essential difference between Xu's ideas and his own (Tianyi bao,No. 3: 34–35).

Among western anarchists, Liu found in Tolstoy confirmation of the ideals that he had first discovered in native sources (Tianyibao, 11–12: 416–417). As with Tolstoy, he idealized rural life and manual labor, and opposed a commercialized economy. He believed that a degeneration had set in in Chinese society with the emergence of the money economy around the turn of the Christian era. The money economy had led to the strengthening of despotism: the commercial economy had led to the impoverishment of many in the population, which had prompted government efforts under Wang Mang to establish control over land. Liu almost certainly had the contemporary Revolutionary Alliance advocacy of "the equalization of land rights" in mind when he described this development as one that enhanced despotic government (Tianyi bao, No. 5: 91–94). His suspicion of commercial economy also underlay his hostility to recent changes in Chinese society. He emphasized, on the one hand, the destruction of the rural economy under pressure from western commerce, and the ensuing crisis it had created for the peasantry. At the same time, he expressed a very strong dislike for the urbanization that had set in with recent economic changes. Shanghai, the symbol of China's modern economy, represented to Tokyo anarchists amoral sink in which men degenerated into thieves, and women into prostitutes (Tianyi bao, No. 5: 95–97).

Liu, in other words, perceived anarchism only as a modern version of a rural utopianism that had long existed in China. This was in accordance with his view of socialism in general. In a discussion of socialism, he traced socialism from Plato to the modern world, without assigning any peculiar distinction to modern socialism (Tianyi bao, No. 6: 145–148).

In light of Liu's approach to anarchism, it is not surprising that he drew different conclusions than *New Era* anarchists concerning the path China should follow in pursuit of the good society. Unlike the New Era anarchists who perceived Republican government as a progressive develop-

ment, Liu argued that if China could not achieve anarchism immediately, it would be better off under the old regime than under the "new politics" (*xin zheng*): "Reform is inferior to preserving the old, constitution is inferior to monarchy." He offered three reasons to explain his position: that the old educational system was superior to the new,which favored the rich; that the proposed parliamentary system would enhance the power of the elite and, therefore, contribute to inequality; that the increased power of capital would result in the concentration of wealth, and deprive the people of the self-sufficiency they had hitherto enjoyed. Liu bolstered his argument with statistics on poverty in various countries which, he believed,showed that development increased inequality in society (Tianyibao, No. 8–10, combined issue: 193–203).

Secondly, Tokyo anarchists placed a great deal more emphasis on the plight of the people in China than did the Paris anarchists. *New Era* discussions of anarchism carried an aura of abstract intellectualism. In its three years of publication, the journal published only two articles wholly devoted to the question of labor, and even those were of an abstract theoretical nature; this in spite of the fact that these years were a high point in syndicalist activity in France. *Natural Justice*, on the other hand, paid considerable attention to the problems of women and the peasantry in China.

It seems likely that He Zhen was responsible for the attention the journal devoted to the issue of women's oppression. The Tokyo anarchists derived their inspiration on this issue from Engels's *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which, in presenting the oppression of women as a consequence of the emergence of the patriarchal family with the rise of urban civilization, may have struck a resonant cord with their anti-urban bias.[4]

Although both groups of anarchists were equally critical of women's oppression, the Tokyo anarchists' stance on the question of rural society was distinctive and, from the perspective of Chinese socialist thought, quite significant. The *Hengbao* in 1908anonymously published a number of articles on the peasant question.[5] As far as I am aware of, these were among the earliest serious discussions in Chinese socialism of the role of the peasantry in the revolution, and the meaning of revolution for the peasantry. One of these articles, lauding the peasants' tendency toward communitarian living and anarchism, called for a"peasants' revolution" (*nongmin geming*). Other articles dis-cussed questions of economic cooperation among the peasantry. Perhaps the most interesting among them was an article which, inspired by Kropotkin, advocated the combination of agriculture and industry in the rural economy. There is little need to belabor the significance of this idea that has been an important feature of Chinese socialist thinking from Mao Zedong to Deng Xiaoping. Whether or not later Communists were familiar with these publications is impossible to say at this point. Li Dazhao's first writings in the early 1910s, which showed an anti-urban bias that has led Meisner to describe Li as a populist, sounded very much like some of Liu Shipei's writings on the question of commercial urban society. The works of Kropotkin that inspired these ideas in the *Hengbao*, chief among them *The Conquest of Bread*, had first been translated into Chinese in the *New Era*. By the time of the May Fourth Movement, these works were popular readings among Chinese radicals, and provided the inspiration for the communitarian ideals and the communal experiments that proliferated at the time (Dirlik, 1985). It is not possible to be certain about the influence of these ideas of the Tokyo anarchists on later social-

[4] It is noteworthy that *Tianyi bao* also published brief selections from the *Communist Manifesto*. These were among the earliest publications of the works of Marx and Engels in Chinese.

[5] For these essays, see Ge (1984).

ist thinking, but they were the first to enunciate the ideas, and there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that their ideas may have become in later years a component of Chinese socialists' thinking on the future relationship between agriculture and industry, and the relationship of urban to rural society.

The sensitivity on these questions may have been a consequence of the Tokyo anarchists' proximity to China, which gave them access to the burgeoning popular resistance movements on the eve of the 1911 Revolution. I think, however, that there were other, intellectual reasons for the journal's attention to these problems in the concrete. He Zhen's presence was possibly the most important factor in the attention the journal devoted to problems of women. As for the peasantry, Liu's idealization of rural life was responsible for the attention he devoted to the peasantry in whom he discovered the model personality for anarchist society.

Liu's description of utopian society offers an instructive contrast to the one drawn up by Wu Zhihui in *New Era* (Xin shiji, No. 49). The most conspicuous feature of Wu's utopia was its fascination with mechanical innovations. Liu's utopia, on the other hand, described an essentially rural society, and is most striking for its preoccupation with the disposal of labor; basic to his utopia was the universal practise of manual labor as a guarantee to an egalitarian existence. All anarchists believed in the virtues of manual labor. In later years, the Paris anarchists would take the initiative in establishing a work-study program in France, which stressed the combination of manual and mental labor as the key to the material and moral transformation of Chinese society. In these early years, however, it was Liu who stated most trenchantly a belief in the necessity of combining manual and mental labor to eliminate social inequality, and to create an ideal anarchist personality. Liu's anti-modernism, in other words, was largely responsible both for the close attention he paid to the concrete problems of rural life in China, as well as his idealization of attitudes associated with rural existence.

This same orientation, finally, sensitized Liu to the problem of imperialism in China. He was, to my knowledge, the first Chinese intellectual to see in socialism a means to liberate China from western oppression. An essay he published in *Natural Justice* was remarkable for anticipating views that would become prevalent in China after the Chinese had been exposed to Lenin's analysis of imperialism. The essay argued that the emergence of concepts of socialism and universalism (*datong zhuyi*) promised the liberation of Asian peoples from the imperialism of the "white race"and the Japanese. This task required, he believed, the mobilization of the people (he even cited the Sanyuan li incident of the First Opium War as an example of the people's ability to resist foreigners), cooperation with other oppressed peoples of Asia,and the various "people's parties" (*mindang*) in advanced countries. Perhaps most interestingly, Liu observed that revolution would not succeed in advanced societies until Asia had been liberated, because the exploitation of the Asian peoples strengthened governments and the ruling classes in the West (Tianyi bao, Nos. 11–12, combined issue: 345–368).

Liu's views on anarchism were anathema to the Paris anarchists with their commitment to science, industrial society and progress. Although in general they were supportive of the Tokyo anarchists, they criticized Liu for his equation of modern anarchism with native utopianism. First, they responded, Liu had no conception of progress, which lay at the basis of modern anarchism. It was wrong, therefore, to compare what modern anarchists wished to achieve with the aspirations of primitive people, or to equate anarchism with erratic efforts to achieve a more egalitarian distribution of property, as with the "well-field"system of ancient China.

Secondly, they criticized Liu for his suggestion that Chinese society had been characterized in the past by political *laissez-faire*, which did not fit the facts. China had been ruled for centuries by a political despotism; what Liu claimed added, at the very least, up to an assertion that there was no difference between a society with government and one without it. The superstitious faith in Chinese society in hierarchy, which accounted for the prevalence of "habits of obedience," was itself a product of oppression. Finally, they found humorous Liu's claim that China might be closer to anarchism than other societies. What was required, they suggested, was not talk about levels of anarchy, but effort, awareness and scientific knowledge (Xin shiji, No. 24: 4).

These disagreements were not disagreements over abstract issues but entailed different attitudes toward the modern West, as well as toward the problems of changing China. The Paris anarchists were Francophiles who found much of value in the modern West but little to be proud of in China's past. They valued science to the point of scientism, made industrialism into a utopia (as Bauer has observed of Wu) and, with all their debunking of capitalism, were fascinated with the civilization that capitalism had created (Bauer, 1976: 350–355).

Liu, on the other hand, had the nativist's suspicion of the West. Although he admired certain Western values, he believed that the Chinese heritage contained the equivalents of those same values,and more. He found much of value in Chinese civilization(though not necessarily in Confucianism) to the preservation of the "essence" of which he was to devote his life (Bernal, 1976b).Although he was quite unmistakably a conservative, it is necessary to note, however, that his very conservatism sensitized him to issues that would assume enormous significance in later years in Chinese radicalism. Such was the case with his sensitivity to the question of imperialism to which the Paris anarchists, with their unabashed cosmopolitanism, were completely oblivious. His case, in fact, is interesting because it parallels the qualms about western powers of another "conservative" of the same period, Liang Qichao, who argued against Revolutionary Alliance socialism at this time that would weaken China vis-a-vis the West by undermining China's economic development, an idea that Revolutionary Alliance socialists derided. In the early years of this century, it was still the more conservatively inclined Chinese who saw western intrusion as a major problem of Chinese society. Only in the 1920s would Chinese socialists merge their social revolutionary demands with anti-imperialism. Liu was one of the first to do so. He was also the first, to my knowledge, to show concern for the consequences for China of urbanization, and to turn to rural China in response in search for moral and material answers, a search that major Chinese socialists such as Li Dazhao and Mao Zedong would join in later years. Finally, his insistence on the need to combine manual and mental labor as a means to transforming the Chinese personality would assume immense importance among other anarchists during the New Culture Movement (though his contribution was not acknowledged), and retain its importance all the way to the recent Cultural Revolution launched by Mao.

UTOPIA AND REVOLUTION

In the early years of this century, anarchism was one of the two main currents in Chinese thinking on social revolution, which had been stimulated by the introduction to China of socialist ideas around the turn of the century. The Revolutionary Alliance had incorporated "social revolution" in its political program in 1905as a means of preventing in China's economic development the social ills that had accompanied the rise of capitalism in Europe. Revolutionary

Alliance socialism conceived of socialism as "social policy," the use of political intervention by the state to curtail inequality and, therefore, control social conflict.

Anarchism introduced a new theme into Chinese social revolutionary thinking: social revolution as cultural revolution. In contrast to Revolutionary Alliance socialists, whose attention was focused on the state, the anarchists, in their rejection of the state, turned to society as the proper realm of revolution. Key to their idea of social revolution was the transformation of the individual, because it was a basic premise of anarchism that a society could only be as good as the individuals who constituted it. Anarchists viewed inherited social institutions as institutional manifestations of the principle of authority, which distorted the individual psyche, and prevented the free play of the instinctive sociability of human beings, the only basis upon which a good society could be established. The abolition of existing institutions, therefore, must be accompanied in the creation of good society by a cultural transformation (both intellectual and ethical) of the individual to restore to humanity, as it were, its pristine sociability. The strongly cultural connotations of the anarchist idea of social revolution were responsible, I think, for the immense popularity anarchism was to enjoy in China a decade later, during the New Culture Movement, at which time the anarchist conception of change diffused widely in Chinese thinking.

Anarchist themes had an intriguing resemblance to issues in pre-modern Chinese politics. The preoccupation with the moral basis of politics, the concern with nourishing public over private interests, the assumption that in education lay the means to moral transformation, all point to a possible affinity between anarchism and the native ideological legacy of Chinese anarchists. That native political vocabulary infused the language of anarchism would seem to lend support to such an interpretation.

This interpretation can be sustained only if we ignore the self-image that the Chinese anarchists held of themselves, and,even more importantly, the content of the anarchist advocacy of social revolution, an entirely new concept in Chinese politics. The very existence of two camps of anarchists, one of which upheld native traditions and the other one opposed them, militates against any simplistic view of anarchists as prisoners of a cultural or political unconscious. What determined associations of anarchism for the Paris and Tokyo anarchists was not an unconscious activity of inherited beliefs and dispositions, but conscious choices made in response to a complex of problems that were products of the material and ideological conditions of early twentieth-century Chinese society, in particular the problems of revolution and the relationship to contemporary world civilization, and a host of more specific questions to which these problems had given rise.

Anarchist writing was indeed infused with the vocabulary of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Earlier, Revolutionary Alliance writers had on occasion resorted to the social vocabulary of pre-modern Chinese society in explaining their own socialist notions of class. Anarchists used native vocabulary, utopian or otherwise, with much greater frequency. This practise of using a native vocabulary no doubt made for considerable confusion concerning the relationship of anarchism to native social and moral ideals, but once again it would be improper to conclude from the confounding of the vocabulary that, therefore, the ideas themselves were confounded by the anarchists. Kenneth Chen has explained that when Buddhism was first introduced to China,Buddhists used the vocabulary of Daoism in order to render Buddhist concepts intelligible to the Chinese who had no native equivalents for those concepts (Chen, 1964). This practice,described as "matching terms" (*geyi*), may help explain the Chinese use of a native vocabulary to express anarchist ideals in the early twentieth century. It does not follow, therefore, that anarchist ideas lost their

revolutionary identity in the process, just as Buddhism did not lose its identity much earlier for being expressed through a Daoist vocabulary. Confusion there was, to be sure; a somewhat mysterious, and vague, association with Buddhist ideals would characterize a great deal of Chinese anarchist thinking in the twentieth century. But ultimately, as is evident in the revolutionary impact of anarchism on Chinese thinking, the association was to transform the meaning of the native vocabulary that was used initially to express anarchist ideas.

The anarchist ideas of morality and revolution illustrate the need to go beyond the vocabulary to its content in order to appreciate this problem fully. Paris anarchists took morality to be the end of revolution. True morality, they believed, could be achieved only with learning. The learning they referred to was not just any learning, least of all the kind of learning that Confucians had prized, but scientific learning. Li Shizeng dismissed as"particular" (*si*) all learning that could not stand up under the test of modern science (Xin shiji, No. 7: 2). Science, the conclusions of which were independent of national or cultural orientations,represented to him only the "universal" (*gong*), and therefore true learning. He excluded from the realm of scientific learning politics and law, "false morality," and religion, including within it only, in addition to the natural sciences, sociology and anthropology (Xin shiji, No. 21: 4). Anarchist scientism, whatever one may think of it, clearly distinguished the anarchist perceptions of the fundamentals of learning and, therefore, of morality, from those of their Confucian predecessors for whom true learning had been all that the anarchists sought to abolish.

With regard to anarchist utopianism, which resonated with certain themes in native utopian traditions, it is clear that anarchists held an activist idea of revolution that distinguished their goals from the eremitic escapism of the Daoists to whom they were sometimes compared. Responding to a correspondent who compared anarchist ideals to the idea of "non-action" (*wuwei*), an ideal of politics that infused most Chinese schools of political thought, Li Shizeng observed that "anarchism advocates radical activism. It is the diametrical opposite of quietist non-action. Anarchism does not only advocate that imperial power does not reach the self, it also seeks to make sure that it does not reach anyone else" (Xin shiji, No. 3 : 2). Embedded in this statement is a distinction between traditional political escapism and modern revolutionary politics; the one seeking to establish a space apart from the existing political order, the other seeking to take over and to transform political space in its totality. That China had its Boddhisatvas who sought to save humanity, and modern anarchism has had its escapist eremitists does not change the fundamental differences in the conceptualization of political space between anarchism and native Chinese political traditions;it only points to the need for circumspection in drawing parallels between ideas that are inherently open to wide ranges of interpretation, and those that draw their meaning not from abstractions but from their concrete historical context.

China's political circumstances in the first decade of this century encouraged receptivity to the moralistic political ideals of anarchism among Chinese revolutionaries. Anarchism was not new in China in 1907. Knowledge of anarchism and socialism entered China at about the same time around the turn of the century. Before 1907, however, Chinese knowledge of anarchism had been vague, not distinguished clearly from Russian nihilism,and was encompassed within the term "extreme revolutionism."Anarchism was associated more with a technique of political action-assassination-than with a social philosophy. In an environment in which there were few means of political expression and little apparent basis for revolutionary action, youthful revolutionaries discovered in individual action a means ofexpression that caught their imagination. Individual acts of political expression, even when their political futility was evident,served to af-

firm revolutionary (and personal) authenticity. The heroic tradition in Chinese politics provided one source of legitimacy for this kind of political behavior; the "extreme revolutionism" of Western revolutionaries provided another (Price, 1974; Rankin, 1971). Anarchism provided a vague justification for these actions. After 1907, Chinese acquired a much more sophisticated appreciation of anarchism as a social philosophy, but these attitudes persisted in an intellectualized guise. The glorification of the actions of Qiu Jin and Xu Xilin for their selflessness, the constant insistence of the anarchists that they were not concerned with success or failure but with truth all point in this direction. Chu Minyi went so far on one occasion as to suggest that assassination was justified if only because it had a purifying effect on the revolutionary (Xin shiji, No. 18: 3).

More than any other radical philosophy of politics, anarchism expresses a "politics of authenticity." Although anarchists perceived the preoccupation with the self as a social and political evil, most of their writings were directed at the liberation of the self, the self purged of the ideological and social encrustation that hid its authentic nature. In this sense, anarchist ideals found a responsive chord among radical youth alienated from existing social norms but without an alternative social direction.

At the same time, however, it was precisely the anarchist view of the individual as a social being, a basic ontological premise of anarchism, that pointed to possibilities beyond social alienation (Saltman, 1983: chaps. 1, 2). Although anarchism was still associated with individual action and assassination after 1907, it was the social and cultural implications of the anarchist ideal of revolution that would gradually move to the forefront of Chinese thinking on anarchism, and leave a lasting impression on Chinese social revolutionary thought. China's most respected anarchist, Shifu, started his career with assassination activities, but moved away from assassination as he became familiar with anarchist philosophy (Krebs, 1977). After the Republican Revolution of1911, anarchists distinguished themselves in educational and social mobilization activities, including the establishment of the first modern labor unions in China. In the midst of the wave of individualism that swept Chinese youth in the late 1910s, it was the anarchists who, in their insistence on the essential sociability of human beings, kept alive social issues, and played a major part in the emergence of widespread concern with society and social revolution in the aftermath of the May Fourth Movement of 1919.

Anarchism expressed a utopian universalism and a humanitarian vision that was in many ways far removed from the immediate concerns of contemporary Chinese society. But it was not, for this reason, irrelevant; for the first two decades of this century, anarchist ideas played a central role in ideological debate. During the period covered here, anarchism provided a perspective for the critique of the ideologies of reform and revolution. The Paris anarchists, in their futurism, were critical of the limitations in the ideology of the nationalist revolutionaries who rested their hopes with the state. Even more evident was the case of Liu Shipei who, with the aid of his antimodernist anarchism, was able to see that the "new policies" were not the harbingers of political openness and social welfare that many thought them to be. It is also possible to state that their contemporaries, themselves intrigued by these questions, took the anarchists more seriously than have historians.

Anarchists were utopian, to be sure, but it was their very utopianism that accounts for their ability to express concerns among Chinese intellectuals that were no less real for being politically irrelevant, at least in an immediate sense. Anarchist utopianism was itself the expression of a universalistic urge in Chinese thinking that gained in meaning as the Chinese conception of China was particularized with the emergence of nationalism. Against a world torn apart by

national interest and conflict, anarchism held up the possibility of a humane civilization of which China could be a part. This utopianism on occasion took a comical form; as with a "Mr. Humanity" (*Rendao shi*) from England who, in an open letter to the Chinese ambassador in England, charged that the latter, in tampering with student mail, broke "the law of humanity," and exposed "to the civilized world that Chinaman are [sic] savages." There was nothing comical, however, about the many anarchists who over the years risked government wrath for their pursuit of "humanity," which authorities deemed to be subversive of public morality and order.

Utopianism, moreover, is a relative concept. If we take them seriously enough, ideas such as democracy and freedom, which we bandy about as a matter of course, are as utopian as anything to which the anarchists aspired; indeed, anarchism appears utopian because anarchists have shown a tendency to take these ideas seriously. Those who criticized the anarchists for being too"idealistic" were not always cognizant that the Republic or socialism that they advocated were themselves quite "utopian"when viewed from the perspective of those conservatives who had an even more pessimistic view than they did of the Chinese ability for self-government. Utopia has been a force in history because one person's utopia has been another's reality.

The Chinese anarchists, moreover, were idealists but they were not, therefore, "blind," as the Paris anarchists said of themselves. Though anarchists promoted anarchism as a total revolutionary philosophy, they relegated their vision far into the future, and were quite prepared themselves to compromise their ideals to meet immediate needs. Indeed, anarchists would make a very real contribution in the new ideals they introduced into education,something they believed was the only reliable means to achieve anarchist society. Anarchist ideals could even become "functional" to the ends of political power, as they did when anarchists in the 1920s held up their ideal of unity and universality against Communists who, in promoting class struggle, seemed to be bent on prolonging social divisions. Aside from personal relations, this was an important element in the Guomindang flirtation with anarchists in the 1920s.

Anarchists were not the only utopians in early twentieth century China which, as a period of political and ideological transformation, provided fertile grounds for utopian thinking. Kang Youwei the reformer had produced the first utopian work of this period; although Kang's *Datong shu* was not yet published when Anarchism emerged in Chinese thought, Kang's utopian thinking may have influenced at least one of the anarchists, Wu Zhihui, who apparently visited with Kang before he left for Europe. Nevertheless, anarchist utopianism differed from that of Kang Youwei. Kang's utopia was a utopia of the future, which reflected in content his thinking on the present but did not,therefore, shape his present concerns. Anarchist utopianism was a revolutionary utopianism because it was an immanent utopian-ism, which presupposed that the present provided the point of departure for the path to utopia. It derived its inspiration, at least for the Paris anarchists, from the "scientism" of Kropotkin which, however rationalist and a historical it may be, portrayed anarchism nevertheless not as a future dream but as a necessity of human evolution. Although Kang Youwei was quite satisfied (if not entirely happy) to live with the present world of nations and families, competition and conflict, anarchist utopianism by its very nature called forth immediate criticism of the contemporary world, and efforts to change it.

It was in this regard that anarchism may have made its most important contribution to Chinese social revolutionary thought. China has been a revolutionary society in the twentieth century not just because of the revolutionizing of its society and politics,which nourished the revolutionary faith, but also because of a faith in revolution as an ultimate value, a means to a better world. Lasky has observed (1976) that Marxism blended utopia and revolution to make the process of

revolution itself into a utopia. This, I think, applies much more to anarchism than to Marxism. In China, moreover, anarchists were the first to articulate a faith in revolution as an endless process of change that was not only important in revolutionary thinking in general, but left its imprint on some currents in Marxist thinking as well. A notion of revolution as utopia was perhaps implicit in the 1903 statement by Zou Rong in a classic of Chinese revolutionary thought, the *Revolutionary Army*: "Ah, revolution, revolution! If you have it you will survive, but if you don't you will die. Don't retrogress;don't be neutral; don't hesitate; now is the time" (Zou, 1974: 19).

Whether Zou's statement was inspired in any way by the anarchist ideas that were already finding their way into China is difficult to say; Social Darwinism was very much in evidence inhis essay. But the idea was one that the Paris anarchists echoed,now clearly inspired by "mutual aid," but expressed in the vocabulary of Buddhism: "Revolution! Revolution! Revolution‼! Since the beginning of the world, there has not been a year,a month, a day, and hour, a minute, a second, without revolution. Revolution moves forward without rest, tireless in its intrepidity. It is the key to the progress of the myriad worlds [*daqian shijie*]" (Xin shiji, No. 3: 3). As it was to Michael Walzer's "revolutionary saints" in Europe, revolution was to society as the propeller was to the ship, constantly moving it forward under the guidance of universal principle as the propeller moved the ship forward in accordance with the compass. Revolution was not simply a solution to practical problems, it was the destiny of humanity.

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