Anarchists and the May 4 Movement in China

Nohara Shirõ

January 1975

Contents

Translator's Note

Until the post-Cultural Revolution thaw that began in 1979, Chinese readers found it next to impossible to gain access to information about the strong anarchist influence within their country's revolutionary movement. From the point of view of the ruling Communist Party, in whose favour historical materials were invariably rewritten, this was a necessity borne out by the fact that, when people took to the streets in 1989 to demand a degree of control over their own lives, among the slogans that they raised were the traditional ones of anarchism. One of the few sources of information on anarchism available in Chinese before the 1960s was the collection titled *An Introduction to the Periodicals of the May 4 Period* (*Wusi shiqi qikan jieshao*), which first appeared in 1958 and was reissued in 1979. To those with the energy to wade through the six hefty volumes, the collection proved to be a treasuretrove. It not only listed all the major periodicals of the May 4 period and after, but also reprinted their Contents Pages, Editorial Statements, etc, while providing an analysis of the significance of each periodical. The latter, while written from the standpoint of the Communist Party, was nevertheless remarkably objective, even with regard to the anarchist periodicals. Toward the latter the policy was one of stating the facts then suggesting shortcomings, making it possible to sift out considerable information not only about anarchist activities but also about the considerable overlap between groups of different political persuasions during those years. It was this collection, in fact, that provided the catalyst for Nohara Shiro's original essay.

Nohara Shiro, until his death in 1981, was a Marxist historian specializing in Chinese history and politics who had also become strongly involved in the movement to eradicate pre-war feudal and fascist influences from Japanese education and learning. The essay translated here originally appeared in his 1960 collection, *History and Ideology in Asia* (*Ajia no rekishi to shisb*). Despite his personal preference for Marxism over anarchism, Nohara's approach to the subject is quite open-minded. The strengths of his essay are its focus upon practical organizing attempts rather than intellectual activities, and its revelation of the considerable anarchist influence upon Li Dazhao, whom the Communist Party has long claimed as its own. Whilst most of the early intellectual exponents of the anarchist idea either drifted away into obscurity, were converted to Marxism, or joined the bandwagon of the nationalist movement (some even becoming outright fascists), the organizing activities described here often became the building blocks for the subsequent communist movement. Nohara's work is thus invaluable not only for shedding light on the role of anarchism as an intellectual stim-

ulus for the Chinese revolutionary movement as a whole, but also for making clear the political debt owed the anarchists in terms of practical activities.

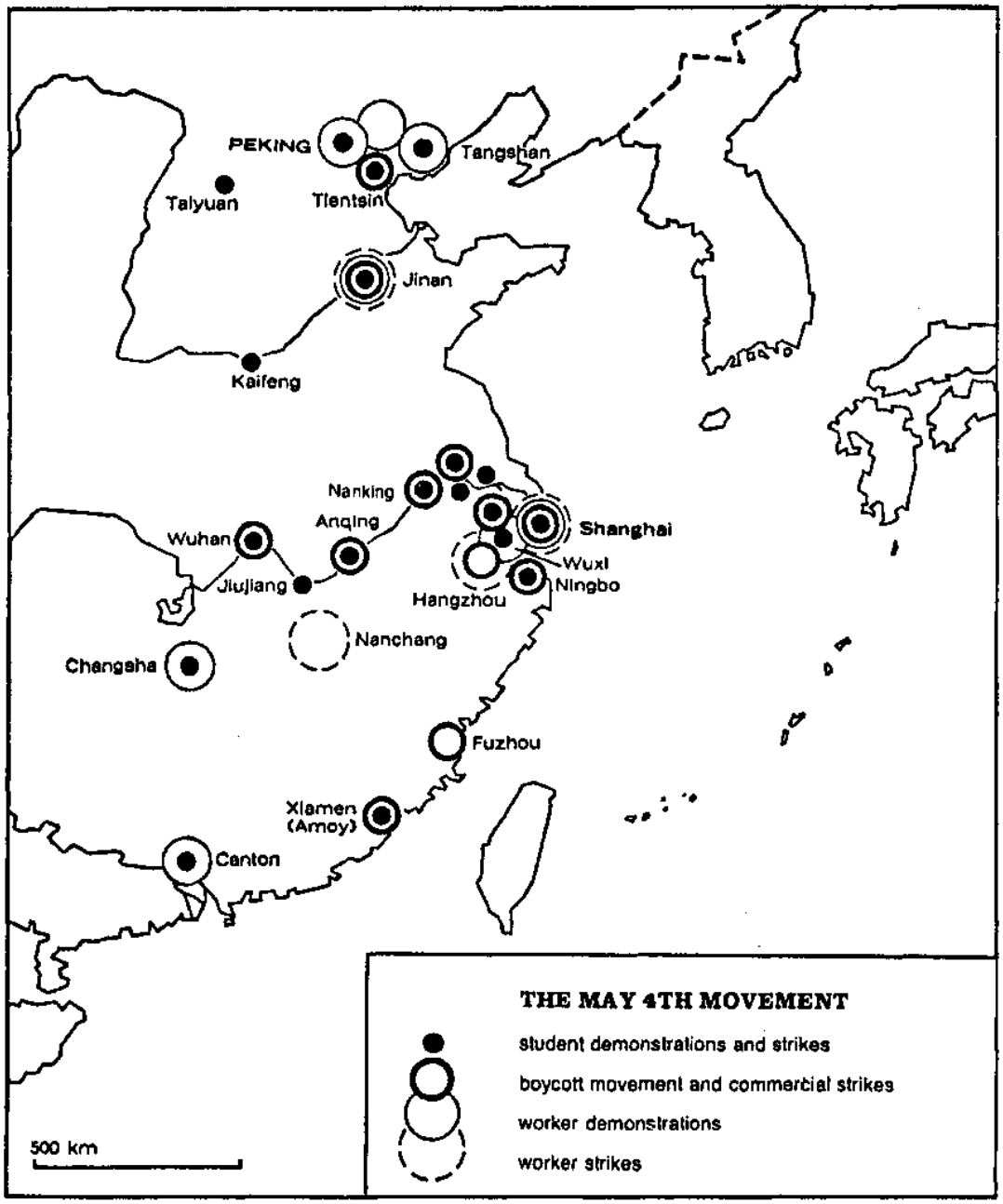
In the Commentary I have attempted to marshall additional material on themes raised by Nohara, without losing a sense of proportion. The Chinese anarchist movement, like its counterparts elsewhere, has often been overlooked because of a lack of materials, and the Commentary is an attempt to assemble previously scattered information and make it accessible to readers. The translation is a completely revised version of one that first appeared in issues 1–4 of the small magazine *Libero International,* published in Kobe and Osaka from 1975 to 1977. The Commentary and Introduction have also been considerably expanded and amended. In accordance with standard East Asian practice, personal names of Chinese, Japanese and Korean individuals have been transcribed with the family name preceding the given name. Chinese characters for most of the individuals and periodicals mentioned may be found in Chow, 1963.

A Note on the Pronunciation of Chinese Names and Terms

Most letters are pronounced roughly as written, with the exception of the following:

c = ts as in 'its'
q = ch as in 'chin'
x = hs as in 'shin'
si = sir
zi = zer as in 'Tizer'

[Map]


PEKING
Tangshan
Talyuan
Tientsin
Jinan
Kaifeng
Nanking
Anqing
Shanghai
Wuhan
Wuxi
Jiujiang
Ningbo
Hangzhou
Nanchang
Changsha
Fuzhou
Xiamen
(Amoy)
Canton
500 km
THE MAY 4TH MOVEMENT
student demonstrations and strikes
boycott movement and commercial strikes
worker demonstrations
worker strikes

Part One

Introduction

The students' movement for democratization that erupted in China in April 1989 only to be bloodily crushed by the authorities some two months later was the latest in a series whose origins can be traced back to the beginnings of modern China's revolutionary process. Sparked off by the death of Hu Yaobang, the former Secretary-General of the Chinese Communist Party who had been deposed in disgrace by conservatives two years before, the movement had derived further inspiration from the visit to Beijing of the Soviet leader Gorbachev, then at the height of his popularity thanks to his perestroika' reform initiative. And yet it was not by chance that the movement also coincided with the 70th anniversary of the famous student movement of May 1919. Ironically, while the latter has been appropriated as a primary revolutionary icon by the ruling Communist Party, it was against the dictatorial style of that very party that the 1989 students were protesting. Sadly, despite the students' insistence upon a nonviolent movement and the fact that they sought merely to urge the Party to live up to the revolutionary ideals it still claimed to espouse, the government's reaction was as ruthless as had been that of its counterpart, the warlord regime of seventy years before.

The parallel between the two movements does not stop there. Government approval for thousands of students to travel abroad, which formed one wing of the opening-up' *(Jtaifang)* policy of the ten years following the refutal of the 'Cultural Revolution' in 1979, closely matched the policy of dispatching students to Japan and the West for further education in the early years of this century. In both cases the initiative was an implicit recognition of the fact that stagnation had set in which could only be cured by the injection of new blood; and in both cases student demands, far exceeding the bounds of the government's original intentions, were for fundamental reforms in the country's political organization. For in 1989, as in 1919, changes were taking place on a worldwide scale that not only stimulated the students to press home their demands with still greater fervour than they might otherwise have had, but also caused the government to look fearfully over its shoulder, admitting the justice of many of the students' arguments while ordering them to restrain the 'radicalness' of their behaviour.

Behind the students' actions, in 1989 as in 1919, was a deep mood of patriotism that was effectively obliterated in each case by a barrage of government propaganda. In 1919

the students, a tiny minority of the population but open to the input of new ideas and current information, had watched their country being steadily divided up among the superpowers and realized that politicians in charge of government policy were in fact contributing to the disaster. It was as if the shock of that realization had galvanized them into a search for the real meaning of 'China'. Why was the country apparently resigned to suicide? Was there any longer any meaning to being 'Chinese'? Where was the country bound, and what was needed to guide it along the way ? In the sense that the spirit of the May 4 Movement was an attempt to redefine Chinese culture in the context of the modern world, it was far more of a revolution than its predecessor of eight years earlier which had overthrown the Qing dynasty and inaugurated a republic.

Seventy years later the 1989 students' call for a multi-party state to replace the Communist Party's dictatorial control over national affairs stemmed from a similar realization that the Party's refusal to admit change was leading China toward disaster. Not least was their concern that the Party, by betraying the very values it had foisted upon the country in place of those of traditional society, had left people with no values at all. Their anxiety was fuelled by the screening the previous year of the controversial television documentary 'River Elegy' *(Heshang').* Using the Yellow River as a symbol for Chinese civilization, the programme had suggested that the desperate efforts put in over the centuries by peasants to sustain the river in its course and prevent flooding had their parallel in efforts by successive governments to sustain the unique nature of Chinese civilization, resulting in stagnation and a refusal to admit the validity of outside ideas. The allusion to the conservatism of the present government was obvious. To concerned intellectuals, persisting on this course could only mean the continued isolation of China from the world community.

Despite government efforts to contain the controversy and the sponsoring of a stream of publications criticizing the producers of 'River Elegy', the debate continued. Just as students and intellectuals in 1919 had called for political reform to 'protect our mountains and seas' — ie, to return China to its own people — the demands for democratization in 1989 grew from the perception that the government possessed neither the will nor the energy to tackle the multitude of problems facing the country. If anything, reports of widespread pollution and defoliation throughout China over the past few years have made the issue of 'protecting the mountains and seas' more pressing than ever.

On May 4 1919 some 3,000 Beijing students demonstrated in protest against the Chinese government's acquiescent attitude toward Japan's expansionist demands. The immediate cause was the failure of the Versailles Peace Conference to return to China German colonies in Shandong province seized by Japan in 1915; the revelation that the government had tacitly agreed to Japan's assuming control was the last straw. The officials held responsible for the government's stance were denounced as traitors, and the May 4 demonstrations were called to force their resignation. When some students invaded the home of one of the ministers, police arrived, a fight ensued, and 32 people were arrested. This was the 'May 4 Incident', the catalyst for a process of

tumultuous change that would end in the total transformation of China. Out of the May 4 Movement that followed the Incident grew not only the cultural revolution that would sweep away the old elite and (most of) its values for ever, but also many of the political currents that over the next thirty years would battle for control of the country. National consciousness, political parties, the labour and student movements, even the beginnings of the peasant movement, can all be traced back to 'May 4', the term which has come to subsume not merely the Incident itself but also the decade of social and intellectual change that had begun four years earlier.

The transformation of China's predominantly-agrarian economy had begun during the 19th century, the result of a combination of imperialist pressure and more gradual domestic trends. In the early days native industry had little chance to expand because foreign-manufactured goods of lower price and superior quality were constantly being dumped on the market through the many one-sided trade agreements forced upon the weak Chinese government. With World War 1 and the preoccupation of the western powers with military production, however, China obtained a breathing space. Native production, especially in light industry, grew rapidly from 1914 to 1920. Investment moved from the countryside to the cities; joint-stock corporations and modern banks began to appear; capital concentration and the growth of a modern economy quickened. Merchants, always a despised group in Chinese society because of their non-productive character, transferred their operations from the hinterland to the cities with the encouragement of the new Chambers of Commerce. Their consequent interest in national rather than local markets made them a highly significant political factor, and many of them came to support the aims of the May 4 Movement. In particular, the increased influence of Japan and the return of the other imperialist powers after the war made the merchants and industrialists anxious about the future and therefore sensitive to appeals for national recovery.

The intellectual revolution which provided the initial impetus for the May 4 Movement also grew out of this process of structural change. China's ability to maintain its social and political systems virtually unchanged for more than two millenia was primarily due to the fact that their intellectual premises had never been seriously challenged. After the Opium War with Britain in 1840–42 had demonstrated the superior might of the West, however, the first stirrings of national consciousness began to be discernible. A movement grew up around the principle that, while China's traditional learning and institutions were superior to those of the West, in order to protect and preserve them China needed to learn Western methods and technology. Military defeat by Japan in 1894–5, though, brought another rude awakening. The lessons of the ineffective revolution of 1911, together with increasing encroachment by Japan (where the 1868 'Meiji Restoration' had already begun to transform society along Western lines) convinced intellectuals that merely transplanting laws and political institutions was not enough.

Fierce nationalism, inspired by opposition to the 250-year rule of the alien Qing or Manchu dynasty, had won a transparent victory in the revolution of 1911 that estab-

lished a republican system of government, but the new order was almost immediately turned into the personal dictatorship of President Yuan Shikai. Many erstwhile revolutionaries joined the government; others wasted time and lives on futile, uncoordinated insurrections; still others, once their more practical strategies showed signs of becoming a serious threat to the established order, were eliminated by presidential assassins. Following Yuan's abortive 1916 attempt to make himself emperor and his death soon after, the country fell into the hands of local militarists or 'warlords'.

All this, together with further imperial restoration attempts, the collusion of party politicians with the warlord governments, and the total failure to rally popular opinion for a 'Second Revolution' in 1913, brought home all too plainly that mere nationalism was not the cure-all which many intellectuals had thought it to be. The abject acceptance by the government in 1915 of Japan's 'Twenty-One Demands', intended to turn China into little more than a Japanese colony, merely underlined the hollowness of the changes that had taken place so far, and convinced many intellectuals of the need for more fundamental change. Things being what they were, it was inevitable that these intellectuals, though numbering only some ten million in 1919, would come to represent other casualties of social change in a kind of crusade to save China.

The 'new' intellectuals, whose contacts with modern Western civilization had often, even if only temporarily, alienated them from traditional Chinese orthodoxy, claimed that not only should Western methods and ideas be fully introduced, but also that China's hallowed traditions themselves should be subjected to a total re-examination. In 1915, therefore, through the medium of the newly-established *New Youth* magazine, these intellectuals began calling for the destruction of all traditional values, ethics, social theories and institutions, and for their replacement by new ones appropriate to building a 'new culture' for \ China. The appeal was predominantly to young people, as the name of the magazine suggested, and Chinese students responded enthusiastically, particularly after *New Youth* began to be published in the vernacular style instead of the stilted classical forms that symbolized the old culture. As this 'New Culture Movement' gathered momentum, every aspect of the old society came under fire: the traditional family was to be abolished, arranged marriages would give way to freely-chosen love matches, filial piety would be replaced by individual equality, and the sexual double standard would be ended by the establishment of sexual equality. Old superstitions and religions were castigated in the name of scientific methods. Politics would be by and for the common people, and a literary revolution would do away with the old script intelligible only to a few thousand trained scholars, making culture available to all.

Events outside China were presenting a stimulating contrast to its own passivity. While Western democracy had been widely discredited by the Peace Conference's decision on Shandong, the success of the October Revolution in Russia, followed by the ill-fated but still impressive revolts in Hungary, Finland, Germany, Austria, Bavaria and elsewhere showed the potential of popular uprisings. Meanwhile, the August 1918 'Rice Riots' in Japan and the following year's 'March 1 Movement' against Japanese

colonial rule in Korea helped demonstrate that popular initiative was not the prerogative of the West.

The effects of May 4 were far-reaching. Most profoundly affected of all, perhaps, were the women — at least, those living in the cities. Chinese women were taught from childhood to be passive and obedient, sheltered from the outside world, used as pawns in family politics, rarely given any education, and not allowed to work. Foot-binding, concubinage, female infanticide, the cult of chastity preferring suicide to dishonour and so on had made Chinese women perhaps the most violently oppressed in the world. Women's emancipation, when first mooted by progressive (male) intellectuals made aware that half China's population was kept in virtual slavery, thus had a feeling of inevitability to it. Young women bobbed their hair, went on demonstrations, attended school for the first time, demanded a free choice in marriage and so on. The idea of 'women's rights' had gradually filtered down through the few schools and publications that were available until by 1919, despite strong resistance, it had become a key motif of the intellectual and social revolution.

The modern labour movement was also a product of May 4. Foreign economic encroachment since the mid-19th century had created a small proletariat, and expansion during World War 1 had increased the number of urban workers by 1918 to about a million. Though but a tiny proportion of the entire Chinese population of 400 million or so, the anti-imperialist movement, particularly the anti-japan agitation during May 4, quickly awakened these workers to a sense of their own potential. It also brought home the advantages of organization, which in turn, by arousing the opposition of Chinese industrialists, helped encourage class awareness. Although there was no central labour organization at the time, it has been estimated that as many as 60,000 workers in 43 enterprises staged some form of strike or stoppage in Shanghai alone. Much of the activity was stimulated by the socialist clubs and study groups that had spread across the country during mid-1919.

The remaining 90% or more of the population, meanwhile, the peasants, took little part in the events of 1919. Mostly illiterate, and culturally speaking light years removed from the world of the urban intellectuals, the people of the Chinese countryside could make little of the nationalist furore enveloping the cities. Rural China, controlled for two thousand years by an unproductive landlord class presiding over an atomized peasantry in varying degrees of economic distress, had naturally changed but little as a result of the revolution of 1911, which had been barely more than a military coup. Years of inter-warlord conflicts rolling back and forth over the villages, destroying the economy and killing millions, had by the time of the May 4 Movement reduced many parts of inland China to chaos. Thus, while May 4 had meant little more to most peasants than the entertaining sight of bands of well-meaning students come to 'share the peasants' lives' and to spread the message of 'national reconstruction', intellectuals concerned with the practical methods for creating a 'new China' were giving serious thought to the 'peasant problem'. Out of this concern to liberate the countryside from poverty and ignorance would eventually, after twenty years in which

rural conditions went from bad to worse, come the peasant revolution that would prove stronger than either Japanese imperialism or the US- backed middle-class elite of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), and which would win the whole country for the popular policies of the Chinese Communist Party. China's peasant revolution may thus also be said to have germinated in the fertile soil of the May 4 Movement.

An Anarchist Genealogy

In the China of 1919, hot on the heels of the broad-based popular movement known as 'May 4', a cacophony of diverse ideologies was vigorously disputing how to build upon the movement's successes in the reconstruction of their country. One of the profoundest of those disputes, as elsewhere, was that between anarchism and 'bolshevism'.[1]

Prior to the establishment of the Communist Party in 1921, 'socialism' in China had encompassed a range of creeds, from anarchism, syndicalism, guild socialism and bolshevism to Tolstoyan humanism and even the Japanese 'New Village' (*Atarashiki mura*) movement.[2] Indeed, the thinking of the earliest Chinese communists had been deeply imbued with elements of anarchism and other ideologies, and 'bolshevism' itself was widely viewed as no more than a faction within the anarchist movement.[3] Not until after the post-May 4 disputes did the Chinese bolsheviks genuinely manage to forge a clear direction for themselves and strike out upon an independent path.

Anarchism, along with other socialist creeds, had been introduced to China on the eve of the 1911 Revolution there by radicals exiled in France and Japan. Among the numerous articles dealing with socialism carried in the *People's Report* (*Minbao*), organ of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (*Zhongguo geming tongmenghui*) formed in Tokyo in 1905, Bakunin, Kropotkin and other European anarchist figures were well represented. Alliance members including Zhang Binglin, Zhang Ji and Liu Shipei[4] con-

[1] Nohara Shiro uses the words 'bolshevik' and 'bolshevism' very loosely in this text to denote not only the Bolshevik Party formed by Lenin and his supporters, but all advocates of the centralizing trend within socialism.

[2] 'New Village', a utopian movement inspired by the ideas of Tolstoy and Kropotkin, was conceived by the Japanese communalist Musha- nokbji Saneatsu. Members renounced all private property to live a life of 'from each according to their capacity; to each according to their needs'. In China, where such 'New Villages' were often seen as communes through which the anarchist message could be carried to the countryside, many young people of the May 4 era were affected by the movement's ideals.

[3] For a discussion of Chinese perceptions of the 1917 Revolution, see Dirlik, 1989a: Chapter 2.

[4] *Zhang Binglin* (1867–1936), aka. Zhang Taiyan, was a brilliant cultural critic who had fired the imaginations of a generation of young Chinese in 1900 by cutting off his queue (the long pigtail of hair traditionally worn by Manchu men and forced upon Chinese men following the Manchu conquest to symbolize their acceptance of their new rulers). Anti-Manchu nationalism was the common denominator that brought together revolutionaries of every creed in pre-1911 China, and Zhang's trenchant critiques made him a natural leader of the movement. After arriving in Japan he served as editor of the *People's Report* from July 1906 until it was suppressed in 1908. His distaste for political organization brought

tacted Japanese militants Kotoku Shusui, Osugi Sakae, Sakai Yoshihiko and others,[5] and with their help organized the Society for the Study of Socialism (*Shehuizhuyi jiangxihui*). In the journals *Natural Justice* (*Tianyi bao*) and *Impartiality* (*Heng bao*) which

him close to anarchism, and under his influence the Chinese revolutionary movement in Japan became increasingly radicalized. In 1908 he split with the republican movement and returned to China. With the fall of the Qing dynasty his cultural conservatism came to the fore and he eventually became a foe of the May 4 New Culture Movement. Furth, 1976 is an interesting discussion of the contradictions between Zhang's innate conservatism and his revolutionary activities. For a fuller discussion, see Shimada, 1990.

Zhang Ji (1882–1947) had been one of the first Chinese students to arrive in Japan, and had soon been converted to anarchism under the influence of Japanese militants Kdtoku Shusui and Osugi Sakae. He made a number of translations of anarchist classics from Japanese into Chinese. After police pressure forced him to flee Japan in late 1907 he joined another active group of Chinese anarchists in Paris. For details, see Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 28–34. Following his return to China he became a leading light in the Nationalist Party (*Guomindang*) though continuing to espouse anarchist ideals, and soon after the revolution in 1911 tried to acquire from the government an island in the Yangzi River "as an experimental area for world anarchism". By the 1920s, like many other former anarchists, Zhang's revulsion for the communists' methods had turned him into a diehard reactionary. At the time of his death he was director of the National Museum of History.

In *Liu Shipei* (1884–1919), aka. Liu Guanghan, political radicalism and cultural conservatism combined yet again. From 1902 to 1907 he was active in the revolutionary movement in Shanghai before being invited to Japan by Zhang Binglin to help him put out the *People's Report.* In Tokyo his anti-Manchu nationalism was quickly transformed into militant anarchism by the Japanese radicals mentioned above, and he wrote a series of articles applying anarchist ideas to China. His wife He Zhen was evidently another radical influence on him, and was herself later arrested on an assassination charge. Liu was unusual among pre-1911 Chinese anarchists in stressing the significance of labour (though he was less interested in the labourers themselves), insisting that in an anarchist utopia manual labour would be performed by all. He was deeply affected by Tolstoy's agrarian utopianism. Then, in 1909, Liu suddenly turned traitor and betrayed several of his comrades to the authorities before returning to China. Some say that He Zhen, known for her beauty, had been threatened with torture following her arrest, and that Liu changed sides to save her. This is probably no more than a romantic smokescreen thrown up to protect Liu's image, however, and the truth has never been discovered. In later years Liu became a notorious figure, sponsoring Yuan Shikai's attempt to make himself emperor in 1915, and, following his appointment to the Faculty of Beijing University in 1917, actually speaking out against the new literature and thought of the May 4 Movement. After being personally rebuked by his students he died suddenly of TB at the early age of 36. Typically, Liu's backpedalling has usually been blamed by his friends and apologists on the "evil influence" of He Zhen. For detailed treatments, see Dirlik, 1986; Bernal, 1976a and 1976b; Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 29–33.

[5] *Kdtoku Shusui* was the first Japanese intellectual to espouse the causes of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, and collected a considerable following of young people before his execution in 1911 on a fabricated charge of plotting to assassinate the Emperor Meiji. *Osugi Sakae* took up the anarchist banner following Kbtoku's murder, and became the inspiration for the second phase of the Japanese movement, a wave of syndicalism accompanying the post-World War 1 economic boom, until his murder by the military authorities in 1923.

Sakai Toshihiko, though not an anarchist, supported their direct action position and worked closely with them into the 1920s, when he moved from Marxism to social democracy. For details, see *A Short History of the Anarchist Movement in Japan* (Idea Publishing House, Tokyo, 1979).

they subsequently launched, they began regularly introducing the ideas of Bakunin and Kropotkin.[6]

In 1906 Kbtoku Shusui, following his return from the United States, had promptly announced his conversion to anarcho-syndicalism and begun to propagate the general strike as the only road to a true revolution:

> We will never, never achieve genuine social revolution through universal suffrage or by parliamentary procedures. In order to attain our target of socialism, there is no other course for us but to rely on 7) direct action by the workers acting in unison.[7]

In China, meanwhile, domestic and foreign pressure since the Boxer Uprising of 1900 had forced the Qing authorities to take steps towards establishing a constitutional monarchy based upon a system of consultative assemblies in an attempt to bolster its autocratic rule. The working class was still fearfully weak, however, and an anti-government struggle by means of a general strike was quite out of the question. Under the circumstances Chinese anarchist militants could do little but resort to 'propaganda by the deed' using the tactic of assassination. The backcloth to this advocacy of individual terrorism was provided by such episodes as the 1907 plot to kill all the high officials of Anhui province, in which Qiu Jin, a woman student just returned from Japan was involved, and Wang Jingwei's attentat upon the Imperial Regent in 1910.[8]

---

[6] *Natural Justice* had also been intended as the journal of He Zhen's Association for the Recovery of Women's Rights, and both it and *Impartiality* were jointly edited by Liu and He. Both papers were closed down by the Japanese authorities in 1908. The Society for the Study of Socialism opened in August 1907. For details, see Scalapino and Yu, 1961; 29–32; Bernal, 1976b. On He Zhen, see Ono, 1989: 66–8.

[7] From 'My Change of Thought' in *Heimin 'shimbun* (Common People's Paper), February 5, 1907. The article split the Japanese socialist movement into militants and moderate social democrats, and began the chain of events that would culminate in the execution of Kotoku and eleven others in 1911. For details, together with a translation of the article, see the *Short History.* 78–106.

[8] *Qiu Jin* (1875–1907), a pioneer feminist revolutionary, had formed a radical women's group along with He Zhen in Shanghai in 1903 before crossing over to Japan to elude arrest in 1904. In 1905, in protest against Chinese government pressure on radicals active in Japan, she returned to China to throw herself into the revolutionary movement and became involved in plans for an anti-Manchu insurrection in the two provinces of Anhui and Zhejiang. The Anhui plot was prematurely exposed and crushed, but Qiu went ahead with her plan to organize secret societies into a revolutionary army until she was arrested and executed. Always astride a horse and usually wearing a man's gown, Qiu Jin cut an extraordinary figure for her time. For details, see Ono, 1989: 59–65; Rankin, 1975.

Wang Jingwei (1893–1944) was one of the foremost political figures in modern Chinese history. From his pro-terrorism position in 1911 he gradually moved towards party politics, was associated with the anti-communist left wing of the Nationalist Party until the 1930s, and finally, despairing of China's capacity to resist Japanese expansion, agreed to serve as puppet premier under the occupation in 1940.

Although often equated with anarchism, assassination was resorted to by practically all early 20th-century Chinese political groups, from Manchu die-hards to liberal democrats; like the Russian nihilists, they saw it as the only way to hit back at autocratic rule. Attacks on Manchu officials during the first ten years of the 20th century were legion. For details, see Price, 1974.

A good example of this trend was Liu Sifu. Following his return from Japan in 1906, Liu, or Shi Fu as he is usually known,[9] undertook the elimination of local officials in support of the Alliance's armed rising in Guangdong in 1907, and later masterminded an assassination attempt upon the Imperial Regent on the eve of the 1911 Revolution. In this way he commenced his efforts to propagate anarchism by way of undisguised terrorism.[10] His subsequent activities too, since they came to constitute the main current of the pre-May 4 anarchist movement, require a brief explanation here.

Since 1907 the anarchists Wu Zhihui, Li Shizeng, Zhang Jingjiang and, following his expulsion from Japan, Zhang Ji, had been publishing the weekly magazine *New Century* (*Xin shiji*) in Paris.[11] Sales outlets had also been set up in England, the

[9] 'Shi Fu' was the name adopted by Liu Sifu when he began anarchist activities, his abandonment of the family name 'Liu' symbolizing his rejection of the despotism of the traditional Chinese family. Numerous texts (including Nohara's) mistakenly refer to him as 'Liu Shifu'. Due to the similarity of his name to that of Liu Shipei, the careers of the two men have often been confused, and certain overlapping circumstances in their careers (both were born in 1884, both died of TB in their thirties, both became anarchists at about the same time, and both were in Japan at almost the same time), aided in the confusion.

[10] In fact Shi Fu had not yet declared himself an anarchist at the time of his assassination activities. A scion of an old gentry family like many of his contemporaries, Shi Fu went to Japan as a reformminded student in 1904, and in August 1905 had been present at the founding of the Alliance. He returned to China without contacting the Japanese anarchists (Kotoku Shusui was mostly either in the United States or in prison), and much of his time was spent learning about explosives. In the summer of 1906, back in Guangzhou (Canton), he began to plan his first revolutionary activities, but the unsuccessful 1907 rising resulted in the loss of his left hand and in his incarceration for two years. Those years, however, gave him the chance to do some reading, most notably of some texts of Kropotkin translated by the Paris New Century group (see below) and smuggled in by friends. It was only then that he became an anarchist. After his release Shi Fu again formed an assassination band to promote the anti-Manchu movement, but with the establishment of the Republic in 1911 declared his rejection of violent activities in favour of constructive social revolution.

[11] *Wu Zhihui* (1864–1953), although he became a supporter of the Nationalist Party after 1911, remained an atheist and intellectual fellow-traveller of the anarchists well into the 1920s. *Li Shizeng* (1880- 1973) led a career similar in most respects, occupying various senior posts in the Nationalist Party and later becoming Dean of Beijing University. Both he and Wu escaped to Taiwan in 1949 with the remnants of Jiang Jieshi's government, fearing a backlash from their association with the party's anti-communist right wing since the 1920s. In their heyday, however, they had been among the most influential of the Chinese anarchists. Wu laboured hard in the 'work-study' movement, sending Chinese students to study in Europe where many were converted to anarchism or syndicalism. Li was the translator of Kropotkin's *An Appeal to the Young* and *Mutual Aid.* A lot less is known about *Zhang Jingjiang* (1873–1950). He was the son of a wealthy silk merchant and an intellectual who, during his stay in France with the work-study movement, became involved with the

French CGT (*Confederation Generale des Travailleurs*), then a pure anarcho-syndicalist organization. His fortune allowed him to contribute considerable funds to the revolutionary cause, and much of his wealth was used up in promoting the work-study scheme. He too later became prominent in the Nationalist Party, and because of his fortune was regarded as a political power-broker.

Wu, Li and Zhang had first set up the World Press (*Shijie she*) in Paris in 1906 after fleeing the persecution in China, and published two issues of a pictorial magazine called *World* (*Shijie*) before beginning the *New Century.* Most of the articles in the latter (which also carried the Esperanto title of

United States and Japan, and efforts were being made to spread anarchist propaganda via overseas Chinese students and residents. Shi Fu, who had contacted this Paris group soon after the 1911 Revolution, then set up his own propaganda organization in Guangzhou called the Cock-Crow Study Group (*Huiming xueshe*). From August 1913 the group began to publish its own magazine, *Cock- Crow Record* (*Huiming lu*), later changed to *People's Voice* (*Minsheng*). In the meantime, they had already put out, in the summer of 1912, not only a selection of articles reproduced from the *New Century,* but also a collection entitled *Masterpieces of Anarchism* (*Wuzhengfuzhuyi cuiyan*), which introduced the writings of Kropotkin and other libertarian theo- 12) rists and propagated the use of Esperanto.[12]

In the summer of 1913 Shi Fu and his fellow-anarchists also got together to found the Conscience Society (*Xin she*). Membership required observation of the following twelve injunctions: 1. do not eat meat; 2. do not take liquor; 3. do not smoke tobacco; 4. do not have servants; 5. do not use sedan chairs or rickshaws; 6. do not marry; 7. do not use family names; 8. do not become officials; 9. do not become Members of Parliament; 10. do not join any political party; 11 do not 13) join the military; 12. do not profess any religion.[13]

The Chinese scholar Ding Shouhe has suggested a number of reasons for China's susceptibility to the appeal of anarchism. First, having suffered long under the corrupt rule of an autocratic monarchy, the Chinese people had come to regard governments, laws and all political activity with extreme antipathy. Second, the expanding petty

---

La Tempo Novaj') were written by either Li or Wu; and included Li's translation of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid,* the source of Shi Fu's first knowledge of anarchism. The magazine was suspended in 1910 after a hundred-odd issues, and most of the people involved in it returned to China following the successful 1911 Revolution. For details on the activities of the Paris group, see Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 2–28; Dirlik, 1989a: Ch. 5.

[12] The most detailed source on Shi Fu is Edward Krebs: *Liu Ssu-fu and Chinese Anarchism, 1905–1915* (University Microfilms International, 1977), and this section of Nohara's essay has been amended somewhat to agree with facts newly discovered by Krebs. The Chinese term translated as 'Cock-Crow' could alternatively be rendered as 'Crying Out in the Darkness' ; Shi Fu evidently intended the name to emphasize the anarchists' lonely struggle amidst extremely hostile conditions.

[13] While the Cock-Crow and *People's Voice* groups were engaged in actively studying and promoting anarchism, the Conscience Society was intended to be no more than a loosely-organized spiritual movement. Many people belonged to both. Almost eighteen months in advance of the Conscience Society, the Association for Promoting Virtue (*Jinde hui*), a very similar organization, had been set up in January 1912 by Wang Jingwei and some of the returned Paris anarchists. Like the Conscience Society and many other contemporary groupings, its membership requirements contained a set of negative injunctions: the lowest category of membership prohibited gambling and visits to prostitutes; others included rejection of meat, tobacco and alcohol, refusal to enter government service or the military, and rejection of concubinage (Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 37). The reason for the popularity of the negative example among Chinese anarchists was probably the preponderance of intellectuals, among whom the common feeling was that China's problems were born from the degeneration of moral values and the corruption of the political elite. Of all these groups, the regulations of the Conscience Society were the strictest and the most comprehensive. The Association for Promoting Virtue was revived in Beijing in 1918 by Wu Zhihui, Li Shizeng and Cai Yuanpei (see below, note 30). For details, see Chow, 1960: 51.

bourgeois class, accustomed to backward and dispersed forms of economic organization, mistrusted and therefore reacted strongly against the idea of a strong centralized polity based upon an advanced mass-production economy. Third, when confronted by social or political difficulties everyone fell back on their own abilities: when occasion demanded some might dream of establishing an ideal society, but the idea of a fierce, protracted class struggle was repugnant to the Chinese. Finally, the traditional nihilistic influence of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi created a hotbed for the spread of anarchist ideas.[14]

As far as the last point is concerned, it is true that certain anarchists at the time followed *Natural Justice* in posing Lao Zi as the father of Chinese anarchism.[15] The charge that anarchism appealed to the petty bourgeoisie, too, is more or less borne out by Shi Fu's union activities as described below. Point number one, on the other hand, can perhaps only be fully appreciated in the context of the period between the Revolution of 1911 and the May 4 Movement of 1919. Indeed, unless this point is grasped it is impossible to understand the special significance of anarchism's far-reaching influence during this period.

For many Chinese, the 1911 Revolution had brought a promise of better things to come, but that promise had been totally dashed by the subsequent assumption of power by Yuan Shikai, Duan Qirui and successive militarist governments. The anarchists' profound mistrust of parliamentary politics and indeed of all political activity was thus borne out by actual events. Shi Fu's 'Twelve Abstentions', therefore, especially numbers 8, 9, 10 and 11 with their air of political asceticism, struck a harmonious chord in many hearts.

Let us now return to Shi Fu's activities. With the failure in 1913 of Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen)'s so-called 'Second Revolution' against Yuan Shikai, Yuan's authority

---

[14] See Ding Shouhe et al, *The Influence of the October Revolution on the Chinese Revolution* (*Shiyue geming dui Zhongguo geming de ying- xiang*) (Beijing, 1957), pp. 101–2.

The issue of China's susceptibility to anarchism is perceptively discussed by Dirlik (1989a: 19–54). The anarchists were the first Chinese radicals to positively appraise the Bolshevik Revolution, partly because of its radical nature, but primarily because it was perceived as a *social* revolution. They insisted throughout their debates with other socialists that the social revolution must take precedence over political change lest a new dictatorship result.

[15] This applied chiefly to the cultural conservatives Liu Shipei and Zhang Binglin. Liu agreed with the Paris group on everything but their attitude towards China's past. He cited Laozi and Zhuangzi as the world's first anarchists, and used his training as a classical scholar to demonstrate China's potential to become an anarchist society without imitating the West. He also cited the ease with which local self-government could be instituted because of the lack of centralized control in China, and emphasized the spirit of humanity and cooperation in the villages.

The position of the Paris group was quite different. Influenced by European thought, they rejected Chinese tradition entirely for doing no more than foster superstition, and praised in its stead the role of science. They even proposed that the Chinese language be abandoned altogether (blasphemy to the likes of Liu and Zhang) in favour of Esperanto, a point that later split the anarchist movement. For a discussion, see Krebs, 1977: ch. 4. On traditional Chinese anarchism, see K.C. Hsiao, 'Anarchism in Chinese Political Thought', in *Tien Hsia Monthly* vol. 3 no.3 (October 1936), pp. 249–63.

finally extended as far south as Guangzhou. *Cock-Crow Record* was immediately proscribed after only two issues and the Study Group closed down. In September Shi Fu himself was forced to move, lock, stock and barrel, to Macao, where he managed to publish two more issues under the title of *People's Voice* before the Portuguese colonial authorities, under pressure from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, also clamped down on him.[16] He next found refuge in the Foreign Concession of Shanghai,[17] from where in April 1914 he began to put out *People's Voice* once again. That July he formed a new group under the name of the Society of Anarcho-Communist Comrades (*Wuzhengfu-gongchanzhuyi tongzhishe*), and released a manifesto:

> What is anarcho-communism? It means the elimination of the capitalist system and its reconstruction as a common-property society in which both governments and rulers shall be superfluous. To put it plainly, it is to advocate absolute freedom in economic and political life.[18]

The proposal for a 'common-property society' with no need for governments or rulers was intended to proclaim the group's rejection of the post-revolutionary dictatorship advocated by the bolsheviks; ironically, however, the Chinese phrase *gongchanzhuyi* or 'commonproperty-ism', evidently coined by Shi Fu, later came to stand for that very 'communism' advocated by the bolsheviks.[19]

---

[16] In late 1913 Shi Fu's group had proposed to revive their assassination activities one last time in order to attempt to eliminate Yuan Shikai, but were dissuaded by liberal politicians, possibly including their erstwhile co-conspirator Wang Jingwei. Some members of the group, incidentally, had remained in Guangzhou to continue clandestine activities.

[17] The Concessions were pieces of Chinese territory ceded under pressure to foreign powers during the 19th century and after. Since they were not subject to Chinese law, they became centres of antigovernment intrigue and refuges for 'undesirable elements'. Andre Malraux's *Man's Estate,* set against the revolution and counterrevolution in Shanghai in 1927, takes place almost entirely in the French Concession.

[18] The proclamation continued by declaring the group's intent to create a free communist society with no distinction between male and female roles, each person contributing according to their ability. Relations between women and men would be free and open-ended, and the children cared for in communal nurseries. The traditional family would be broken up and replaced by love alliances. Workers would use the fruits of their labour for their own needs. This sounds very idealistic, but Shi Fu believed that twenty years' hard work by anarchists in Asia would bring about an anarchist-communist society throughout the continent. Incidentally, Shi Fu's activities were also a family affair: at least three of his brothers and his four sisters worked together with him on the *People's Voice, and* continued working there after his death. See Krebs, 1977: ch. 6–7; the proclamation is discussed on pp. 369ff.

As early as 1907 the Paris-based *New Century* had been the first to condemn the traditional family as the ultimate source of oppression in China, calling for an 'ancestor revolution'. For details, see Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 9ff. Shi Fu's role in spreading the anarchist word in China is assessed in Dirlik, 1989a: 60–65.

[19] The word 'bolsheviks' here refers to centralizing socialists like Sun Zhongshan and Jiang Kanghu, not the Russian Bolshevik Party, whose ideas would not reach China for several more years. *Sun Zhongshan* (1866–1925), better known as Sun Yat-sen, was the grand old man of the Chinese revolutionary movement, having been responsible for some dozen or so attentats against the Qing authorities prior to

That August a strike spread among lacquer craftsmen in Shanghai, but with very little organization. Shi Fu promptly ran up a pamphlet advising them on how to conduct their campaign and urging them to organize themselves and increase their social awareness. The pattern which he outlined for their union was a revolutionary syndicalist one repudiating all political objectives. During that same month of August — whether before or after this episode is not clear — the Society of Anarcho-Communist Comrades affiliated itself to the Jura League, an international anarchist organization based in Switzerland.[20] By this time Shi Fu had clearly abandoned his former individualist anarchism for the anarchist-communism of Kropotkin. Accordingly, he threw himself into the thick of the labour movement, putting out a worker-oriented paper called the *Worker's Handbook* (*Gongren baojian*) as an organ for the propagation of syndicalism.[21]

Back in Guangzhou barber-shop workers (with funds of 100,000 *yuan*, it was claimed) and tea-shop employees were inspired to form their own unions under Shi Fu's guidance, while many other young Guangdongese, after imbibing his ideas, left China to settle in European colonies like Burma, Java and Singapore. There they either became teachers in schools for overseas Chinese or bustled about organizing the Guangdongese printers, clothing workers and hotel employees. Shi Fu himself, however, on March 27 1915, succumbed to tuberculosis in Shanghai.[22]

1911. After 1911 he was elected Provisional President of the new Republic, resigned in favour of Yuan Shikai to prevent civil war, then led a series of insurrections and rival governments before eventually setting up a political base in Guangzhou with Russian help in 1923. He died of cancer in 1925 in Beijing where he had sought to open talks with the northern warlords on the reunification of China. *Jiang Kanghu* (1883- 1945) was the organizer of the first Chinese Socialist Party which in 1913 claimed some 400,000 members. He and Shi Fu subsequently engaged in a major debate over the merits of anarchism versus democratic socialism. Exiled from China, he travelled through the United States and Russia before returning to China in the 1930s. He even tually made himself a non-person in Chinese political history by throwing in his lot with Wang Jingwei and the Japanese puppet regime in Nanjing. In 1913 both Sun and Jiang had taken up positions close to the European socialist parties, including mass nationalization under state control, among their plans for social reconstruction. The debates between Jiang and Shi Fu are summarized and discussed in Krebs, 1977: 334–368, and in Dirlik and Krebs, 1981.

[20] The group also sent a report on the state of the anarchist movement in China to the International Anarchist Congress scheduled to be held in London in August 1914. The congress never took place because of the outbreak of war.

[21] According to Chow Tse-tsung (1963: 38), this publication actually appeared after 1917, published secretly and irregularly by the *People's Voice* group after Shi Fu's death. I have found no mention of it in Krebs, 1977. According to Chow, the paper, whose contributors included Zhang Ji, sought to spread anarcho-syndicalist ideas, advocated the distribution of economic power among labour unions by means of the general strike, criticized Marxist dialectics, and opposed the doctrine of seizing political power by force. Whether an earlier edition appeared in 1914 or not is a question requiring further research.

[22] Shi Fu died during an operation on his lungs, and his body was buried near Hangzhou where the Conscience Society had been formed in 1912. The *People's Voice* group continued its activities after his death, putting out four more issues of the paper (No.'s 23–26) between May and June 1915. After that its appearance became sporadic, and it ceased altogether with No. 29 in November 1916. Its place was taken by a newsletter, the *People's Voice Society Record of Events* (*Minsheng she jishilu*),

Despite Shi Fu's death the subsequent development of the Chinese anarchist movement was much along the lines that he had advocated...[23] After the 1911 Revolution, and particularly after 1915, the year of Shi Fu's death and of the beginnings of the May 4 New Culture Movement, Chinese anarchism was generally seen as having abandoned its individual terrorist associations for Kropotkin's 'mutual aid' conception. It thereby re-emerged as a systematic body of thought rejecting every authority save that of science, demanding absolute liberty, and advocating the construction of an ideal utopian society.

In 1913 the radical intellectual Li Dazhao had written his essay titled 'The Great Grief' (*Da-ai pian*) in which he decried the complete untrustworthiness of 'democracy' and 'political parties' under warlord rule.[24] However, with Japan's infliction of her 'Twenty-One Demands' in 1915, the conclusion of the Nishihara Loans in 1917, and the signing of the Sino-Japanese Military Mutual Assistance Conventions in 1918,[25] Li's mistrust turned to alarm as he came to feel still more keenly the crisis facing the Chinese people. In order to overthrow warlord rule and establish a new society, it was necessary to go to the very roots of the problem, something which had not hitherto been attempted. In a 1916 essay, 'Spring', Li thus stressed as follows:

---

which appeared fairly regularly for the next ten years. Pamphlets were also produced, more than 45,000 copies being distributed between 1916 and 1920. In 1921 *People's Voice* was revived for a final time in Guangzhou. The four issues (No.'s 30–33) acted principally as a mouthpiece for the anarchist position in the deepening confrontation with the communists. See Krebs, 1977: 407ff. Shi Fu's life provided the model for various leading characters in the novels of the anarchist novelist Ba Jin. For details, see Lang, 1967: 54, etc.

[23] I have omitted here a rather vague and inaccurate paragraph in Nohara's text about the syndicalist movement in Japan, at the end of which he himself admits that he is uncertain of its relevance. Rather than mislead readers, I decided upon omission as the best policy.

[24] Li Dazhao's political position at the time is explained, along with a discussion of this article, in Meisner, 1974: 8–14. Along with an admiration for the socialism of Jiang Kanghu, Li was also deeply influenced by Tolstoy and Kropotkin, and took up a position very similar to that of Liu Shipei's anarchism. This point, ignored by Li's principal biographer Meisner, is noted in Dirlik, 1989a: 26.

[25] *The Twenty-One Demands* were an ultimatum presented to the Chinese government by Japan on January 18 1915. Printed on paper ominously watermarked with dreadnoughts and machine-guns, they called for Japanese control over Shandong, Manchuria, the Yangzi Valley and other key areas, together with other measures that would have resulted in China's becoming little more than a Japanese colony. On May 25, following a threat of military force, Yuan Shikai accepted most of the terms. Not only did Yuan's own credibility collapse as a result; the widespread anger toward Japan that the Demands sparked off became the focus of the new nationalist feeling that developed throughout China in subsequent years.

The Nishihara Loans had been forced upon the Chinese government in the wake of the Twenty-One Demands with the purpose of bolstering the pro-Japanese warlord government then in power in Beijing. They amounted to some 145 million yen.

The *Conventions* gave Japan the right to station troops in north China and Outer Mongolia on the pretext of preventing an invasion by Germany or the Soviet Union; the right to use Chinese military maps; and the right to provide officers to train Chinese troops. For details on the Conventions and the resistance to them, see Chow, 1960: 79–83.

> From now on, the problem for humankind in general and the Chinese nation in particular is no longer merely to seek blindly to survive, but one of rebirth, rejuvenation, and reconstruction... Young people who are self-aware can burst through the ensnarling webs of history, smash the prison of stale ideas... free their present selves, destroy their past selves, and urge the selves of today's youth to clear the way for those of tomorrow.

The theme of youth persisted right up to Li's 1918 essay 'Now' (Jin), clearly reflecting young people's contemporary demands for a 'change in values'.[26] Ye Shaojun's novel *Teacher Ni* (*Ni Huanzhi*) framed those demands succinctly:

> The revamping of all values has become a popular ideal. Why have hitherto-sacred concerns become of no import?... Doubts are bubbling over, self-questioning is rising in pitch. The time is past for worrying over the minor details — let us boldly pull down and rebuild the whole lot![27]

This passage expressed perfectly the May 4 New Culture Movement's attack on the old morality and ethics that sustained warlord rule, and its hopes for constructing a new Chinese identity. To this end, the movement took up and used as weapons in its struggle not only evolutionism and other modern western theories brought into China since the closing years of the Qing era, but also the various schools of socialism and the ideas of Bergson, Dewey and Russell.[28] Among the young people and students of the time, however, by far the most popular books were Tan Sitong's *Philosophy of*

[26] 'Spring' (*Qingchun*) appeared in the September 1 1916 edition of the New Culture Movement magazine *New Youth,* and 'Now' in the April 15 1918 edition. An English translation of the former, slightly simplified, may be found in *Chinese Literature,* May 1959, pp. 11–18.

Few articles were more representative of the optimism of New Culture thinking than 'Spring'. While critical of the deadweight of China's past in a manner extremely similar to the critiques unleashed prior to the army crackdown in Tiananmen Square in June 1989 (see, for example, the television series titled *Heshang* — 'River Elegy' — and the book by the same name), Li expressed perfectly the contemporary belief among intellectuals that, by their own cultural remoulding, they would be able to simply extinguish the past and create a new future. Intellectuals of seventy years later, having seen how little difference a communist revolution had made, were less optimistic.

Li's thinking at the time is summarized in Meisner, 1974: 26–8, and in Schwartz, 1967: 10–13.

[27] This possibly autobiographical novel, published in 1930, described the experiences of a typical young May 4 intellectual subsequently caught up in the midst of the counter-revolutionary violence of 1925- 27. Ye Shaojun, aka. Ye Shengtao (b. 1893), was also a poet and educator who had a strong influence on the anarchist writer Ba Jin. For a discussion of the significance of *Teacher Ni,* see Schwarcz, 1986: 171–8.

[28] *John Dewey* and *Bertrand Russell* were among the many Western thinkers and educators invited to lecture to Chinese audiences in 1919- 20 by New Culture Movement activists. Russell's influence in particular was strong until he fell out of favour for his criticism of the post-revolutionary society in the Soviet Union. Plans to invite Bergson did not materialize. For details, see Chow, 1960: 191–3, and chapters seven and nine in general.

The New Culture Movement itself is discussed fully in Grieder, 1983: chapter six; Schwarcz, 1986: chapter one; and Chow, 1960: chapters three, seven and passim.

Benevolence (*Renxue*), Kang Youwei's *One World* (*Datong shu*), and, representing the West, the ideas of Kropotkin and Tolstoy.[29]

Amidst all this, it was anarchism that for a time seized the emotions of young students who, along with many other people, translated their fierce desire for a re-orientation of values into a total rejection of traditional authority itself. With their suspicion and mistrust of 'politics', they came to dream of setting up an ideal society at one stroke. During the May 4 period, therefore, it was inevitable that the lingering influence of Shi Fu should finally stretch as far as north China too. The credo of the Society for Promoting Virtue (*Jinde hui*) formed by Cai Yuanpei and others in 1918, for example, clearly echoed the 'Twelve Abstentions' of the Conscience Society.[30] In May 1917 Beijing University students had already formed an anarchist group, the Reality Society (*Shi she*), whose prominent members included Huang Lingshuang, Ou Shengbai and Zhao Taimou. In their occasional magazine *Notes on Liberty* (*Ziyou lu*) they explained Kropotkin's mutual aid theory, and argued for a workers' general

---

[29] *Tan Sitong* (1865–1898) and *Kang Youwei* (1858–1927) were traditional intellectuals whose desire for political reform to stem China's decline in the late 19th century led them to advocate a constitutional monarchy. Revolutionary enough in its time, the concept was soon left behind by the accelerating pace of events. Each of the works mentioned showed some strains of anarchism and utopian socialism. In 1898 both men acted as advisers to the young emperor during the so-called 'Hundred Days' Reform', but the changes they advocated were blocked by court conservatives. In the reaction that followed Tan was arrested and executed, but Kang escaped to Shanghai and finally to Japan. After the 1911 Revolution his monarchist ideas lost their attraction and his only moment of fame came with his support for an abortive restoration attempt in 1917. The 1898 episode is discussed in Spence, 1982: 48–57.

In some respects Kang's ideas were more radical than those of the revolutionaries of his time. He presented Confucius as a reformer who had responded creatively to the crisis of his time, and revived the traditional concept of Great Harmony or 'One World' as the basis for a modern society. He foresaw a future in which race, class and gender distinctions disappeared along with the institution of the family. Private ownership would no longer exist, people would eat in communal dining halls, and children would be reared by communally- operated schools and nurseries. Kang's work has appeared in English as *Ta Tung Shu: The One World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei* (Translated by Lawrence G. Thompson. London, Allen and Unwin, 1958.) It is discussed in Spence, 1982: 64–73.

[30] This was a reconstruction of the 1912 group mentioned in note 13. For details, see Schwarcz, 1986: 49–50. Cai had also been a member of the earlier group but had left it to form his own 'Six Don'ts Society' (*Liubu hui*)

Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940) was an intellectual supporter of the anarchist movement rather than an anarchist. An old-style literatus who had attained the highest degree in the old examination system, he had also been strongly critical of that system. As an educator, particularly as President of Beijing University from 1917 to 1919, he wielded great influence among young people during the May 4 era. His re-creation of the Society for Promoting Virtue had been intended to counter what he termed the "spiritual slothfulness" of both teachers and students at the University. About seventy teachers and three hundred students joined, including Li Dazhao, Luo Jialun and Fu Sinian (see below). They learned through the Society and its covenants the need to distance themselves as intellectuals from the establishment in order to avoid being corrupted like the traditional Chinese elite. All of these men went on to play major roles in the May 4 Movement. On Beijing University and the radical changes wrought by Cai Yuanpei, see Grieder, 1983: 215ff. For a biography of Cai, see William J. Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei, Educator of Modern China* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977).

strike to bring about a socialist revolution.[31] Elsewhere, too, new anarchist groups were appearing, like the Masses Society (*Chun she*) of Nanjing with its magazine *The Masses* (*Renchun*) and the Peace Society (*Ping she*) of Taiyuan with its *Peace* (*Taiping*). By March 1918 Wu Zhihui had begun publication in Shanghai of an anarchist monthly called *Labour* (*Laodong*), where Chinese readers first received the message of May Day.[32]

---

[31] *Huang Lingshuang*, aka. Huang Wenshan, Huang Zunsheng and under the penname Jiansheng, was the son in law of Huang Xing, one of the most famous insurrectionary leaders of the 1911 period. In his youth he had been a member of Shi Fu's group, and his anarchist career continued up to the end of the 1920s. One of the most prominent of the Chinese anarchists, his writings appeared in most of the journals described below. He also worked hard to restore the international links created by Shi Fu but sundered by the outbreak of war in 1914. In 1919 Huang and Li Dazhao were the two most prominent radical professors at Beijing University. As evidence of the considerable overlap between anarchists and communists at this time, when the Comintern emissary Voitinsky arrived in Beijing in 1920, Huang was evidently introduced, and a letter of introduction which Voitinsky brought to the Guangzhou anarchists later was very likely written by him. See Dirlik, 1989a: 149–50. In his later years Huang became a member of the 'CC Clique' a right-wing group within the Nationalist Party, and was still alive in Taiwan in the 1970s.

Ou Shengbai (1893˜?), another of the most important anarchist militants of the May 4 period and thereafter, is credited with having converted Mao Zedong to anarchism when both were living in Beijing in 1919. His political duel with communist party boss Chen Duxiu a few years later (see below) became a classic, Chen, his former teacher at Beijing University, calling him a "little devil". In Mao Zedong's autobiography contained in Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China,* Ou is referred to as 'Chu Tsun-pei'. Ou is a Cantonese pronunciation of a name usually pronounced Qu in Mandarin. The debate is carefully analyzed in Dirlik, 1989a: 239–44, and also in Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 55–9.

Zhao Taimou abandoned anarchist activity soon after this and went to the United States to study. He later turned up as head of the Experimental Drama Theatre in Jinan, Shandong, where one of his most promising pupils was the fourteen-year old Jiang Qing, later to marry Mao Zedong and ultimately to be purged in 1976 as the leader of the 'Gang of Four'. In 1931, Zhao, by that time yet another anti-communist member of the Nationalist Party, arranged Jiang's admission to Shandong University of which he was then President. A fierce reactionary, he put pressure on her to dissuade her from "causing trouble" — joining the nationalist movement against Japanese aggression. See Witke, 1975.

Notes on Liberty, also known as the 'Liberal Record', was one of the most radical magazines of the time, introducing in translation such Western anarchists as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman as well as Tolstoy. Ba Jin was converted after reading a translation of Goldman's 'Anarchy' in one issue (Lang, 1967: 46ff). Although it published only four issues through May 1918, the magazine was very influential and circulated two thousand copies of each issue. It had the political and financial support of Li Shizeng and Wu Zhihui.

[32] *May Day* was first celebrated in Guangzhou ('the Barcelona of the East' as it was called) in 1918, and in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities in 1920. Ironically, even in 1920 the parades continued to be led by anarchist and socialist intellectuals, the manifestation of a newly- felt need on the part of radical intellectuals to create an alliance with the working class to change China instead of relying on their own efforts. Only in Guangzhou, where the anarchists had been organizing workers for two years, did the latter turn out in large numbers.

Labour, which also carried the Esperanto title of *La Laboristo,* published five monthly issues before folding in July 1918. As well as propagating Proudhon's theory of labour, it also carried Tolstoy's ideas, and welcomed (with reservations) the October Revolution in Russia. The first labour-oriented magazine China had seen, it called for a general strike and for a take-over of the factories by the

The considerable overlap among the editors of and contributors to these magazines suggests that the groups were in close contact with one another. As Huang Lingshuang said, all of them were really just extremely small free-wheeling outfits, with but a minimum of ideological unity. They were viewed by the warlord-controlled government, however, as treasonable, immoral and ultra-extremist, a clear measure of how strongly their proposals appealed to the current mood of Chinese intellectuals.

In February 1919[33] the Japanese Diet had heard the following speech from one of its members:

> Broadly speaking, the socialists in Japan may be divided into five varieties. Among them, the state socialists are not in the least dangerous — on the contrary, they should be encouraged. Next come the pure Marxian socialists who, whilst not to be encouraged, pose no threat. Then there are the communists, visionaries admittedly, but not to the extent of posing any threat to social order. Fourth and fifth, respectively, come the plainly dangerous syndicalists with their advocacy of revolutionary labour unionism, and the anarchists, who seek to do away with all authority and advocate absolute liberty for the individual.

Conditions in China, where the union movement lagged far behind that of Japan, were thus somewhat different. Still, the Chinese ruling class kept a firm grip on the situation. As a result, during the course of 1918 the *People's Voice,* Reality, Masses and Peace groups were all forced to close down. In January 1919 they merged as the Progress Society (*Jinhua she*), and began to put out a new monthly, *Evolution* (*Jinhua*), whose third issue (March 1919) was a special one in commemoration of Shi Fu, but before long this too was proscribed, a victim of the furore surrounding the May 4 student movement.[34] Let us now take a look at how things were on the campus

---

producers by means of direct action. Although it agreed theoretically with the formation of a workers' party, it insisted that the time was not ripe and advocated instead syndicalist organization "to increase the workers' knowledge and persuade them to unite to solve social problems". Contributors to *Labour* included, apart from Wu Zhihui himself, Li Shizeng, Huang Lingshuang, Cai Yuanpei, Chen Duxiu and Chu Minyi. *Chu Minyi* had begun his radical activities in Japan before crossing over to Europe where he became a prominent figure in the *New Century* group. Back in China he moved rapidly up the ranks of the Nationalist Party, only to split with Jiang Jieshi and throw in his lot with Wang Jingwei's puppet government. He was joined there by Ou Shengbai. Following Japan's surrender in 1945 Chu was shot as a traitor and Ou disappeared. There is a discussion of *Labour* in Dirlik, 1989a. Nohara, incidentally, mistakenly refers to the publication as a daily.

[33] Nohara gives the year of the speech as 1909, but this seems historically impossible since the Japanese socialist movement, like that in China, did not really take off until after World War 1; anarchism and syndicalism were still virtually unheard of.

[34] The merger had been proposed by Huang Lingshuang and Ou Shengbai, by this time the leading spokespeople for the anarchist movement. For more information, see Krebs, 1977: 409ff; and Chow, 1963. *Evolution,* short-lived but important, was among the first magazines to express the anarchists' growing disillusion with the Bolshevik Revolution. The aim of the new group, named after a Shanghai

of Beijing University, particularly the activities of the anarchists there, by way of Xu Deheng's 'Recollections of May 4.[35]

Ideologically speaking the campus was divided into three trends, the most influential being the *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian*) group represented by Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi and Li Dazhao.[36] Although the three men had all been initiators of the New Culture Move-

organization proscribed some time earlier, was "to spread the principle of mutual aid in society, making it known to all and practising it". The title was in line with their reservations toward violence and class struggle, which they saw as manifestations of authoritarianism. While they accepted Darwin's concept of evolution, they rejected his emphasis on the struggle for survival in favour of Kropotkin's stress on the role of mutual aid. Revolution, as Huang Lingshuang put it in the magazine's Opening Declaration, was a process of re-evolution. *Evolution,* which carried the Esperanto title *La Evolucio,* also put out a separate edition in Yokohama, Japan.

[35] The article was originally published in the *Guangming ribao* (Shanghai) on May 4 1951. Prominent as a student organizer since 1918, Xu had been among the five radical students who broke into the homes of the unpopular government officials at the climax of the May 4 demonstration, and had been arrested. Released soon after, he went to the United States to study, and later returned to China where he was active in the anti-imperialist movement that racked the country for the next thirty years. The author of numerous memoirs, Xu has consistently emphasized the political significance of May 4 over the cultural, making him a fairly safe figure for the government to trot out whenever it felt the need to reconfirm its own May 4 connections. In 1979, for example, Xu re-emerged as a strong critic of the democratization movement that coincided with the 60th anniversary of May 4.

[36] *New Youth* was the most influential periodical of the entire May 4 era, providing a melting-pot for all sorts of ideas, though after its move to Shanghai in May 1920 it came to be dominated by the communists. Almost all the individuals mentioned in this essay contributed to *New Youth* at one time or another.

Chen, Hu and Li were all influential academics on the Faculty at Beijing University. *Chen Duxiu* (1879–1942) was a former traditional scholar who, though originally a patriot close to Zhang Binglin (in his youth he had cut off his queue following Zhang's example), had been one of the first to criticize the May 4 students' patriotism. He pointed out that the objective was not to save China but to *change* it. In 1919 he became Dean of Humanities at the University. From the early 1920s Chen began to move toward a communist position, eventually becoming the Chinese Communist Party's first secretary-general. Most of his early efforts were directed at young anarchists like Ou Shengbai who, in refusing to accept that "coercion in the proper hands could be used for good", he considered a reflection of the traditional Chinese contempt for authority: as he put it, the "lazy, wanton ... free thought" inherited from Laozi and Zhuangzi (Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 57). It could equally be said, however, that his conception of a benevolent elite wielding power on the people's behalf was a reflection of the Confucian tradition which had bolstered autocratic rule in China for centuries, a tradition which had ironically enough been the first target of his polemics when the New Culture Movement began in 1915. Chen's own sons were for a time anarchists, though they were ultimately brought around to communism, and one of them died in the great Shanghai strike of 1927 (see below). Chen was later purged from the Communist Party as a Trotskyist in order to cover up for Stalin's self-seeking China policy, and died of cancer in seclusion in 1942.

Hu Shi (1891–1962), regarded today as the epitome of bourgeois liberalism, was a spokesman in 1919 for cultural reform void of political content. He particularly promoted the use of vernacular language in order to reach the ordinary people, but when the post-May 4 movement began to take a political turn dropped away. After disagreeing with both the Communists and the Nationalists, he escaped to the United States after 1949, moved to Taiwan in 1958 to take up a post in the academic hierarchy there, and died there a few years later.

ment, by 1919 their paths had already begun to diverge. To Li Dazhao's piece 'The Victory of the Poor', for example, Hu Shi retorted with 'The Victory of Democracy over Militarism', revealing their fundamentally polarized conceptions of democracy. Again, to Hu's insistence upon "more study of problems, less talk of isms", Li issued a refutation, precipitating a clash over the issue of theory versus practice. Among Hu's student followers were Fu Sinian and Luo Jialun, editors since January 1919 of the monthly *New Tide* (*Xin chao*) and active in the vernacular speech movement.[37]

The second of the three trends, though far less influential, was the so-called National Heritage Faction represented by Gu Hongming, Huang Kan and Liu Shipei, which published the monthly *National Heritage* (*Guogu*). Extremely conservative, the group made hardly any mention of politics whatsoever.[38]

Then, of course, there were the anarchists, the main focus of this essay. Li Shizeng and Wu Zhihui were there, and at first even University Chancellor Cai Yuanpei demonstrated sympathy with their aims. The combination of highly backward political conditions, low student comprehension of the social sciences, and the attractiveness of these 'eminent scholars' ensured that, for a time, considerable numbers of students would flock to the anarchist ideal.[39] Best remembered among the latter are Huang

---

Li Dazhao (1888–1927), the Chief Librarian at Beijing University in 1919, had moved gradually from patriotic liberalism to a more radical position after seeing the corruption of Chinese politics following Yuan Shikai's death in 1916. His career is discussed in detail later in this essay. Early in 1927, after the reactionary warlord Zhang Zuolin began a purge of radicals in the city, Li Dazhao and others took refuge in the Soviet Embassy, from where they continued to issue polemics against the Chinese authorities. In April Zhang's soldiers raided the embassy and Li was arrested. He was executed by strangulation soon after.

All three men are discussed in Grieder, 1983: chapters six and seven.

[37] The debate between Li and Hu is discussed in Grieder, 1983: chapter eight. *Luo Jialun* (1897–1969), known for his fiery temper, had authored the original May 4 Manifesto calling on all Chinese to rise up in protest against those who had betrayed the national interest. *Fu Sinian* (1896–1950), more erudite and less political than his friend, had been an advocate of moderation. Whereas *New Youth* had been produced primarily by professors, *New Tide* was edited entirely by progressive students. For details, see Schwarcz, 1986: 67ff. On the vernacular speech movement, see Ibid: 76ff.

In May 1920, after Hu Shi urged May 4 activists to give up struggling and go back to school, Luo and Fu accepted money from a Shanghai capitalist and went to study in America. Both subsequently became stalwarts of the Taiwan academic elite.

[38] In fact, former anarchist Liu Shipei was the main force behind this journal, being both founder and editor. Liu had emerged as the paramount critic of the *New Tide* group's critique of traditional Chinese culture, and when he died later in 1919 the *National Heritage* collapsed after just four issues. For a discussion, see Schwarcz, 1986: 124–5.

Gu Hongming (1857–1928) was an extraordinary figure, a sort of Confucian Tory who gave lectures in Latin, wrote perfect English, and penned diatribes in the style of Scots ballads. See Grieder, 1983: 220–1. *Huang Kan* (1886–1935) had been a disciple of Zhang Binglin. *National Heritage* criticized the vernacular speech movement as "cultural vandalism" equivalent to the Qin emperor's 'burning of the books' in 213 BC (Ibid: 233–4).

[39] Such 'eminent scholars' were the sole source of information on any brand of revolutionary thought in these early years, and would-be Marxists flocked to their book-lined studies with as much enthusiasm as did anarchist students.

Lingshuang and Ou Shengbai. Denying the need for either state or family, these two symbolized their stand by refusing to use their family names.[40]

The 'Recollections' contain Several noteworthy points concerning the 1919 student movement, but before discussing them it seems worthwhile to show how the ground for May 4 had already been prepared by the students, particularly those in Beijing, in the previous year's campaign against the Sino-Japanese Military Mutual Assistance Conventions.

Japan, which was then plotting intervention against the new Soviet regime in Russia, had devised the Conventions as a Sino-Japanese 'alliance' to defend the Far East against mutual enemies. To this end, Japanese and Chinese troops would 'cooperate' in north Manchuria, and dispatch a 'joint' force for operations 'beyond the Chinese frontier' : ie, in Siberia. Japan would also appoint personnel to 'maintain mutual contacts' with the Chinese army, and establish 'jointly operated' military bases on Chinese territory. The real objectives of this 'mutuality', of course, were no less than the subjugation of the Chinese army to Japanese control, and the subordination of China itself through the system of military bases.

Chinese students in Japan, as soon as they got wind of the Conventions, organized a protest rally, only to suffer numerous arrests and injuries at the hands of the police. Their anger complete, in May they returned as one to China. Once back in Shanghai they formed the National Salvation Corps of Chinese Students in Japan, founded a paper called the *National Salvation Daily* (*Jiuguo ribao*), and sent representatives to Beijing to appeal their case to the students there.[41] As a result, on May 21 1918 more than 2,000 students from Beijing University, the National Higher Normal College, the National Industrial College, the College of Law and Political Science, and the College of Medicine demonstrated against the Conventions.

While it had no direct effect, the anti-Conventions movement did provide an opportunity for the students of Beijing and Tianjin to get organized. The most significant result was the establishment soon after of the Students' Society for National Salvation. In July Beijing and Tianjin representatives went south where they contacted other students in Jinan, Nanjing and Shanghai, and within a month a nationwide organiza-

[40] Refusal to use family names, symbolizing rejection of the traditional family's despotic authority, was one of the commonest motifs of the May 4 period. So many contributors to radical magazines of the time did so that it is often impossible to identify them clearly. A vivid picture of the despotic Chinese family can be found in Ba Jin's novel *Family* (Anchor paperback, 1972), which also contains an introduction by Olga Lang on Ba Jin's life. Raised in just such a family himself, Ba (b. 1904), an anarchist who came of age during the May 4 era, personified the anarchists' concern with and appeal to the plight of young people of the time. Criticized and treated abominably during the Cultural Revolution, Ba has re-emerged in recent years amid a more open atmosphere toward political history; his works, once regarded as 'poisonous weeds' because of their anarchistic concern with the individual, have begun to be sold once more.

[41] In fact, as the name suggests, the organization was founded while the students were still in Japan. Despite government pressure to go back to Japan to continue their studies, most of the students remained in China to agitate. For details on the movement, see Chow, 1960: 78 ff.

tion had been created. In October preparations began for a new monthly, the *Citizens' Magazine* (*Guomin zazhi*), intended to act as a liaison medium among the scattered groups. The Citizens' Magazine Society, founded at the same time, had over two hundred members, each of whom paid five *yuan* into a fund to finance publication of the magazine. Many of them were active in the subsequent May 4 demonstrations.[42]

According to the 'Recollections', the anarchist students of Beijing University did not take part in the 1918 agitation. Neither, for that matter, did the *New Tide* group, but it was the anarchists above all who poured scorn upon their fellow-students' patriotic agitation, deriding patriotism as a decadent ideology. Since their opposition is said to have been behind the adoption of the name Students' Society for National Salvation instead of the original name of Students' Patriotic Association, it may be gathered that the anarchists wielded considerable influence among their fellow-students. Moreover, few Citizens' Magazine Society members were as yet capable of holding their own in an argument with the cosmopolitan anarchists.

Unite With the Toiling Masses!

In April 1919 the Versailles Peace Conference granted Japan the former German colonial rights in Shandong province, sparking off nationalistic fury at almost every level of Chinese society. Since the failure of China's international diplomacy was clearly a result of the 'nation-selling' policies of the Beijing government, this nationwide anger fused with and further strengthened the existing opposition to warlord rule, already intensified by the New Culture Movement. The first to translate this emotion into actual activities were the students. The slogans coined for their demonstration on May 4, 'Fight for Sovereignty Abroad, Smash the Traitors At Home!', 'Refuse to Ratify the Peace Treaty!', 'Fight to Retrieve Shandong!', 'Bury the 21 Demands!', 'Boycott Japanese Goods!', 'Punish the Nation-Selling Traitors!', 'China for the Chinese!', and so on soon turned the original Beijing-centred student movement into a national shutdown by merchants, to be followed after June by a wave of workers' strikes. Under pressure from this unified nationwide resistance, the government finally declined to sign the Peace Treaty.[43]

[42] The Society's members were initially very moderate and opposed to direct action. As a result they bitterly opposed the cultural critiques of the *New Tide* group, arguing that in its hour of need China required unity, not self-criticism. The two groups finally came together in March 1919 with the formation of the Commoners' Education Lecture Corps (see below). The *Citizens' Magazine,* after publishing its first issue on January 1 1919, gradually moved further and further left and in its November 1 issue carried the 'Communist Manifesto'. For details, see Chow, 1960: 82.

[43] On June 28, the date set for signing the Peace Treaty, Chinese workers and students in Paris, many of them organized in previous years by the anarchists of the New Century group, surrounded the headquarters of the Chinese delegation to prevent them from attending the ceremony. In the event the delegation refused unilaterally to sign since the Conference failed to recognize China's rights in Shandong. They then resigned and returned to China, where the students accordingly declared an end

According to Xu Deheng's 'Recollections', Beijing University student groups who had previously pursued independent paths now put politics behind them as they joined forces at the forefront of the May 4 Movement. The anarchists were no exception to this trend; on the contrary, it was for them a golden opportunity. Of course, from their standpoint all political activity was pointless; on the other hand, if the movement could be turned in the direction of the workers' general strike which they had advocated for so long, nothing could have been better. However, it has to be said that their decision to participate in the May 4 Movement owed less to such clear political calculations than to their inability to stem the force of an irresistible tide. The calculating was to begin only after May 4.

The organizational leadership of the May 4 Movement was quite independent of established groups and political parties. When word of the Peace Conference's humiliating decision reached Beijing, the Citizens' Magazine Society, New Tide Association, Work-Study Society (*Gongxue* hui) and other influential student groups had immediately held a meeting at which they resolved to stage a mass demonstration on May 7, 'National Humiliation Day' (the anniversary of Japan's ultimatum on the 21 Demands). At a later meeting of Beijing student representatives held on the university campus on May 3, the demonstration was brought forward to the next day. The organizations set up the previous year by the Students' Society for National Salvation were transformed into students' unions, first in Beijing then elsewhere, culminating on June 16 with the formation in Shanghai of the Students' Union of the Republic of China.[44] It was precisely these local students' unions that were to provide the organized leadership for the movement that followed.

The already-mentioned Work-Study Society, formed by students and graduates of Beijing Higher Normal College in February 1919, was one of the groups destined to fire the opening shots in the campaign. Its work-study principles, as we shall see later, were remarkably anarchistic. Always present behind the scenes of the May 4 Movement, frequently playing a militant role, the group has been credited with planning the assault on the homes of the three government ministers held responsible for acceptance of the 21 Demands and conclusion of the Nishihara Loans: Minister of Communications Cao

---

to the previous month's strikes and demonstrations. Nevertheless, the Shandong problem remained unsolved, and Japanese troops continued to occupy the province for some years.

[44] The formation of the Students' Union of Beijing was significant in more than one respect. Not only was it the first time that both middle and higher school students in the city had been united on a permanent basis; more important, it was the first time in Chinese history that male and female students could attend meetings side by side and become members of the same group. Since boys and girls attended separate schools there had previously been no common activities and no mixed groups. Now, however, girl students began to join the movement in large numbers, and within a year co-education was being introduced at Beijing University. See Chow, 1960: 123. At the same time there seems to have been resistance to the new atmosphere. In Tianjin the Students' Union created a separate organization for women, the Association of Patriotic Women Comrades, which enjoyed at its outset more than six hundred members ranging from thirteen-year- olds to women in their sixties. In October 1919 women began to join the Students' Union and the Association was disbanded. See Ono, 1989: 107.

Rulin; Minister to Japan Zhang Zongxiang; and Director-General of the Currency Reform Bureau Lu Zongyu.[45]

May 4 left behind it a rich legacy, not least the realization among the people as a whole that the combined struggle against feudalism and imperialism was a *national* issue. Another lesson was that the decisive factor in the struggle had been the power generated by the united front of the mass organizations formed at every level of society. Thus was born, in July 1923, the Great Anti-Imperialist League comprising some fifty organizations including the Students' Union of China, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese Federation of Labour Unions.

Sun Zhongshan, who at the peak of the May 4 Movement was staying in Shanghai, told student representatives who came to plead for his support that he was powerless to help them. Nevertheless, in an address to the World Association of Chinese Students on October 18 1919 Sun exclaimed:

Even in so short a space of time... what tremendous things this student movement has achieved! I now know that unity is strength. Sun then sought the students' support for his own 'Constitution Protection Movement'. Moreover, in a letter to overseas Nationalist Party members in January 1920 he pinned his hopes upon the ideological changes wrought by May 4, and highly appraised the New Culture Movement. In fact the Chinese Revolutionary Party (*Zhonghua gemingdang*), over which Sun had wielded dictatorial control since its founding in 1914, had already renamed itself the previous October as the above- mentioned Chinese Nationalist Party, the first step in its transformation from a secret society-style organization into a mass political party.[46]

---

[45] The Work-Study Society rejected the traditional Chinese conception of 'mental labourers as governors, manual labourers as governed'. It aimed, via utopian socialism, anarchism, humanitarianism, the New Village programme and a labour movement, to realize anarchist ideals to serve the working class. It also propagated the concept that 'education is life, school is society'. Though its members rejected wholesale change in favour of piecemeal reforms, still they insisted on direct action, and often persuaded students to take radical steps where many had preferred to hold back. The organization formed in February 1919 was a mainly patriotic, anti-japan group, and the society was revamped in May to push for more radical social change. The leader of the May 4 attack on the home of the pro-Japanese Minister Cao Rulin was a member of the Work-Study Society, a Hunanese anarchist named Kuang Husheng. He was credited with coining the slogan 'Oppose Authority!', which added a more militant tone to the other students' mainly patriotic slogans. Kuang later became a teacher at the Hunan Provincial First Normal School in Changsha from which Mao Zedong had graduated. The School was in the process of becoming a centre of radical learning, but after 1927 drifted towards the Nationalist Party, and Kuang became active in the operation of the so-called 'Labour University' in Shanghai (see below).

In May 1922 the Work-Study Society published a May Day issue of its journal *Work-Study Monthly* (*Gongdu yuekan*) in which it proposed to establish a school for workers; the school seems never to have opened.

[46] Backed by local military figures Sun had established a military government in Guangzhou in 1917 in opposition to the Beijing warlord regime. Following several small wars, peace negotiations had begun in Shanghai just before the outbreak of the May 4 Movement. This was Sun's reason for being in the city. Sun, however, was a cultural conservative, and his support for the student movement, which he saw as a weapon to use against Beijing, was carefully calculated. His refusal to help the students consequently stemmed equally if not primarily from his distaste for their iconoclastic attitude toward

Mao Zedong also demonstrated the profound lesson learned from May 4 in his 'Great Union of the Popular Masses' (*Minzhong dalianhe*), published in the *Xiang River Review* (*Xiangjiang pinglun*) in July and August 1919. This article had strong repercussions, and its importance was stressed by a representative of the Shanghai Students' Union in the *China Times* (*Shishi xinbao*) on the movement's first anniversary.[47] In his article Mao singled out the Students' Union of China and the National Salvation Societies formed in various quarters as the two most significant groupings spawned by May 4.

Another important political thinker to feel the impact of May 4 was Li Dazhao. Li took up the issue of 'personal liberation' raised by the New Culture Movement, and, by linking it to the May 4-inspired 'Great Union of the Popular Masses' idea, evolved the conception that it would be achieved in the process of struggles waged by individuals within their organizations. It was a conception which would revamp modern political thought in Asia, and an example of what is meant by the contention that May 4 was the ideological take-off point for the New Democratic Revolution in China. Chinese scholars have even seen in the wartime National United Front the germination of the 'Great Union of the Popular Masses' conception.[48]

---

traditional culture. The quotation is from his speech, 'The Urgent Task of Saving the Nation', in *Selected Works* I, 1956.

'Protecting the Constitution' was the slogan under which Sun had created his military government in Guangzhou. In the confusion following Yuan Shikai's death, power in Beijing had been usurped by a new warlord clique under a revised constitution that reduced the influence of the representative assembly guaranteed by the 1912 Provisional Constitution. On the events surrounding the formation of the Chinese Revolutionary Party, see Edward Friedman, *Backward Toward Revolution* (Berkeley, 1974).

[47] The repercussions were perhaps not quite as great as Maoist hagiography has since claimed, but many May 4 activists including Luo Jialun proclaimed Mao's analysis of the movement to be fundamentally correct. His basic point was that the movement had awakened people to the need for a united front of students, merchants and workers in the struggle for civil rights and social reconstruction. Recent research has shown that Mao considered himself an anarchist until the end of 1920, far later than had hitherto been assumed, and his anarchist leanings appear quite clearly in the article. He calls Kropotkin's ideas "broader and more far-reaching" than those of "the party of Marx", stressing the need to understand the lives of the common people, and calling for mutual aid and voluntary labour. Mao also specifically rejects the elimination of political enemies, calling on them to repent and begin working with others (a call that was echoed in the theory if not the practice of the Cultural Revolution). For details, see Dirlik, 1989a: 178. Mao's article is translated by Stuart Schram in *China Quarterly* No. 49 (1972). The *Xiang River Review,* for which Mao also acted as editor, was considered one of the six best magazines to appear during the May 4 period, despite its having published only four issues before its suppression by the Hunan warlord authorities in August 1919.

[48] In his essay 'On New Democracy', first published in February 1940, Mao wrote that May 4 was "called forth by the worldwide revolution at that time, by the Russian Revolution and Lenin, it was part of the world revolution of the proletariat". This statement has become the basis of Chinese communist historiography concerning the history of the revolutionary movement in China. Mao's theory of New Democracy described May 4 as the watershed between 'old' and 'new' democracy: before May 4 the bourgeoisie had controlled the revolutionary movement; after it the working class began to take on an independent role, though the bourgeoisie, suffering from imperialist oppression, could still cooperate with it. While it is true enough to say that May 4 led to the emergence of the working class on the

Among the new organizations that appeared as a result of May 4 were the 'Street Unions' (*Malu lianhehui*) formed in Shanghai and other big cities by merchants and shop proprietors. These unions differed fundamentally from the old commercial guilds, which had become the creatures of successive warlord governments. In later years they were to become active in campaigns for civil rights.[49]

The peasants, however, who were of course the great bulk of the population, remained quite excluded from the popular movement of 1919. To be sure, Mao Zedong and Li Dazhao were showing great interest in the peasant issue, but they had yet to take any practical measures. Then there were the efforts of a group of Beijing University students who, in March 1919, had set up the Commoners' Education Lecture Corps (*Pingmin jiaoyu jiangyantuan*) with the objective of increasing the common people's knowledge and awareness. Inheriting the New Culture Movement's twin concepts of 'science' and 'democracy', they had initiated an enlightenment programme aimed particularly at village dwellers, but after the spring of 1920 their message too was confined to a lecture hall set apart for them on the university campus.[50]

While Chinese scholars have attributed this failure to official obstruction or financial difficulties, it seems far more likely that the inability of the Corps members to shake off their inherent didacticism came up against a brick wall in the villages themselves.

Chinese political stage, it is patently mistaken to suggest that the Movement was "called forth" by the Russian Revolution and Lenin. At the time of the founding of the Communist Party in 1921, few intellectuals knew anything about Marx, let alone Lenin, who seems not even to have been translated until late 1920. Interest in the Russian Revolution was a result of the May 4 Movement, not a cause. For a discussion, see Dirlik, 1989a: 43ff.

[49] The Federation of Street Unions of Shanghai soon became the most influential organization in the city, establishing night schools and directing sanitary and welfare measures.

[50] The Corps, founded on the anarchist-inspired slogan 'Go to the Masses!', originally had more than 120 members. Its founders included Xu Deheng, Luo Jialun, Zhang Guotao and Wang Guangqi (on Zhang and Wang, see below), and all were members of either the Citizens' Magazine Society or the New Tide group. They came together in the realization, previously repugnant to the former group, that China needed a new cultural identity to stand up to external enemies. For the first few months lectures took place on Saturday evenings on street corners; later lecture halls were established in working-class sections of the city where weekly talks were held on topics like socialism, mutual aid, the national crisis, the dangers of superstition, and the meaning of May Day. Popular literature was also widely distributed. Although Nohara speaks of these activists' problems in the villages, the movement actually began within the city walls and spread out to the rural suburbs only in early 1920. For the intellectuals involved the most important effect was the face-to-face contact with ordinary people, and the group formed the basic nucleus for the communist group established in Beijing in mid-1920. For a discussion, see Schwarcz, 1986: 86ff, 128–33. It has also been said that the Corps' failure was despite being armed with a dictionary of popular usage compiled for them by the anarchist Wu Zhihui (see Dirlik, 1989a: 68).

Although the movement had little success in the suburban villages, the members reacted to their failure by establishing more formal institutions within the city, and these flourished until the movement was coopted by the communists a few years later. Incidentally, Nohara mistakenly gives 1921, instead of 1920 as the date for their becoming confined to lecture halls.

The unbridgeable gulf that persisted during the May 4 era is treated in the writings of Lu Xun.[51]

For a time, then, the problem of how to organize the working class remained the movement's central concern, but in order to get so far, a certain turning point had had to be manoeuvred. As the example of the student movement showed, the posture assumed by the May 4 agitation was one of seeking to force the government to accept its demands by a combination of petitions and propaganda among the masses. Even after May 4, however, the government, bowing to Japanese pressure, ordered provincial authorities to suppress the boycotts of Japanese goods. Subsequently, in January-February 1920, it even clamped down on students in Beijing and Tianjin protesting against the opening of direct negotiations with the Japanese government on the Shandong question. In both cities the Students' Union, the Teachers' Union and the Federation of All Organizations of China (*Quanguo gejie lianhehui*) were ordered to dissolve.

As the confrontation with the government intensified, the more radical students were already beginning to tire of petitions, protest demonstrations and the like, and their tone gradually began to change. From things like dismissal of the nation-selling politicians, opposing the signing of the Peace Treaty, and a boycott of Japanese goods, they now began to advocate the wholesale overthrow of the present government and the reform of the country's social structure. The Nationalist Party's organ *Weekly Review* (*Xingqi pinglun*) of Shanghai highlighted this trend in an article titled 'The Past and the Future of the Student Movement':

> Up to now the movement has been one concerned solely with foreign policy issues; from now on it will be a movement addressing itself to fundamental social problems... a movement through which the plundered class shall overthrow the plunderers, and all the people of the world become workers ! (No. 46, April 18, 1920)

In this way the effect of government repression was to push concern with social change, hitherto submerged beneath the students' absorption with resistance to imperialism and feudalistic ideas, to the forefront of their consciousness. Their vision of the form that change would take was given shape by the decisive role of the working class in the victory of May 4; that same energy, hopefully, could now be put to use to

[51] *Lu Xun* (1881–1936) is recognized as China's greatest essayist and writer of modern fiction. Originally a medical student, Lu turned to full-time writing to arouse the Chinese people to struggle for their liberation. His first short story, titled 'Diary of a Madman' and published in May 1918, was a prophetic one looking forward to the students' outburst a year later. *The True Story of Ah Q,* his most important work, was an allegory of the shortcomings of the Chinese character under the influence of traditional ethics and institutions while faced with the onslaught of the modern west. Lu's short stories have been published in English translation under the title, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories,* translated by William A. Lyell (University of Hawaii Press, 1990). A short critical biography may be found in Grieder, 1983: 270–74. For a full treatment, see Spence, 1982: passim.

destroy the existing order and construct a new society. As a result the relative merits of anarchism and various socialist creeds became the subject of debate within many of the student groups. Deng Yingchao's 'A Memoir of the May 4 Movement' gives an example.[52] Within the Awakening Society (*Juewu she*), an organization formed in Tianjin in September 1919 by progressive male and female students (who included Zhou Enlai), such arguments took place constantly, though no-one as yet possessed any firm belief. As for communism, it was simply an ideal society, where you had only to work to the best of your ability for all your desires to be met. Exposure to the vicious savageries of the warlord governments, however, indubitably for a time made anarchism the prevailing trend among the students.[53]

As examples of that trend, it is possible to single out the *Beijing University Students' Weekly* (*Beijing daxue xuesheng zhoukan*), founded as the official organ of the students' union in January 1920; *Struggle* (*Fendou*), put out by the Struggle Society, a small anarchist group established at Beijing University soon after May 4; and *Zhejiang New Tide* (*Zhejiang xinchao*), established in November 1919 and edited by teachers and students of the Zhejiang Provincial First Normal, First Middle and other schools in

[52] Deng's 'Memoir' is included in the *Collection of Essays in Commemoration of May 4* (*Wusi jinian wenji*), 1950. Deng later married Zhou Enlai. She participated in the 1934 'Long March' and left an important record of that too. After 1949 she was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party and became a leader of the Chinese Women's Federation. In recent years she has come into prominence as a conservative voice, particularly for her criticisms of the 1989 student movement. She and Zhou had been active in various other groups prior to the Awakening Society, where she had worked primarily for women's emancipation. At this time, as Nohara says, there was no clear understanding of communism within the group: its main influences seem to have been guild socialism, anarchism and humanism. Its aims, expressed through its journal *Awakening, were* to propagate new thought, individual self-cultivation and women's emancipation, and to practice the ideals of work-study and the New Village. The magazine, which should not be confused with the later magazine of the same name that acted as a Nationalist Party mouthpiece, managed to put out only one issue in January 1920 owing to the arrest of the group's members for participating in the student movement mentioned above. Articles in the magazine were required to be collective creations; those contributed by individuals went unsigned, and members even went so far as to use numbers to identify themselves in place of their family names. For a discussion of the group's significance, see Dirlik, 1989a: 164–5. Nohara mistakenly gives the date of the group's formation as March 1919.

[53] Some qualification of Nohara's comment at the end of this paragraph seems justified. Although the warlord government's repression made the anarchists' critique of authority sharper than ever, it also blunted the movement's optimism regarding the possibility of spontaneous mobilization and a peaceful transition to a better society. As faith in anarchism among intellectuals declined, so the search for more structured forms of organization grew more pressing.

Hangzhou.[54] The change of tone of the *Students' Weekly* was particularly striking, and gives a vivid illustration of the turning point mentioned above.

As originally conceived, the magazine was intended to be an ideological forum for the entire student body: in line with Chancellor Cai Yuanpei's principle of 'broad-minded tolerance of diverse points of view' (*jianrong binghao*), no single 'ism' or theory was to be promoted within its pages. Up to its fifth issue, therefore, it continued to reflect the trends of the New Culture Movement period, for which the 'mass movement' meant no more than conducting academic research, importing new scientific methods, seeking ideological breakthroughs, and rebuilding the cultural framework. What is more, the tasks of cultural reconstruction and social leadership were seen by these intellectuals as devolving upon them alone; one must look hard to find any suggestion of the need to change themselves by learning from working people.

---

[54] *Struggle,* which appeared three times a month, was established in January 1920 and published eight issues until it was closed down and the editors arrested in April that year. Contributors, as elsewhere, refused to use their family names, signing themselves with random initials. One of its issues was a special one on 'free love'. The magazine was succeeded by the *Struggle Weekly,* which managed to put out twenty issues during the summer of 1920. For a discussion, see Dirlik, 1989a: 31.

Zhejiang New Tide, though it put out only three issues between November and December 1919 before being suppressed, was one of the most provocative of all the May 4 magazines, its circulation reaching a thousand even in that short time. The Provincial First Normal School where it was based had a strong anarchist tradition and was eventually closed down by the authorities in the spring of 1920. The magazine advocated "freedom, mutual aid and labour" as the "natural" endowments of human society. After its suppression some of the students went to Japan where they worked with the anarchist Osugi Sakae.

One of the teachers at the school, Shen Zhongjiu, later became a member of the anarchist-affiliated clique within the Nationalist Party, and in 1927 was appointed director of the party-sponsored Shanghai Labour University. The latter, promoted by one-time anarchist party elders like Li Shizeng, Wu Zhihui and Zhang Jingjiang, was a last futile attempt to use the Nationalist Party to channel the Chinese revolution in an anarchist direction in response to the inroads made by the communists. Opportunistic and ill —fated as it was, the Labour University nevertheless attracted not only the best among the remaining anarchist intellectuals (there was also a strong faction opposed to the venture, it should be said), but also drew participation from abroad. Guest lecturers included Japanese anarchists Iwasa Sakutard and Yamaga Taiji, and Jacques Reclus, grandson of Elisee Reclus from whom Li Shizeng had first learned his own anarchism. For details of the Labour University, see Dirlik, 1989b.

The three magazines mentioned by Nohara were only a few of the numerous anarchist-influenced periodicals that sprang up all over the country in the immediate wake of the May 4 Movement. Most, of course, disappeared without a trace; some of those that did leave a record were as follows: *New Hunan* (*Xin Hunan*), published in Changsha from July to October 1919 and edited from August by Mao Zedong; *The Critic* (*Piping*), which appeared in Beijing in late 1920; *New Person* (*Xin ren*), published in Shanghai from 1920–21 by the New Persons Society, whose fifty members included some in Beijing and Nanjing; and *The Person* (*Ren*), put out in Guangzhou in early 1920, mainly by north China anarchists including Jing Meijiu and Zhao Taimou. Other magazines that carried anarchist ideas included *New Shandong* (*Xin Shandong*) of Jinan, *New Republic* (*Xin gonghe*) of Taiyuan, and *New Zhejiang* (*Xin Zhejiang*) of Shanghai, but the influence of anarchist ideas was so strong that there was probably no politically — oriented magazine, at least before 1920, that did not carry them at some point (the above information was taken principally from Chow, 1963).

With the upsurge in the student movement that accompanied the negotiations on the Shandong question after February 1920, the magazine's tenor steadily began to break through those limitations. In response to the February movement, the Beijing government had announced that "of late ... people in various quarters have organized illegal groups in which they engage recklessly in discussions of politics and thereby disturb the security of the realm." Several groups including the Beijing Students' Union were consequently ordered to disband. In response the *Students' Weekly's* ninth issue (February 27), in an article titled 'Dissolution! Dissolution! Illegal Dissolution!', argued that the Public Order Police Law invoked to justify the dissolution itself infringed the Constitution: drafted by a parliament that had been no more than a rubber-stamp for Yuan Shikai's policies, it too was illegal. What was more, the warlord-bureaucrat clique then controlling the government, known as the 'Anfu Club', was itself an illegal organization, so why did the Police Department not dissolve it as well? While those in power are allowed to sell the country out and create chaos, deplored the writer, the powerless are forbidden even to utter the word "patriotism" !

In the following issue (March 7), an article titled 'A Refutation of Riots' argued that "laws and institutions created by the state are ultimately designed to protect the interests of the capitalists and to suppress those of the workers". When such an arbitrary system provokes plans for "general strikes" and "overthrowing the government", the rulers label such tactics as "riots", but for the people they are simply extraordinary methods forced upon them by the need to break out of the extraordinarily onerous conditions they live in. "As citizens of a republic they have the right to express their opinions concerning important national affairs — this is agitation, not 'rioting', and the sole criterion should be not whether a movement is violent or nonviolent but whether its motives are good or bad." Accordingly, the popular anti-monarchical movements in Russia and Germany which sought political reform and an improvement in people's living conditions were not 'riots'. On the other hand, the Japanese government's suppression of the Korean Independence Movement, Yuan Shikai's attempt to make himself emperor, and the present government's armed interference in the students' patriotic movement are all motivated by malicious despotism, and it is those which should be considered as true 'riots'. "In a stagnant and poverty-stricken country like ours is today", the writer summed up, "is there any other way to break down these irksome barriers than to resort to deeds of a startling nature?"

Although this piece still held up the Provisional Constitution as the basis for the right to resist, the signs of change were already clearly visible. The new course, apparent in issues six and seven and growing steadily stronger thereafter, led towards anarchism. The addition to the editorial board of anarchist members of the Reality Society like Huang Lingshuang, Chen Youqin and Huang Tianjun undoubtedly provided much of the impetus for this drift.[55] In issue six, an article titled 'Governments and Freedom'

[55] *Chen Youqin* also contributed to several other magazines of the period, including *New Life* (*Xin shenghuo*), circulated by the Commoners' Education Lecture Corps to Beijing railway workers

had argued: "In an era of governments there can be no freedom for the people. From now on we must give up the illusion that governments are divinely prescribed". From issue seven onwards, introductions to Kropotkin's theories and editorials discussing anarchism appeared more and more frequently, and issue seventeen (May 23, 1920) was actually given over to an 'anarchism special'. One article in this issue, 'The Meaning of the Anarchist Revolution', explained as follows:

> Direct action by the workers, the driving force of the revolution, will return the entire means of production — fields, factories, mines and machinery — to public ownership, thus abolishing the private property system. At the propaganda stage of our activities, we cannot and must not seek to avoid radical methods. Our objective is to arouse society and pressure the government, so we must devise effective propaganda without questioning the methods.

Another article, 'Anarchism and Socialism', took an unmistakeably anarcho-syndicalist line:

> The most rapid means for the realization of anarchy is the general strike. Naturally, the more tightly organized the workers' groups are, the more quickly it can be attained. However, many Chinese workers are uneducated, and to create anarchy overnight would be difficult. As anarchists, therefore, our most pressing tasks at this time are, first, to propagate anarchist ideas as energetically as possible; and second, to raise the workers' educational level so as to give them the ability to govern themselves and resist attempts to lead them astray.

Already, the implications of 'direct action' had come a long way from the "deeds of a startling nature" — within the limits of the Provisional Constitution — proclaimed earlier.

References to anarchism could also be found in other issues of the magazine. Concerning direct action, Kropotkin's ideal society was invoked:

> The workers will run the factories directly, and return the organs of production which have been plundered by the capitalists to public ownership. After that both production and consumption will be communal, based on the principles of liberty. ('Congratulations on May Day', issue number 14)

---

and citizens in 1920, and *Women's Review* (*Funu pinglun*), a women's rights magazine which appeared during 1920. Nothing more is known about *Huang Tianjun*.

The quotations from the *Students' Weekly* are taken by Nohara from the aforementioned Introduction to the Periodicals of the May 4 Period. For the present translation I have made certain corrections and amendations in line with the original text.

As to prospects for the future:

> Workers of the whole world, irrespective of national boundaries, will organize labour boards at strategic points; these will take over the planning responsibilities historically assumed by so-called governments. ('Labour's Great Enemy and its Future Role', same issue)

This second article, which resounded with the tenor of anarchist cosmopolitanism, also described the October Revolution in Russia as only the first stage in the liberation of the proletariat, which for its ultimate victory would have to await the anarchist revolution.

At the same time that the tone of the *Beijing University Students' Weekly* was experiencing this sudden transformation, the *Zhejiang New Tide's* programme for social change, as outlined in its 'Opening Statement', also displayed a clearly anarchistic tone:

> Our ideal is a society based upon liberty, mutual aid and labour. In order to bring prosperity and progress to people's lives, we must resolutely smash all politics, laws, states, families, impotent theories, customs and habits which stand in the way!

The Statement also stressed that the mission of reforming society could only be assumed by the workers and peasants. It divided the world into four classes, politicians, capitalists, intellectuals and workers, and continued:

> The classes of politicians and capitalists, being the root source of slavery, competition and plunder, are the principal opponents of liberty, mutual aid and labour, and are therefore incapable of creating social change. The class of intellectuals too, since it assists the former in their crimes against society, is equally incapable. Only the class of workers, the vast majority of the world's population, can discharge the responsibility for mutual aid and labour. Moreover, since their lives are filled with misery they must take the responsibility for reforming society, however much they may shrink from it.
>
> Enlightened members of the intelligentsia must cast off their class preconceptions, throw themselves into the world of labour, and become as one with the toilers ... Our hope for the future is that, in the first place, the students will become aware and join forces before going on to promote similar awareness and unity within the labouring world; in the second stage the students' and labouring worlds will join forces; finally, the students will all become workers, and the labouring world move toward one great federation. If all the students threw in their lot with the workers, the aim of reforming society could be easily attained.

Deng Yingchao, who had experienced the May 4 student movement as a 16-year old pupil of the Tianjin-Zhili First Girls' Normal School, was not then aware of the need for such things as the need for intellectuals to unite with the workers and peasants. Yet, she relates in her 'A Memoir of the May 4 Movement', she felt intuitively that the students alone could not save China, that they must go beyond their limited capacities and awaken all their compatriots. What was no more than an inkling for her, meanwhile, had already been refined by the *Zhejiang New Tide* into a union of intellectuals, workers and peasants. The era of Illuminati-style politics had passed.

Their experiences in the May 4 Movement brought home to the youthful students the fact that not only destruction, but even the construction that would follow it required the strength of the working class to succeed. How to ally with and organize the workers consequently became a problem of major proportions for them. Accordingly, went the *Zhejiang New Tide* programme, intellectuals could not merely act as purveyors of political education from some foreign haven.[56] They had to derly their very existence as intellectuals, casting in their lot with the working class. At the same time as raising the latter's consciousness, they would also remake themselves, finally blending into the workers' midst. The overall strength of the working class would thus be increased, allowing itself to free itself by its own efforts, and thus making it possible to commence the task of constructing a society based on liberty, mutual aid and labour.

Certain Chinese scholars, holding up Li Dazhao's conception of a 'union of intellectuals and workers' (expounded in his 1919 article 'Youth and the Villages'), have insisted that the principle of uniting with the labouring masses was first proclaimed by the early Chinese communists, whose understanding of Marxism had been deepened by the lessons of the October Revolution. This is not quite true. The crucial differences between the Chinese Marxists and the anarchists and others would appear elsewhere. That the ideological principle of uniting with the toilers was shared by both anarchists and communists at this point in time is left in no doubt by the programme for social reconstruction of 57) the *Zhejiang New Tide.*[57]

The best source of information in English on the magazines of this period is Chow, 1963. Most of the information given here, unless otherwise stated, is taken from that source.

---

[56] This is probably a reference to Sun Zhongshan and other revolutionaries of the pre-1911 generation, who spent much of their careers trying to organize insurrections from exile abroad.

[57] In other words, the worker-peasant alliance, upon which Mao staked and won his political life in the 1920s and 1930s, was equally attributable to insights held by the anarchists. The latter had in fact called for this kind of strategy as early as 1911 when the mainstream of Chinese revolutionary politics had still been anti-Manchu nationalism, criticizing the latter as being capable of benefiting only a small minority. Another way in which the anarchists anticipated the Leninists of later years was in advocating infiltration of the secret societies, bandit gangs and other mass organizations that filled the interior in order to spread the message of social revolution and free federation. See Scalapino and Yu, 1961: 16–17.

As an example of the scholars mentioned in this paragraph, Nohara gives Shi Jun, author of *A Selection of Teaching Materials on Modem Chinese Intellectual History* (*Zhongguo jindai sixiangshi jiang- shou tikang*), published in 1955.

Part Two

The rise and fall of practical activities

How did the anarchist students initially seek to realize their plans for social reconstruction? The activities of the 'Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps' (*Gongdu huzhutuan*) movement, which spanned a period of some six months following the Corps' founding at the end of 1919, were one example.[1] Centred on Beijing University students and supported by Hangzhou students from the *Zhejiang New Tide* group, members included the founder Wang Guangqi, Luo Jialun from Beijing, and Shi Cuntong and Fu Linran from Zhejiang. Financial support was provided by several well-known intellectuals including Cai Yuanpei, Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi, Li Dazhao and Zhou Zuoren.[2] The movement also seems to have sprung up among students in Shanghai and Tianjin.

What the Corps students did, basically, was to promote in one small corner of Beijing a self-sufficient group lifestyle in which members, in addition to their studies, would work at least four hours a day, contributing their income to a pool which paid for living expenses and other outlays. Some opened printing shops, restaurants and laundries for students and teachers; others even tried selling handicrafts and so on. While there was little to distinguish this superficially from the life of the average student, their programme was in fact a sincere effort to tackle the problem of what was to become of China in the post-May 4 era. Believing that the class contradictions in society stemmed from the separation of mental and physical labour, they sought to create, by their own efforts in one isolated enclave, the prototype of a new society in which the two would be reunited, and from where they could begin to spread their

[1] Hu Shi later claimed that http://libcom.org/node/add/library?parent=3613Mao Zedong had also shown great interest in the Corps at this time (Nohara's note). Recent research has shown that Mao actually considered himself an anarchist until at least the end of 1920.

[2] Shi Cuntong (1890–1970) had become notorious in November 1919 for writing an article in *Chejiang New Tide* attacking not only filial piety (the basis of the traditional Chinese family) but also Confucian society as a whole. The government accused him of treason, the magazine was suppressed, and Shi moved to Beijing to join the Corps. The following June he went to Tokyo, where he became a founding member of the Communist Party group there; at the same time, however, his contacts with the Japanese anarcho-syndicalist Osugi Sakae convinced him of his anarchist beliefs, and he subsequently became one of the most energetic exponents of the "essential unity of Marxism and anarchism". See Dirlik 1989a: 203–16. Zhou Zuoren (1885–1968); younger brother of the writer Lu Xun (see Part One), a liberal professor at Beijing University, was also a strong advocate of the New Village Movement mentioned below and in the first part of this translation. For background on the other figures, see Part One.

influence to society at large. Wang Guangqi summed up their aspirations in issue No. 7 (January 1920) of their magazine *Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps*:

> The Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid groups are the embryo of the new society, and the first step in the realization of our ideals ... On paper we advocate a social revolution every day, but we have yet to begin to put it into practice. Our mutual aid organization is just the starting point for our real movement... If it is successful, we can gradually expand it and simultaneously begin to realize the ideal of 'from each according to their ability; to each according to their needs'. This movement should indeed be called 'a peaceful economic revolution'.[3]

Similar ideals were invoked in an article in issue No. 2 (August 1919) of *Young China* (*Shaonian Zhongguo*).[4] Entitled 'My Plan for Creating a Young China', it too advocated the establishment of 'Small groups':

> We must escape from the confines of the old society and head for the wilderness and forests, where we can create a truly free, truly egalitarian association. Then, by promoting economic and cultural autonomy through cooperative labour, we can cut ourselves off completely from the corrupting influence of the old society. After that we will set about the rebuilding of the latter on the pattern of our own society. Unlike the socialist parties of Europe, we do not declare war on the old society by the method of armed insurrection.

Strongly reflecting the influence of the currently-popular 'New Village' movement of the Japanese utopian Mushanok6ji, the group's proposals ultimately amounted to a mere caricature of the concept of 'uniting with the toiling masses'. Yet these students threw themselves dedicatedly into the work they chose, and, when Hu Shi dismissed their typical 'poor student', haphazard ways of making ends meet as no different from those of American students, they must surely have been deeply resentful.[5])

The previously-mentioned Work-Study Society of Beijing Higher Normal School, on the other hand, openly advocated anarchy, and made a fundamental distinction

[3] Wang Guangqi (1892–1936), at the same time as being a prime mover of the Corps, was also a founder and leading member of the Young China Association (see next note). Though basically a liberal, he was then in a strongly anarchist phase and advocated social revolution. He had previously participated in the work-study programme in France.

[4] This was the organ of the Young China Association (*Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui*), founded in June 1918. Mao Zedong, Li Dazhao, Zhang Guotao (see below) and others of varying political persuasions joined, making it one of the strongest of the May 4 organizations (Nohara's note). After 1920 it split into Marxist and liberal factions. The article cited in the text was by one Zong Zhikui.

[5] See, for example, Fu Linran, 'Before and After May 4' (in *Recollections of May 4 — Wusi yundong huiyilu*, 1959, p. 170).

between their own doctrine of work-study and the position of the Mutual Aid Corps. Still, there was nothing to choose between them as far as practical activities were concerned, and both experiments ultimately ended in disappointment. Shi Cuntong, in a self-critical piece, described the failure of the Mutual Aid Corps as follows:

> Present-day society is organized on a capitalist basis, and the capitalists keep a firm grip on all capital resources. There is absolutely nothing we can do about that, and to imagine regaining control of those resources is a mere pipedream! Pitting our feeble strength against such a treacherous, vicious society as this-how could we but be defeated? We tried to rebuild society, but found we could not even penetrate it, even after creating the Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps. Rebuilding society? It was never even on the cards! From now on, if we want to rebuild society we must plan to do it wholesale and from the very roots!
>
> Piecemeal reforms will get us nowhere. As long as society is not reformed at the roots, no experiments in new lifestyles are possible. So long as such experiments fail to distance themselves from everyday society, it follows that they will always be under its sway, and consequently come up against countless obstacles. The only way around this is a joint uprising of the peoples of the whole world, which will uproot those obstacles once and for all... 'To rebuild society, we must gain entry into the capitalist controlled means of production. ' This is our conclusion.[6]

Dai Jitao too, then a supporter of Marxism, looked back on the failure of the Mutual Aid Corps and counseled the students to go into the capitalist-controlled factories where, toiling side by side with the workers, they could then try to seize their leadership.[7]

Accordingly, a number of the more serious anarchists, among them one Huang Ai, began to throw themselves into syndicalist activities. In May 4 days Huang had been a Tianjin Students' Union delegate. Subsequently, at a joint preparatory meeting for the 'May 30 Petition Movement" Huang clashed bitterly with the General Secretary of the

[6] Cited from 'Experiences and Lessons of the Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps', in *Weekly Critic* (*Xingqi pinglun*) No. 48, May 1 1920, a special May Day issue. "These experiments perhaps offered more to the young people who took part in them, in the form of an escape from their oppressive families, than to the future of China itself. As an exercise in creating new kinds of social relations, they were a high point in anarchist idealism; their failure consequently had dire results for the future of Chinese radicalism, allowing Marxist notions of conflict to win out over anarchist values of mutual aid and cooperation. For a fuller discussion, see Dirlik 1989a: 91ff." Shi's self-criticism is assessed sympathetically in Dirlik 1989a: 189.

[7] From his 'The Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps and Capitalist Production', in *New Youth*, Vol. 7 No. 5, April 1920. Dai Jitao (1891–1949) was a co-founder of the CCP who later defected to become an important theorist on the right of the GMD.

Beijing Students' Union Zhang Guotao over the advisability of such a movement.[8] He and his supporters' position — that even though it would not achieve much in itself such a movement would effectively expose Premier Duan Qirui's collusion with the Japanese, prevent direct Sino-Japanese negotiations on the Shandong question, and awaken the entire people to the situation -eventually triumphed. Huang was arrested twice during the May 4 agitation, and early in 1920 returned to his native Hunan province in central China. There, in November he and another comrade named Pang Renquan organized the syndicalist Hunan Workers' Association (*Hunan laogonghui*) in the provincial capital of Changsha.[9]

The Japanese historian Suzue Gen'ichi writes of another incidence of syndicalist organizing activities:

> In Shanghai there was an organization known as the Chinese Wartime Labourers' Corps (*Canzhan Huagongtuan*), a section of which showed syndicalist tendencies. In practice, though, the part it played was minimal, and it amounted to little more than a loose group of Chinese workers of various kinds linked solely by the fact that they had all worked along the French border during the war in Europe. There was very little of the labour union about it, whether of the industrial or the craft variety.
>
> On the other hand, there was also a second group of French returnees, the Diligent Work and Frugal Study Association (*Qingong jianxuesheng tuan*) students. Sent to France after the war ended through a scheme arranged by Wu Zhihui to help poor students, on arrival they had found their lives to be all work and no study, and had promptly returned to China. Among them were not a few who had been deported for their attempts to form a commu-

[8] Zhang Guotao (1897–1979) had been a student founder of the Commoners' Education Lecture Corps discussed in the first part of this essay. Later he was to be a co-founder of the CCP, a labour organizer and a Red Army commissar, and would eventually become Mao Zedong's most dangerous rival for the Party leadership. During the 1934–35 Long March when the Communist armies moved their base from southeast China to the north, Zhang lost out in a fierce power struggle with Mao, and finally led a dissident contingent of the force to Tibet. In 1938 he defected to the GMD side, and after 1949 moved to the United States where he spent the rest of his life. Zhang has published an important though self-seeking volume of memoirs titled *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party: the Autobiography of Chang Kuo-t'ao* (University of Kansas, 1971–72).

[9] Huang Ai's presence at the debate is recalled by a communist veteran of the May 4 Movement, Zhang Jinglu, according to whom Huang (then using the name of Huang Zhengpin) was "the most vociferous detractor" of Zhang Guotao's proposals, and "resolutely insisted" that the petition march go ahead "regardless of the consequences". Since Huang was then acting as a student radical rather than as an anarchist, Zhang Jinglu's assessment of him is as positive as his attitude toward the party renegade Zhang Guotao is negative. Regarding Huang's later activities (see below), he reluctantly admits that Huang had "considerable success" in organizing Hunan workers, but explains that he was subsequently "reformed by Chairman Mao" and "took refuge in Marxism". The fact that Huang's successes were achieved through syndicalist. methods is completely ignored.

nist party while in France, but many others had returned as syndicalists, and were becoming involved in practical activities.[10]

This latter group evidently owed something to the influence of the New Century Society formed in Paris at the end of the Qing dynasty by Wu Zhihui and Li Shizeng, but little is known about the actual activities of either of these two factions.[11]

[10] In contrast to this Shanghai group, returnees in Guangzhou (Canton) used their experiences to organize 26 new unions, later considered among the first modern unions in China. Almost 200,000 Chinese workers were sent to France after 1917 to help the Allied war effort, building roads, railways, factories, barracks and arms depots, and sometimes handling the dead (they were not considered sufficiently trustworthy to be put in uniform). For details, see Michael Summerskill, *China on the Western Front* (self-published, 1982). Not all the 'coolies' who came back from Europe got involved with workplace organizing, by the way; most of them had no place to work except for those who found jobs as rickshaw-pullers. Many of them seem to have turned to what was then more or less a staple sideline in China: banditry. In May 1923, for example, the luxury 'Blue Express' from Shanghai to Beijing was derailed and several foreign captives taken for ransom along with scores of Chinese. The negotiations over the former's release lasted several months, and the 'Lincheng Affair' as it became known developed into an international cause celebre (it later inspired the 1932 Greta Garbo film *Shanghai Express*, directed by Josef von Sternberg -screenplay published in 1973 by Simon & Schuster). Most of the media, both in China and elsewhere, treated the affair as no more than yet another of the 'bandit outrages' for which China was then so notorious, but certain sources have pointed to a minority political faction within the gang, some of whose members spoke French, a fact which seems to link it almost unquestionably to the returned wartime labourers. The group (which according to reports may also have had connections to Sun Yatsen's radical movement) held out for a political solution to the incident, demanding the resignations of rapacious warlords and rejecting the time-honoured pattern of merely demanding a cash ransom for the prisoners. How far the attack on that specific train had been planned is not clear. One of the passengers, named Lucy Aldrich, was actually the niece of the American millionaire John D. Rockefeller, but if the bandits were aware of this they certainly did not exploit it, for the women and children among the captives were released almost immediately. Eventually most of the gang were enrolled in the local military, in accordance with their leaders' demands. A few months later those leaders themselves were quietly bumped off and their followers chased back into the mountains -presumably in retaliation for the 'loss of face' the local army commanders had suffered over the affair. What became of the political faction, meanwhile, has never been investigated. For more details, see my book, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford University Press, 1988: page 73). Suzue Gen'ichi (1894–1945) was a Japanese writer and activist very close to the Chinese labour and revolutionary movements. He wrote several books based on his intimate knowledge of Chinese affairs, including a biography of Sun Yatsen and a history of the proletarian movement. The citation here is from his *History of China's Liberation Struggle* (*Chugoku kaihõ tõsõ shi*).

[11] The link between the New Century Society and the post-war work-study scheme was the Society for Frugal Study in France (*Liu-Fa jianxuehui*), founded by Wu, Li, and others in 1912 (for information on these figures, see Part One). Its principles were very close to those of the Society for Promoting Virtue and the Conscience Society (see Part One). The Society for Frugal Study in France also helped conclude contracts for the Chinese recruits sent to serve in France, who as a result came to enjoy all the liberties of French citizens, including (perhaps thanks to pressure from the then-syndicalist French CGT-General Confederation of Workers) that of forming trade unions (this would probably also account for the syndicalism of the Shanghai organization). Although the first recruits consisted entirely of illiterate workers, little by little teachers and students came to be included, principally as interpreters, and by 1918 their numbers had reached almost 30,000. (One of them was the anarchist author Ba Jin; for details, see Olga Lang, *Pa Chin and his Writings*: Ch. 6). The consequences for the Chinese mass movement

Meanwhile, following the foundation under Comintern auspices of a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) core group in Shanghai in May 1920, similar communist groups were established in Beijing, Wuhan, Changsha, Jinan and Hangzhou, as well as in Paris and Tokyo (the names varied from place to place: some were simply called Societies for the Study of Marxism),[12] and members began to apply themselves to the task of or-

were huge, for this was the first time that intellectuals had had the chance to live side by side with workers and to establish relationships of trust with them. Several industrial and social organizations were formed in France as a result, and between 1916 and 1918 there were at least 25 strikes by Chinese workers protesting against industrial conditions there. Incidentally, the communist organization formed in France was not a party as such but a preparatory cell known as the New People's Study Society. Many of its members, however, were ,people who would take place in the founding of the CCP in July 1921. The work-study programme reached a peak in 1921 when 1,000 or more students were sent to France, and anarchist activities continued among students and workers in Paris until well into the 1920s. In January 1922 the Chinese monthly *After Work* (*Gongyu*) was established, and put out 23 issues before October 1925 when it was merged with the Shanghai magazine *Free Person* (*Ziyouren*) following its editors' return to China. *After Work* (edited initially by the two sons of CCP leader Chen Duxiu, who until 1923 were among the most active anti-bolshevik polemicists) attacked the communists in France (represented by Zhou Enlai) on the grounds that the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union had actually lost their freedom since 1917, and that the Chinese communists were misleading the labour movement. These were perhaps the same students whom the Japanese anarchist Osugi Sakae tried to organize during his visit to Paris in 1923. For details on 6sugi's trip, see the small magazine Libero International No. 5 (Sept. 1978), available from the present translator. For details on the work-study scheme, see Paul Bailey, 'The Chinese Work-Study Movement in France', *China Quarterly* No. 115 (Sept. 1988), 441–61, and Scalapino and Yu 1961: pages 44–54.

[12] The original Shanghai group, for example, took this name, though it seems to have included more anarchists than communists at the beginning. In those early days of Marxist activity, the meaning of 'Marxism' was extremely broad. As late as 1921 Marxian socialism was being acknowledged by Chinese communist leaders as including orthodox Marxism (represented by Kautsky), revisionist Marxism (Bernstein), syndicalism, guild socialism, and bolshevism (Lenin and Trotsky). There were even some who considered bolshevism to be a faction of anarchism rather than of Marxism because of its militant tactics; others saw socialism as comprising two branches: collectivism (Marxism) and communism (Kropotkinism). It's not so surprising therefore that we find so many anarchists in at the founding of the CCP and working on the local communist groups, magazines and so on. The differences were sorted out within a year or two, under the influence of the returned students and of Comintern emissaries, but for a short period there was a genuine mood of revolutionary solidarity in China. Following the ascension of the communists it was never to return. For a discussion, see Dirlik 1989a: Ch. 8 and 10. Some examples of this collaboration can be traced. The original Beijing nucleus of the CCP, the Society for the Study of Marxist Theory (based on the membership of the Commoners' Education Lecture Corps discussed in Part One), was almost exclusively anarchist when formed in September 1920. Before their final decision to walk out in November, these anarchists took responsibility for worker-oriented propaganda. According to Zhang Guotao's autobiography noted above, in those early days the anarchists were strong enough to insist on and secure a non-hierarchical form of organization for the group. The Guangzhou branch too, formed at the same time as the Beijing one, was almost totally anarchist. Its weekly magazine *The Worker* (*Laodongzhe*), first published in October, promoted anarchism, with contributions from Huang Lingshuang on the general strike and the role of labour unions in the revolutionary struggle. The *Workers' World* (*Laodongjie*) of the Shanghai communist group (later renamed *The Communist*, *Gongchandang*) also carried, among others, an article by Huang Ai on the founding of the Hunan Workers' Association (issue 17).

ganizing labour unions. The following 2ol or three examples were typical. In mid-1920 the Shanghai group established in Xiaoshadu a Workers' Spare-Time School, where they began political education classes in Marxist theory; in November and December of that year China's first communist-led labour unions, the Shanghai Machine-workers' Union and the Shanghai Printers' Union were formed; and in January 1921 the Beijing group followed with another Workers' Spare-Time School in Zhangxindian leading to the establishment of the Zhangxindian Labour Union that May.[13] With the membership of these groups as its nucleus, in July 1921 the CCP was finally inaugurated, followed by the Chinese Labour Union Secretariat, whose avowed role was to promote the development of the labour movement by setting up workers' organizations and directing strikes.

During this period, arguments between anarchists and communists continued unabated even within the communist groups. The Beijing group, for example, originally numbered Huang Lingshuang, Ou Shengbai, Yuan Mingxiong and other anarchists among its members. During discussions on the provisional draft for a general party programme which the group had independently drawn up, however, Huang and the others fiercely opposed a clause advocating the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in the end withdrew from the group. As anarchists they were all in favour of revolutionary activities, meaning direct political action that negated the present system; they rejected totally, as strategies for the pre- and post-revolutionary periods respectively, both parliamentary politicking and the seizure of political power leading to a dictatorship of the proletariat under a revolutionary government.

In line with this kind of reasoning, the anarchists, unlike the communists, sought to promote the labour movement independently of everyday political activities. This debate was the keystone of the anarchist-communist struggle in all countries; in China, like elsewhere, it never managed to get beyond the realms of abstract polemic. To go into the details of the argument would be extremely tedious, and I propose to ignore it.[14] Even in Guangdong, where Shifu's influence persisted, the same conflict

[13] Zhangxindian had already been the site Of an anarchist- organized preparatory class for students intending to go to France on the work-study programme. The communist school was presumably built upon this basis. Many of the students who supported the school's activities were former members of the Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps. Situated along the Beijing-Hankou railway line, the town already had a strong nucleus of militant railway workers who had recently been organized into a union by Zhang Guotao.

[14] In actual fact, a classic in the way of political exchanges took place in 1920–21 between the Marxist Chen Duxiu and the anarchist Ou Shengbai, Originally carried in the magazines *New Youth* arid *People's Voice*, an English summary is given in Scalapino and Yu 1961: pages 55–59. For an astute discussion, see Dirlik 1989a: Ch. 10, especially pages 234–45. For the communists, the attack on anarchism was intended more as a means to purify their own ranks than as an attack on political rivals. At this stage of the revolutionary movement the debate was still conducted in very friendly terms, focussing upon the means to achieve political change rather than the end. Fundamentally it was a clash between social and cultural revolution: the communists' rejection of the cultural revolution-type thinking that had characterized the May 4 period (see Part One) reflected not only changes in the political climate but also their growing loss of faith in the ability of the classes they claimed to represent

took place, and eventually the anarchists either withdrew from the communist group or were converted to Marxism.

Let us now pick up the string of Huang Ai's story once again. After returning to Hunan in June 1920, as I have said, Huang and Pang Renquan set up the Hunan Workers' Association (HWA) in Changsha in November. Its aims were to raise both the living standards and the educational level of local workers. The original membership consisted of students, mostly from Huang's and Pang's alma mater, Hunan Jiazhong Technical School. Gradually, technicians and workers of the No. I Textile Mill and the local mint joined, followed by construction workers, machinists and barbers. By the time of the December 1921 strike at the No. 1 Textile Mill, some 4000–5000 workers were said to be under the HWA's influence. This was perhaps the largest of all the workers' organizations established by the anarchists.[15] The mill, founded in 1912 under joint management of officials and merchants, had been brought to a standstill by successive years of warlord conflicts, though its doors remained open. In the meantime the Hua Shi company, a Hunan capitalist concern, had colluded with the local warlord to acquire the management rights to the mill. Since the company's policy of importing capital and technology from other provinces had aroused the common resentment of Hunan's industrial, commercial and educational circles, the HWA achieved great popularity when, in April 1921, it began an all-out struggle to restore the mill to the Hunanese.

Just about this time Mao Zedong was also setting about organizing Hunan's workers, though his efforts to alter the direction of the HWA did not readily bear fruit. To the Marxists' contention that government was necessary provided it was established by the workers themselves, the HWA retorted scornfully that whatever the government it would be no different from warlord rule. Mao, unabashed, continued patiently trying to convince selected workers. At the same time as supporting Huang's and Pang's fight

---

to change their circumstances without coercion from above. In this sense the victory of bolshevism in China has to be seen as the failure of the egalitarianism and idealism that had characterized May 4.

[15] Anarchist and syndicalist labour organizations of the mid-1920s were somewhat stronger than is generally supposed. Even after control over most of the movement had fallen into the hands of the communists, anarchists continued to be active (see, for example, letters to the London anarchist journal *Freedom*, mentioned in Lang 1967: page 300). In 1925, for instance, anarchists predominated in the Shanghai-based Confederation of Labour Associations (*Gongtuan lianhehu*), said to comprise 37 unions with 50,000 members. The Confederation was anti-bolshevik and tended towards syndicalism, for which reasons it has been consigned by Beijing to the dust-heap of history and included among the so-called "yellow unions" in, Chinese labour movement histories. It published its own periodical, the *China Labour Herald*. Even the veteran communist labour organizer Deng Zhongxia admitted later that the anarchists, despite their reputed decline, remained a significant influence over the Chinese working class for ten years, and were a force to be reckoned with by the communists until as late as the mid-1920s. In Guangzhou it was 1925 before the communists were able to make any headway in the labour movement at all, so strong were the anarchists there, and Chen Duxiu, first Secretary-General of the CCP, refused to allow the Party centre to move there on the grounds that "anarchists are all over the Place" (quoted in Dirlik 1989a: 214). Incidentally, Pang Renquan is the same individual referred to in Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* as Pang Yuan-ch'ing (see also below, appendix).

against the warlords and capitalists, Mao candidly criticized their anarchist activities and finally, after mutual discussions, managed to call a halt to some of their more radical activities. His proposal that the HWA be reorganized to admit the collection of membership fees and other formal procedures was also accepted, and soon it began to look like a regular organization.

The Hunan branch of the CCP was probably founded in the first half of 1921, and by the end of that year Huang and Pang are said to have joined the Socialist Youth Corps (*Shehui zhuyi qingniantuan*) set up at the same time.[16] Shi Yang, another one-time believer in anarchism, had already changed his mind. After conducting on-the-spot investigations of working people's conditions and examining the problems of improving their livelihood, he had concluded that anarchy was but the product of a utopian dream, incapable in practice of liberating the working class; the idea of free organizations and federations in which people would work only according to their abilities and take whatever they desired, while a noble ideal, gave no suggestions for its practical realization. The only concrete and reliable programme, he had apparently come to feel, was that offered by communism.[17] The change of heart experienced by Huang and Pang was perhaps similar: even the most minor economic struggles should be taken immediately into the political arena; without such a combined struggle not even the basic goal of improving the workers' living standards can be achieved. For them, that is, as people who had done actual battle with conditions in China, the anarcho-syndicalist rejection of political activity had ceased to have any meaning.[18]

Not long after these events, spurred by the Nine-Power Treaty passed at the Washington Conference,[19] the HWA organized an opposition rally followed by an anti-

[16] Rather than a formal branch of the CCP, which was not set up until July 1921, the organization mentioned was probably a Marxism Study Society. The SYC too, largely established in the aftermath of the anarchist-bolshevik split, was more or less a communist front. Anarchists have always denied the claim that Huang and Pang joined the SYC, and even some communist writers avoid stating categorically that they did so.

[17] Shi Yang was also known as Zhao Shiyan. Born in 1900, he had been an active student leader during May 4, and after working with the Commoners' Education Lecture Corps in Beijing in 1920 went to France on the work-study scheme. Forming a branch of the SYC in Paris, he led students there in a protest against the Nine-Power Washington Treaty (see below), and in December 1921 helped found a CCP cell with Zhou Enlai. Back in China he was one of the most active organizers of the 1927 strike which took over Shanghai, helping form pickets to take over the city from the warlord government. When Jiang Jieshi turned against the workers, however, Zhao was arrested and executed together with Chen Duxiu's son Yannian.

[18] It is not clear from Nohara's text whether this remark is being attributed to Huang and Pang themselves, to Shi Yang, or to some other source (Nohara himself?). At any rate we have to be careful of reading too much into this so-called "change of heart". For anarchists of the time, the crisis was not so much one of belief as one of organization: in other words, it was frustration born of the inability to get themselves organized rather than loss of faith in the ideas of anarchism themselves that caused many anarchists to move towards the CCP, which they saw as the only available vehicle for carrying out the social revolution they advocated.

[19] The Washington Conference was held from November 1921 to February 1922. The Nine-Power Treaty passed in the latter month agreed in principle to respect China's territorial integrity and political

imperialism demonstration in which several dozen organizations and some ten thousand people, workers and others, took part. Mao Zedong, following the inauguration 'of the CCP, thus increased his efforts at cooperation with the HWA. In January 1922 the workers at the No I Textile Mill struck in support of their claim for a year-end bonus. Huang and the other anarchists began agitating to ensure the strike's success, but fell into the hands of Zhao Hengti, the local warlord who had been bought off by the Hua Shi company, and met an untimely end at his hands.[20]

Following these executions and the forced closure of the union which ensued, the leadership of the HWA fled to Shanghai, Tianjin, Hankou and other cities where they began the task of reconstruction. From that point on, however, their activities were solely concerned with resisting the CCP-controlled labour organizations. In Changsha, following the successful strike by construction workers and others in 1922, many former HWA workers began to join the CCP. Some, however, were bought off by local warlords, and others were later used in an attempt to destroy the great Shanghai strike which followed the May 30 Incident of 1925.[21]

On April 10 1924 the Labour Union Secretariat initiated an all-faction congress of labour unions in Shanghai, but the meeting was marked by constant and violent conflicts between Marxists and syndicalists. The Hunan anarchist delegate, Chen Xiaocen, was probably one of those who had fled the province following the execution of Huang and Pang. As usual, the syndicalists proposed a motion that unions should not engage in political activities, and fought bitterly against unification of the unions in the hands of the Marxists. Finally, they walked out of the congress altogether."[22]

---

independence, but did nothing in practice to alter the privileged position of foreigners themselves in China. To further incense nationalistic Chinese, Japan retained its railway and other rights in Manchuria and Shandong, and was allowed to strengthen its naval position in the Pacific.

[20] Anarchism had been as influential in Hunan as anywhere else in China at the time, and Changsha anarchist groups included the Youth Study Society, the Health Bookstore, the Hunan Rain and Poetry Society, the Enlightenment Society, and the Young People's Club. Anarchism, via Kropotkin's federalist ideas, also had a strong effect on the Hunan self-government movement which Mao Zedong espoused for a time in 1920 (see Angus McDonald, 'Mao Tse-tung and the Hunan Self-Government Movement', *China Quarterly* No. 68, 751–77). A detailed account of Huang's and Pang's role in the Hunan struggle may be found in the Appendix to the present translation.

[21] The 'May 30 Incident' was the shooting by British police of Shanghai workers protesting conditions in Japanese factories that had led to the death of one female worker. The protest movement that ensued developed into a protracted boycott of foreign products and series of strikes which took up where the May 4 Movement of 1919 had left off. Nohara's allegation of strike-breaking by the syndicalists follows the argument set out in the Beijing publication, *Introduction to Periodicals of the May 4 Period* (see Part One), particularly Book 2, pages 153 ff, and is a good illustration of the care required in handling such materials. Reading between the lines of that publication, it becomes clear that what the syndicalist unions did was to encourage the strikers to act on their own initiative rather than follow CCP directives. The slaughter which followed the communist-organized 1927 strike (see below, note 95) showed the correctness of their position.

[22] Chen Xiaocen, a veteran of the Tianjin, Awakening Society (see Part One), had indeed worked on the *Workers' Weekly* in Changsha. He was also a strong supporter of women's rights, working on several magazines which took up that position. After 1922, after belonging briefly to the SYC, Chen was

Thus it was that anarcho-syndicalist strength within the Chinese labour movement all but disappeared.[23] Huang Lingshuang, one of its principal proponents in the post-

active in the Shanghai Confederation of Labour Associations mentioned above, and in 1926 was asked to return to Changsha by the provisional government there to organize a labour movement to counter the Leninist-controlled one. For this Chen has been castigated ever since as a "scab" organizer (*gongzei*) in orthodox historical materials, but by 1926 everyone opposed to the CCP's position of centralizing the labour and political movements under its own leadership was being called either "scab" or "Trotskyist". Unfortunately, historians of the Chinese labour movement have all tended to accept uncritically Beijing's descriptions of its enemies, resulting in a distorted version of the country's revolutionary history.

[23] As these notes have already pointed out, syndicalist influence in the labour movement, though certainly weaker after the mid-1920s than earlier, did not decline quite as rapidly as communist materials have suggested. The HWA continued to affiliate to the Shanghai Confederation mentioned above, and their refusal to take part in communist-organized bodies, I was told by veterans of the struggle, was natural given the latter's intolerance of other factions. Allowing themselves to be taken under the communists' wing would have been tantamount to suicide, they pointed out, and the presence of several old anarchists in the upper ranks of the GMD suggested that that party would be more amenable to syndicalist demands than the communists could be. Indeed, for a time in the late 1920s, following the establishment in 1927 of the Shanghai Labour University, it seemed as if that might even be true. See the previous instalment of this translation, pages 305–6. For a detailed study, see Chan & Dirlik 1991. Outside the labour movement, too, anarchist groups continued to exist all over the country, following the establishment in August 1923 of an Anarchist Federation. In that year a list of existing anarchist groups appeared in the Beijing daily *Sea of Learning* (*Xuehui*), whose contributors included Huang Lingshuang, Ou Shengbai and Jing Meijiu. In 1922 the paper had reprinted the polemic between Ou and Chen Duxiu mentioned above, as well as carrying translations of Osugi Sakae, Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Bakunin, Oscar Wilde, Romain Rolland, Emma Goldman and others, all in the short space of nine months between October 1922 and its closure in June 1923. According to the paper's investigation, admitted to be incomplete, the following anarchist groups existed in China: *Sichuan* — Fit Society, People's Voice Society, Half-Moon Society, Equality Society, Light Society, People's Vanguard Society, Common Society, Youth Mutual Aid Corps, Red Society, Action Society, Levelling Society, Benefit Society; *Beijing* — Anarchist Alliance; *Nanjing* — Peace Society; *Shanghai* — Dao Society; *Hubei* — Light Society, Humanitarianism Study Society; *Guangzhou* — People's Voice Society. Other groups not mentioned included the Red Heart Society, Black Labour Society, Free Women Society, Chinese Village Movement Society, Beijing Daobao Press, Cock-Crow Society, Dawn Society, and the Village Movement Alliance. One of the longest-lived and most influential of all the anarchist groups was that which formed around the *People's Bell* (*Minzhong*; also referred to in English as the *People's Tocsin*). Co-founded by Ou Shengbai and Huang Lingshuang in July 1922, the group continued to publish its magazine until July 1927, first in Guangzhou and later in Shanghai. Its aims were to establish an "anarchist-communist society", and to fight against the four "principal enemies of the Common people", namely: state and government (citing Bakunin); private property and private ownership (citing Proudhon and Kropotkin against Marx); religion (citing Marx and Nietzsche); and the family (citing Edward Carpenter and Emma Goldman). *People's Bell* also published translations of many Western and Japanese anarchists. Contributors included, apart from Ou and Huang, Liang Bingxian, Li Shizeng, Wu Zhihui, Jing Meijiu, and Ba Jin. Many of the founder-members had previously worked with Shi Fu (see Part One), and volume 2, number 3 of the magazine was a special Shi Fu commemoration issue. Another important journal of the time was the *Mutual Aid Monthly* (*Huzhu yuekan*), founded in Beijing in March 1923. It rejected all forms of power and authority, severely criticized Sun Yatsen and Chen Duxiu, and opposed the imminent union of the CCP and the GMD (a Moscow-inspired tactic to give the former a chance to seize power by tying it to the bourgeois -revolutionary forces represented by the latter; the two parties were united in 1924, but the alliance was reneged by Jiang Jieshi's coup against the Shanghai workers

May 4 era, left soon after to study in the USA and, after receiving a Ph.D., became professor of sociology at Zhongyang University. Subsequently, it is said, he became a lesser light in the right-wing 'CC Clique' of the Nationalist Party.[24] With other anarchists simply melting away and what have you, it was a dismal outcome to the movement. The ideological role played by anarchism, however, is a topic altogether separate from the fate of individual anarchists, and deserves further examination.

A man named Li Dazhao

The anarchist-bolshevik controversy in China reached a crescendo between the establishment of the first communist groups in May 1920 and the inauguration of the CCP in July 1921. The principal arguments unfolded in the pages of the magazines *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian*) and *The Communist* (*Gongchandang*), the latter a monthly put out by the Shanghai communist group.[25] The self-styled bolsheviks, however, at the beginning at least, cannot be said to have consciously differentiated themselves from the anarchists; on the contrary, some of them even interpreted bolshevism in terms of anarchist premises. A good example, as we shall presently see, was Li Dazhao, a typical Chinese intellectual who worked ceaselessly and dedicatedly for the cause of the Chinese revolution from the end of the Qing dynasty, through the 1911 revolution and the May 4 Movement, right down to the amalgamation of the Nationalist Party and the CCP in 1924.[26]

---

in 1927). In 1923 *Mutual Aid Monthly* conducted its own investigation of the state of the anarchist movement in China, and listed 21 different organizations. It also estimated that up to 1923 more than seventy anarchist books and periodicals had been published, not counting translations. For an overview of the situation up to the late 1920s, see Dirlik 1991: pages 10–26.

[24] Huang Lingshuang remained one of the most active anarchists in China until the mid-1920s, when he went temporarily to the United States to study sociology at Columbia University. He subsequently returned to China to teach at the Shanghai Labour University, and f 1nally threw in his lot with the GMD right wing as an evil preferable to working with the communists.

[25] *The Communist*, successor to the *Workers' World* mentioned earlier, published several articles on anarchism, often enthusiastic ones. They included 'Kropotkin's Manifesto to the Workers of the World', which appeared in issue no. 3, April 1921.

[26] Although Li Dazhao never considered himself an anarchist as such, his ideas were fundamentally libertarian, and as we shall see he was later to be profoundly moved by the ideas of Kropotkin. As early as 1917–18, his instinctive reaction to the October Revolution in Russia was basically an anarchist one. Reflecting his early interest in Tolstoy, he welcomed the revolution as a victory for the "common people" that would bring them the "bread" they needed. Biographers such as Meisner, mistakenly equating anarchism with terrorism, have simplistically concluded that Li was opposed to anarchism because of his rejection of assassination, with the result that anarchistic influences on his intellectual development have been underrated, and 'populist' ones emphasized, when in fact they came from very similar Russian intellectual roots. The main thing was that the Russian Revolution was seen as the first *social* revolution in history (as opposed to mere political turnovers), and because it was the anarchists in China who insisted that a social revolution took priority over the political one, the revolution came almost inevitably to be seen in anarchist terms. The most comprehensive source of information on Li Dazhao is the above-mentioned Maurice Meisner's *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* (Harvard University,

During the stage of the anarchist-bolshevik debate, as was the case in every other country, the anarchists' criticism of the bolsheviks, centring on their demands for absolute liberty, rejection of political methods, opposition to proletarian dictatorship and centralized authority, and advocacy of an ideal society based on mutual aid, liberty and labour, raised from the latter no more than equally abstract, Marxist formulations. For the people of China, who since the revolution of 1911 had learned to mistrust all politics, they carried but little weight. Only after the sacrifice of Huang Ai and Pang Renquan and the struggle at the 1st Chinese Labour Union Congress, followed by the laying down of a tentative plan for the reconstruction of China at the 2nd Congress of the CCP in July 1922, did the bolsheviks begin to extract themselves from this quagmire:

> The proletariat's support of the democratic revolution is not equivalent to its surrender to the bourgeoisie. It is a necessary stage in putting an end to the feudal system and in nurturing the actual power of the proletariat. We the proletariat have our own class interest. Even if successful, the democratic revolution would bring only some minor liberties and rights; it would be no total liberation. Indeed, the success of the democratic revolution will merely allow the bourgeoisie, at present in its infancy, to develop more speedily, and put it in an antagonistic position regarding the proletariat. When that stage is reached, the proletariat must launch the second stage of the struggle, allying with the poor peasants against the bourgeoisie to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. If the organization and fighting power of the proletariat have been sufficiently strengthened, our efforts in this second-stage struggle, following on from the victory of the democratic revolution, will surely bear fruit.
>
> The CCP is the party of the Chinese proletariat. Its aims are to organize the proletariat and, by means of class struggle, to establish a dictatorship of workers and peasants and abolish private property, so as to arrive at a communist society. The CCP, in the immediate interests of the workers and poor peasants, should lead the workers to support the democratic revolutionary movement and promote a democratic united front of workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie.[27]

1967; Atheneum reprint, 1974). Unfortunately, Meisner's concern with Li's role as a pioneer communist leads him to skirt many of the issues that present Li in a different light, such as the analysis of horizontal versus vertical organization (see below). He thereby ignores much of the libertarianism implicit in Li's thinking. For a more recent and more penetrating critique, see Dirlik 1989a.

[27] Thanks to this opportunist pseudo — ideology, during the 'Great Revolution' of Shanghai in March 1927 when working-class organizations had taken over almost the entire city, the communists were so bewildered by theory that they were evidently unable to see that a social revolution was already under way in the city. They thus refused help from anti-Jiang Jieshi forces and ordered workers, once the city was in their hands, to lay down their weapons and surrender to the armies of the "bourgeois

With this manifesto, not only was the popular post-1911 political apathy overcome at last; it also marked the bolsheviks' first successful dissociation of themselves from the anarchists.

Let us now return to the beginnings of this process. As I have said many times already, the thinking of the earliest communists was heavily laced with anarchism. This tendency can be discerned, for instance, in Li Dazhao's October 1918 essay 'The Victory of Bolshevism' -regarded as one of the earliest Chinese Marxist texts. According to the 'bolshevik' proposals presented there, everyone regardless of their sex will be required to take part in labour, and all working men and women must organize a single federation in which membership will be compulsory. Each federation must have a supreme central council, and those councils must organize governments for the whole world. Instead of secret committees, parliaments, presidents, premiers, cabinets, legislatures and rulers, there will be only the councils of the workers' federations, with whom all decisions will rest. All industrial concerns will become the property of those who work in them, beyond which there will be no property rights at all. The bolsheviks, uniting the propertyless poor of the whole world, will utilize the latter's powerful resilience to build a free homeland for everyone. The first stage will be a Federation of European Democracies, a base upon which to build the World Federation. This is the meaning of bolshevism.[28]

— democratic revolution" led by Jiang. The result, after Jiang unleashed death squads composed of reactionary secret societies and military units on the unarmed workers, was a horrific orgy of blood and cruelty which filled the streets with the rotting corpses of thousands who had trusted the judgement passed down from the CCP's Olympian heights. The aftermath as far as the communists were concerned has been described by the American writer Harold Isaacs, an eyewitness: "In the cities the workers left the ranks of the Communist Party by the thousands. In April 1927, it had been an organisation of nearly sixty thousand members, 53.8% of them workers. Within a year that percentage fell by four-fifths and an official report admitted that the Party "did not have a simple healthy party nucleus among the industrial workers". Thus in their own way the workers passed their verdict on the party that had led them to disaster. They never did return to its ranks. The essentially nonurban character of the Chinese Communist Party, originating in these circumstances, was preserved right up until its conquest of Power two decades later. (*The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Stanford, 1961, pages 273–4)" For all that the Maoist line of going to the villages to mobilize the peasants that formed some 90% of the Chinese population was attuned to the real circumstances of the Chinese situation, then, it should not be forgotten that the CCP's reluctant abandonment of the cities was to no small degree a decision forced upon it by its integrity having reached a nadir among the workers there. The anarchist workers, incidentally, remained aloof from the 1927 strike on the grounds that it was putschist and premature and bound to fail, bringing only suffering to those it was supposed to liberate. They were proved only too correct, and many underlined their better judgement with their own blood nevertheless, but their organizations have continued to this day to be condemned in orthodox histories as "scab unions".

[28] The closeness of 'bolshevik' proposals such as these to the ideas of anarchism may be seen from the fact that the same ideas had already been put forward in the pioneer anarchist magazine *Labour* (*Laodong*-see Part One) earlier in 1918 — and in fact were taken directly from the writings of the European anarchists Bakunin and Proudhon. Li's conception of the role of the "bolsheviks" was closer to Bakunin's image of a core of professional intellectuals and agitators moving among the people than to a Leninist vanguard mapping out the path from above. Like Bakunin, that is, Li saw the role of the

There is a common thread linking this proposal with the *Beijing University Students' Weekly* statement already mentioned, which foresaw how "workers of the whole world, irrespective of national boundaries, would organize labour boards at strategic points which would take over the duties historically assumed by so-called governments. " As a matter of fact, just before the previously-quoted passage in 'The Victory of Bolshevism', there is a paragraph in which Li states that "the revolutionary socialist party of the bolsheviks, with Marxism as their standard, will strive to smash the national boundaries which today stand in the way of the growth of socialism". In similar vein, part of Li's January 1919 piece 'New Era' went:

> In the future, a drastic change will affect the system of production. The working class, united across the world, will set up a single rational association of producers, break down national boundaries, and overthrow the capitalist class everywhere. Their weapon will be the general strike.

To put it bluntly, Li's interpretation of bolshevism was essentially no different from the programme envisaged by the anarchist Huang Lingshuang when he wrote in the second issue of *Progress* (*Jinhua*, Feb. 20, 1919) that "the new tide in today's world is the great anarchist revolution". For that matter, certain contemporary opinions even attempted to explain the May 4 Movement entirely in terms of the effect of anarchism and other theories upon the students.

This apparently cosmopolitan trend in Li Dazhao's thinking recurs throughout his writings, and the following passage is a good example of what was to be for him a constant preoccupation:

> Our demand right now is for a free, liberated self, and for a world in which people can love and be loved without obstacle. The motherlands, social classes, and racial distinctions which now stand between the self and the world are obstacles to evolution and interference in our daily lives, and must be done away with one by one. ('The Self and the World', in *Weekly Critic* (*Meizhou pinglun*) No. 29, July 6 1919).[29]

Accordingly:

---

intellectual as little more than that of a catalytic agent whose activities would release the spontaneous energies of the masses; he attributed no significant role to the vanguard party, and had little concern for party organization as such. His role in the founding of the CCP and the subsequent iconization of him by that party have tended to obscure the many profound differences between Li's thinking and that of Leninist-style revolutionaries.

[29] *Weekly Critic* (*Meizhou pinglun*) was begun by Chen Duxiu in December 1918 as an endeavour to inform Chinese people of the events in the Soviet Union (Nohara's note). 37 issues appeared before the Beijing government suppressed it in September 1919. It was one of the first magazines to present a political (rather than cultural) critique of the Chinese situation. Other contributors included Hu Shi and Wang Guangqi.

> The May 4 Movement is directed against the aggressive policy known as 'Pan-Asianism', and does not harbour any deep animosity toward the Japanese people themselves. We reject all those, Japanese or otherwise, who use force to stifle people's rights. I believe it inappropriate to view this movement as no more than a patriotic one. Rather, it is but one part of a movement to liberate all of humankind. Friends, if we proceed with such a vision in our hearts, we will be helping to bring about the happiness of future generations! ('Talk at the Anniversary Celebration of the *Citizens' Magazine*, in *Citizens' Magazine* (*Guomin zazhi*) vol. 2 no. 1, Nov. 1919)

This theme, that a movement for the liberation of humanity implied a movement for liberation from world imperialism, is made explicit in the following passage from Li's article titled 'Secret Diplomacy and the World of Robbers' (*Weekly Critic* No. 22, May 18 1919): "The reason why Japan can flaunt her aggressive policies around the world is simply that the world today is a world of robbers!"

However, was Li Dazhao's cosmopolitanism the same as that of anarchists like Wu Zhihui? Far from it, for beneath Li's approach, which otherwise resembles that of the anarchists so closely, lies a theory of *national* liberation. It can also be perceived in his piece titled, Pan-Asianism and New Asianism', published in the *Citizens' Magazine* vol. 1 no. 2, Jan. 1 1919:

> From the general drift of world affairs, there is little doubt that in the future the United States will construct an American Federation, and Europe a European Federation. We in Asia too must create a similar organization. Together these will provide the basis for a World Federation. Asians must join together in espousing a 'New Asianism' in place of the 'Pan-Asianism' advocated by some Japanese which, based on Ukita Kazutami's idea of a Sino-Japanese alliance, is intended to bolster the status quo. Our proposal is based on national liberation, and assumes fundamental social change. The peoples of Asia, now in the thrall of foreign annexation, will be liberated and become capable of self-determination. From there they must build one big federation, providing the third corner of the triangle alongside Europe and America. Then all three will cooperate in forming the World Federation, and so advance the well-being of all humankind.[30]

[30] Many of Li's ideas on internationalism had already been expressed by the anarchist Liu Shipei (see Part One), another Tolstoyan, several years before. Liu had felt that the world revolution would be triggered off by an uprising of the colonial peoples against their imperialist oppressors. To cope with it, the latter would have no choice but to increase their exactions against the proletariat at home, who would then be forced to rise up in protest, thus completing the world socialist revolution. While Li Dazhao has been hailed for this breakthrough in theory, Liu Shipei's contribution, because of his subsequent apostasy, has been forgotten. Liu also took this internationalist position a stage further by insisting that such a world revolution would come about only if links were created with the socialist parties in the developed nations, who would then coordinate the struggle at home. Ukita Kazutami (1858–1945) was

At the time of the '21 Demands' controversy in 1915 (see Part One), Li Dazhao was a student in Japan. Towards the end of that year, on behalf of the Association of Chinese Students in Japan, he wrote 'A Letter of Admonition to the Elders of the Nation' in which he began by describing in detail the foreign powers' invasion of China. After that he explained the disastrous crisis now confronting the country, exposed the real nature of the '21 Demands', and urged his elders, brothers and sisters to lose no time in joining hands to defend the beautiful mountains and rivers and the glorious historical tradition of their motherland. Later on, in a passage which unashamedly revealed his nationalistic yearnings, he recalled his departure for Japan:

> Not long ago I left my homeland and sailed east across the sea. The sun set into the wind-lashed waves, all was a Jadecoloured moment. Once past the Yellow Sea the land of Korea came into view. I looked to glimpse some trace of our 1894 debacle [i.e. in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–51, but all was swallowed in mist. I could only listen, the angry waves a doleful roll of drums as the waters flowed eastwards. It was as if the lonely ghosts of those who had died for China had buried their hatred there.

Xu Deheng recalls in his 'Recollections of May 4' how impressed he had been by Li Dazhao, who during 1918–19 had backed the Shanghaibased National Salvation Corps of Chinese Students in Japan, wrote constantly for the *Citizens' Magazine*, and was the only intellectual to consistently support the student movement from the students' own standpoint. At the time of May 4 itself, because Li had grasped the relationship between the Chinese people and the rest of the world in terms of anti-imperialism, he never became a mere chauvinist or cosmopolitan.[31] Accordingly, while the May 4 New Culture Movement is generally said to have been destructive of China's native cultural

a liberal Japanese intellectual whose book *Imperialism* (*Teikokushugi*) had been translated into Chinese in 1895.

[31] In order to incorporate his fierce nationalism into his vision of the revolution to come, Li subsequently developed the curious notion of a "proletarian nation". The theory was that economic changes leading to the impoverishment of China resulted from outside forces, while those in the Western nations arose from internal causes. Hence the suffering of the Chinese people under world capitalism was worse than that of the Western proletariats, who were oppressed only by their indigenous capitalists. Thus "the whole country has gradually been transformed into a part of the world proletariat". In other words, China as a nation had become a revolutionary class, embodying revolutionary ideas, and therefore qualified to participate in the world proletarian revolution even though its own proletariat was almost non-existent. Although the roots of this kind of thinking were embedded in the ancient concept of China as the centre of the world, Li Dazhao, unlike later right-wing, ex-Marxist ideologues, did not include bureaucrats, "evil gentry" and Chinese compradores representing foreign interests among the ranks of Chinese proletarians. Insisting that -China's internal class struggle be intensified, he condemned Chinese capitalists as fiercely as he did foreign ones, and consistently attacked warlords and landlords although they were theoretically part of the "Chinese proletarian nation". Nevertheless, the contradictions showed through. One result was the massacre of Beijing-Hankou railway workers in February 1923 by the warlord Wu Peifu, with whom Li, in charge of organizing labour in north China on behalf of the CCP, had reached an 'agreement".

traditions, Li displayed a somewhat different attitude. With regard to the criticism of Confucius, for example, Li advocated the overthrow not of Confucius himself but of the power bestowed on him by the idolatry of generations of rulers. ('Natural Ethics and Confucius')

These points presented problems for the anarchists. They too had voiced their opposition to the foreign powers' invasion of China, but in their case, since it stemmed from their abstract position of resistance to all arbitrary power, it never developed into straightforward national sentiment. From their standpoint, naturally, such things as race and tradition did not even merit consideration. The Reality Society's *Notes on Liberty*, for example, declared its rejection of such concepts as 'patriotism' and 'national essence' (Issue no. 2, 'Revolution and Conservatism') . In the Liu Sifu Commemoration Issue of *Progress*, too, we read:

> Happily, not only did Liu Sifu not manifest the typical characteristics of Chinese civilization; on the contrary, he fervently hated them, and by overcoming them managed to preserve the spirit and the dignity of anarchism. ('The Reason for Publishing a Liu Sifu Commemoration Issue')

Although many other factors entered into it, this was surely a major reason why anarchism as an ideology, unable to adapt to the revolutionary ferment enveloping all China, went into a sudden decline.[32]

[32] Idealistic as the anarchists, projections may sound, they have been borne out by developments in China since 1949. Basically their position was that, unless the entire structure of authoritarian conditioning in the Confucian canon was torn down and a new I society built in its place, any revolution in China, particularly one carried through by a bolshevik party, would merely result in a despotism more sophisticated than ever before. In short, a revolution could only be as good as the forces that brought it about; an organization that behaved dictatorially, both internally and in its relations with other social forces, could never bring about a truly revolutionary, egalitarian society. Whatever they lacked in terms of concrete methods for bringing about a revolution in China, and however overoptimistic they may have been about the possibility of achieving cultural change in a short time, this crucial insight by the anarchists has only now begun to be given the recognition it deserves. The anarchists lost influence over the revolutionary process in China because, as well as refusing to espouse patriotism (meaning love of the nation-state, which anarchists distinguish from nationalism, meaning cultural or regional pride), they saw that China was not ready for a proletarian revolution and would suffer even more if one were imposed willy-nilly from above. Insisting on the need for social revolution before political revolution, however long it took, they therefore counselled consolidation of the revolutionary forces instead of expending them on useless putsches. As a result, they were submerged not only by the tide of anti-imperialism sweeping the world in the aftermath of World War I , but also by the revolutionary romanticism of the Leninists. The latter, by their slogans of "high tide of the working-class movement" and so on, succeeded in convincing many Chinese workers that the revolution was "just over the crest of the next wave". How many people would be swallowed up by the wave was evidently immaterial to them.

Nevertheless, as even a Chinese scholar has confirmed, anarchism left behind it one remarkable contribution to Chinese thought.[33] During the early years of World War I, as Germany's armies went from victory to victory, ideas like the following enjoyed a vogue in China:

> At the root of the world lies the will to live, and the struggle for existence forms the true core of evolution. States grow out of the will to live, while militarism is the extreme manifestation of the struggle for existence. In the past the great powers were constrained by mountains and seas, and contacts between them were rare. Each possessed its own territory and people, and, since their boundaries did not touch, conflicts between them were not violent. However, the modern age brought considerable easing of communication and increasingly frequent contact between the powers. As their economic systems also expanded, the struggle for existence grew accordingly more fierce. The end result was militarism, which sprang up to meet the demands of the time. The only way for nations of this age to protect their boundaries and their peoples is militarism. The only way to avoid- becoming the slaves of others is to take the road of militarism. The world today is a militaristic world. (*New Youth*, vol. 2 no. 3, Nov. 1916)

The theory of natural evolution imported into China since the late Qing period, as well as inspiring Liang Qichao's 'Theory of National Imperialism', had been highly stimulating for the nationalists of that period.[34] Under the conditions of May 4, however, by which time the Chinese people were suffering under the crushing burden of warlord rule, it naturally had the adverse effect of promoting feelings of inferiority and defeatism, and of encouraging a trend toward militarism which supported the warlords' attempts to impede the democratic movement. Ultimately, the variety of Social Darwinism that grew up in China, since it contained elements of both determinism and fatalism, in fact became an obstacle to the development of revolutionary theory. Li Dazhao's essay 'New Era' provided a critique of these problems:

> Up to now all the natural evolutionists have been telling us about the 'survival of the fittest': that the strong must prey on the weak; that the weak must sacrifice their right to life and happiness to preserve the position of the strong; that the strong must eat their fellows and the weak be eaten by them, etc. But today the fallacies of this argument have become abundantly

[33] This point is raised by the Chinese scholar Li Longmu in an article titled 'Comrade Li Dazhao and the Propagation of Marxism during the May 4 Period', carried in the magazine *Historical Research* (*Lishi yanjiu*) No. 5 (1957), page 12. (Nohara's note)

[34] Liang Qichao (1873–1929) was a historian, philosopher, journalist and politician active in the anti-Manchu movement and subsequently as leader of a reformist party after 1911. For a discussion of his significance, see Grieder 1981: Ch. 5. The importance of evolution theories for Chinese intellectuals in general is also discussed in the same book, especially on pages 148–52 and 245–8.

> clear. Biological evolution depends not on struggle but on mutual aid. If humanity desires life and happiness, we must love one another, not use force to exterminate one another.

Furthermore, as Germany's initial run of victories turned to defeats, and as revolution spread from Russia to Germany and then to Austria, Li saw the cast-iron proof of his case in the ongoing disintegration of the 'survival of the fittest' society which had been the original cause of the war.

The starting point for this new interpretation of evolution had been Kropotkin's 'theory of mutual aid'.[35] This is clear from Li's article 'Class Struggle and Mutual Aid' (*Weekly Critic* No. 29, July 6 1919), which also raised a new and quite separate problem. Li, as a Marxist, felt compelled to unify the principles of mutual aid with those of class struggle. In no way a pure Kropotkinist, he began with Marx's dictum that "all history to date is the reflection of class struggles", acknowledged the role played by class struggle in the pre-history of humanity, and proclaimed that the one racking the world at present was the last they would be required to undergo. Unless this last struggle was definitively carried through, however, the world of mutual aid of the proletariat, in which that principle would reach its highest expression, would not be reached. Moreover, Li asserted, even in the pre-historical period the evolution of the social fabric had been brought about by the moral dictates of mutual aid in conjunction with class struggle. The ideal society would therefore be attained by means of one final class struggle in tandem with an upsurge in the spirit of mutual aid — in other words, through a combination of material and spiritual remoulding.

Present-day Chinese scholars have attributed this standpoint to Li's so-called "dualism", on the grounds that his thinking had yet to be fully permeated with Marxism. However, in another article titled 'From Vertical Organization to Horizontal Organization' (*Emancipation and Reconstruction- Jiefang yu gaizao*, vol. 2 no. 2, Jan. 15 1920), we read that "vertical organization" -i.e. all organization based on exploiters and exploited, rulers and ruled-is created through force; while "horizontal organization", such as in China's case the various federations formed by students, teachers, merchants, workers, peasants, women and so on as a result of May 4, is created through love. Horizontal organization, the article continues, uses the spirit of mutual aid to resist vertical organization. To overthrow vertical organization is emancipation; to establish horizontal organization is reconstruction.

In saying that the *individuality* of every oppressed person would also be restored through the liberation struggle of horizontal versus vertical organization, as we noted earlier, Li Dazhao was displaying his reluctance to treat the problem of the individual separately from that of the organization, from that of the whole. That is, individuality too was to undergo ideological reconstruction so as to bring about the spirit of mutual

[35] Mutual aid and federalism had become key planks in the anarchists' platform by 1907. Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* had been published in 1902, and was soon translated into Chinese for serialization in the magazine *New Century*.

love based on class affinity: in other words, "all for one and one for all". Therefore, when he explained the meaning of reconstruction as the establishment of horizontal organization, he implied also ideological reconstruction. And so Li Dazhao's theory of 11 material change combined with ethical change", however rudimentarily developed, was an early hint of the thought reform movement later to become one of the most remarkable features of the Chinese revolution. With such a conception of individuality, needless to say, ideological reconstruction could not stop at mere closet enlightenment.

As a thinker, Li Dazhao was quite out of the ordinary. Spencer, Tolstoy, Kropotkin, perhaps even Dewey, all found a temporary lodging side by side with Marx within his mind. There was even a time when none of them could be easily singled out. This was what made Li stand out even among May 4 intellectuals. Neither-and this too was remarkable -could Li be labeled a mere haphazard, opportunist syncretist. By way of the May 4 Movement, Li Dazhao became aware that the task confronting the Chinese people ever more clearly with each passing day, that of striving for both national independence and democracy for the labouring poor, was closely connected with the fate of humankind and of the world at large.

At the risk of repetition we can put this another way: after absorbing the impact of the October Revolution in Russia, Li Dazhao then turned out, not a paean to Pure Marxism, but the idea of a "toilers' democracy" (see his article 'Victory of the Poor'). One might even say that this formed the very core of his thinking; any consideration of Li's post May 4 Political development must therefore take this idea into consideration. Li Dazhao, that is, from this new standpoint, became convinced that the age-old problem facing the Chinese people — national independence and prosperity — could be solved only in conjunction with a movement to liberate all of humankind.

On the basis of this conviction, Li Dazhao freely adapted and put to use any and all theories. For instance, in appraising the failure of the Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps, he did not advise total rejection of their programme, but merely pointed out the number of obstacles posed for such an experiment by the urban environment, and advised instead that it be tried out in the countryside. ('The Weakness of the Work-and-Learning Mutual Aid Corps in the Cities', in *New Youth*, vol. 7 No. 5, April 1 1920)[36] Unlike Hu Shi, Li took the Corps' experiment as a serious attempt to build the new society. Though one of the very first to initiate the study of Marxism, therefore, Li Dazhao did not assume its correctness from the start. Rather, while taking part-sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly-in practical activities addressed to national problems, and while simultaneously investigating other political doctrines, he began only gradually to lean towards Marxism.[37]

[36] Mutual aid and federalism had become key planks in the anarchists' platform by 1907. Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* had been published in 1902, and was soon translated into Chinese for serialization in the magazine *New Century*.

[37] Epilogue: early in 1927 the reactionary warlord then in control of Beijing, Zhang Zuolin, began a purge of radicals in the city. Li and others took refuge in the Soviet Embassy, from where Li continued

to issue radical polemics against the Chinese authorities. In April Zhang's soldiers raided the embassy and Li was arrested. He was executed by strangulation soon after.

Appendix

Huang Ai & Pang Renquan in Hunan

Huang Ai and Pang Renquan were products of the introduction of technical education to China during the 1910s, representing a new class of working intellectual quite different from the philosophical variety that had dominated traditional Chinese society. They were thus able to bridge the gap between mental and physical labour (as well as that between the practitioners of each kind of labour) much more easily than their predecessors had, and as a result became leading figures in the early Hunan labour movement. Huang, after graduating from the Jiazhong Technical School in Changsha, had gone to Tianjin to continue his education and there become involved in the May 4 agitation. Pang had remained in Changsha and had taken part in the successful popular movement to oust the bloodthirsty provincial warlord Zhang Jingyao.

While working in Changsha factories as technicians, both Huang and Pang had become involved with local anarchists. Later they organized a workers' reading society, which in November 1920 was formally reorganized into the Hunan Workers' Association. The founding meeting was attended by representatives from the printers, tailors, mechanics, foundry workers, dyers, miners, surveyors, rattan and pottery workers' guilds, though most of the original seven thousand members, at the outset at least, were technical students. In these early days, moreover, since local merchants wielded much more control over the Association's executive than the anarchists did, the organization fell far short of being a syndicalist union.

The struggle at the No. 1 Textile Mill in Changsha had first begun in March 1921, but had been easily bought off by the mill-owners. Indeed, over and above the struggle by the workers at the mill was a battle for control between Hunanese and non-Hunanese capitalists. Conditions at the mill were appalling: ten people slept to a small room in the dormitories, the walls of which, through a lack of toilets, were lined with piles of excrement. The food was inedible, beatings were frequent, and the pay was barely enough to live on. Several workers did indeed die on the job rather than ask for sick leave without pay. After the strike began in April, Huang Ai was arrested and hold in jail for a month, but the owners were forced to admit some of the strikers' complaints. Despite the limited nature of the victory won at this stage-which included few gains for the workers themselves — this was one of the first instances in China. of organized labour actually achieving some of its demands. Marxists all over the country, until

then concerned only with education and study of theory, began to prick up their ears. Among them was Mao Zedong.

Towards the end of 1921 a general movement began in Changsha to secure a bonus to offset reductions in pay or non-payment of wages. In January 1922 the mill workers demanded an extra month's salary. The management refused, the workers struck, and mill guards were palled in to disperse them. Two workers were killed in the melee, and when the others refused to call a halt to the strike warlord governor Zhao Hengti, a major shareholder in the mill, called in troops. After martial law was declared within the mill compound the workers began passive resistance, refusing to work, and finally the management asked Zhao to force a solution. Zhao promptly summoned Huang and Pang Renquan for "negotiations", but as soon as they arrived rested them and threw them into jail. They were executed before dawn the next day, and their heads were publicly displayed.

Although the Hunan Workers' Association was banned after this most of the strikers' demands were met. Non-Hunanese were oust from management positions and a New Year bonus was paid, yet conditions in the mill remained abysmal. Elite supporters of the union were given control over the mill ownership, and were thus able to sup press any hint of a revival of labour activity in Changsha until 1926.

From January to October 1921 the HWA published its own magazine, *The Workers* (*Laogong*). At this stage the union, though it led several actions in Changsha, did not favour a general strike, and the magazine reflected its moderate position. After October it was succeeded by the *Workers' Weekly* (*Laogong zhoukan*), in which Huang's and Pang's anarchist ideas were much more strongly reflected. Because of its radical position, however, the paper had to be distributed secretly to workers. From No. 14 on, after the suppression of the HWA, it was put out in Shanghai.

Following the Changsha tragedy the HWA's members scattered throughout the country, and various publications subsequently appeared dedicated to the memory of the two martyrs, including *Sacrifice of Blood* (*Xuezhong*) in Shanghai and *!!* (a double -exclamation mark) in Tianjin. In 1926, after the capture of Changsha by the armies of Jiang Jieshi's Northern Expedition, the HWA was revived and a new paper, *Resurrection* (*Fuhuo*), began to appear.

Huang's and Pang's deaths made them the Chinese labour movement's first martyrs, and tribute was paid to them from every quarter. Zhou Enlai, who had worked with Huang in Tianjin as a student organizer, wrote a special poem to their memory, and Li Dazhao wrote an article praising their role as "pioneers of the working class". Mao Zedong also added his voice. In later years, however, Mao was to be less charitable towards the pair, claiming many of their successes for himself. Relating his life story to Edgar Snow in 1936, he described the Hunan events as follows, and his version was faithfully transcribed in Snow's *Red Star Over China*.

> In May 1922, the Hunan party, of which I was then secretary, had already organised more than twenty trade unions among miners, railway workers,

municipal employees, printers and workers in the government mint. A vigorous labour movement began that winter... Most of the big mines were organised, and virtually all the students. There were numerous struggles on both the students' and workers' fronts. In the winter of 1922, Chao Heng-t'i ... ordered the execution of two Hunanese workers, Huang Ai and P'ang Yuan t him. ch'ing, and as a result a widespread agitation began against Huang Ai, one of the two workers killed, *was a leader of the rightwing labour movement*, which had its base in the industrial school students and was opposed to us, but we supported them in this case and in many other struggles. *Anarchists were also influential in the trade unions, which were then organised in an All-Hunan Labour Syndicate, but we compromised and through negotiation prevented many hasty and useless actions by them.* (stress added)

By this time, of course, the label "right-wing" when applied to labour unions or Politicians generally meant "anti-CCP", and "hasty" meant "before Leninist hegemony was achieved".

References

Bernal, Martin, 1976a. *Chinese Socialism to 1907.* Ithaca, New York.

———— 1976b. 'Liu Shih-p'ei and National Essence', in Charlotte Furth ed., *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, Mass.), pp. 90–112.

—- 1968. 'The Triumph of Anarchism over Marxism, 1906- 1907', in Mary C. Wright ed., *China in Revolution: The First Phase 1900–1913* (New Haven, Conn.), pp. 97–142.

Chow Tse-tsung, 1963. *Research Guide to the May Fourth Movement.* Cambridge, Mass.

– 1960. *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modem China.* Cambridge, Mass.

Dirlik, Arif, 1989b. 'The Revolution That Never Was: Anarchism in the Guomindang', in *Modem China* vol. 15, no. 4 (October 1989), pp. 419- 62.

—- 1989a. *The Origins of Chinese Communism.* Oxford University Press.

—— 1986. 'Vision and Revolution: Anarchism in Chinese Revolutionary Thought on the Eve of the 1911 Revolution', in *Modem China* vol. 12 no. 2 (April 1986), pp. 121–61.

—- and Edward Krebs, 1981. 'Socialism and Anarchism in Early Republican China', in *Modem China* vol. 7 no. 2 (April 1981), pp. 117–51.

Furth, Charlotte, 1976. 'The Sage as Rebel: The Inner World of Chang Pinglin', in Charlotte Furth ed,, *The Limits of Change,* pp. 113–50.

Grieder, Jerome B., 1983. *Intellectuals and the State in Modem China: A Narrative History.* New York, The Free Press.

Krebs, Edward Skinner, 1977. *Liu Ssu-fu and Chinese Anarchism, 1905- 1915.* University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor and London.

Lang, Olga, 1967. *Pa Chin and his Writings: Chinese Youth Between the Two Revolutions.* Cambridge, Mass.

Meisner, Maurice, 1967. *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism.* Cambridge, Mass.

Ono Kazuko, 1989. *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850–1950.* Edited by Joshua A. Fogel. Stanford.

Price, Don. C., 1974. *Russia and The Roots of the Chinese Revolution, 1896- 1911.* Cambridge, Mass.

Rankin, Mary B., 1975. 'The Emergence of Women at the End of the Ch'ing', in Marjory Wolf and Roxane Witke eds., *Women in Chinese Society* (Stanford), pp. 40˜66.

Scalapino, Robert A. and George T. Yu, 1961. *The Chinese Anarchist Movement.* Berkeley.

Schwarcz, Vera, 1986. *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919.* Berkeley.

Schwartz, Benjamin L, 1967. *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao.* New York.

Spence, Jonathan D., 1982. *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895–1980.* New York.

Witke, Roxane, 1975. 'Chiang Ch'ing's Coming of Age', in Wolf and Witke eds., *Women in Chinese Society,* pp. 169–92.

Shimada Kenji, 1990. *Pioneer of the Chinese Revolution: Zhang Binglin and Confucianism.* Translated by Joshua A. Fogel. Stanford.

Although not cited in the Commentary, the following volumes were also consulted: Jean Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919–1927.*

Stanford, 1968; and Benjamin I. Schwartz ed., *Reflections on the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium.* Cambridge, Mass., 1973.

Nohara Shirõ
Anarchists and the May 4 Movement in China
January 1975

Momoyama Gakuin University Library, Japan:
<stars.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/7177/files/KJ00004276158.pdf> &
<libcom.org/library/anarchists-may-4-movement-china>
Translated by Philip Billingsley.