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The twentieth-century Chinese anarchist movement

It might seem odd for a book on Chinese anarchism to devote only one chapter to the early twentieth-century anarchist movement in China, which began separately at the turn of the last century among Chinese student groups in Tokyo and Paris, respectively, and continued in China itself after the 1911 revolution until it was gradually eclipsed by Marxist–Leninism in the 1920s. First, given the rather extensive scholarship on this movement both in and outside of China,¹ and second, the limited relationship of that movement to either premodern Daoist anarchism or to the dissident Marxists whose critique will be labeled “neo-anarchist” in later chapters, that early twentieth-century movement lies largely outside the scope of this book, with two different but notable exceptions that are the focus of this chapter.

For the most part the early twentieth-century Chinese anarchists adopted the themes of their European and American counterparts, especially concerning the need for a social revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and to establish social and economic equality within an industrial, modern, but communal society, also to be accomplished through establishing experiments such as work–study movements where people would combine intellectual work with manual labor. The modern Chinese anarchists also, of course, proclaimed what this book terms as the minimal essence of the anarchist critique—the idea that the state is harmful and unnecessary and rules for itself when it can. As with their Western counterparts, however, the Chinese anarchists were often contradictory on this point when they called for coercive, violent revolution and when many of them ended up acquiescing one way or the other to state authority in their later careers. For Chinese anarchists as for anarchists in other countries, this work argues, it is

their departure from the minimal essence of the anarchist critique that made it easier for people who continued to identify as anarchists to cooperate eventually with various types of state authority. The two different issues within the modern Chinese anarchist movement that we need to examine also highlight this departure from the basic anarchist critique.

First we need to examine why there was such a limited influence from traditional Chinese anti-statist ideas, including especially Daoism, on the modern Chinese anarchist movement. Did the negative attitude of most members of that movement toward Daoism really reveal limits or weaknesses in Daoist anarchism—especially whether it was truly opposed to all state authority—or instead did their attitude reflect biases related to modern faith in “scientific” socialism that itself may reveal too much faith in authority even among self-styled anarchists? Second, we need to examine the debates between anarchists and Marxist–Leninists that broke out in China in the 1920s, both in order to understand the possible negative lessons Mao Zedong drew from those debates, which we will examine further in the next chapter, and to understand why Marxist dissidents in the PRC, even when they utilized what we will label in the last two chapters as “neo-anarchist” critiques of the state, had to take pains to disassociate themselves from anarchism (even if at points, as we will see in the last two chapters, they did acknowledge a similarity or even debt to anarchism).

Looking Back: Daoism and the Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Anarchist Movement

Most of the early twentieth-century Chinese anarchists, even if they acknowledged the “anarchist impulse” in the DDJ and the *Zhuangzi*, nevertheless viewed Daoism, with its emphasis on *wuwei* (which they took to mean inaction) as a prescientific, escapist philosophy of individual transcendence that provided little to no guide for revolutionary action. As Li Shizeng, a leader of the Chinese anarchists studying in Paris in the first decade of the twentieth century, put it,

Anarchism advocates radical activism. It is the diametrical opposition of quietist nonaction. Anarchism does not only advocate that imperial power does not reach the self, it also seeks to make sure that it does not reach anyone else.²

Furthermore, though Li did accept that Daoism had some commonalities with anarchism, nevertheless, given that the ancient Daoists did not have the benefit of modern scientific advances, he believed that,

... naturally what [Lao Zi and other ancient sages] had to say is not fully relevant to events that are occurring several thousand years later ...³

Likewise, for Wu Zhihui, another leader of the Paris group, all traditional thought and religion, though perhaps valuable in their day, have been made worthless as a result of modern evolution. Against those who would find transcendental ideas of selflessness and fraternity in traditional Christian and Buddhist values that could be used to reform society, Wu responded,

Selflessness and fraternity are the natural virtues of humankind and the seeds of world evolution ... [Now that the world is] relatively civilized, most people believe in good morality and so agree on selflessness and fraternity. The beliefs of ancient people have nothing in common with those of today. The anarchists have no need to yield one iota.⁴

Similarly, Shifu—the influential leader of the anarchist movement in China itself from the time of the 1911 revolution until his death in 1915—despite his own influence from Buddhist practices “vigorously denied” any connection of Daoism and Buddhism to anarchism.⁵

The chief exception to this negative view of Daoism among the early twentieth-century anarchists was Liu Shipei, the leader of the Chinese anarchists in Tokyo from 1907 until 1910. Given his later career, however, by his negative example he may serve as the exception who proves the rule about the lack of influence of Daoism on twentieth-century Chinese anarchists, or even perhaps as the person who by his negative example led other anarchists to reject Daoism as true anarchism. Liu began his career as a rather typical Confucian scholar and would-be bureaucrat who continued to admire Confucian and Daoist thinkers for their supposed ideals of laissez-faire government even after he became an anti-Manchu nationalist revolutionary after 1903 and an anarchist after 1907. In the poems he wrote between 1902 and 1906 just before moving to Tokyo, Liu took up Buddhist and Daoist themes of the transience and emptiness of the material world and the need to transcend the self and attain oneness with the cosmos.⁶ During his anarchist period, Liu expressed his view that Lao Zi was the father of Chinese anarchism and that ancient Chinese society was inherently anarchistic, since it was supposedly mostly free of central state control due to the influence of the “non-interference” policy of both Daoism and Confucianism. In addition, he also pointed to the ancient Chinese advocates of an egalitarian agrarian utopia such as Xiu Xing to say that China had its own libertarian socialist tradition.⁷ During his anarchist period Liu rediscovered the Daoist anarchist tract of Bao Jingyan, whom Liu viewed as an anti-militarist who called for the destruction of the whole principle of rulership and who attacked the distinction between rich and poor, thus for Liu showing that Daoism had anarcho-communist and not just philosophical anarchist roots.⁸

While seemingly providing more evidence for the point of the first part of this book concerning the anarchist nature of Daoism, the lesson that many scholars of anarchism and anarchist sympathizers may draw from the direction Liu took in his later career is that of the weaknesses and contradictions of any modern anarchism based on Daoist and other premodern philosophies. In 1908, Liu returned to China, where he turned very conservative, supporting the late, decaying Qing dynasty regime that he had previously so opposed, even serving under the Qing official Duan Feng as he moved from one post to the other, including in Sichuan province where Duan suppressed republican revolutionaries in late 1911. After the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, Liu served under the warlord Yan Xishan and through him came to support and join the government of Yuan Shikai, the former Qing dynasty general who extracted the reward of being named president of the republic as the price for going over to the republican side but who nevertheless started to move toward declaring himself the emperor of a new dynasty in his last years in office. After Yuan's death in 1915 Liu returned to the purely academic realm where he was mostly apolitical, though he did take part in a journal that opposed the prevailing New Culture era radicalism up till his death in 1919.⁹

Even before his return to his conservative roots, Liu was more in sympathy with the anti-materialist, anti-urban egalitarian ideals of Tolstoy than with the pro-science (if not scientistic) attitudes of the Paris anarchists,¹⁰ though he was never a total primitivist and did think the future anarchist society could achieve a high economic–technological level.¹¹ Nevertheless, beginning in his anarchist period, Liu's anti-capitalist and egalitarian beliefs led to an “ambivalent attitude” that laid the seeds of a conservative utopianism opposed to Western modernity based on economic–industrial technological development if that modernity meant the growth of socioeconomic inequality and modern bureaucratic government. Once he lost hope for the possibility for immediate revolution, he believed that China's past agrarian ideal, even if it was very backward economically, was preferable to Western “material civilization.”¹² As the historian Yang Fang-yen cogently summarizes,

In Liu's pleas for anarchist utopia, his agrarian nostalgia was wrapped up in the apologetic rhetoric of the “advantage of backwardness” and transposed into a defense of China's pioneering role in the world anarchist revolution. In his advocacy of “preserving the old,” by contrast, this nostalgia reasserted itself as a reactionary but no less utopian attempt to return to the past.¹³

Once he lost faith in the immanence of social revolution in China, a critic of Daoism as anarchism could argue, Liu's Daoist–Buddhist beliefs helped him to justify a shift from anarchism to a nihilistic acceptance of the state and even to a willingness to accept political office, similar to the path Wu Nengzi

took nearly a 1,000 years previously. In sum, Liu's path from anarchism to reactionary monarchism would seem to seriously discredit Daoist anarchism, or at the very least, to undermine the anarchist cause in providing fodder for its critics and enemies.

Indeed, the seminal Chinese Marxist and early CCP leader Chen Duxiu in his debates with the anarchists in the early 1920s did not hesitate to attack anarchism "as a reflection of intellectual and behavioral habits rooted in Daoism." As Edward Krebs summarizes Chen's argument,

anarchism fostered a lazy and undisciplined sort of free thinking . . . which had as its chief cause the "nihilist thought and laissez attitude" of Daoism. As a result, the anarchism so popular among [Chinese] youth "is certainly not a thoroughly western anarchism," but rather "a revival of the principles of Laozi and Zhuang Zi, a Chinese-style anarchism."¹⁴

For Chen, the passive Daoist "irresponsible individualism" of these self-labeled "Chinese-style anarchists" led to lazy, dissipated, unlawful, libertine behavior that would only result in people "taking vows, going mad, and committing suicide."¹⁵ Chen charged that those "Chinese-style anarchists" who opposed centralized state authority as not fitting China's national character were only too similar to Yuan Shikai and other strongmen who called for a new type of government fitting the Chinese national character, and thus anarchists would only help China achieve such reactionary authoritarian rule. The "nihilists" among the Chinese anarchists, Chen contended, were only "low grade anarchists" with no principles at all, who included "parliamentarians, bureaucrats, opium addicts, jailers, thieves, and charlatans."¹⁶ Since, in response, Western-influenced Chinese anarchists were quick to deny that they were passive nihilists and escapists and that anarchism was quite capable of organizing and leading a mass movement to build a modern society, they felt the need to distance themselves from Daoism.¹⁷

As we have seen throughout the previous chapters, by no means does all Daoist anarchism have to lead to individualist nihilism or escapism. Only when such Daoist-influenced thinkers came to reject the existence of a unified whole, we concluded, did they fall prey to nihilism and acquiescence with state power, as in the second and third generations of *qingtian* intellectuals at the end of the Han dynasty and Wu Nengzi during the chaos of the mid-ninth century CE. Certainly in the current "post-modernist" age where faith in the ability of science and technology to solve all of the world's problems has reached a low ebb, one does not have to automatically denigrate premodern political thought as obsolescent or irrelevant. Within the argument presented in the first part of this book, one could attribute Liu's conservative turn not to his Daoist anarchism per se but to his own lack of confidence in Daoist principles of a spontaneous order underlying the whole.

Furthermore, all kinds of anarchists could and did take the path of collaborating with various authoritarian governments, including even modern Chinese anarchists who rejected Daoism and claimed to embrace materialism and modern science, such as Wu Zhihui, who ended up joining the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) government. It would be all too easy to join other Chinese anarchists and denounce such actions as opportunist and hypocritical, but in fact some anarchists often may take such actions out of a failure to recognize that the key point of anarchism is its view of state autonomy. Wu Zhihui seemed to have greatly valued his own experience in France on a work-study program and agreed to work with the Guomindang to the extent that it would back his schemes for expanding such programs in the future.¹⁸ In other words, he may have valued modern anarchism's stress on socioeconomic equality over its critique of the state, thereby gradually opening himself up to the path of acquiescence to state power. Despite any such sincere and/or principled reasons for compromise with authority, Chinese anarchists who acquiesced to various types of authoritarian rule, including especially anyone who claimed inspiration from Daoism such as Liu Shiwei, helped Chen's argument and ultimately served to discredit anarchism in China, even if there was accommodationist behavior on all sides, including among some Chinese Marxists who, like many political actors, were certainly not immune to self-serving authoritarian actions. Of course the anarchists were quick to respond to criticism from Chen and other Marxists, which led to rather vigorous debates between the two types of revolutionaries in the early 1920s, debates we now examine.

Looking Ahead: The Debates Between Anarchists and Marxists in the 1920s

It is important to examine these debates, not only in order to understand Mao's possible negative influence from anarchism that we will examine in Chapter 6, but also in order to see why anarchism became such a pejorative label in the PRC, which will help provide the background for the denunciations of anarchism in the PRC examined in Chapter 7 and to see why Chinese Marxist thinkers using what this book will term "neo-anarchist" critiques of the state had to take pains to try to protect themselves from being denounced as anarchists, as we will see in Chapters 8 and 9. This debate also relates directly to this book's prime contention of the minimal essence of anarchism. After all, the Chinese anarchist response to Marxist-Leninism, when that rival doctrine entered China in the years following the Bolshevik revolution, followed the anarchist critique of Marxism elsewhere, which since the days of Bakunin has focused primarily on the main anarchist critique of the state.

The first Chinese anarchist to criticize Marxism in print seems to have been Huang Lingshuang, who wrote an article criticizing Marxism in 1919, before its Leninist variant entered China.¹⁹ Though praising Marx for some of his economic theories, he criticized him heavily on other grounds, most especially for the limits of his theory of the state. For Huang, not just the capitalist state, but any state “is organized solely for the protection of the privileges and property of the few,” while the tyranny of the Marxist state in particular, following Kropotkin, if “endow[ed] with even more power such as control of the land, mines, railways, banks, insurance” will be even harsher and will provide no guarantee of a new Napoleon on Yuan Shikai arising.²⁰

The main debate between the rival anarchist and Marxist camps began in late 1920 and early 1921, around the time of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and for the most part remained civil in tone since there were still many anarchist or anarchist-influenced activists in the CCP ranks and both sides still had some hope of cooperation in organizing workers in the cities. First in secret criticism of anarchists in the new CCP journal the *Communist* (*Gongchandang*), writers argued that Communism was superior both in carrying out class struggle through centralized organization and in economic production through a centralist (*jizhong*) approach. Without the use of state power, another writer argued, through a dictatorship of laborers it would be impossible to create socialism in a backward society such as China as well as to defend socialism against its enemies.²¹

The open part of the debate began with a lecture that the CCP cofounder Chen Duxiu gave during his visit to the southern city of Guangzhou in January 1921, reprinted in the joint anarchist-Marxist journal *The Guangzhou Masses* (*Guangzhou Qunbao*) that then printed replies from Chen's former student, the anarchist Ou Shengbai. *Voice of the People* (*Minsheng*)—Shifu's anarchist newspaper that was revived by his followers after his death—reprinted Ou's part of the debate, and the whole exchange was reprinted in the national magazine *New Youth* (*Xin Qingnian*) in August of the same year. Ou tried to revive the debate in 1922 when he sent an essay from abroad to an anarchist publication in China.²²

While rather restrained in tone as each side was still trying to convince the other to come to its side, the heart of this first part of the Marxist-anarchist debate in China was over the issue of individual freedom versus group life and whether or not coercion was a necessary part of social existence. Chen argued that given its stress on individual freedom and voluntary compliance, anarchism fundamentally lacked the capacity both to wage revolution successfully and to maintain power after the revolution. “Except for the individual who escapes from society, there is no absolute freedom [*jiedui ziyou*] and no capacity to put anarchism into practice.”²³ Based on the success of the Bolshevik revolution, Chen argued that organized, centralized power was needed to overthrow imperialism, while anarchist reliance

upon separate, atomized units of undisciplined men could not advance the revolution. Even if somehow anarchists could set up Kropotkin-style free federations of communes instead of Lenin's dictatorship of the proletariat, the capitalists would soon mount a comeback, thus, to Chen, explaining why anarchists were considered the good friends of capitalism.²⁴ Anarchists were too optimistic about human nature and too pessimistic about all things political, and since some men were evil and reactionary and even good people could not be reached by education in the capitalist era, rule by virtue and education alone were unrealistic.²⁵ Trying to rely on the public will as found in town hall-style meetings and voluntary associations would not work given the emotionalism of ignorant masses in the current corrupt, backward conditions of the Chinese people.²⁶ Anarchism would also not be capable of building a modern economy but was based on romanticized notions of individualism and anti-industrial society that would return humans to primitivism and tribalism instead of building large-scale industry, for which centralized organization and control were necessary.²⁷

Ou's response was that anarchism was not based on rampant individualism but instead on voluntary association (*lianhe*) through free contracts in which there would be an organic relationship between individual and society, where a more flexible "public will" (*gongyi*) would help the group function, as opposed to coercive and unchanging public laws. Anarcho-communists in fact were not opposed to group life; instead they only opposed the despotism of the group over the individual.²⁸ As Ou put it, showing great influence from Kropotkin,

We depend on society for our survival and the individual is a member of society;

thus in order to pursue individual liberty, we should first pursue society's liberty . . .

The individual liberty that ignores the common good is not liberty but rather the enemy of liberty.²⁹

Anarchists were not against violence in order to achieve revolution, Ou argued, but were only against institutionalized power and law that would inevitably result in new types of oppression. As opposed to free contract between individuals, rule by law only aided the interests of the ruling class and failed to prevent officials from robbing the people.³⁰ Though there was much ignorance in modern society due to capitalism, with scientific progress the dominance of emotionalism would fade and people would become more rational in time.³¹ Ou did accept that certain "reactionary individuals" who did not respond to sincere argument could be controlled with ostracism or banishment from the community, the "same way we treat capitalists,"³² a response that allowed Chen to reply that "public will" could be more akin to the despotism of the tribe over the individual in primitive society and

to argue that contracts were in effect just another type of law that would be ineffective and meaningless without the backing of more clearly defined “abstract laws.” Ou’s allowing for some form of social coercion of the individual opened him up to Chen’s rebuttal and perhaps shows the problem that critics of anarchism see in the social coercion that would remain in anarchist society. Despite this weakness, Ou did employ the main anarchist theory of the state to criticize Marxist socialism as “state collectivism.” In this system, “with the state as the owner of the means of production and the workers as its laborers,” “. . . the bureaucrats are the masters, the workers their slaves. Even though they advocate a state of the dictatorship of the workers, the rulers are bureaucrats who do not labor, while workers are the sole producers.”³³

Other anarchists in *Minsheng* also responded to Chen’s critique within the basic anarchist theory of the state by arguing that when Marxists justified advocating a “people’s dictatorship” in place of voluntary association supposedly because “human nature is not developed to its fullest” they demonstrate a “great contradiction,”³⁴ which presumably refers to the classic problem of how to control the controllers if all people cannot be trusted. These *Minsheng* writers were in effect raising the question of what would stop the growth of a new state elite ruling for itself once one accepts the need for “temporary” dictatorship. The *Minsheng* writers also took issue with the stress on class alone as the basis for revolution, noting that state authorities often used the power of religion in past eras and nationalism in the contemporary era as ways to get the masses to fight each other.³⁵ Another *Minsheng* writer argued that the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat was so vague that it lost all meaning. It would make as much sense as to call for all women of the world to unite to overthrow the rule of men and replace it with a dictatorship of women. “If you say this is a ridiculous approach, the Marxist method is the same except that what it proposes is even more remote . . . what we must remember is that if we wish to save society from perishing, we cannot use methods that are doomed!”³⁶ Again, this “doomed” method presumably refers to the basic anarchist idea of the state as a parasite on society that will destroy its host and thus itself in the long run.

As Arif Dirlik notes, the main differences in the Chen–Ou debate were that Chen “believed that individual rights must be sacrificed to the interests of the group” and that the revolution had to be achieved through coercion, while Ou believed that the revolution could be achieved through education and that to use coercion would “nip in its bud the promise of a good society.” In what in retrospect was obviously a very ill omen for the future, Chen argued that while laborers should have the right to strike under capitalism, since all production was for the equal benefit of all members of society in communist society there would be no need to strike as that would be the equivalent of workers striking against themselves.³⁷ This belief goes to the heart of the Marxist failure to see the difference between state and society

after the revolution, where the state indeed could act against the interests of the proletariat. This failure in turn reveals why the twentieth-century Chinese anarchists, like their anarchist compatriots elsewhere, distrusted the Marxist–Leninist emphasis on economic class alone as the basis for revolution.

The debate became more heated after 1922 when, influenced by Emma Goldman, many Chinese anarchists—some of whom had met her and/or corresponded with her personally and most of whom were aware of her writings criticizing Bolshevism after her departure from the Soviet Union—stepped up their criticism of their Marxist rivals. Chinese anarchists were also influenced by criticisms of the Bolshevik revolution by Peter Kropotkin’s widow and by the Georgian anarchist and associate of Kropotkin Varlaam Cherkezov, from whom they learned of the suppression of the anarchists in the Soviet Union and especially of the brutal suppression of the Kronstadt uprising, knowledge which sharpened their polemics and focused their criticism more on the Marxist–Leninist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat.³⁸ In addition, the alliance of the young CCP with the Nationalists, which began in 1923 and was formalized in the “First United Front,” gave anarchists ammunition to attack “Bolshevism” in China.

Some Chinese anarchists, following Ou Shengbai’s earlier argument, attacked Bolshevik socialism as “state collectivism” that would not achieve true communism but only replace individual capitalist ownership with state ownership. Others, following Cherkezov, attacked the “Jacobinist” tradition within Marxist socialism that similarly failed to break with the methods of bourgeois politics that Lenin revived.³⁹

The Chinese anarchists’ biggest complaint about Soviet-style socialism was over the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Huang Lingshuang, in a letter from the United States published in 1923, noted that Kropotkin’s widow had told him of Kropotkin’s view before his death that Bolshevism was not true socialism since true socialism could not be built upon centralized state power, reinforcing Huang’s conclusion that the “‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ was only a mask for a dictatorship of intellectuals in the Communist party.”⁴⁰ Similarly, another Chinese anarchist writer debating the leader of the Chinese communist students in Paris and future PRC Premier, Zhou Enlai, argued that the dictatorship of the proletariat, given the centralized method of organization of Marxist–Leninism, was in reality nothing but “a dictatorship of leaders of the Communist party.”⁴¹ As the Sichuan anarchist Lu Jianbo summarized the argument, “facts tell us: the inner lining of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of a single party—the Leninist party. The Soviets have already been captured by bureaucratic socialists.”⁴²

Another young Sichuan anarchist, writing under his given name [Li] Feigan, who was to translate several classic works of Western anarchism into Chinese and who would become a world famous novelist under his pen name Ba Jin (formed from parts of the transliterated names of Bakunin

and Kropotkin), continued Jianbo's critique of the Marxist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat in one of several articles he himself wrote and which were critical of Bolshevism. Ba Jin took up the core anarchist argument that one group can never rule in the name of another. As he wrote,

the bourgeoisie toppled the feudal regime and seized political power, after which this nearly created an autocratic system [*ducaizhi*] controlled by a minority of the bourgeoisie. If it were truly the case that a dictatorship [*zhuanzheng*] of a minority of the bourgeoisie could represent the interests of the collective bourgeoisie, how come within the bourgeoisie there still occur incidents of struggle for political power?

For this reason Marx's [dictatorship of the] proletariat is no different from what he calls the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. That is to say, it's a minority dictatorship. A true dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible to create. Truly, what the Russians have done [quoting Jianbo] is to hang out "the sign of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the substance is still a dictatorship by a minority of Communists. The real workers still live in the state of slavery. The interests of the proletariat cannot be represented by the Communist Party . . ."

. . . Therefore [Jianbo] says that the Communists really are nothing more than a so-called bourgeoisie and that which the Communists call a proletariat are nothing more than a slight mutation on the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

As Ba summarized his own argument,

if we recognize that one class oppressing another class is not correct and that this is sufficient to harm the happiness of humanity and impede humanity's progress, then we ought to oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie used their political authority to oppress the proletariat and that was wrong, but should the proletariat rise up and oppress the bourgeoisie and commit the same offense? "If a majority of people direct a minority of people then they themselves become perpetrators of violence; they themselves become oppressors [and] they negate other people's rights." These are the words of A[lb]ert Parsons, who was from the Chicago workers' movement, which he said in court [in his trial for the Haymarket bombings].

. . . The social revolution of the proletariat is a revolution liberating the proletariat. It's a revolution that topples control of people by others. Now if in the first step you seize political power, then you become one who controls other people and you put yourself in the position of one who ought to be overthrown. Would one then have the gall to come forward and work for revolution?⁴³

In other words, following Bakunin's criticism of Marx, Ba here implies that the workers in the post-revolutionary State would quickly become ex-workers who would betray the revolution.⁴⁴ As we will see in Chapter 7, Ba Jin, who remained in China after the communist revolution, would later suffer several rounds of denunciation up to 1949 for his loyalty to the cause of anarchism.

The early twentieth-century Chinese anarchist movement, like the anarchist movement internationally, started to lose out to the communists in the later 1920s and 1930s not only due to its famous problems in organization, which the Chinese anarchists increasingly bemoaned themselves, but also due to its failure to make peace with nationalism and the desire of most Chinese revolutionaries to build up a strong modern economy, which many at the time identified with centralized, hierarchical organization. Nevertheless, given its earlier dominance over Marxism among radical intellectuals and trade union activists up to the 1920s, the Chinese anarchist movement would have profound effect on the Chinese Communist movement, many of whose members were originally anarchists, including Mao Zedong himself, as we will see in the next chapter. Most importantly, the anarchist critique of the state, especially in its Leninist form, would continue to haunt and taunt the Chinese Communists after 1949. In what could serve both as a companion to Bao Jingyan's denunciation of the tyrannical crimes of rulers divorced from the common people and as a prediction of the bloody course of communism in the PRC after 1949, one Chinese anarchist writing in 1923 argued that the Bolshevik emphasis on seizing political power led,

... those who consider themselves extraordinary in a period of brutality to arouse the ignorant masses to do battle for them; and when the struggle is over, they use the educated to devise a set of laws to bind the people, and train police and soldiers to massacre them. Ah! Power, power! People who have died cruel deaths throughout history, and the poor with their existence as beasts of burden, all have received your labor!⁴⁵

Thus, even at the moment it started to lose out to the Communists, the Chinese anarchist movement expressed most clearly the most powerful part of the anarchist idea, the fear that the state, even in a revolutionary movement whose original goal was to liberate the people, would inevitably start to rule for itself and thereby to oppress the people.

Notes

- 1 For a large, if necessarily still limited selection of the voluminous PRC studies of the Chinese anarchist movement, see Rapp, "Chinese Works on Anarchism in the People's Republic of China, 1949–2010," in Ruth Kinna (ed.), *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*. The leading English language

- monographs on the twentieth century Chinese anarchist movement consulted in this brief overview include Robert A. Scalapino and George T. Yu, *The Chinese Anarchist Movement*; Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture*; Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*; Edward Krebs, *Shifu: Soul of Chinese Anarchism*; and Yang Fang-yen, "Nation, People, Anarchy: Liu Shih-p'ei and the Crisis of Order in Modern China." Another comprehensive Western language source (German) is Gotelind Müller, *China, Kropotkin und der Anarchismus*.
- 2 Zhen (pseudonym for Li Shizeng), "Da Chee shi" (Response to Mr. Chee), 2, cited in Dirlik, 111–12.
 - 3 Ibid., 10, cited in Zarrow, 181.
 - 4 Wu Zhihui, "Tuigang renshu yi yi shijie guan" (Extending the Way of Humanity to Cure the World), 148, cited in Zarrow, 164.
 - 5 Krebs, 255, n. 27.
 - 6 Chang Hao, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*, 167–70, cited in Yang, 270.
 - 7 Liu Shiwei (under pseud. Shenshu), "Renlei junli shuo" (On the Equal Ability of Human Beings), 375–83, cited in Yang, 291, and Dirlik, 101–2.
 - 8 Liu, "Baosheng xueshu fawei" (The Subtleties of Master Bao's Scholarship), cited in Zarrow, 166–7.
 - 9 Yang, 296–300.
 - 10 Zarrow, 95–6; Dirlik, 102–3.
 - 11 Yang, 287.
 - 12 Ibid., 311–12, 320–1. Overall, Yang carries out the most penetrating analysis of Liu's "conservative turn" and how it was prefigured in his anarchism. See Yang, 294–341.
 - 13 Ibid., 312–13. Jing Meijiu, the "sole personal link" between Liu Shiwei's Tokyo group of Chinese anarchists and later anarchists in China proper during the early Republican period, and who would become a prominent anarchist writer and editor in the 1920s, in a 1912 lecture, perhaps influenced by Liu Shiwei, expressed sympathy for "utopian counter traditions" in China's past that pointed to an egalitarian agrarian ideal, and at one point even contemplated writing a short book (a project evidently never realized) that would "synthesize anarchism and the theories of Lao Zi." For Jing's link to Liu Shiwei's group, see Gotelind Müller and Gregor Benton, "Esperanto," 107; for Jing's unrealized project on Lao Zi, see his "Zuian" (Account of Crimes) in *Xinbai geming ziliao leipian* (Collection of Materials on the 1911 Revolution), 74, cited in Dirlik, 119–20. In the supplement *Xuehui* (Sea of Learning) to the newspaper *Guofengribao* (National Customs Daily) that Jing edited in the 1920s, the pseudonymous author Wuxu wrote one other article that referred to ancient precursors of anarchism, titled "Zhongguo gudai wuzhengfu zhuyi chao zhi yipie" (A Brief Look at Anarchist Currents in Ancient China), an article this author has been unable to locate but which is cited in Muller and Benton, "Esperanto," and in Muller, 491, n. 3.
 - 14 Chen, "Zhongguo shide wuzhengfu zhuyi" (Chinese-Style Anarchism), *Xin Qingnian* (New Youth) 9(1) (May 1921): 5–6, as summarized in Krebs, *Shifu*, 177; also see Zarrow, 226.
 - 15 Ibid., 177–8; also as summarized in Zarrow, 226.

- 16 Chen, "Xiapin de wuzhengfudang" (Inferior-grade Anarchists), 119–21, as summarized in Zarrow, 227; also cited in Krebs, *Shifu*, 177–8.
- 17 For example, see [Li] Feigan, "Wuzhengfu zhuyi yu shiji wenti" (Anarchism and Practical Problems), reprinted in Ge Maochun et al. (eds), *Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan* (Selection of Materials on Anarchist Thought), 830–8.
- 18 For the move of some Chinese anarchists to the Guomindang and to the right in general, see Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Chapter 7, "Revolution that Never Was: Anarchism in the Guomindang," 248–85; Zarrow, 196–208, and Ming K. Chan and Arif Dirlik, *Schools into Fields and Factories: Anarchists, the Guomindang, and the Labor University in Shanghai, 1927–1932*.
- 19 Huang, "Makesi xueshuo de piping" (A Critique of Marxist Theory), reprinted in Gao Jun et al. (eds), *Wuzhengfui zhuyi zai Zhongguo* (Anarchism in China), 295–300. A partial translation of this essay can be found in Graham, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas I*: 355–7.
- 20 Translated in Graham, 356; also see Krebs, "The Chinese Anarchist Critique of Bolshevism during the 1920s," in Roger B. Jeans (ed.), *Roads Not Taken: The Struggle of Opposition Parties in Twentieth Century China*, 207.
- 21 For the internal communist criticism of anarchism, see Dirlik, 207–14.
- 22 The original exchanges between Chen and Ou were republished in "Taolun wuzhengfu zhuyi," *Xin Qingnian*, 9(4) (August 1921) and reprinted again in Editorial Department, Xinqingnianshe (New Youth Society), *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji* (Collection of Discussions on Socialism), 97–154. Ou's last rejoinder, "Da Chen Duxiu junde yiwen" (Responding to Chen Duxiu's Doubts) was published in *Xuehui* (Sea of Learning) (Feb. 1923) and reprinted in Ge Maochun, Jiang Jun, and Li Xingzhi (eds), *Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan* (Selection of Materials on Anarchist Thought), 2: 658. English language summaries of the Chen-Ou debate can be found in Krebs, *Shifu*, 175–8; "The Chinese Anarchist Critique of Bolshevism," 209–13, Zarrow, 228–9; Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 213–19; *The Origins of Chinese Communism*, 234–45; and Scalapino and Yu, 55–9.
- 23 Chen, "Taolun wuzhengfu zhuyi," 5, translated in Zarrow, 229.
- 24 Chen, "Speaking on Politics," in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 1–16, as summarized in Scalapino and Yu, 55–6.
- 25 Chen, "Criticism of Socialism," in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 74–96, and "Another Answer by Chen Duxiu to Ou Shengbai," in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 119.
- 26 Ibid., 125, and "Chen Duxiu's Third Reply to Ou Shengbai," in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 137–8.
- 27 Ibid., 140–1, also cited in Zarrow, 229.
- 28 Ou, in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 97–101, cited in Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 215.
- 29 Ou, in "Taolun wuzhengfu zhuyi," 7, quoted in Zarrow, 229.
- 30 "Ou Shengbai's Answer to Chen Duxiu," in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 118, and "Another Reply to Chen Duxiu," in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 127–8.
- 31 Ibid., 119.
- 32 Ou, "Taolun wuzhengfu zhuyi," 18, quoted in Zarrow, 229.

- 33 Ou, "Da Chen Duxiu junde yiwen" (Answering Mr. Chen Duxiu's Doubts), *Xuehui* (Feb. 1923), reprinted in Ge Maochun et al. (eds), 658, translated in Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 224.
- 34 "Gao feinan wuzhengfu zhuyizhe" (Response to the Critics of Anarchism), and "Wuzhengfu gongchan pai yu jichan pai zhi qidian" (The Differences between Anarchist Communism and the Collectivists), *Minsheng* (Voice of the People), 30 (March 1921), cited in Krebs, *Shifu*, 178–9.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Krebs, 179, citing "'Jieji zhangzheng' he 'pingmin zhuangzheng' guo shiyong yu shehui geming ma?" (Are "Class Warfare" and "People's Dictatorship" Appropriate in Social Revolution?), *Minsheng*, 33 (July 1921): 5; reprinted in Ge Maochun, et al. (eds), *Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang*, 2: 587–90; also cited in Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 228.
- 37 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 217, and *The Origins of Chinese Communism*, 241, citing Chen in *Shehui zhuyi taolun ji*, 149–51.
- 38 For the later part of the anarchist-Marxist debates in China, see Zarrow, 225–6, Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 220–36, Krebs, *Shifu*, 185–8; "The Chinese Anarchist Critique," 214–17. Dirlik (220, 224–30) notes at length the influence of Cherkezov on the Chinese anarchists in the early to mid-1920s. One article published at the end of the decade showing such influence was by the novelist Ba Jin under his given name [Li] Feigan, "Makesi zhuyi pipan Chaierkaisuofu zuo" (Criticism of Marxism in the Works of Cherkezov).
- 39 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 225–6.
- 40 Dirlik, 222–3, citing Huang, "Lingshuang zhi mojun han" (A Letter from Lingshuang), in *Chunlei yuekan* (Spring Thunder Monthly), 110, 113.
- 41 Sanbo (pseudonym), "Iguo gongchan zhuyi shibaizhi yuanyin jiqi buqiude fangfa" (The Failure of Communism in Russia and the Way to Salvage It), reprinted in Ge Maochun et al. (eds), *Wuzhengfuzhui sixiang*, 2: 598, cited in Dirlik, 223.
- 42 [Lu] Jianbo, "Lun wuchan jieji zhuanzheng" (On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat), 1, cited in Dirlik, 223.
- 43 Li Feigan (Ba Jin), "Zailun wuchan jieji zhuanzheng" (Further Discussion of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat), 1–2, translated for this chapter by Daniel Youd; also cited in Dirlik, 222–3. See also, John Rapp and Daniel Youd (guest eds), "Ba Jin and the Anarchist-Marxist Debates in China" (forthcoming), which will include four of Ba Jin's articles written in the 1920s critical of Marxism and two articles from the PRC criticizing his anarchism.
- 44 Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (1873), reprinted in Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 330–1.
- 45 A An (pseudonym for Anarchist A?), "Wo suo xinyang de geming" (The Revolution I Believe In), *Wuyi yuekan*, reprinted in Gao Jun et al., *Wuzhengfu zhuyi zai Zhongguo*, translated in Krebs, "The Chinese Anarchist Critique," 215.