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Denunciations of anarchism in the PRC

Introduction

This chapter continues to examine the limits to genuine critiques of state autonomy in the PRC by analyzing denunciations of anarchism published in the official Chinese press from the early years of the regime to the contemporary era, utilizing a three line model of Leninist regimes, especially as presented by Edward Friedman. It should be noted at the outset that the PRC denunciations of anarchism are not in themselves very interesting and mostly blindly follow the critique of Marx and Engels of Proudhon and Stirner as representing the interests of the petite bourgeoisie, or small producers, mixed in with Lenin's denunciations of anarchism as an "infantile disorder" of "ultraleftism," as typified by Mikhail Bakunin, whom Lenin claimed was an opportunist perhaps only posing as a revolutionary.¹ Such denunciations almost always ignored, as did most Soviet critics, the claims of people like Bakunin to be socialist anarchists, and the claims of most anarchists after that date, most notably Peter Kropotkin, to be anarcho-communists equally interested as Marxist-Leninists, if not more so, in ending private property. It should also be noted that almost none of the people being denounced were really anarchists and that in numerous cases people condemning others as anarchists were themselves later denounced for the same reason.

However unoriginal and inaccurate these denunciations of anarchism were in practice, they are nevertheless worth examining for the confirmation they provide, both about the lack of any true quasi-democratic elements in Maoist thought or practice and the essential truth behind the charge of Party democrats that despite the major policy shifts and huge changes in society over time from the Mao to Deng and post-Deng eras, there is an essential continuity in the nature of China's Leninist Party-state. This

chapter will attempt to make the latter point without falling into the trap of viewing China's Leninist regime as an unchanging, "totalitarian" monolith by adapting Friedman's labels of "Stalinists" who emphasize socialism as the buildup of heavy industry through central planning and a command economy, "Maoists" who supposedly favor the use of ideological incentives to move toward communism without creating a huge bureaucratic state or reviving economic inequality, and "Titoists" who view socialism as the buildup of abundance of the proletariat and thus who would allow market reforms that tolerate limited inequality.² In fusing this model with labels borrowed from analyses of internal politics of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan under the old "1955" single party hegemonic system, one could posit that coalitions of mainstream and anti-mainstream elements of different lines often form, such as a Maoist-Stalinist coalition during the Cultural Revolution and a Titoist-Stalinist coalition in the early to mid-Deng years.³ After that point through the early years of the twenty-first century, the differences within the Party-state could be said to focus on degrees of market reform, and thus between moderate and radical Titoists, though as we will see in the postlude, Maoist and Stalinist elements in the Chinese Leninist state may be mounting a comeback.

Denunciations of Anarchism from 1957 to 1976

Denunciations of anarchism in the PRC can be traced back at least to the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957–8. Deng Xiaoping made note of the problem of anarchism in 1957 in his report at the end of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, where he concluded that among the "serious erroneous points of view" of a few "bourgeois intellectuals" (i.e. those who had dared to speak up during the Hundred Flowers Movement), were "... individualism, liberalism anarchy, egalitarianism and nationalism."⁴

In 1958, the Maoist Yao Wenyan helped begin his career by taking part in denunciations of the novelist Ba Jin (virtually the only real Chinese anarchist ever criticized in the PRC, and even then a former anarchist), who though no longer claiming to be the anarchist he was before 1949, as we saw in Chapter 5, did express mildly loyal criticism of the status quo during the Hundred Flowers period.⁵ In his article, Yao targeted anarchist themes in Ba Jin's early novel, *Miewang* (Destruction).⁶ As Ba Jin was still protected at this point by others in the Party hierarchy, Yao mostly couched his criticism in comradely terms, saying Ba had insufficiently repudiated his former anarchism in articles he had published since 1949, since the novelist had only called his early thought "limited," tried to defend anarchism of the Kropotkin variety as another version of communism that did not amount

to bourgeois individualism, and claimed that his novel *Destruction* was in favor of revolution and was not nihilistic. In response, Yao dissected the novel to argue that its anarchist hero did indeed express an “anarchist hopelessness” that amounted to a philosophy of “extreme individualism” opposed to leadership of the Party. Yao summed up the main lesson of his analysis of Ba Jin’s novel as the “especially harmful nature” of anarchist thought, which, whatever its claim of being revolutionary, in fact “uses individualism to resist collectivism” and “advocates extreme democratic transformation, opposes discipline, shows contempt for organizations, and fails to see the productive nature of physical laborers,” leading to a potential “destructive effect” on contemporary society if it were not thoroughly opposed. Though tame in comparison to later denunciations of Ba Jin in the Cultural Revolution, Yao’s critique can be seen as a shot against the bow of those who had challenged the Party in the Hundred Flowers period by calling for more openness and individual freedom. After expressing mild self-criticism in 1958 against this attack, including of his past anarchism, Ba Jin survived this assault and returned to prominence after the Great Leap Forward where he could again raise mild criticisms of the excesses of the regime and especially of the “literary bureaucrats” who had criticized him and other writers in the late 1950s, criticisms which only helped intensify the later assault on him during the Cultural Revolution.⁷

Before the Great Leap ended, however, and probably as part of the “Campaign against Right Opportunism” launched after the purge of Peng Dehuai in 1959, another brief round of denunciations of anarchism occurred. Most prominently, Lin Biao, who had replaced Peng as Minister of Defense, criticized “anarchism and egalitarianism” as part of the “temporary, partial interests of the small producers” in his denunciations of major deviations within the army.⁸

By far the most intensive criticisms of anarchism in the history of the PRC, however, occurred during the Cultural Revolution. Anarchism, as William Joseph points out in his exhaustive study, *The Critique of Ultra-Leftism in China*, represented only one, if perhaps the leading example, of “ultra-leftism” that was periodically if incompletely criticized during this period.⁹ Given the sheer volume and number of denunciations of anarchism in the Cultural Revolution era, only a small sample can be summarized in this chapter. Suffice it to say that both Stalinists and Maoists launched criticisms of anarchism in the early years of the Cultural Revolution, if for different reasons.

The Stalinists, and perhaps any closet Titoists who might have quietly survived, denounced the “chaos” of “great [or ultra or extensive] democracy” (*daminzhu*) at the outset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and revived these charges periodically from 1967 to 1969 to in effect charge that the Party Maoists had encouraged extra-Party “ultra-leftists” to push Mao’s critique of a “new bourgeoisie in the Party” to a point that threatened

continued state control of society. In February 1967, for example, when the Stalinists had gained a temporary ascendancy (in what was later termed by the Maoists, the “February Adverse Current”), an article in *Hongqi* revived the critique of anarchism in Engels’s “On Authority,” a work issued during Marx’s lifetime. Just as Engels criticized Bakunin’s followers for failing to see the essential authoritarian nature of socialist revolution and thus the need to maintain “the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie,” so too “some persons” in the Cultural Revolution used Mao’s call to seize power from the bourgeoisie in the Party to supposedly oppose all authority, a stance that, following the standard Marxist critique of anarchism, the *Hongqi* author found to be “an expression of the inherent bad characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie, an expression of anarchism.”¹⁰ This stance was perhaps reflected in the *Renminribao* editorial of April 26, 1967, “Anarchism is the Punishment of Opportunist Deviationists,” that found that “anarchism is looming up, dissolving the targets of our struggle and deflecting it from its normal direction.”¹¹

On the other hand, also during the Cultural Revolution, Maoists who favored continuing class struggle against “new bourgeois elements” in the Party could use anarchism as a whipping boy to prove their own truly leftist credentials and to protect themselves against Stalinist attacks. For example, when extra-Party Red Guard Maoists went too far for Mao and began to attack “bourgeois elements” in the People’s Liberation Army and to call for “suspecting all” as the “fighting slogan of great democracy,”¹² Yao Wenyuan, who by this time became perhaps the leading Maoist polemicist, known as “the Stick,” responded with a denunciation of one, perhaps mythical, extra-Party Maoist group, the “May 16 Corps,” as a “scheming counter-revolutionary gang” that spouts such slogans as “doubt everyone” and “oppose anybody” that appears only in the guise of ultra-Left anarchism but is in essence extremely Rightist.¹³ Yao tried to combine this anti-anarchist critique of extra-Party Maoists with denunciation of the fallen Party leader Tao Zhu for the same tendencies, even though Yao and the other inner Party Maoists otherwise criticized Tao for being too conservative, that is, as we might argue using the three line model, too much within the Stalinist camp.¹⁴ Likewise, Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, when called upon by Party elders to help rein in the Red Guards attacking the army and seizing weapons, denounced such groups for “factionalism,” which she charged was “a characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie and is mountain-topism, departmentalism and anarchism—very serious anarchism.”¹⁵

Mao himself, following Friedman, may not have been the best Maoist during this time as he shifted back and forth along policy lines as he saw fit and in order to keep his perceived Party rivals off balance. Thus, the Chairman first allowed the Maoist group that he created to push (rhetorically) for Paris Commune style mass democracy in 1966 while, as we saw in Chapter 6, he himself later denounced the Shanghai Commune in

1967 as “extreme anarchy, which is most reactionary” and “. . . detrimental to the interests of the people and against their wishes.”¹⁶ It was by using this statement of Mao that Stalinists in the Cultural Revolution could denounce Red Guard organizations as anarchist and imply that their Maoist supporters in the Party were anarchists as well, which in turn forced the inner Party Maoists to find extra-Party groups to denounce as anarchists, as with Yao and Jiang Qing. Thus inner Party Maoists could very easily both denounce anarchism and be denounced in turn as anarchists themselves. As the first such example, the leading Party Maoist Chen Boda could denounce anarchists as causing “splittism” and leading to the failure of unity if the revolutionary Left in 1967,¹⁷ while he himself became the major target of a campaign denouncing anarchism after his fall in late 1969 to early 1970. Evidently with the permission of Mao himself, in September of 1969 the top ideological organs of the Party-state launched a major national campaign against “bourgeois factionalism” and anarchism as part of preparing the country for a possible war with the Soviet Union,¹⁸ a campaign that continued into 1970–1 with Chen as the main, if unnamed, target of a campaign against “swindlers like Liu Shaoqi.”¹⁹ As Joseph notes, this campaign continued into 1972 when it merged into the first campaign against Lin Biao for his “leftist” errors.

This latter campaign featured articles in *Renminribao* in October 1972 criticizing the “swindlers” as opportunists who only posed as anarchists, “. . . not because they want to do away with all forms of government, but because they want to do away with the government of the dictatorship of the proletariat and replace it with a government of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie which they represent.”²⁰ This aborted campaign was perhaps the high point of criticism of anarchism in the Mao era and a precursor to the 1977 attacks on the Gang of Four as anarchists.

From the inner Party Marxist democrat Wang Ruoshui, whose thought we will examine in Chapter 9, we now know the inside story of the 1972 campaign, which he himself promoted.²¹ Even though, as Wang noted, remaining Maoists such as Yao Wenyuan themselves had earlier compared the “swindlers” to Bakunin’s “sabotage activities” against the First International,²² the leading Maoists at the top of the Party in 1972 feared that the main thrust of the initial campaign to criticize Lin Biao as an ultra-leftist was aimed at them (with good reason, one would think, considering the very recent campaign against Chen Boda as an anarchist and the not much later 1977 campaign against the Gang of Four as anarchists that we will examine below), and thus they tried to quash the campaign, publishing articles in the Shanghai journal *Wen Hui Bao* that took *Renminribao* to task for the pernicious influence on the provincial press of its articles criticizing anarchism.²³ This criticism of his paper led Wang, on his own initiative, but also at the suggestion of his editor Hu Jiwei to write to Mao himself to ask whether or not the anti-anarchist articles Wang had published were proper. Mao ruled against Wang, and probably under the Chairman’s orders, on

December 19 Premier Zhou Enlai called in Wang to a meeting at the Great Hall of the People along with members of what would become the Gang of Four to get Wang to end the campaign. By the end of this nearly 6-hour meeting, which lasted well into the early hours of the next day, Wang realized that he had inadvertently put Zhou in a very difficult position since Zhou himself had earlier declared that he was “inclined to agree” to thoroughly denounce “. . . the ultra-leftist trend of thought and anarchism stirred up by the Lin Biao anti-party clique”²⁴ without then knowing that it was Mao himself in October in a private conversation with Yao Wenyan and others who decided that criticism of anarchism was inappropriate. Wang reported that at the December meeting, Zhou, though admitting that he himself had earlier criticized people for anarchism, claimed that he only meant to refer to those who interfered in foreign policy as anarchists and “not to the entire line of Lin Biao,” speaking in what Wang viewed as an uncharacteristically haphazard and at times incoherent manner that suggested to Wang that “the premier was saying things that ran counter to his convictions,” including saying things critical of Wang, as evidently ordered by Mao, while trying to protect him.²⁵ Thus, as Wang belatedly realized, the dispute over whether or not to label Lin Biao as an anarchist became inextricably wound up in palace intrigue involving the struggles of the Maoists around Jiang Qing to replace Zhou Enlai and other top leaders of the Party, struggles that were to increase a few years later.²⁶

Denunciations of Anarchism during the Hua Guofeng-Early Deng Xiaoping Years

The use of denunciations of anarchism to reinforce their Maoist credentials while limiting Maoist policies in practice is especially true of those Party elites in the Hua Guofeng era (1977–9), which could represent the ultimately failed rule of a Stalinist–Maoist coalition. As such, Hua’s coalition had an interest in denouncing full Maoism as illegitimate anarchism, which they wanted to discard while retaining the supposed essence of the Mao line of the Cultural Revolution. During the spring and summer of 1977 especially, articles appeared in the official Chinese press criticizing the Gang of Four in much the same terms as Lin and company were criticized in 1972, that is, as opportunists who only fanned up the wind of anarchism in order to usurp Party and state power.²⁷ After that point the main tone of criticism of the Gang shifted to other directions, even to the contradictory charges that the Gang tried to establish a “fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie,” but the earlier charges culminated in speeches by Party Chairman and Premier Hua Guofeng and the top general and later Chairman of State Ye Jianying that mentioned the problem that “secret factions” in the Party were spreading,

among other things, the “harm of anarchism,” and a plank in the “General Program” of the CCP Constitution adopted in August 1977, which noted the need for the whole Party to “oppose all splittist and factional activities, oppose the independence from the Party, and oppose anarchism.”²⁸

The denunciations of anarchism did not end with the fall of the Gang of Four. The criticism of anarchism that survived in the late 1970s perhaps helps demonstrate the early Deng era as representing the ascendancy of a Titoist–Stalinist coalition, with Deng uneasily maintaining a balance between representatives of both lines and with the Stalinists implicitly threatening to return to a neo-Maoist coalition. In this regard, Ye Jianying’s continuing denunciation of anarchism in 1978 especially represents the continuity of the Hua and early Deng eras. Ye criticized the Gang of Four in 1978 for “. . . incit[ing] anarchism and slander[ing] the socialist legal system and every kind of rational rules and regulations as revisionist and capitalist in their vain attempt to throw our proletarian country into chaos and seize power in this chaos,” an attempt that he would oppose by strengthening the “socialist legal system.”²⁹ As criticism of the Gang for “ultra-leftist” excesses continued in the official press, now even in the former Maoist bastion of the Party magazine *Hongqi*, the tone of the articles reflected Ye’s line about the need to restore economic order and a socialist legal system, a point on which the unity of the rising Titoist–Stalinist coalition of Deng would hinge.

Especially at the beginning of market-based economic reform in 1979–80, the attack on ultra-leftism as a whole was initially intensified, as Joseph notes.³⁰ Though Joseph does not himself mention examples, after 1979 those who denounced anarchism most often were people in the Party-state elite who had opposed Maoist policies for their undermining of state control and Stalinist-style central planning. Such people denouncing anarchism in this period did so to undermine intellectual critics inside and outside the Party who tried to take advantage of Titoist economic reforms to push for political liberalization. For example, in late 1978 and early 1979 denunciations appeared in the official press that tried to link Democracy Wall activists to the activities of the Gang of Four, both supposedly representing “anarchists who, masquerading under the banner of democracy, caused worsening economic conditions and social instability.”³¹ The PRC Minister of Education directly tied the “small number of students [who] practice anarchism in defiance of organization and discipline” presumably in the Democracy Wall movement to the “corruption and poisoning of [their] minds by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four,”³² a theme that continued in national and provincial press articles throughout 1979 and into 1980. Once again, the culmination of this campaign was a speech by Ye Jianying to mark the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the CCP where he spoke of the need to eliminate “factionalism, anarchism, and ultra-individualism.” A report on his speech noted further the need to guard against the ideology of “ultra-democracy,” a habit of the “small producers” that once again

was caused by the “spoiling of the social atmosphere” by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, which spread the “ideology of anarchism and extreme individualism . . . among some people,”³³ a line that was repeated widely in other press outlets from November 1979 to early 1980.³⁴ The criticism of the “anarchism” of Democracy Wall activists as a form of bourgeois individualism counterposed with the need to achieve “stability, unity, and socialist democracy” would of course presage the many campaigns against bourgeois liberalization in the 1980s.

After the repression of the Democracy Wall extra-Party critics in 1979–80 with Deng’s institution of the “Four Cardinal Principles,” the debate shifted to inside the Party, where intellectuals within the Titoist side of the coalition tried to call for political reforms, while their Stalinist opponents, led by Hu Qiaomu, continued to push against bourgeois liberalization in the name of preserving “socialist spiritual civilization.” As reflected in denunciations of anarchism, this struggle included a debate between Ma Jia of the Titoist camp who argued in 1980 for the need to “scientifically” criticize anarchism while clearly distinguishing it from real democracy,³⁵ versus Gu Zhaoji of the Stalinist camp who wrote an article at the same time that wasn’t published until 1982 which argued that anarchists were indeed exponents of “extreme democracy” and that trying to “scientifically” distinguish what constitutes anarchism would lead people to “not find any traces of anarchism at all,” leading people to oppose bureaucratism without opposing anarchism.³⁶

This brief debate reflected the Stalinist push against bourgeois liberalization in 1981–2 that had begun with official criticism of Bai Hua’s screenplay “Bitter Love.” Included in this criticism were denunciations of the script for, as one author put it, “the erroneous trend of thought of anarchism, ultra-individualism and the bourgeois liberalism to the extent of negating the four basic principles.”³⁷ Such denunciations were repeated in the provincial press until early 1982 and were revived in 1983–4 after the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign. This campaign was again led by Stalinists such as Hu Qiaomu against what Friedman labels the democrats inside the Party, as typified by Wang Ruoshui,³⁸ whose thought we will examine in Chapter 9. Hu denounced Wang’s use of the Marxist concepts of humanism and alienation in a long article in *Hongqi* that was reprinted in *Renminribao*, where he explicitly charged that those “well-intentioned” comrades who pushed the concept of alienation in effect gave cover to those who called explicitly for “the abolition of all social and political power, all social and economic organization, all ideological authority, all centralism and discipline, and have openly propagated anarchism, absolute freedom, and extreme individualism.”³⁹

Such denunciations were echoed in numerous articles in 1984 which stressed the need to completely negate “extensive democracy” and tried to link anyone calling for democracy to the “anarchism” fanned up in the

Cultural Revolution. As one article in *Hongqi* put it, “while practicing anarchism, some anarchists and their apologists will talk at length as if they are ‘fighting for democracy.’”⁴⁰ While academic articles in this period could discuss the early twentieth-century Chinese anarchist movement more dispassionately and even find in it some progressive elements, Stalinist critics around Hu Qiaomu continued to try to link those in the 1980s who called for democracy with the evil of anarchism, including in the aftermath of student protests in 1986, when an article in *Renminribao* again linked the protestors to those who pushed the concept of extensive democracy during the Cultural Revolution, which the article claimed would in fact only lead to anarchism and the violation of the rights of the majority.⁴¹

This attempt to link the student-led democracy movement to the turmoil (*dongluan*) of the Cultural Revolution was also used after the Tiananmen student protests of 1989. The problem for the regime, however, in applying the label of anarchism to the student movement was that the student leaders, even after the severe provocations of May and June launched by the government, at most called for electoral democracy and human rights and not the Paris Commune style mass democracy advocated in the Cultural Revolution. This fact of course did not stop the government from trying to draw a link between the Tiananmen protests and the Cultural Revolution. As one commentator argued in an article published jointly in *Jiefangjunbao* and *Renminribao* in the same month as the crackdown on the student protesters,

The university students today are all young people around 20 years old. They have not personally experienced the disaster and pains suffered by the state and the people, including the young students, caused by social disturbances during the Cultural Revolution. At that time, many Red Guards who were so young had gone to the streets to advocate speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates, and writing big character posters, established ties and took part in criticism and struggles. As a result, our country was led to a nationwide great turmoil of civil war and our national economy was on the verge of collapse . . .

. . . Young students [of the Tiananmen movement in 1989] originally intended to solve problems through demonstrations and petitions, but the result was the spread of anarchy.⁴²

This line continued into August, as in one article in *Jiefangjunbao* that applied Lenin’s old label of “leftist infantile disorder” in order to argue once again that the student movement would result in “anarchy” if the country moved too hastily towards implementing democracy.⁴³ Similarly, another official commentator argued that if people pushed for democracy beyond China’s “national conditions” during the “initial period of socialism” when

China is still in a time of low levels of education, literacy, and development and “. . . when many people are still preoccupied by the daily toil for basic survival” then “it [would be] impossible to expect from them a high degree of democratic participation. Even if a so-called democracy is forcibly implemented, interference from various factors will give rise to individualism, factionalism and anarchy, and lead to de facto non-democracy and even chaos.”⁴⁴ In contrast to trampling on human rights and the promotion of “anarchist thinking” by Lin Biao and the “Gang of Four” during the Cultural Revolution, it was the Deng-era regime, yet another commentator argued while denouncing the program of exiled Tiananmen student leaders and reform intellectuals, that had reversed the verdicts on tens of thousands of people persecuted during the Mao era and restored the rule of law, thus demonstrating the “iron-clad fact of [the state] respecting people and caring for people. . . .”⁴⁵ In criticizing the calls of intellectual allies of the students within the Party such as Yan Jiaqi for deepening market reforms as the same as “putting the economic system on a capitalist basis as an appendage to international capital,” this article perhaps demonstrates a point when Titoist reform in the Deng Xiaoping era was stalled and some Maoist, anti-imperialist rhetoric reappeared, threatening a shift to a Stalinist–neo-Maoist coalition. This harsh line as applied to denunciations of student protests culminated in a speech by CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin in October 1989, reinforced in an interview with the PRC Minister of Justice in November, that stressed the need to take as the main task opposing those who advocated “ultra-democracy and anarchism.”⁴⁶

PRC Denunciations of Anarchism, 1992–present

Even after Titoist economic reforms returned to the forefront after 1992 with Deng Xiaoping’s trip south to visit the special economic zones, and as the threat of a shift to a Stalinist–Maoist coalition receded, denunciations of anarchism nevertheless continued. To pick just a few examples, first in 1995, probably in response to academic calls for political reform, *Renminribao* published an article reviving Deng Xiaoping’s 1979 warning that talking of “abstract democracy” would “inevitably lead to serious spreading of extreme democratization and anarchism, total sabotage of the political situation of stability and unity, and complete failure of the four modernizations.”⁴⁷ In 1999 and 2000 the PRC press denounced the founder of the Falungong spiritual/healing movement, Li Hongzhi, as someone who “hated, negated, and undermined our socialist state power” and to Falungong as a troublemaking group which is “anti-science, anti-humanity, anti-society, and anarchistic”⁴⁸ and as an “evil cult” that carried out

activities that similar to “anarchist trends and factions of all kinds [which] have occurred in history.”⁴⁹ In 2000, in response to very moderate demands of the democracy movement in Hong Kong, the CCP-controlled press there complained that “pure populism and anarchism can only throw Hong Kong into chaos. . . .”⁵⁰ In 2003, countering Taiwan President Chen Shui-bien’s call for an eventual referendum on a new Taiwan constitution, the Hong Kong Communist press denounced the “so-called ‘popular will’ [of] the Taiwan authorities . . . as none other than ‘populism’ or ‘anarchism.’”⁵¹ In 2004, against international and some domestic demands for increased respect for human rights, a PRC functionary claimed that “respect and safeguards for human rights in an isolated and abstract sense . . . could lead to anarchism and extreme individualism in practice and bring disaster to the state, society, and the people.”⁵² In July of 2008, even after the defeat of Chen Shui-bien and the election of the KMT’s Ma Ying-jeou as president in Taiwan, the same Beijing-controlled press in Hong Kong denounced the continuing efforts of the Taiwanese opposition to carry out “Taiwan-style democracy” that would dare to “directly criticize any official, even top leaders” and “directly expose the corrupt officials and lawbreakers via the media” as “classic anarchy and personal liberalism!”⁵³ Finally, also in 2008, in response to calls for “returning power to the people” at an academic conference marking the thirtieth anniversary of the beginning of the Deng-era reforms, the Communist press in Hong Kong denounced this call as possibly leading “to the evil path of anarchism.” As one article concluded, “unrestrained talk about ‘returning power to the people’ will not only mislead the people with the impression that they do not need the government but will mislead them into thinking that the government had been abusing its power and now needs to rectify its ways.”⁵⁴

Conclusion

In effect, the leaders of China’s Leninist Party-state in both the Cultural Revolution and the reform era turned the label of anarchism into a cultural meme that could be wielded against anyone who dared decry the growth of a new Communist Party elite ruling for itself, or to call for any real degree of democracy and individual freedom. In the end, therefore, the criticism of anarchism in the PRC ironically helps prove the essential point of the anarchist critique of Marxism. That is, regardless of important differences among themselves, the very agreement of top leaders of all Leninist factions to condemn as anarchists any democrats within their coalition as well as any critics outside of the Party who argued that the state may act at times in its own interests and not just for the economic class it supposedly represents, itself helps to remove a check on increasing state autonomy and aids the continuing survival of Leninist state despotism.

Notes

- 1 For a very convenient summary of these orthodox Marxist denunciations of anarchism, see the Soviet text published in an attempt to counteract revivals of anarchism in the student movements in America and Europe in the late 1960s to early 1970s, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism: Selected Writings by Marx, Engels, Lenin*. Chinese official denunciations mostly ignored other possible Marxist lines of attack on anarchists, for example Nicolai Bukharin's claim that they represented déclassé and "lumpenproletariat" rough elements (see Nicolai Bukharin, "Anarchy and Scientific Communism" (1922), translated in *The Poverty of Statism: Anarchism vs. Marxism: A Debate Bukharin, Fabbri, Rocker*, 1–10), or V. I. Lenin's charge that the Christian anarchist Leo Tolstoy represented elements of the dying aristocracy that turned against all states out of twin reactionary idealization of a supposed egalitarian rural ideal and a pessimistic realization that the old landed order was doomed to destruction. See Lenin, *On Literature and Art*, 64–8.
- 2 See especially Friedman, "Three Leninist Paths within a Socialist Conundrum," in Dorothy Solinger (ed.), *Three Visions of Chinese Socialism*, 11–46. Also see Friedman, "Maoism, Titoism, Stalinism: Some Origins and Consequences of the Maoist Theory of the Socialist Transition," in Mark Selden and Victor Lippit (eds), *The Transition to Socialism in China*, 159–214.
- 3 Following the argument of John A. Rapp, "Despotism and Leninist State Autonomy: The Chinese Asiatic Mode of Production Debates in Comparative Perspective," 1–59.
- 4 Deng, "Report on the Rectification Campaign," September 23, 1957, translated in Robert R. Bowie and John King Fairbank (eds), *Communist China 1955–1959: Policy Documents with Analysis*, Document 19, 348.
- 5 For a concise summary of Ba Jin's actions during the Hundred Flowers, see Olga Lang, *Ba Jin and His Writings*, Introduction.
- 6 Yao Wenyan, "Lun Ba Jin xiaoshuo 'Miewang' zhongde wuzhengfuzhuyi sixiang" (Discussing the Anarchist Thought in Ba Jin's Novel, *Destruction*), 17–20. The first English translation of this article will appear in Rapp and Youd, "Ba Jin and the Anarchist-Marxist Debates in China," forthcoming.
- 7 For Ba's criticism during the early 1960s and his suffering during the Cultural Revolution, see Olga Lang's introduction to the English translation of Ba Jin, *Family*.
- 8 See Lin, "March Ahead under the Red Flag of the General Line and Mao Tse-tung's Military Thinking," translated in Bowie and Fairbank, Doc. 46, 580, 584–5. For a summary of the criticism of anarchism in this revival of the Anti-Rightist Movement, see Zhongguo renmin daxue makesi liening zhuyi jichuxi (The Marxist-Leninist Studies Department of Chinese People's University), *Wuzhengfuzhuyi pipan* (Criticizing Anarchism).
- 9 Joseph, 220–31. See pages 23–61 for Joseph's summary of the classical Marxist-Leninist lines of attack on anarchism. See pages 128–44, 159–61, and 189–90 for his summary of attacks on anarchism in China, especially in 1971–2 and 1976.
- 10 *Hongqi* Commentator, "On Revolutionary Discipline and Revolutionary Authority of the Proletariat," *Hongqi*, 3 (February 1967), translated in *Survey*

- of China Mainland Magazines* (hereafter SCMM), 564 (February 20, 1967), 3, citing Frederick Engels, "On Authority," first published in Italy, 1873, translated in *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 100–4.
- 11 Cited in Jacques Guillermez, *The Chinese Communist Party in Power, 1949–1976*, 428.
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