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SPIRITUAL MOTHER AND INTELLECTUAL SONS: EMMA GOLDMAN AND YOUNG CHINESE ANARCHISTS

RACHEL HUI-CHI HSU

This paper tackles contacts and interactions between Emma Goldman and Chinese anarchists in the 1920s, during her exile in Europe and Canada, illuminating little-known transpacific anarchist networks in a period when both Goldman's career and anarchism as an international movement were in decline. The study sheds light on the ways by which and extent to which Goldman sought to kindle the young generation's interest in anarchism and on the latter's creative adaptation of her ideas in a cross-cultural context. Showcasing the interactions of Qin Baopu, Lu Jianbo, and Ba Jin with Goldman, the article reveals how young Chinese anarchists helped forge a transpacific network of anarchist advocacy that crossed gender, generational, and national divides. I argue that these young anarchist intellectuals exhibited masculine rationality, philosophical creativity, and pragmatic flexibility in adapting Goldman's ideas to the increasingly oppressive political climate in China. In sum, the article unveils the multivalent effects of Goldman's thought—including her views on Bolshevism, anarchists' place in national revolution, and free love—on her Chinese interlocutors in the 1920s.

KEYWORDS: Ba Jin, Chinese anarchists, Emma Goldman, Lu Jianbo, 1920s, Qin Baopu, transnational anarchism

"I think there is a possibility for you to go to China. I will try my best to get the chance.... I also believe that the Chinese Youth will welcome you with the opened arms [*sic*] as a dearest friend and teacher."¹ This passage came from an English letter (dated July 5, 1927) by Ba Jin (巴金 1904–2005), a 23-year-old Chinese student, to the 58-year-old prominent anarchist Emma Goldman (1869–1940), who had been exiled in Europe and Canada after almost three decades of active campaigning for anarchism in the United States. Back in December 1921, the 20-year-old Chinese anarchist Qin Baopu (秦抱朴 1901–?) visited Goldman in Russia while studying

1 Ba Jin to Emma Goldman, July 5, 1927, in Candace Falk, Ronald J. Zboray, and Daniel A. Cornford, eds., *The Emma Goldman Papers: A Microfilm Edition* (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1991–1993), reel 18.

there and was enlightened by her views on the Russian Revolution.² Lu Jianbo (盧劍波 1904–1991), another young anarchist who was active in propaganda work in 1920s China, also had correspondence with Goldman and translated a series of her works on women, love, and sexuality. Some other anarchists helped with the fundraising to facilitate Goldman's trip to China.³ The feeling of hope for realization of her China tour in the late 1920s was mutual. On May 26, 1927, Goldman replied to Ba Jin's earlier letter, "Indeed I should love to go to China and to have you act as my interpreter.... I should especially want to...see your country in its present great struggle."⁴ Her personal experience in postrevolutionary Russia and her emphasis on women's/sexual liberation distinguished her from other international anarchists with whom Chinese anarchists kept in touch. Goldman's contacts with young Chinese anarchists in the 1920s helped introduce a transnational dimension to the anarchist movement in China.

The modern Chinese anarchist movement—during its active years in the early twentieth century—can be divided into three generations (Table 1); arguably, Goldman had the most influence on the third generation. Anarchism as a radical, antiauthoritarian philosophy emerged in China in the first decade of the century. According to the scholar Zhou Limin (周立民), the first-generation Chinese anarchists, many of them then studying abroad, contributed to the introduction of anarchist philosophy into China from the West and Japan at that time.⁵ The second generation participated more directly in social change in China during the 1910s, setting up anarchist groups, communities, and publications. As the historian Arif Dirlik has noted, by 1919, when the May Fourth movement was in full swing, anarchism "became central to the revolutionary discourse."⁶ Anarchists' mobilization and organization among workers was somewhat earlier and no less active than that of the Communists.⁷ The third generation of Chinese anarchists was marked by their young age and intellectual/philosophical temperament, including the contribution of book-length translations of foreign anarchist theories.⁸ Active from the mid- to late 1920s, these anarchists—mostly male college students or graduates—were less directly involved in labor strikes, as their propaganda and organizing were seriously challenged by the rising Nationalist Party or Guomindang (GMD) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

2 Qin Baopu, "Huiyi zaonian lieu ji yu Gaodeman xiangshi de jingguo" [A memoir of my meeting Ms. Goldman in Russia in my early days], n.d. [1987?], in the Emma Goldman Archive, Berkeley, CA, United States.

3 "Shijie xiaoxi: Gaodeman nüshi lai'an" [World news: Ms. Goldman's letter], *Min zhong* 13 (1925): 47–49.

4 Emma Goldman to Ba Jin, May 26, 1927, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 18.

5 Zhou Limin, *Wusi zhizi de shiji zhi lu: Ba Jin pingzhuan* [The century-long journey of the son of the May Fourth era: a critical biography of Ba Jin] (Taipei: Showwe Information, 2011), 53–54. The prominent first-generation Chinese anarchists are listed in Table 1.

6 Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 149. The prominent second-generation Chinese anarchists are listed in Table 1.

7 Liu Shixin, "Quanyu wuzhengfu zhuyi huodong de diandi huiyi" [Reminiscences on anarchist activities], in Ge Maochun, Jiang Jun, and Li Xingzhi, eds., *Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan* [Selection of anarchist thoughts], vol. 2 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1984), 926–39.

8 Lu Zhe, *Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi shi gao* [History of Chinese anarchism] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1990), 266–67.

Table 1. Prominent Chinese Anarchists of the First to Third Generations

First generation	Second generation	Third generation
He Zhen (何震 1884–1920)	Huang Lingshuang (黃凌霜 1898–1988)	Ba Jin (巴金 1904–2005)
Li Shizen (李石曾 1881–1973)	Liang Binxuan (梁冰弦 d. 1962)	Bi Xiushao (畢修勺 1902–1992)
Liu Shipai (劉師培 1884–1919)	Liu Shifu (劉師復 1884–1915)	Lu Jianbo (盧劍波 1904–1991)
Wu Zhihui (吳稚暉 1865–1953)	Qu Shengbai (區聲白 1892–1945)	Mao Yibo (毛一波 1901–1996)
	Yuan Zhenying (袁震瀛 or 袁振英 1894–1979)	Qin Huisheng (秦惠生) or Qin Baopu (秦抱朴 b. 1901)
	Zhu Qianzhi (朱謙之 1899–1972)	Wei Huilin (衛惠林 1904–1992)
		Wu Kekang (吳克剛 1903–1999)

Source: Zhou Limin, *Wusi zhizi de shiji zhi lu: Ba Jin pingzhuan* [The century-long journey of the son of the May Fourth era: a critical biography of Ba Jin] (Taipei: Showwe Information, 2011), 53–54.

in leading the national/social revolution. In the end, anarchism in China faded away as a major force in radical politics after 1928, when the GMD nominally unified China.⁹ It was during the 1920s that Goldman was likened to a “spiritual mother” by such radical students as Ba Jin and exerted great influence among young Chinese anarchists.¹⁰

This paper charts the intergenerational associations between Goldman and young Chinese anarchists to examine a lesser-known episode of transnational anarchism in the interwar period. The historical significance of this episode is threefold. First, it illustrates Goldman’s frequent interactions with and distinct impact on Chinese anarchists. After she left the Soviet Union in 1921, having becoming disillusioned with the authoritarian nature of the Bolshevik regime, Goldman tried to maintain her social circle via letters, writings, and intermittent lectures during her depressed exile years.¹¹ She readily responded to international social rebels who contacted her with the hope of strengthening their convictions in anarchism while finding their own ways to fight for their causes. Her firsthand observations and publications on the Bolshevik dictatorship provided timely insights for young Chinese anarchists who strove to set themselves apart from the Communists. These young Chinese anarchists translated Goldman’s works on anti-Bolshevism and exchanged ideas with her on anarchists’ place in the Chinese national revolution, both of which topics were untouched in the writings of Peter Kropotkin, who passed away in 1921. Rather than seeing Goldman as their spiritual “mentor,” as Goldman called Peter Kropotkin, they intimated a closer rapport with her—as evidenced by Ba Jin—by using the metaphor of spiritual “mother.”

Second, this episode exemplifies the persistence of a transnational network of anarchist advocacy during a challenging time for anarchist movements worldwide. While anarchism had—to quote Eric Hobsbawm—“entered upon a dramatic and uninterrupted decline” after the 1917 Russian Revolution, anarchists around the world still fought for

9 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 198–99. The prominent third-generation Chinese anarchists are listed in Table 1.

10 Ba Jin, “Xinyang yu huodong” [Beliefs and activities], in *Ba Jin quanji* [Complete works of Ba Jin], vol. 12 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2004), 403–7.

11 Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile: From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War* (Boston: Beacon, 1989).

their idea(l)s through journalism, organizing, and multidirectional collaborations.¹² Chinese anarchists in the 1920s actively developed their connections with foreign comrades in Asia, the Americas, and Europe as they struggled with the GMD and CCP in agitating for revolution. Their contacts with Goldman and other international anarchists displayed an ongoing transnational advocacy network of anarchism to collectively counter the rise of Bolshevism and nationalism. In his classic study, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Arif Dirlik pointed out how the anti-Bolshevik narratives of such foreign anarchists as Goldman and Alexander Berkman (1870–1936) had notably affected the way that Chinese anarchists perceived Bolshevism. But the interactions between Goldman and young Chinese anarchists were not Dirlik’s focus.¹³ Inspired by Dirlik’s insights, my article explicates how the third-generation Chinese anarchists drew on Goldman’s thought via correspondence and translation as they both faced harsher conditions for the development of anarchist movements.

Third, this episode reveals the radicalization of Chinese anarchist rhetoric through the critical reception of Goldman’s sex radicalism in the late 1920s. In 1926, Lu Jianbo led a campaign promoting Goldman’s idea of free love and women’s emancipation by focusing on translating her book, articles, and biographies. But soon he and several male comrades proposed an “antilove theory” as a radical alternative path to realizing anarchism. While pursuing free individuality and social solidarity similar to Goldman’s anarchist ideals, the “antilove” advocates considered romantic love a selfish act contradicting the collective good. Promoting “human love” instead, these male anarchists tried to revolutionize both conventional sexual norms and what they viewed as ill-conceived new practices of sexual/romantic love in China. In sum, this article seeks to unveil the multivalent effects of Goldman’s thought—including her views on Bolshevism, anarchists’ place in national revolution, and free love—on her Chinese interlocutors in the 1920s.

The case study of Goldman’s interactions with her Chinese adherents in this article furthers our understanding of the extent and limits of her vision for “intellectual proletarians.” When she was in the United States in the early twentieth century, Goldman developed the ideological categorization of “intellectual proletarians” as potential recruits for anarchism.¹⁴ She argued that capitalist tyranny deprived and degraded all those who worked for their living, either with hands or brains. Intellectual professionals, she suggested, suffered more than wage laborers from the degradation of their individuality. She looked forward to the proletarianization of intellectuals, which would compel them to cast off their self-righteous “middle-class traditions” and merge with the working-class “revolutionary proletarians” to “wage a successful war against present society.”¹⁵ It was her hope that the more the “intellectual proletarians” accepted anarchism, the less necessary it would be for social revolution to involve undesirable, destructive violence. The members of the third generation of Chinese anarchists were practically all “intellectual proletarians” under Goldman’s categorization. Unlike the “philosophical anarchists”

12 Eric Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays* (New York: Quartet, 1977), 61.

13 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 220.

14 Emma Goldman, “Intellectual Proletarians,” *Mother Earth* 8, no. 12 (February 1914): 363–70.

15 Goldman, “Intellectual Proletarians,” 363–70. See also Rachel Hui-Chi Hsu, *Emma Goldman, Mother Earth, and the Anarchist Awakening* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021), 18–21.

in the United States, who rejected violent means to achieve their (mostly individualist) anarchist ideals, the young Chinese anarchists were committed anarchist communists. Nevertheless, they achieved less in mass mobilization or labor activism than in propagandizing among their intellectual peers—either because of their theoretical disposition or because of the adverse sociopolitical situation. As they characterized Goldman as their “spiritual mother,” I argue, these male college students/graduates displayed mixed traits as “intellectual sons” who were at once audacious and vulnerable. While these “intellectual sons” spread Goldman’s sex radicalism, their dialectical thinking drove them to propose a theory of antilove in place of her idea of free love. Having lost close touch with the workers under the Nanjing regime after 1928, these intellectual anarchists were forced into political retreat from anarchist activism. Their latent inactivity in the 1930s contrasted sharply with both their avid collaboration to produce anarchist propaganda in the previous decade as well as with Goldman’s persistent engagement in sociopolitical struggles until her death in 1940.

Showcasing the interactions of Qin Baopu, Lu Jianbo, and Ba Jin with Goldman, this article reveals how young Chinese anarchists helped to forge a transpacific network of anarchist advocacy that crossed gender, generational, and national divides. As we shall see, these young anarchist intellectuals exhibited masculine rationality, philosophical creativity, and pragmatic flexibility in adapting Goldman’s ideas to the increasingly oppressive political climate in China. The intergenerational associations between Goldman and her Chinese adherents revealed their shared visions of the anarchist ideal and their diverse approaches to achieving it. This transpacific episode in the 1920s demonstrates the versatility of anarchism—a phenomenon that was actively advanced by Goldman and yet ultimately beyond her control.

GOLDMAN IN CHINA BEFORE 1920

Reportage about Goldman in China emerged in the early twentieth century, when her thought-provoking, boundary-breaking writings on anarchism—especially her anarchist monthly, *Mother Earth* (1906–1917)—began to be circulated around the globe.¹⁶ As early as 1903, her activities as an anarchist agitator had been covered in a Chinese article, entitled “Nǚjie Guoerman” (女傑郭耳縵 The heroine Goldman), in a Shanghai-based journal.¹⁷ Goldman soon established direct, reciprocal connections with East Asian anarchists who helped promote *Mother Earth*. In June 1907, the name of *Mother Earth* appeared in *Tian yi* (天義 Natural justice), a seminal Chinese-language anarchist paper issued in Tokyo. Its publishers, Liu Shiwei (劉師培 1884–1919) and He Zhen (何震 1884–1920), studied in Japan and associated with Japanese anarchists.¹⁸ Goldman soon corresponded with the *Tian yi* group,

16 Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman* (Boston: Beacon, 1970), 95–101.

17 Zi Guo, “Nǚjie Guoerman” [The heroine Goldman], in *Guomin riribao huibian* [Collection of the *People’s Daily*], vol. 3 (Taipei: Zhongguo guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshe shiliao bianzuan weiyuanhui, 1968), 0801–0803.

18 Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 31–58, 130–55; Lydia H. Liu, Rebecca E. Karl, and Dorothy Ko, eds., *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 28–35.

mailing them a copy of *Mother Earth*.¹⁹ In April 1914, *Mother Earth* showed up on the “exchange list of periodicals” of another Chinese anarchist paper, *Min sheng* (民聲 Voice of the common people), indicating the two journals’ association. Liu Shifu (劉師復 1884–1915), the editor of *Min sheng*, credited *Mother Earth* and the London-based *Freedom* as the two leading English-language anarchist journals.²⁰

By the late 1910s, Chinese translations of Goldman’s writings began to surface in the progressive press as well as in anarchist publications. In 1917, Yuan Zhenying (袁震瀛 1894–1979), an English major with anarchist leanings at Peking University, chose “Marriage and Love” as his first translation of Goldman and published it in *Xin qingnian* (新青年 *New Youth*), a leading left-wing liberal monthly in China that later promoted communism.²¹ Meanwhile, Yuan and his anarchist friends issued translations of Goldman’s “Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty” and “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For” in an essay volume published by their Anarchist Society.²² In 1919, Yuan’s translation of Goldman’s “The Modern Drama: A Powerful Disseminator of Radical Thought” was published in *Xin qingnian*.²³ These translations together contributed to Goldman’s “enormous popularity during the [May Fourth] New Culture Movement,” as Arif Dirlik noted.²⁴

It was also during that era that the anarchists in China expanded their transnational advocacy network for anarchism by maintaining contact with foreign anarchist leaders, including Goldman. Chinese anarchist Zheng Peigang (鄭佩剛 1890–1970) reminisced that “friends from various countries often wrote to encourage us.... We were most pleased to receive letters from such senior anarchists as [Peter] Kropotkin, [Jean] Grave, [Emma] Goldman, Osigi Sakae, and [L. L.] Zamenhof” at the time.²⁵ Goldman and her lifelong comrade Alexander Berkman, both of whom were imprisoned in the United States for obstructing the draft, got in touch with a few young male Chinese anarchists after being deported to Russia in late 1919.²⁶ Examining the effects of Goldman’s anti-Bolshevism and sex radicalism in 1920s China, the following sections illustrate an underexplored legacy of her anarchist advocacy network during her exile.

19 “Xin kan jie shao” [Introduction of new periodicals], *Tian yi* 6 (September 1907): 36.

20 “Zaixu zazhi jiaohuan lu” [Records of exchange list of periodicals: continued], *Min sheng* 7 (April 25, 1914): 11; “Tongxin taolunlan: da Anfu” [Correspondence: replying to Anfu], *Min sheng* 18 (July 11, 1914): 12.

21 Meiguo Gaoman nüshi [Emma Goldman], “Jiehun yu lian ai” [“Marriage and Love”], trans. Zhen Ying, *Xin qingnian* 3, no. 5 (July 1, 1917): 1–9.

22 Emma Goldman, “Aiguo zhuyi” [“Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty”], trans. Chao Hai, in *Shishe ziyoulü* [The Truth Society’s speech on freedom], vol. 1 (Beijing: Shishe, 1917), 1–5; Emma Goldman, “Wuzhengfu zhuyi” [“Anarchism: What It Really Stands For”], trans. Shuang, in *Shishe ziyoulü*, vol. 1, 5–8.

23 Meiguo Gaoman nüshi [Emma Goldman], “Jindai xiju lun” [“The Modern Drama: A Powerful Disseminator of Radical Thought”], trans. Zhen Ying, *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 2 (February 15, 1919): 179–95.

24 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 179.

25 Zheng Peigang, “Wuzhengfu zhuyi zai Zhongguo de ruogan shishi” [Some historical facts about anarchism in China], in Ge, Jiang, and Li, *Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan*, 939–71.

26 Paul Avrich and Karen Avrich, *Sasha and Emma: The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012).

GOLDMAN'S ANTI-BOLSHEVISM IN CHINA, 1921–1925

Goldman's experience in Russia and her later criticism of Bolshevism had a significant influence on the young anarchists who struggled with the revolutionary turmoil of 1920s China. Prior to their deportation, Goldman and Berkman were both optimistic about the prospect of the Russian Revolution as the beacon of people's awakening.²⁷ However, during their stay in Russia, Goldman and Berkman witnessed the repression, corruption, and mismanagement of the Bolshevik government.²⁸ Their profound disillusionment led them to leave Russia in late 1921, with the hope of freely criticizing the Bolshevik regime and carrying on their fight for the anarchist cause. Goldman's vehement condemnation of the Bolshevik government in her book *My Disillusionment in Russia*, published in 1923, positioned her as one of the earliest critics of Bolshevism.²⁹ Goldman stressed that her book was based on close observation, earnest study, frequent meetings with people of various political opinions, and extensive travels across Russia and not merely on partisan anarchist ideology. Her final decision to speak out, she remarked, was "for the sole reason that the people everywhere may learn to differentiate between the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution."³⁰ The Irish American writer Frank Harris (1855–1931), in his short biography of Goldman for *My Disillusionment in Russia*, noted that the book captured "the first authentic picture of the Soviet Government."³¹ Although this book provoked opposition from many international socialists and Communists, it was promptly embraced by her junior adherents in China. As they engaged in an ideological struggle with the Communists, Goldman's insight into the authoritarian nature of Bolshevism served as a great source of inspiration for the Chinese anarchists to maintain their antistate stance.

Qin Baopu was the key figure who not only met with Goldman but also spread her anti-Bolshevism among the anarchist circles in China. A student with anarchist leanings and a member of the Socialist Youth League in Shanghai, Qin Baopu studied at the Communist University for the Toilers of the East in Moscow from spring 1921 to fall 1923. Through an introduction from Kropotkin's wife, Sofia Grigorievna Ananieva-Rabinovich (1856–1938), Qin visited Goldman several times before she left Russia in December 1921. Goldman was among the very few internationally prominent anarchists who met with Chinese anarchists in the 1920s. Her encouragement and her views on Bolshevism conceivably carried significant weight with these young anarchist radicals. In his short memoir on meeting with Goldman in Russia, Qin Baopu wrote that Goldman's answers to all his questions had given him a deeper understanding of the Russian Revolution. Their correspondence in Russian continued after Goldman and Berkman went into exile in Western Europe. In 1925, through Qin's introduction, Ba Jin started corresponding with Goldman in English.

27 Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (1925; repr. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970), xlv.

28 Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (1931; repr. New York: Dover, 1970), vol. 2, 726–927.

29 Frank Harris, "A Biographical Sketch of Emma Goldman," in Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, xii.

30 Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, xii–xiii.

31 Harris, "Biographical Sketch of Emma Goldman," xxxvii–xxxviii.

As the only Chinese anarchist who had had in-depth conversations with Goldman in person, Qin Baopu initiated a propaganda campaign against Bolshevism that drew upon her ideas and writings. Qin claimed that, in the two and a half years after he left Moscow for Beijing in 1923, his writings “were all deeply influenced by Goldman.”³² These articles, many of them serialized in various newspapers, later were included in his three books, *Chi e youji* (赤俄遊記 Travels in Red Russia), *Eguo geming zhi shibai* (俄國革命之失敗 Failure of the Russian Revolution), and *Eguo geming lun cong* (俄國革命論叢 Essays on the Russian Revolution). The Chinese translation of Goldman’s book on Russia, entitled *Buersheweike zhi baozheng* (布爾什維克之暴政 The Bolshevik tyranny) also came out in 1923.³³ In 1924, Ba Jin published articles in the anarchist magazine *Min zhong* (民鐘 People’s tocsin) that referenced Goldman’s works on the Russian Revolution.³⁴ The numerous translations and publications inspired by Goldman’s anti-Bolshevism confirm Dirlik’s comment that Goldman’s writings “were responsible in large measure for shaping Chinese anarchists’ attitudes toward the Soviet Union.”³⁵ By rendering her writings into Chinese, Qin Baopu and his comrades contrasted authoritarian Bolshevik rule with the false liberating image it enjoyed among leftists and liberals around the world.

In addition to her contacts with Qin Baopu, Goldman also reached out to various anarchist groups in China, hoping to further expose the truth about the Bolsheviks while soliciting support on behalf of imprisoned Russian comrades. For the young Chinese anarchists, who had originally associated the October Revolution with anarchism, Goldman’s messages broke the Bolshevik myth while reaffirming the imperative of guarding against excessive state power. In September 1924, a Shanghai-based anarchist periodical, *Ziyou ren* (自由人 Freeman), had published letters from Goldman to Qin Baopu and from Berkman to the editors written when the exiles were in Berlin. These letters indicated that the *Ziyou ren* group had contributed funds to the imprisoned Russian comrades upon receiving the news circulated by Goldman and Berkman. In a letter to Qin Baopu, who translated and published it in *Ziyou ren*, Goldman expressed her wish to see her various anti-Bolshevik writings translated into Chinese, so as to expose the “pseudo-revolutionary methods of the Communist State.”³⁶ In 1925, the Beijing-based *Xue hui* (學匯 Convergence of learning) and the Nanjing-based *Min zhong* both carried the Chinese translation of Goldman’s letters to these two anarchist groups. Goldman wrote that she would translate the letters from her Chinese correspondents on China’s situation and their struggles with the Communists into different languages to circulate among international anarchist papers.³⁷

Goldman’s interactions with Chinese anarchists reaffirmed their joint commitment to oppose Bolshevism, and she and they also explored the possibility of her embarking on a tour of China. In the aforementioned letter to *Min zhong*, Goldman expressed both

32 Qin, “Huiyi zaonian lieu ji yu Gaodeman xiangshi de jingguo,” 5.

33 “[Waiwei ziliao] Zhongwen wuzhengfu zhuyi shukan minglu” [(External information) Directory of Chinese anarchist books], accessed February 17, 2021, <https://www.douban.com/group/topic/15721578/>.

34 Tang Jinhai and Zhang Xiaoyun, *Ba Jin de yige shiji* [A century of Ba Jin] (Chengdu: Sichuan wenyi chubanshe, 2004), 49.

35 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 220.

36 “Tong xun” [Correspondence], *Ziyou ren* [Freeman] 6/7 (September 5, 1924): 50–51.

37 Emma Goldman, “Gaoerman nüshi zhi chie congshu she de xin” [Ms. Goldman’s letter to the Society of Red Russian Books], trans. Baopu, *Xue hui* 462 (1925): 6–7.

her willingness to tour China and her financial plight. Conveying gratitude for the cordial invitation from her Chinese adherents, Goldman provided them with the topics that she would discuss if she could make the trip. They included themes of anarchism, Russia, modern education, modern drama, and the woman question, all subjects on which she had delivered well-received presentations when she was in the United States. The editor of *Min zhong*, Bi Xiushao (畢修勺 1902–1992), appended to Goldman's letter a fundraising appeal on her behalf. "We know that if she could come and lecture in China," wrote Bi, "it would not only vigorously stimulate the Chinese anarchist movement but also make a major change in the ideas of Chinese young men and women in general." Bi further contrasted the effect of Goldman's possible China tour with the results of visits by such "celebrities" as Bertrand Russell, who had visited China from 1920 to 1921, and John Dewey, who had been there from 1919 to 1921. In Bi's opinion, Goldman stood for the revolutionary and the masses, whereas Russell and Dewey embodied the aristocratic and the elite. Bi ended by soliciting donation of the travel funds ("estimated at 2,000 dollars") for Goldman from comrades and academic organizations sympathetic to anarchism across China.³⁸

Following the intensive propagation of anti-Bolshevism drawn upon Goldman's work, a small group of Chinese anarchists led by Lu Jianbo shifted focus to introduce her sex radicalism. From 1926 to 1927, Lu and others issued a series of publications either by or about Goldman in order to promote free love. But soon enough these male anarchist intellectuals took a dialectic turn into negating the liberating sense of romantic love. The critical reception of Goldman's free-love idea examined in the next section showcases the theoretical ingenuity of her "intellectual sons" in China.

THE GOLDMAN EFFECT: SEX RADICALISM

Emma Goldman was the main, if not the only, Western anarchist figure whose work on women, gender, and sexuality was translated in China as a source of inspiration for promoting free love. Free love had emerged as a social movement led by utopian socialists and freethinkers in antebellum America; it had been gradually endorsed by anarchists since the 1870s. The main goal of US free-love advocates was to assert individual/sexual autonomy from state regulation and church interference.³⁹ As a keen anarcho-communist, Goldman set herself apart from other free-love liberals by highlighting the centrality of free love in radical social change. Her sex radicalism consisted of advocating for free love, birth control, sex education, the abolition of marriage and chastity, and the defense of homosexuality.⁴⁰ The Chinese translation of Goldman's "Marriage and Love" first appeared in 1917, during the heyday of culturally iconoclastic ideas such as free love among progressive liberals and students. The anarchist scholar Gotelind Müller has noticed the "anarcho-feminist background" of the catchphrase "free love" in the culturally iconoclastic and politically

38 "Shijie xiaoxi: Gaodeman nüshi laihan," 48.

39 John C. Spurlock, *Free Love: Marriage and Middle-Class Radicalism in America, 1825–1960* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 107–63; John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 156–67.

40 Hsu, *Emma Goldman, Mother Earth, and the Anarchist Awakening*, 165–98.

progressive May Fourth era (mid-1910s to mid-1920s) while recognizing the importance of Goldman's feminism among Chinese readers.⁴¹ Though Müller has pointed out that Lu Jianbo highlighted Goldman's "views on gender questions," Müller omitted the "antilove" theory he developed as a critical adaptation of Goldman's cult of free love. This section focuses on the tension between Goldman's ideas and the "antilove" theory in the discourse of third-generation anarchists to assess the intellectual effects of her sex radicalism. The dialectical process of endorsing and revising Goldman's idea of free love, I argue, reveals the masculine rationality and philosophical creativity of these male anarchists, both traits that point to their idealistic bent and abstract reasoning as young intellectuals.

The 1920s witnessed a surging discourse of the "new sexual morality" (新性道德 *xin xing daode*) in Chinese society, to which the anarchists contributed with their dialectical critique of free love. Conventional sexual morality in China revolved around the regulation of female chastity and idealization of women as faithful maidens, loyal wives, and virtuous widows.⁴² Gendered sexuality, as the nexus of family lineage, male virility, and female virtue, sustained the Confucian sexual-ethical order. These normative guidelines for sexual behaviors and gender complementarity, though they met sporadic challenges in the imperial era, came under major attack in the early twentieth century. Introducing foreign notions of "romantic love" through the neologism *lian'ai* (戀愛), progressive intellectuals heralded the deconstruction of Confucian sexual ethics. Energized by a variety of foreign theories, institutional and professional authorities as well as political parties competed to modernize gender relations and social ethics with the new regulatory apparatus of personal sexuality.⁴³ In sum, discourses of new sexual morality in 1920s China epitomized the prioritization of the individual, society, race, and state over the family in a time of political turmoil and cultural transformation.⁴⁴ Promoting Goldman's idea of free love marked Lu Jianbo and his comrades' ambition, which adhered to their cross-cultural anarchist genealogy, to carry out a social revolution that eradicated nation, class, marriage, and chastity.

Through a series of translations, Lu singled out Goldman's sex radicalism from other foreign progressive theories of love and sex with which it had been conflated in the May Fourth era. During the late 1910s and the early 1920s, Goldman's idea of free love was fused with diverse new theories under the general cult of romantic love in such popular journals as *Funü zazhi* (婦女雜誌 Ladies' journal). Generally, Goldman's demand to abolish marriage appealed less to the modernizing Chinese than did the freedom of love,

41 Gotelind Müller, "Knowledge Is Easy, Action Is Difficult: The Case of Chinese Anarchist Discourse on Women and Gender Relations and Its Practical Limitations," in Mechthild Leutner and Nicola Spakowski, eds., *Women in China: The Republican Period in Historical Perspective* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2005), 86–106.

42 Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee, *Confucianism and Women: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

43 Lü Fangshang, "1920 Niandai zhongguo zhishi fenzi youguan qing'ai wenti de jueze yu taolun" [Choices and discussion of issues about love by Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s], in Lü Fangshang, ed., *Wusheng zhi sheng jindai zhongguo de funü yu guojia* [Voices amid silence (I): women and the nation in modern China (1600–1950)] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, 2003), 73–102.

44 Hiroko Sakamoto, "The Cult of 'Love and Eugenics' in May Fourth Movement Discourse," *positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 329–76.

marriage, and divorce promoted by the Swedish educator Ellen Key. Numerous educated urbanites clung to Key's notion of voluntary chastity based on mutual love to resist the double standard of sexual morality and arranged marriages that still prevailed in China.⁴⁵ Starting in 1926, Lu Jianbo made it his mission to translate Goldman's works on love, sex, and women as the epitome of the social revolution that he and his comrades promoted as an alternative to the GMD's and CCP's revolutions. Much as Yuan Zhenying had chosen the leftist *New Youth* for publication of Goldman in translation, Lu Jianbo selected a liberal monthly, *Xin nǚxing* (新女性 New woman), as the venue to propagate Goldman's sex radicalism among the Chinese general public. A series of translations by Lu of Goldman's works and biographies culminated in the publication of *Ziyou de nǚxing* (自由的女性 The free woman), a translated collection of Goldman's essays, in 1927.⁴⁶ It was presented as the masterpiece of Goldman's sex radicalism and covered a range of topics that included love, marriage, woman suffrage, puritanism, prostitution, modern drama, and revolution. This collection typified Goldman's anarchist proposal for equal (heterosexual) intimacies liberated from both institutional tyrannies and conventional norms.

By invoking Goldman's ideas, Lu Jianbo and his comrades set their readers on a radical path to change their personal lives and society. In his preface for *Ziyou de nǚxing*, Lu credited Goldman as the spokesperson of the "leftist socialist" approach to the women's movement, in contrast to the reformative feminist approach represented by Ellen Key. Goldman's idea of free love denounced the ideals of marriage and romantic chastity that Key espoused. Goldman argued that chastity was an institutional vice that cut women off from their sexual nature and damaged their well-being. For Goldman, only free love liberated from chastity could help create autonomous individuality, independent motherhood, and true companionship. While Goldman, like Key, saw love as the only determinant of sexual morality, she denounced marriage as the antithesis of love, which was "the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy."⁴⁷ In short, for Goldman, free love transcended both the still-restrained romantic chastity and purely carnal free sexuality.⁴⁸ Summing up the radical import of Goldman's essays, Lu stressed that he endorsed Goldman's approach to women's and sexual issues, which demanded the total abolition of the sociopolitical status quo.⁴⁹ Lu was joined by his lover-comrade Deng Tianyu (鄧天鵲 1906–1986) and comrade Mao Yibo, who published articles praising

45 Lynn Pan, *When True Love Came to China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), 154–69.

46 The translations of Goldman's works and biographies by Lu Jianbo included the following: Emma Goldman, "Eluosi geming zhong de funü" ["Women of the Russian Revolution"], trans. Lu Jianbo, *Xin nǚxing* 1, no. 4 (April 1926): 253–60; Emma Goldman, "Jiehun yu lianai" ["Marriage and Love"], trans. Lu Jianbo, *Xin nǚxing* 2, no. 1 (January 1927): 81–92; Hippolyte Havel, "Aima Gaodeman zhuang" ["Biographic Sketch"], trans. Lu Jianbo, *Xin nǚxing* 2, no. 3 (March 1927): 269–84; "Aima Gaodeman zhuang (xu)" ["Biographic Sketch," continued], trans. Lu Jianbo, *Xin nǚxing* 2, no. 4 (April 1927): 429–46; Emma Goldman, *Ziyou de nǚxing* [The free woman], trans. Lu Jianbo (Shanghai: Kaiming Bookstore, 1927). All but one of the articles in *Ziyou de nǚxing* came from Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1910).

47 Emma Goldman, "Marriage and Love," in Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 2nd ed. (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1911), 233–45.

48 Donna M. Kowal, *Tongue of Fire: Emma Goldman, Public Womanhood, and the Sex Question* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 1–51.

49 Lu, "Preface," in *Ziyou de nǚxing*, 5–8.

Goldman's anarchism for seeking liberated and equal relations between men and women through a thorough social revolution.⁵⁰ In their vision, free love reigned; gone was chastity, whatever its form. Ba Jin, for his part, translated Goldman's "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" in *Xin nüxing* in 1926. In an epilogue, Ba Jin revealed Goldman's hope, conveyed in their correspondence, of touching the heart of Chinese youths "the same way she touched those in Europe and America" with her works.⁵¹

Not only did the anarchist radicals prefer Goldman's approach over Key's reformist stance, but, by the mid-1920s, the intense sociopolitical struggles in China compelled some of them to go beyond Goldman's free love in seeking sexual liberation. The dissolution of the first United Front between the GMD and CCP in 1927 led many anarchists to work with the GMD to revive the revolutionary movement, while the anarchist radicals refused to collaborate with any parties in carrying on their anarchist cause.⁵² Some of them were particularly averse to these political parties' demand for their members' full devotion in disregard of or at the expense of personal relationships. Besides invoking Goldman's sex radicalism, a few anarchists sought to counter all forms of suppression of individual freedom. Not long after Lu's advocacy campaign for Goldman's sex radicalism, his comrade Zhang Lùqian proposed a neologism, *fei lian'ai* (非戀愛 antilove), as a way to reconfigure personal choice and collective interest in intimate matters. Zhang's antilove theory was premised on his anarchist belief in maximizing individual freedom and his biological approach to sexuality. Fundamentally, Zhang intended to liberate sexuality not only from chastity but also from sexual love. Echoing Goldman, he first denied the validity of chastity (in any form) in maintaining a love union. But, going beyond Goldman, he went on to discredit the value and liberating effects of romantic/sexual love that she passionately promoted. Zhang repudiated the established notion that romantic love was the spiritualization of—and thus superior to or in charge of—sexuality. For him, sexuality was simply a biological impulse like the appetite for food; it had nothing to do with love. The inseparable tie between love and sexuality knotted by romantic-love advocates, in Zhang's view, placed an unnatural and thus unhealthy burden on personal choice.⁵³ He contended that the arbitrary generalization of all forms of heterosexual intimacies as romantic love would unduly eroticize a nonsexual friendship between two individuals. Consequently, Zhang considered the prioritization of mutually exclusive love over other kinds of human affections to be harmful to the development of a universal love for mankind.⁵⁴

By negating the liberating effect of romantic love in heterosexual relations, Zhang proposed an anarchist sexual ethic by combining free sexuality and human solidarity (人類愛 *renlei ai*). In his opinion, the belief of romantic love advocates—particularly Ellen Key and her Chinese followers—in the union of body and soul (靈肉一致 *lingrou*

50 Yin Wenbin [pen name of Mao Yibo], "Gaoman nüshi wenji" [Anthology of Ms. Goldman], *Xin nüxing* 1, no. 10 (October 1926): 754–56.

51 Gaodeman nüshi [Emma Goldman], "Funü jiefang de beiju" ["The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation"], trans. Li Feigan [Ba Jin], *Xin nüxing* 1, no. 7 (July 1926): 511–21.

52 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 197–285.

53 Qiandi [Zhang Lùqian], "Lun 'lianai lun'" [On "sexual love"], *Xin wenhua* 1, no. 3 (1927): 95–108.

54 Qiandi [Zhang Lùqian], "Feilianai yu lianai" [Antilove and sexual love], *Xin nüxing* 3, no. 5 (1928): 501–25.

yizhi) would lead to two problems. One, it dictated that a woman and man in love had to have sex, regardless of their sexual wills. Two, it neglected the fact that many lovers had poor sex lives, despite their mutual affection. Although Goldman upheld one's free will to choose love partners, her idea of free love still attached sexuality to romantic love, thus doing little to truly set sexuality free. Unlike Goldman, whose ideal of free love was universal with no class nature, Zhang ascribed possessiveness and exclusivity to romantic love and branded them as bourgeois features. Romantic—or even free—love struck Zhang as having a sense of ownership, which contradicted the anarchist ideal he had in mind. Only by detaching sex from romantic love, Zhang declared, could one be free to love and/or have sex with anyone he or she found fit. Synchronizing socioeconomic emancipation from all authorities with sexual liberation from conventions and romantic love, Zhang envisioned a new society without ownership in any form. In that society, compassion for humanity, rather than romantic love, would prevail to create a free, fraternal, and natural/ethical state of love, as well as sexual unions.⁵⁵ Zhang was joined by other anarchist intellectuals like Mao Yibo, Xiang Peiliang (向培良 1905–1959), and Gao Changhong (高长虹 1898–1956?), who variously attacked the theory and practice of romantic love in China.⁵⁶

As Zhang Lǔqian mainly targeted Ellen Key's theories, Lu Jianbo had to confront his own espousal of free love inspired by Goldman. In 1927, Lu still judged Zhang's idea of replacing free love with free sexuality and human love as "unnecessary" and "unfeasible."⁵⁷ Lu's love union with Deng Tianyu and his intellectual appreciation of Goldman's ideas made him hesitate to renounce free love. Nevertheless, his anarchist belief in maximizing individual freedom, along with his aversion to the problematic practices of sexual love in China, rendered him susceptible to Zhang's reasoning. By 1928, Lu's thought had undergone a dialectic process, during which he adopted a new understanding that free sexuality, rather than free love, was key to both physical gratification and mankind's sustainability. Whereas Goldman denounced man-made marriage and lauded joyful unions based on sexual love, Lu felt compelled to rescue individual sexuality from the abuses of romantic love in Chinese society. He came to brand such free-love advocates as Goldman the "psycho-physical dualists" (心物二元論者 *xinwu eryuanlun zhe*), whose lingering attachment to the mysterious, unpredictable nature of love kept them from embracing total sexual liberty.⁵⁸

Zhang Lǔqian's neologism and Lu's proselytism embodied their naturalistic ethics of sex in light of foreign theories and sociopolitical reality. Moving away from Goldman's cult of free love, Lu stressed that physical desire without the ostensibly "nobler" spiritual element of love was not shameful. Rather, such sexuality was a behavior "beyond moral value judgment." On this note, Lu criticized his anarchist precursors—Goldman and Charles-Albert (pen name of Charles Daudet, 1869–1957)—who "displayed their

55 Yibo [Mao Yibo], Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], and Qiandi [Zhang Lǔqian], *Funü wenti zalun* [Miscellaneous essays on the woman question] (Shanghai: Pingdeng, 1927), 200–209, 219–55.

56 Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], ed., *Lian'ai pomie lun* [Disruption of love] (Shanghai: Taidong Book Bureau, 1928).

57 Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], "Feilianai yu lianai zhencao" [Antilove and love-based chastity], *Xin nüxing* 2, no. 8 (August 1927): 835–47.

58 Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], "Tan 'xing'" [On "sex"], *Xin nüxing* 3, no. 8 (August 1928): 868–76.

indecisive contentment [with free love] when facing the sexual revolution.”⁵⁹ For Lu, no laws, conventions, institutions, or even affections other than spontaneous sexuality itself should dictate the new ethics of sex.⁶⁰ As Zhang Lǔqian put it, sexual liberation set social revolution in motion.⁶¹

Seeking to transcend Goldman’s sex radicalism, the antilove advocates displayed their masculine rationality and philosophical creativity to revolutionize sexual morality and society in 1920s China. Lu presented his own position on antilove and anarcho-communism as purely scientific, rooted in biology, and designed to maximize personal liberty in an evolutionary society. “I obey my own reason,” Lu asserted, “and do not succumb to whatever dogmas impose on me.”⁶² Such emotional, poetic phrases as “Some day . . . men and women will rise, they will reach the mountain peak, they will meet big and strong and free, ready to receive, to partake, and to bask in the golden rays of love” in Goldman’s essay were absent in the writings of male antilove advocates. To some extent, Goldman’s “lingering attachment” to romantic love was portrayed by the antilove advocates as clouded by her female, petite bourgeois tendency for romance. They appealed to masculine rationality in contrast with Goldman’s feminine emotionalism, as they rendered it.⁶³

Tellingly, these “intellectual sons” of Goldman justified their challenge to her “parental” authority by referring to “generational succession” based on the principle of social revolution. Having followed their spiritual mentor Kropotkin’s endeavor to promote evolution “in the desirable direction through revolutionary action,” these young male Chinese anarchists claimed that their antilove reasoning was consistent with the scientific, rational method of anarchism in the process of social evolution.⁶⁴ In particular, they saw it as their duty to surpass their predecessors on the path of maximizing individual liberty while promoting social solidarity. Lu Jianbo, for one, announced: “I think it is our responsibility as young people burdened less by social conventions” to step forward and further away from their precursors.⁶⁵ They also treated their antilove theory as a token of philosophical creativity following the principle of social evolution: as Lu claimed, “the new generation excels the old”; proposing the antilove theory, thus, “was by no means showing off for the theory’s sake or disrespectful of former sages” such as Goldman, Lu emphasized.⁶⁶ Furthermore, as rebels against familial patriarchy—the main target of May Fourth cultural iconoclasm—the antilove anarchists did not refrain from challenging the discursive authority of Goldman, their “spiritual mother.”

The antilove discourse epitomized the intellectual idiosyncrasy of male third-generation anarchists in receiving Goldman’s sex radicalism. While embracing the anarchistic principles of Goldman’s sex radicalism, these anarchist intellectuals accepted its ideas

59 Jianbo, “Tan ‘xing,’” 876.

60 Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], “Lun xingai yuqi jianglai de zhuangbian” [On sexual love and its future transformation], *Xin nüxing* 3, no. 12 (December 1928): 1347–62.

61 Qiandi [Zhang Lǔqian], “Lun xing de jiefang yu shehui geming” [On sexual liberation and social revolution], in *Funü wenti zalun* [Miscellaneous issues on women], 246–55.

62 Jianbo, “Lun xingai yuqi jianglai de zhuangbian,” 1347.

63 I am grateful for Dr. Jack Neubauer’s valuable insight on this aspect.

64 George Crowder, “Revolution and Evolution: Kropotkin’s Anarchism,” in Rachel Hammersley, ed., *Revolutionary Moments: Reading Revolutionary Texts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) 141–50.

65 Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], “Qian yen” [Foreword], in *Lian’ai pomie lun*, 2.

66 Jianbo, “Qian yen,” 2.

selectively. They endorsed Goldman's criticisms of marriage and prostitution and her promotion of sexual education, but overlooked her defense of homosexuality and tried to replace free love with free sexuality. Notably, the antilove theory as a remedy to free love was specific to the third generation; Yuan Zhengyin, a second-generation anarchist and translator of Goldman, still upheld (and cited) her cult of free love in his monograph, entitled *Xing de weiji* (性的危機 The crisis of sex), published in 1928.⁶⁷ Only the third-generation youths felt the imperative to redress the harmful practices of free love by increasing personal/sexual freedom from love. Moreover, the young male intellectuals of the third generation were far from sexual libertines. Their ascetic lifestyle and the theoretical nature of their antilove discourse both indicated that they were philosophizing love and sex to further their anarchist beliefs.⁶⁸ In contrast with Goldman, who practiced free love, the antilove advocates only engaged with free sexuality in theory. In sum, the third-generation male anarchists exhibited a distinctive temperament that featured heterosexual normativity, abstract rationality, and local reasoning independent from Goldman, their intellectual source of inspiration.

Intriguingly, the male rationality of antilove advocates was contrasted by the writings of Deng Tianyu, who still clung to Goldman's belief in free love. As Lu's companion and practically the only female anarchist who wrote publicly in their group, Deng's works helped illuminate the features and limits of her male comrades' antilove theory. The antilove advocates' call for gender equality and sexual freedom basically disregarded female sexual vulnerability and the socialized gendered division of labor. The general principle of free sexuality that Zhang Lūqian advocated omitted the coercive effects and gender hierarchy that often put female sexuality at the mercy of men. Other antilove advocates paid no attention to such female issues as birth control, pregnancy, miscarriage, and childbirth. Such was not the case with Deng Tianyu. She had written an open letter to the editor of *Xin nüxing* in 1927 as a defense of her free union with Lu and an attack on the marriage system.⁶⁹ In her review of *Ziyou de nüxing*, Deng praised Goldman as "the forerunner of women and the warrior of women's revolution."⁷⁰ Deng maintained her espousal of Goldman's free-love belief. Her writings attended to women-specific issues ranging from maternity, childrearing, and housework to repressed sexuality, while stressing that the future of women's emancipation should be in their own hands.⁷¹ She showed no sign of endorsing the antilove notions that ignored the sexual, physical, and emotional consequences of free sex on women.

Despite their discourse against love, the third-generation male anarchists shared Goldman's anarchist goal of harmonizing individual freedom with social solidarity. In *Shijie nü gemingjia* (世界女革命家 The female revolutionary of the world), a 1929 essay

67 Yuan Zhenying, *Xing de weiji* [The crisis of sex] (Hong Kong: Shou Kuang Publishing Department, 1928), 45, 131.

68 Gotelind Müller has indicated the "puritanical atmosphere of Chinese anarchism in the 1920s." Müller, "Knowledge is Easy," 99.

69 Tianyu [Deng Tianyu], "Women de jiehe" [Our union], *Xin nüxing* 2, no. 1 (January 1927): 125–26.

70 Tianyu [Deng Tianyu] and Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], *Funü jiefang yu xing'ai* [Women's liberation and sex] (Shanghai: Taidong, 1928), 201–5.

71 Tianyu and Jianbo, *Funü jiefang yu xing'ai*; Tianyu [Deng Tianyu] and Jianbo [Lu Jianbo], *Xin funü de jiefang* [The liberation of new women] (Shanghai: Taidong, 1928).

collection translated by Lu Jianbo and several of his comrades, a treatment of “Goldman’s biography and her ideas” was included as the first essay.⁷² Her commitment to social revolution, as well as her struggles against authority, had won the esteem of these Chinese anarchists. Lu’s conversion to the antilove theory did not turn him against Goldman’s ideal of sexual love, which he believed would be realized *after* the establishment of the new social order. He simply ceased to consider free love a better solution than free sexuality to achieve personal liberty in the current society, where romantic love was often abused and manipulated. The antilove theory, thus, was more of a strategic move to revolutionize society than a rebellion against Goldman’s sex radicalism.

Meanwhile, not all of Goldman’s Chinese adherents dwelled on intimate matters to serve their anarchist cause. Ba Jin, for example, had focused on sociopolitical issues as he corresponded with Goldman. As we shall see, Ba Jin’s case reveals how a Chinese anarchist intellectual had to modify his ideals in an increasingly grim political climate—despite his continued affinity for Goldman, his “spiritual mother” as he called her in his autobiography.⁷³

THE GOLDMAN EFFECT: SOCIAL REVOLUTION

During the 1920s, as both Goldman and Chinese anarchists experienced and responded to national revolutions, she often offered her reflections to her Chinese counterparts, particularly Ba Jin. Ba Jin was candid about Goldman’s profound influence on him as an anarchist. In his reminiscence of his younger years, Ba Jin described how Goldman’s articles, translated in *Shishe ziyoulu* (實社自由錄 The Truth Society’s speech on freedom), “completely conquered” his mind. “It was not until then,” Ba Jin wrote, “that I had a clear belief.”⁷⁴ That was in 1920, when Ba Jin was 17; soon, he identified himself as an anarchist and started to write articles for anarchist papers. An avid reader and earnest anarchist novice, Ba Jin devoted his time and effort to translating anarchist classics, including Goldman’s works on revolution, modern drama, and women’s emancipation. His correspondence with Goldman, beginning in 1925, covered his growth into an earnest member of the anarchist radical faction, his voyage to France for study (1927–1928), and his discussions with her of the revolution in China. Their communication sheds light on Goldman’s reflections on the effects of social revolution, as well as on Ba Jin’s responses and choices as a third-generation anarchist in China. Goldman’s musings on revolution, I suggest, inspired Ba Jin’s thinking about the role of anarchists in the Chinese national revolution. Nevertheless, the impasse that Ba Jin and his comrades faced after the establishment of the GMD regime in 1928 forced him to assume a new, professional status as a writer that displaced his earlier identity as an anarchist. By the time Goldman rose from her depression after exile to once again engage in active political struggle during the Spanish Civil War in the mid-1930s, Ba Jin had become an intellectual writer who only reached people with his pen.

72 Lu Jianbo, ed., *Shijie nü gemingjia* [The female revolutionary of the world] (Shanghai: Qizhi Bookstore, 1929), 1–26.

73 Ba Jin, *Ba Jin zizhuan* [Autobiography of Ba Jin] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Literature and Art Publishing House, 1995), 76–78.

74 Ba Jin, “Wo de younian” [My younger years], in *Ba Jin quanji*, vol. 13 (2004), 10.

Goldman's two-year experience in Soviet Russia had compelled her to "transvalue" her views on the nature of revolution and the task of anarchists, on which she often reflected during her exile. Primarily, Goldman had forsaken anarchists' "old attitude to revolution as a violent eruption"; rather, she began to assert that "revolution must essentially be a process of reconstruction."⁷⁵ Her proposal involved intensive educational work and advocacy for the expansion of democratization, among other strategies.⁷⁶ The task of anarchists, in Goldman's opinion, was to lead the revolution toward the process of reconstruction through means that would serve "the ultimate end of all revolutionary social change" to "establish the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to liberty and well-being."⁷⁷ "The function of Anarchism in a revolutionary period is to minimize the violence of revolution and replace it by constructive efforts," Goldman concluded in a 1938 letter.⁷⁸

That said, as her actions showed, Goldman had always emphasized the duty of anarchists to "become part of the strivings of the people," to quote her reply to Ba Jin on May 26, 1927. In his earlier letter to Goldman, Ba Jin indicated disappointment over the "narrow stand" that his comrades were taking in the multipronged rivalry among the imperialist (northern warlords), Nationalist (GMD), and Communist (CCP) powers in China. In her reply, Goldman encouraged Ba Jin and his comrades to be active agents of social revolution—to "keep close to the people"—so as to further its process as a reconstruction. Goldman made two points regarding anarchists' place in revolutions. First, revolution was not, and never should be, the monopoly of nationalists or other partisans. The mission of anarchists was to help awaken the people's will to rebel while directing the course of revolution toward liberty and well-being for all. Second, anarchists should not collaborate with any political parties that sought to establish a new government to replace the old one. In sum, Goldman expected her Chinese comrades to be with and fight for the people and to foster spiritual, intellectual, and economic awakening in China.⁷⁹

Goldman nudged Ba Jin into accepting her arguments by enlightening him with anarchist history while also showing her appreciation of his fervor as a young, dedicated anarchist and his unease with his bourgeois background. The ways that Goldman highlighted the youth of Ba Jin had double meanings. On the one hand, Ba Jin's young age justified the role that Goldman assumed as a veteran anarchist showing him the correct path set forth by their forerunners. She stressed that Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876), Kropotkin, and Louise Michel (1830–1905) had won for themselves "the very spirit of revolt, on every barricade, always with the masses in their social, political and economic efforts."⁸⁰ Goldman wanted the young Ba Jin to pass on this anarchist tradition, however daunting the task might be. On the other hand, she praised the passion, receptivity, and sincerity

75 Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, July 3, 1928, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 20.

76 Emma Goldman to Alexander Berkman, July 3, 1928, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 20.

77 Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, 262.

78 Emma Goldman to Roger Hall, May 27, 1938, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 43.

79 Emma Goldman to Ba Jin, May 26, 1927, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 18.

80 Emma Goldman to Ba Jin, May 26, 1927, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 18.

that she found in Ba Jin as the hopeful symbol of the young Chinese generation. She also urged Ba Jin to get over his middle-class past: “Nearly all of the intellectual leaders in our own movement were people who became interested in social questions not because of their own misery but because they could not stand the misery of the masses.”⁸¹

Ba Jin’s letters clearly showed his intellectual agreement with Goldman’s views based on her principles and experiences as an anarchist. On July 5, 1927, Ba Jin updated Goldman on the greatly changed political situation in China, as the GMD violently attacked the CCP in Shanghai and elsewhere on April 12 while fighting the northern warlords. The dissolution of the former GMD-CCP United Front, Ba Jin explained, had driven many anarchists to cooperate with the GMD. Concurring with Goldman, Ba Jin concluded, “I think if we will not be familiar with the people, then we can get nothing for the future revolution.”⁸² It was in this context that Goldman expressed her interest in touring China, which Ba Jin eagerly hoped to help make happen. For Goldman, it was urgent to reach the young people of China with her reflections on Bolshevik rule. For Ba Jin, Goldman’s tour would boost the morale of the anarchist radicals, who strove to fight for the revolution on their own.

But, neither was Goldman’s China tour realized nor did Ba Jin persist in fighting with the people for social revolution as an anarchist. Despite Ba Jin’s full agreement with Goldman’s views, he did not risk his freedom as Goldman and Berkman did in order to fight for and with the masses. The growing censorship and hostility of the GMD regime (established in 1927 in Nanjing) toward its political others stifled the anarchist radicals and their activities in China. Many third-generation anarchists retreated from their active propaganda work into a range of intellectual professions. The anarchist Ba Jin, who adhered to Goldman’s advice to join no parties, also converted himself into a novelist after agonizing inner struggles.⁸³ Although he had edited a couple of short-lived anarchist papers in the early 1930s, his connections with trade unionists and the working people—like those of most of the other anarchists—were gone.

Ba Jin’s agonizing emotions about turning away from Goldman’s expectations were revealed in an epistolary article, entitled “Gei E. G.” (To E. G.), published in July of 1933.⁸⁴ Triggered by Ba Jin’s reading of Goldman’s autobiography, *Living My Life*, which came out in 1931, this article was a poignant confession with a mixed sense of political farewell and spiritual regeneration. Still viewing Goldman as his “spiritual mother,” Ba Jin bared his deeply repressed, intensely dejected soul to her as he described how he had endured the past five years since his last letter to her in 1928. He repented his desertion of his anarchist pledge as a social revolutionary, and he admitted that he did not do what he had promised Goldman: devote himself to the revolution and go to the people. It was, as he described it, a bitter five years, when he frittered his energy and life away

81 Emma Goldman to Ba Jin, November 11, 1927, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 19.

82 Ba Jin to Emma Goldman, July 5, 1927, in Falk, Zboray, and Cornford, *Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 18.

83 Yamaguchi Mamoru, “Ba Jin yu Aima Gaodeman 1920 niandai guomin geming zhong de wuzhengfu zhuyi” [Ba Jin and Emma Goldman’s anarchism in the national revolution of the 1920s], *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu cong kan* [Chinese modern literature research series] 5 (May 15, 2016): 1–21.

84 Ba Jin, “Gei E. G.” (To E. G.), repr. in *Ba Jin zizhuan*, 197–99.

on futile matters, as he was unable to fight the environment that confined him. What he had left during this nightmare-like period was a dozen published novels that his readers misinterpreted as his thought, and for which he hated himself. "Thus, I punished myself with silence [with regard to Goldman and other foreign comrades]; I was dead in your milieu, as I have killed myself [as an anarchist]," he wrote. And yet, the two volumes of Goldman's full-of-life autobiography vigorously stirred Ba Jin's soul. "I also want to experience life in its heights and its depths, in bitter sorrow and ecstatic joy, in black despair and fervent hope," Ba Jin told Goldman in the article, quoting and echoing the last paragraph of Goldman's *Living My Life* and declaring his will to spiritual regeneration, "I am going to live that life composedly with the attitude you have taught me, until I have drunk the cup to the last drop." Dedicating his latest novel to his "E. G.," Ba Jin believed that she would understand him, his painful silence, and his novel, for which he had shed his blood and tears.

Largely, Ba Jin's "To E. G." revealed a sense of loss and regret felt not just by him but by the other third-generation anarchists who made the rational decision to step aside from striving with the people. Ba Jin and many of his comrades chose to continue their anarchist cause in intellectual endeavors as writers, teachers, and translators. While Goldman plunged herself into campaigning for the anarchist revolution during the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and lived in agrarian collectives run by anarchists, Ba Jin only issued an article defending anarchism in Spain against some criticisms from Chinese literary circles. He claimed that he was not qualified as an anarchist since he no longer took part in the movement, and some of his bourgeois habits and literary works also contradicted anarchist beliefs. Nevertheless, he still believed in the anarchist ideal and respected anarchists who fought for it.⁸⁵ Despite his political farewell to anarchism, Ba Jin's essay "To E. G." indicated that he had undergone yet another spiritual regeneration inspired by Goldman and retained his intellectual passion for anarchism.

EPILOGUE

The intergenerational associations between Goldman and her Chinese adherents during her exile manifested the strengths and limits of young intellectuals in propagating anarchism. Passionate about their anarcho-communist ideals, these young Chinese men were capable of multilingual communication, theoretical elaboration, and inspiring propaganda. Eager for intellectual enlightenment, ideological guidance, and transnational solidarity, they forged a spiritual connection with Goldman, who gladly shared her thoughts with these young, rebellious idealists. Goldman's multivalent influence on the third generation of Chinese anarchists indicated both the reach of her ever-advancing ideas—whether her sex radicalism, anti-Bolshevism, or reflections on revolution—and their limitations in helping to sustain the Chinese anarchists' movement. Her insights on authoritarianism, the woman and sex questions, and anarchists' roles in revolution had importantly inspired the Chinese anarchist radicals in strategizing for and discoursing on anarchism. Thanks to these third-generation

85 Lin Xianzhi, *Ba Jin: fuchen 100 nian* [Ba Jin: 100 years of ups and downs] (Hong Kong: City University Press, 2019), 149.

anarchists, a variety of Goldman's works were able to reach the Chinese reading public. But she either underrated the crushing effects of the new Nanjing regime on the leftist anarchists or overestimated their passion to persist in their socioeconomic struggles. When pressed by the new political status quo, these young social revolutionaries turned to their rational judgment, not their rebel instincts, for a way out. "Following the brutal suppression of Chiang Kai-shek's counterrevolutionary terror," the anarchist Zheng Peigang recalled in 1963, "we intellectual empty talkers who were not deeply rooted in the masses soon dispersed."⁸⁶ Despite the possibility that Zheng said this in order to be politically correct under the Communist regime, his words effectively captured the crux of the matter.

Nevertheless, as Arif Dirlik remarked, though "anarchism as a movement had ceased to exist" in China after the 1930s, anarchist ideas lived on in various forms.⁸⁷ Just as many American philosophical anarchists carried on their anarchist ideas via such methods as civil disobedience and writing, their Chinese counterparts also continued to reveal their inner anarchist passion, each in his or her own way. In the 1930s, Ba Jin continued to translate anarchist works, and Lu Jianbo still praised the "greatness" of Goldman in furthering "the social evolution for all mankind."⁸⁸ Lu, joined by Deng Tianyu and Zhang Lüqin, edited a new anarchist paper, *Jingzhe* (驚蟄 Awakening of insects; 1937–1939), during the Second Sino-Japanese War, without being involved in any other anarchist activities. In their late 80s, when interviewed by researchers from the Emma Goldman Archive, these third-generation Chinese anarchists—Qin Baopu, Lu Jianbo, Ba Jin, Mao Yibo, Wu Kegang, Wei Huilin, and Bi Xiushao—vividly remembered Goldman as their intellectual inspiration.⁸⁹ Through their cultural or academic careers, these intellectual anarchist veterans instilled their anarchist ideals into their readers, students, and the younger generation. In a way, they had not really forsaken their spiritual mother. For her part, Goldman remained supportive of her young Chinese comrades as she continued to speak out on their behalf, despite the discontinuation of their correspondence.⁹⁰ At the end of "To E. G." in 1933, Ba Jin envisioned meeting with Goldman in Barcelona, which he had learned was witnessing the rise of defiant young Spaniards. Although only Goldman made it to Barcelona to fight her last battle alongside the young Spanish anarchists, Ba Jin and his former comrades did carry their anarchist spirits onward without the anarchist movement.

86 Zheng, "Wuzhengfu zhuyi zai Zhongguo de ruogan shishi."

87 Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 285.

88 Tang and Zhang, *Ba Jin de yige shiji*, 156, 159. Lu Jianbo, "Shehui biandong zhong liang ge funü xing" [Two types of women in social changes], *Chongjing* 1, no. 6 (1933): 3–5.

89 Brenda Butler, interviews, Emma Goldman Archive, Berkeley, CA, United States: "Lu Jianbo," November 1, 1989; "Wu Keh Kang," November 22, 1989; "Huisheng Qin," November 27, 1989; "Bi Xiu-shao," November 21, 1989; "Wei Hui-lin," December 6, 1989.

90 Emma Goldman to Carlo Tresca, April 28, 1938, in David Porter, ed., *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), 161.

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